

GONDOLAR THE GIANT

Hal Ames



It was not so very long ago that a giant named Gondolar lived in the upper part of Argamania. As the years went by, his story was forgotten. I would not have remembered his story either, except for the journal I found in a wooden box in the cellar of my house.

I will retell his tale because Gondolar was that kind of giant. His life was not very spectacular. In fact, it was mostly forgettable, except for the one time he decided to do something for someone else.

Gondolar was the last giant. The humans had killed all the other giants because the people feared them.

When this story began, it was thought that all the giants had been killed, but there were stories of one more giant living in the forest, however, no one had ever seen it. Because of this, it made hunting for this giant an adventure and many went to the forest looking for him. If they killed the giant and brought back his head, they would be heroes and become very wealthy.

Gondolar lived in the great forest. Whenever he heard humans coming, he ran. He knew better than to fight them. Giants are able to fight twenty or maybe thirty men at a time, but when an army comes, it is best to run and hide. This is what Gondolar always did. That is how he avoided being killed for such a long time. One might even have called him a coward.

A giant's life is pretty simple. They prefer to live alone and hunt for the food they

need. They hate humans because they always make so much noise and because they are always trying to kill them. Giants like peace and quiet. They just want to be left alone. Gondolar was no different.

The forest where he lived was thick and dark. He found a large cave on the side of the mountain where the humans could not reach, and he built fortresses high in the trees from where he could look down at the soldiers below when they came looking for him. Their arrows could not reach high enough to hurt him.

If there is one thing that makes a giant weak, it is when they discover that something is being treated poorly. Giants want to help, but Gondolar was not like this. He did not care about anyone or anything but himself. He was very selfish and this helped him to survive.

The other giants that used to live in Argamania were fooled into helping helpless creatures and because of this, they were captured and killed. Gondolar knew this trick. He was not going to be fooled by anyone or anything. He had his life to live and he was not going to die because of this weakness. It all worked out very well for him. He lived alone, did what he wanted, and when he could, he made life miserable for the adventurers who came to find him.

Gondolar built traps in the woods. When the hunters would come looking for him, they would be captured by these traps and then never return to their homes. What the people in the villages did not know was that Gondolar did not kill the hunters. He made them his slaves, and they lived in his fortresses high in the trees. So high in fact, that when the slaves yelled, they were too high for those below to hear them. He felt this was fair since they had come to kill him, so why not keep them as slaves.

Every day Gondolar did his normal tasks. He would search for food and make sure that his slaves were doing what he wanted them to be doing.

When the soldiers came to the forest, he would throw rocks down onto them. When hunters came, he would trap them and keep them in one of his tree houses. As far as he was concerned, everything was as it should be.

He had collected around thirty slaves by the time this story began.

They cleaned his fort in the trees, prepared his meals, and did the things servants normally do. He was smart. He did not keep too many of them in one place for fear they would try to escape or maybe even try to kill him.

Then something happened that changed everything. If it was not for this, Gondolar's story would not need telling. What made it so interesting was who the next hunter turned out to be.

One day, as he was walking through the woods, checking on his traps, he heard a strange noise. At first, he did not know what it was. Then as he got closer to his trap, he realized what it was. It was a small human and she was crying. His trap had caught a girl! This was the first time he had ever seen a real girl.

Before the other giants died, they told him about them. He was told to be very careful of these female humans because their tears had a bad effect on giants. If her tears touched him, he would be hypnotized, and then he would do something very foolish. He might even die. This is how most of the giants had been killed

Gondolar stood silently listening to the sobbing. He had never heard anything like it before. Usually when he had someone in his trap, they would yell and scream at him, say bad things, and even threaten him.

Now, this little creature was sitting against the side of the cage and crying. She did not threaten him. She did not yell at him. He did not know what to do. This was so different from any of the other people he had captured in the past.

At first, he thought about leaving the girl in the cage and just let her die there. That way he would not have to deal with her, but her crying made his heart weak. He did not like the sound. He wanted it to go away, but his curiosity got the best of him.

