

The Beanstalk Giant

Somewhere far away, on top of a large cloud, a pair of giants sat on a bench in the middle of a park. There was a duck pond in front of them. One of the giants was throwing small chunks of bread towards them, though they largely ignored it. The other giant looked thoroughly miserable.

“Tell me again, what happened?” said the giant with the bread, calmly.

The other giant, the miserable one, cleared his throat and started to tell his story. It wasn’t a nice one. There was certainly no happily-ever-after.

It had all started the day before, around about the time the cockerel was crowing. The sad giant had been tending to his runner beans in the garden after cleaning out his gutters. He’d had a wonderful night’s sleep and had woken before dawn to get a head start on the day. A giant diet requires giant runner beans and lots of them. He’d been a little angry when he’d dropped one, but he was in such a good mood that he hadn’t bothered to chase it down the garden path. He wasn’t to know that it had fallen through the cloud and landed in a field far below, just at the same time as a young thief was planting what he, mistakenly, thought were magic beans.

For a long time, the giants had known that people from the down-below world might be able to clamber through the clouds. It had never bothered them. They didn’t think to lock the cloud-gates; after all, everyone knew each other. Somebody had other ideas, though. The bean had sprouted and grown to an enormous size right beneath the giant’s garden. For the rest of the morning, he had gone about his business. Soon, it was time for him to head inside for lunch. He had a wonderful beetroot salad. His mood improved even further, and he decided to bake some bread using the corn from his field.

It wasn’t until he headed back out just as the sun was setting that he realised something was amiss. Something in the air smelled funny. It smelled like nothing he’d ever smelt before. “Fe Fi Fo Fum?” he muttered to himself (Giantese for “What’s this then?”) as he scratched his chin. He couldn’t find

the source of the smell. Each time he thought he had it, it would move.

Throughout the early evening, he searched high and low. He even had his wife bring candles out to light the garden. Just as he was beginning to give up, he heard a rustling in the pantry. Bursting through the door, he caught the young boy with a sack full of food. Shoved in the top was the freshly baked bread. This was too much for the giant who launched into a terrible rage. Angrily, he chased the boy back towards the beanstalk. Before he could follow him down, the boy had reached



the bottom and cut down the stalk.

“The thing is,” the sad giant muttered to his friend on the bench, “I’d have shared with him if only he’d asked. There wasn’t any need for him to go stealing it like that. Now I’ll have to grow a whole new field of corn to make myself another loaf.”

His friend patted him on the back and said, “You’re right. It’s always the same; nobody thinks of us giant-folk.”

RETRIEVAL

1. Where were the two giants sat?
2. What had the giant been doing before he tended his runner beans?
3. Why didn’t the giants lock the cloud gates?
4. What does “Fe Fi Fo Fum” mean?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

V

Find the definition of “amiss”.

E

Explain what “There was certainly no happily-ever-after” means.

I

How did the giant feel when he couldn’t work out where the smell came from?

V

Which word supports the fact that the giant was in a “terrible rage”?

Answers:

1. On a bench by a duck pond
2. Cleaning out his gutters
3. They knew everyone
4. What's this then

V: Out of place

E: The story doesn't have a happy ending

I: Confused and concerned

V: Angrily