

**The  
Shrunk  
Giant**

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**For Hal,**  
who is, as everyone says,  
a very nice boy.

In a small town not too far away from here, there used to live a giant who hated children.

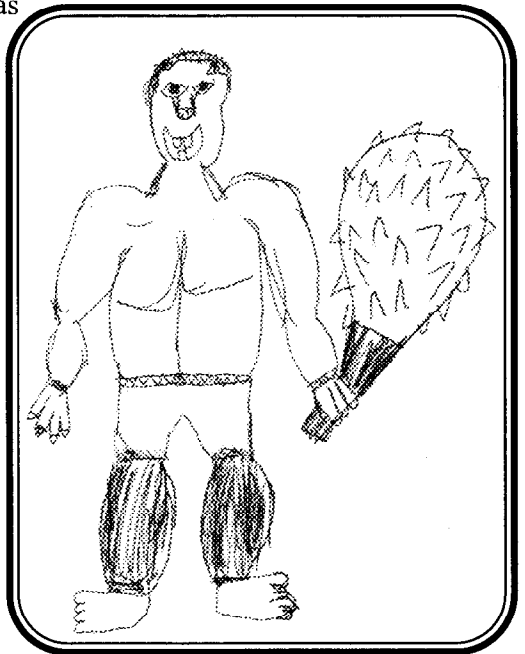
This isn't very surprising in and of itself, since most giants have hated children ever since Jack and The Beanstalk.

But this giant *really* hated children. Whenever he saw children nearby, especially if they were playing and having fun, he would run out of his house and scare them away.

He would yell, "Go away rotten children! Or I will squish you flat and eat you like a pancake!" He had this huge club which he would swing over his head as he lumbered towards them.

The children would run away and, even though the giant never did squish them flat or eat any of them like a pancake, you could see why these children would still be very frightened.

It got so bad that the children of this small town were afraid to play or have fun for fear that the giant would hear them. So the children sat quietly and did their very best not to laugh or even smile.



The small town also had a witch. Fortunately, she was a good witch, and like all good witches she loved children. It broke her heart to see so many children sitting around being afraid to play or have fun.

One day, this good witch could take it no longer. She flew over to the giant's house and knocked on his huge door. When he answered, she asked him, as sweetly as she could muster, "Why do you want to make the children so sad?"

The giant shrugged his giant shoulders and grinned his nearly toothless grin. He looked down at the witch in a menacing way, and said, "Because they are small."

This made the witch even madder, but she kept her anger in check. She asked, again as sweetly as she could, "You think that just because they are small and you are big that you have the right to scare them and stop them from having fun?"

The giant nodded his big, lumpy head and said, "Yes."

You probably already know that it's dangerous to make a mean witch angry. What you might not know is that making a good witch angry is even worse.

The witch took out her wand, pointed it at the giant, and chanted the following words:

*Dreblot talluck,  
dreblot tallock.  
Opps oligit,  
fronloops oligit,  
De la, de la, de la.*



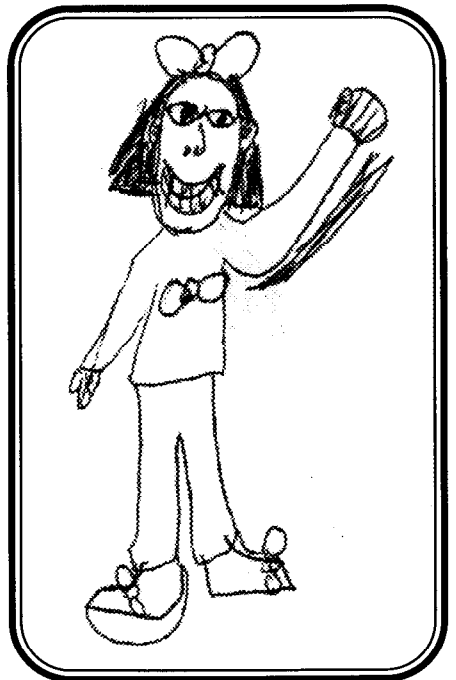
The giant had no more idea what these words meant than you do. He shrugged his giant shoulders again, growled at the witch, and, since it was very late at night, went to bed.

The next morning he heard a child laugh. It was a small laugh, more of a chuckle really, but it was enough to awaken the giant. The giant didn't feel quite right and when he grabbed for his club, he couldn't seem to lift it. He did not want the children to get away, however, so leaving his club behind, he quickly ran out into the street yelling, "Go away rotten children! Or I will squish you flat and eat you like a pancake!" His voice sounded somehow different, but still he added, "With my bare hands!"

To the giant's surprise, the children did not run away screaming. In fact, they did just the opposite: they started to *laugh* and to run *towards* him. One of the girls in the group (the rottenest one of all, in the giant's opinion) raised her fist above her head and yelled back at him, "No. I will squish *you* flat and eat *you* like a pancake."

