



The Beanstalk

Chris Leaver

Magic, Retold Fairy Tales, Supernatural

Once upon a time there was a boy, and this boy had a name. This boy's name was Albert. Albert was the giant son of a giant mother and a giant father. Albert was a kind and friendly giant who loved nothing more than playing in the woods. He would climb the great red trees, with the rich green leaves. These great trees were so tall that they reached the sky, and they were so thick that they protected the small giant family and their small giant's house from the villains and the thieves that lived far, far away. Albert loved the great trees as much as he loved his kind mother and caring father. At this young age Albert could not have been happier – he was adored, and he was safe. He lived in a house that he loved, surrounded by the woods that he loved. Everyone was kind, everyone was happy. In the evenings, Albert's mother would cook chicken broth, and Albert's father would teach him how to grind the chicken bones to make their bread. They would go to bed each night full and content, and would dream sweet dreams in the moonlight, knowing that they were always safe, as long as they had the great trees to protect them.

Each and every birthday that Albert had, his mother and father would give him one gold coin. Albert was ever so grateful for each coin he received. He would keep these gold coins in a bag under his bed, never thinking about spending them, as they were a gift from his beloved mother and father. The day before Albert's twelfth birthday, his mother and father asked him what he would like more than anything else; "To be able to play the loveliest music in the whole world", Albert said. His mother and father smiled at each other.

On Albert's twelfth birthday, he awoke with the red rising sun to find his kind mother and caring father at the bottom of his bed holding the most beautiful golden harp Albert had ever seen. "Happy birthday our darling son", whispered Albert's mother, handing over the loveliest of gifts to her only child so he could play the

loveliest of music in the whole world. Albert loved his harp with all of his soul; half because of the lovely music it played; and half because it was a gift from his most lovely mother and father.

The day before Albert's thirteenth birthday, his mother and father again asked him what he would like more than anything else; "To have the loveliest friend in the whole world", Albert said. Albert's mother and father looked at each other but this time did not smile, as they knew nobody would want to be a friend of a giant boy. However, on Albert's thirteenth birthday, he again awoke with the red rising sun to find his kind mother and caring father at the bottom of his bed holding Albert's new best friend; a golden goose that laid golden eggs. The golden goose had a name. The goose's name was Archie. Albert loved Archie as much as he loved the great trees, and as much as he loved his mother and father. Albert and Archie would play all day, and Albert would collect Archie's golden eggs and give them as gifts to his mother. They all had such a wonderful life.

One day, this wonderful life would change forever.

The small giant family did not awake with the rising red sun on one particular morning. On this morning they awoke to the sounds of wickedness and melancholy; the wickedness of wicked laughter, the wickedness of the sounds of axe against wood; and the melancholy of collapsing trees.

As the small giant family looked out of the windows of their house, they saw a hundred Englishmen taking their axes to the great red trees with the rich green leaves; laughing as they did so. These Englishmen were the villains and the thieves from far, far away. There were so many Englishmen and they were so quick with an axe that by the time the small giant family were able to realize what was happening, there was only one great tree left. "Quickly, quickly my darling son, quickly, quickly my darling wife, head for the clouds up the last great tree", cried Albert's father. Albert grabbed his beloved goose, and he grabbed his beloved harp, and he grabbed his beloved bag of gold coins, and headed up the last great tree for the clouds – with his mother and father following behind, in a slower manner as they were not as young as they once were. As they climbed the tree they could feel the thud and chop of a hundred axes on its base, and the tree began to sway.

Albert reached the cloud at the top of the tall tree and climbed on, turning around and looking down towards his mother and father, who were still climbing. "Quickly, quickly dearest mother, quickly, quickly dearest father", cried Albert. But as the final cry left his lips, the last great tree fell to its death; taking Albert's kind mother and caring father with it.

Albert was alone.

From then on, Albert would sit in his cloud and watch as the 100 Englishmen tore down the small giant family's house and built their own. They moved their English wives into these houses and had English children. They turned what was once the great woods into a city of Englishmen, and of Englishwomen, and of English children. These English children would grow into Englishmen and Englishwomen. Albert would watch and he would cry, and his tears would fall from his cloud as rain. He would play his harp with such anger and such sorrow that it would fill the city below with the sound of thunder. He would fill his time talking to Archie about the days, now gone, he spent playing in the woods. Archie was all he now had left in the world.

One night, Albert cried so hard that his tears flooded the land below, and from the flood grew a magic beanstalk that the English mother of an English child named Jack had accidentally planted the day before. The beanstalk grew so tall that it reached Albert's cloud. Albert cried his self to sleep that night, as he did every night. The morning after his tears had flooded the land below, from which a beanstalk had grown, he awoke to a peculiar stink. He was no longer the kind and caring giant he once was, as his tragic misfortune had weathered his soul. As he opened his heavy, drained eyes, he cried in anger, "Fee-fi-fo-fum! I smell the blood of an Englishman: Be he alive, or be he dead. I'll grind his bones to make my bread"...

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