

Chalk Mountain Adventure

A story for Max by Granddad



In granddad's garden

Max had spent the morning playing his favourite game of being spiderman in the garden with his granddad. Although he'd had lots of fun he was ready for a real adventure. The sort where you didn't know what was going to happen next

Every so often the swing would lift him high above the fence and he would see the white chalk quarries on the hill. "I know", he said turning to his granddad, "lets walk up Chalk Mountain". Chalk Mountain was, according to Max, a magical place where, with a bit of help from his granddad he knew he would find an adventure.

And granddad was also in the mood for an adventure, looking at his round tummy, he knew he should exercise a bit more. So after pulling on their wellington boots they set off up the muddy path to the gate that led up the 'mountain'.

Gateway to another world

They walked along the road until they came to the creaking gate that guarded the path to Chalk Mountain. It was one of those tricky gates - the sort which allows only one person, or dog! to pass through at a time.

Once through the gate they climbed the hill and Granddad started telling Max about how a long time ago people used to take the rocks from the chalk quarry to make lime and cement. But Max was more intent on finding a stick that he could use as a sword to chop up the witches and monsters that were surely going to attack him from the dark places along the path. "and you must have a sword too", he said to his granddad, passing him a stick.

And so was 'Spotty' as he barked and wagged his tail for all it was worth.

Being afraid

They hadn't gone very far when their way was blocked by some black bullocks who were munching their way through the forest. For a moment Max stood frozen, he was scared and he wanted to go back but Spotty started to growl defiantly and granddad said that young warriors should not be freighted of animals even if they are bigger than you.

Granddad told Max to wave his sword. So Max waved his sword and shouted 'go away and Spotty joined in, barking at them too. As if by magic the bullocks left the path and scuttled into the trees mooing angrily as they went. Max carried on shouting long after they were gone. Happy with his own bravery and Spotty was pleased with his courage too.

At the top - seeing the world more clearly

They emerged from the trees into the bright sunshine as they reached the top of Chalk Mountain. Max loved the warm sunshine on his face as he surveyed the landscape beneath him. From here he could see the world more clearly. It felt to him as if his world had suddenly grown bigger simply because he could see it from a different position. An aeroplane flew overhead on its way to Gatwick airport, it seemed close enough to touch it. Look granddad it's a dragon said Max. Granddad half closed his eyes, it was easy to imagine. Spotty jumped up and down trying to catch a butterfly but it was too fast for him.

The giants castle

But these feelings of pleasure were soon replaced by apprehension, for just below him he could see the castle, an old tumbledown lime kiln, where the giant lived. He gripped his sword tightly and moved a little closer to his granddad who tried to reassure him that the giant was probably asleep after counting his money and having a big lunch. Before adding that, just to be on the safe side they had better leave before one of his crows perched on the battlement spotted us and told him we were here. Just as he said this a big crow flew over them sqwarking loudly.

Murky wood

Max did not need much persuading and soon he was trotting along, clinging tightly to his granddad's hand as they had now entered the dark murky woods that clothed the side of Chalk Mountain. Here the trees were tangled and twisted and their branches cracked as you trod on them. The path was steep and muddy and every so often Max slipped and it was only granddads hand that stopped him from falling over.

Max tried to be brave, but every so often he would look over his shoulder to see if the giant was running after him. Every sound convinced him that he would soon be caught and taken back to the giant's castle to be eaten. Until he spotted the smile on his granddads face: a smile that said, have no fear there are two of us and spotty and only one of him!

Scary black hole

Eventually they reached the bottom of the hill below the quarry. Here there were more derelict buildings and a large hole that was covered by iron bars. "This must be the place where the giant brought his prisoners" said granddad. "They must have been thrown into this hole" said Max. He picked up a stone and dropped it into the void. It made him feel funny leaning over to watch the stone fall. Then there was the sound of a splash and something fluttering. "It's probably bats" said granddad. But Max had had enough. "Please can we go home now granddad. I'm feeling hungry, I want some of Momeny's rice". "Of course we can", said granddad, though I think your grandmother will tell me off for getting you and spoty so muddy.

Homeward bound

They climbed over the stile into a big field under a blue uplifting sky even a skylark was singing. Max felt happy as he ran across the field with the wind in his hair and the sun on his face waving his sword and shouting at his imaginary dragons or giants. He was full of courage again in this bright space.

A lesson for granddad

Granddad smiled as he thought about all the things that had happened. What struck him was how a little boy and his imagination had created something wonderful and magical out of his everyday experience. He had not been afraid to imagine and enjoy or suffer the consequences. He hoped that he and his new company would not be afraid to do the same. This is why he called it Chalk Mountain.



Story by Norman Jackson
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