As soon as the children were close to him, he realized what was wrong. They were bigger than he was. Not much bigger, but enough bigger to scare him. The witch's spell had made him smaller than the children he liked to scare.

Terrified, the *no-longer-giant* giant ran as fast as his little legs would carry him. The children, happy to be on the other side for a change, chased him. They were all yelling now,



“We’re going to squish you flat. We’re going to eat you like a pancake!”

They were more singing it, than yelling it:

*We’re gonna squish you fla - hat!*

*Eat you like a pa - hancake!*

*We’re gonna to squish you fla - hat!*

*Eat you like a pa - hancake!*

The giant ran all the way to the witch’s house and, without even knocking, ran right inside and slammed the door.

“Help me!” the giant yelled.

“Help you?” asked the witch, a smile on her face. “You, who scares children just because they are smaller?”

The giant nodded. “Put me back. Make me big again. You *must* help me.”

The witch ignored the giant’s rudeness. Instead, she said, “As a matter of fact, I *will* help you. I will tell you what you have to do before I agree to make you large again.”

“Tell me, tell me,” the giant demanded, all the while tugging on the witch’s robes, the same way a small boy pulls on his mother’s dress when he wants something.

The witch smiled even more sweetly, and said, “Here’s the deal. I will remove the spell under one condition.”

“What? What?” asked the giant, eagerly.

“You play with the children,” she said.

The giant did not want to play with the children. As you know, the only thing he hated more than *regular* children were *playing* children. But since there was nothing else to be done, and he did so much want to be made a giant again, he decided that he would do as the witch asked. He sighed a no-longer-giant sigh and shuffled slowly outside, determined to play with the children.



As soon as the children saw him, however, they knew exactly what game they wanted to play: Chase the Tiny Giant.

They ran after him as they did before, the rotten girl in the lead, chanting:

*Squish you fla - hat. Eat you like a pa - hancake!*  
*Squish you fla - hat. Eat you like a pa - hancake!*

The giant, now crying, scurried away and hid.

One boy, a very nice boy, felt bad about chasing the giant. He thought that them being mean to the giant was just as bad as the giant being mean to them.

So he went over to where the crying giant was hiding and said, "Please don't cry."

The giant cowered from the boy, expecting at any moment for the boy to yell, “Squish you flat!” and then squish him flat.

The boy, the very nice boy, said sternly “It was wrong for you to scare us just for being smaller.”

The giant nodded in agreement. He didn’t really think it was wrong, but he didn’t want the boy to get angry and squish him flat.

The boy added, “But it’s just as wrong for us to scare you now that you are smaller than us.”

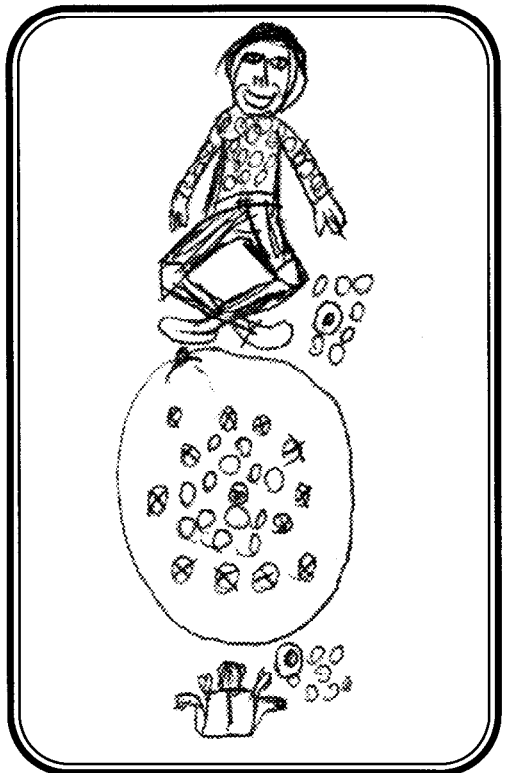
With this the giant agreed. The giant sniffed, then stopped crying. Though still a little afraid, he asked the boy, “W- w- will you p- p- play with me?”

The very nice boy nodded. The boy sat on the ground in front of the giant. He took a bag out of his pocket and opened it. It was full of marbles.

“Do you know how to play marbles?” the boy asked the giant.

The giant shook his head. “N- n- no, I d- don’t,” he answered, afraid of what might happen next.

Out of his other pocket, the boy removed a string and placed it in a circle on the ground. Then, very patiently, the boy taught the giant how to play marbles.





In a shorter time than you might imagine, the other children had brought their marbles and all of them, the tiny giant included, were playing marbles and laughing and having fun.

Soon it was dinner time and one by one the children's parents called the children home. Finally, the very nice boy's mother called him home, as well. He picked up his string and placed it in his pocket, then collected his marbles into the bag. But before he left, he removed a few marbles and gave them to the giant.

"You might want to practice," the very nice boy said to the giant. Then he left for home.

As soon as the boy was out of sight, the good witch appeared. She was clearly happy. She said, "I see that you managed to do as I wished and play with the children."

The giant nodded his lumpy head and asked, "Will you remove the spell and make me big again?"

"Yes," the good witch said. She pointed her wand at the giant and chanted:

*Eebalay alomitz, eebalay aloomitz*

*Iggick doomip, allalaley doomip*

*La dee, la dee, la dee.*

This time, the giant had a good idea of what would happen next. And he was right. Though he didn't feel anything at all, he could tell that he was beginning to grow. After a few moments he was back to his original size.

The witch asked, "Now you promise never to scare the children again?"

The giant growled, "I made no such promise. I plan to be just as mean to the children as before. If not meaner." He grinned his evil, nearly toothless grin and left for home.

In the morning, the giant didn't feel quite right. He didn't know what was wrong. At first he thought the witch had made him small again. So he quickly reached for his club, but he had no trouble lifting it. Then he looked into the mirror and saw, to his relief, that he was still a giant.

At that very moment, the giant heard a child's laugh. It wasn't the very nice boy's laugh. In fact, the giant was pretty sure it was that rotten girl who first said she'd squish him flat. He'd teach her, he thought! He ran outside and saw that it was, indeed, the rottenest little girl, sitting and playing marbles with a group of her friends.

The giant raised his club above his head and started to yell, "Go away rotten chil-" But then he stopped. He didn't feel much like scaring the children this morning. He didn't feel like squishing them flat. And he certainly didn't feel like eating any of the children like a pancake. Not even the rottenest little girl who started all the trouble.

In fact...

Right there in the middle of the street, the giant suddenly knew exactly what he *did* want to do. He dropped his club. He started walking away from the children. Soon he was running. And, in no time, his giant legs brought him to the witch's house.

This time, he knocked gently and politely upon her door.

The witch opened the door and looked out at the giant.

Unsurely, she asked, "Can I help you?"

He nodded his giant, lumpy head. "Yes you can," he said. "If you would be so kind."

"What would you like?" she asked.

"Make me small," he said, softly.

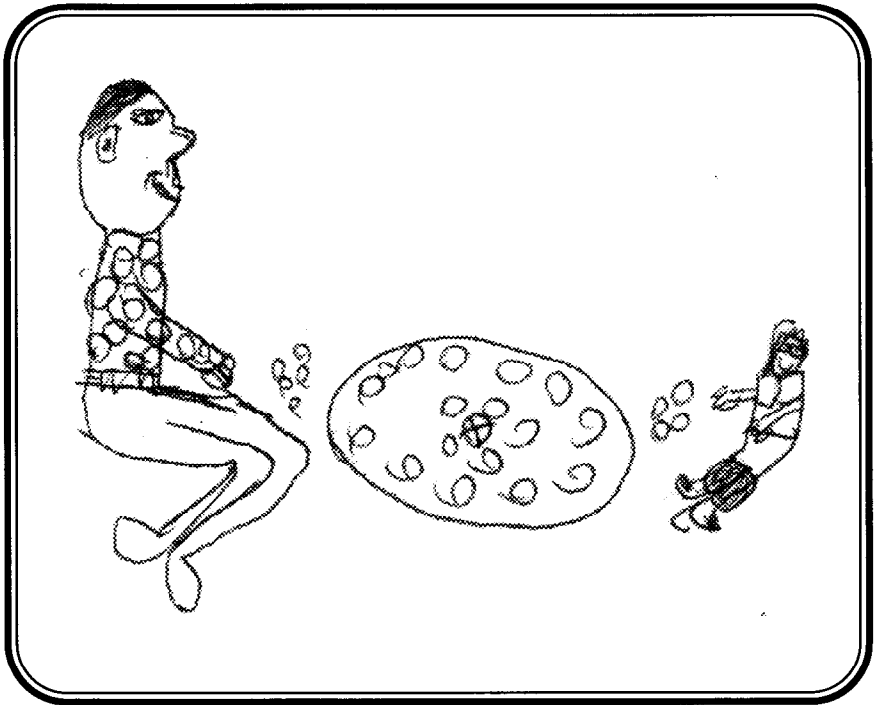
"What?" the witch asked.

“You heard me correctly,” he said. “I want you to make me small again. Please.”

The good witch was happy to do just as the giant asked. She made him small again – just a *little* smaller than the other children – and, to this day, the giant and the witch have remained very good friends.

And if you go to this little town you will most likely find the two of them, as well as a large group of laughing children, in the middle of the town square, playing marbles.

**The End.**



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