When he got close enough, the girl saw him. At first, she jumped backward away from the giant. She was frightened and knew she was going to die. This made her cry even harder.

This was completely different from any other person he had ever caught.

Gondolar just stared at her through the wooden bars of the cage. He moved around the cage to get a better view, but she kept moving inside to get away from him.

“Get away from me, you mean giant!” she screamed.

Again, Gondolar walked around the outside of the cage trying to see what his prisoner looked like.

When he finally got a good look at her, he saw a pretty girl with long brown hair pulled back from her face in a single braid. Her dress was light blue, and she had a silver belt around her waist. Over her shoulders, she had a dark blue cape, which hung to the ground. Her eyes were red from crying and her cheeks were blushed. She was small and frightened. Her voice was small and softer than anything he had ever heard before.

He knew he had to be careful, but he became very curious. There was something deep inside of him that made him want to be nice to her. It was scaring him, but he could not resist.

He sat on a large log and watched for a very long time trying to decide what to do with her. She was so different from anything he had ever seen before.

The sun was going down and the girl became even more afraid. She had never been away from home before.

“How did you come to be in my forest?” Gondolar asked the girl. “Were you looking to kill me?”

She looked up from under her cape, where she had been hiding, and just stared at the giant. She was too afraid to speak.

“I asked you, how did you come to be in my forest?” Gondolar insisted.

While still sitting in the corner of the cage, she pulled the cape away from her face. She got up the courage to speak even though she still sat in the corner.

“I was looking for mushrooms to make a special meal for my father’s birthday, and then I got lost. I was looking for my way home, when suddenly I was trapped in here. I want to go home. Please, let me go so I can see my family again,” the girl pleaded with Gondolar.

“I’m afraid I can’t do that. You will tell your friends and family about me, then many more people will come and they will try to kill me. I have enough servants. I don’t need any more.”

Gondolar paused while he thought for a moment.

“I’m not sure what I’m going to do with you,” he replied to her.

The girl began to cry even harder and begged the giant to let her go.

Gondolar knew the girl needed to eat and drink, but he was not sure how to take care of her. She was a girl, and he had never had to deal with one before.

He decided to wait until she was asleep, and then he would take her to one of his fortresses in the trees.

It took a long time for her to finally fall asleep. Then the giant lifted the cage off the ground and gently picked her up. He took her to his biggest fortress and set her in a corner.

In the morning, when she awoke, the giant was sitting looking at her.

He asked her, “What’s your name?”

She moved backward away from the giant and closer to the wall. Shaking in fear, she managed to answer, “Lowanda, what’s yours?”

“My name is Gondolar, at least that’s what people call me. It’s nice to meet you,” he answered.

“I’ve heard many stories about you. Many people have tried to find you and then they never return. I was afraid you were going to kill me,” Lowanda stated.

“I don’t kill people. I just keep them to serve me. I have never killed anyone,” Gondolar said.

Pausing for a moment, he continued, “I wish you people would just leave me alone. I don’t want anything else, just leave me alone.”

Gondolar gave Lowanda many tasks to do. She became a very hard worker, but she was always looking for a way to escape so she could return home.

She tried to make friends with the other slaves, but they had little to do with her.

They knew who she was and what her position was, so they knew what would happen to them if they hurt or mistreated her.

The others had given up any attempt to escape a long time before. It would take a very long time to climb down the tree, and even if they did get to the bottom, they knew Gondolar would just find them and bring them back. This is what had happened in the past.

The giant came to visit the fortress often. He liked the food that Lowanda prepared for him. He said the meals were the best he had ever had.

During this time, many soldiers came to the forest, many more than ever before.

Lowanda told him that they were probably looking for her. It kept Gondolar very busy as he tried to avoid them. He did not understand why the army was always coming to his forest.

One day, to the surprise of the workers, when Gondolar entered the fortress, he was badly hurt. He was bleeding and they could not find out why.

The giant lay down on the floor, and then Lowanda removed his shirt to find an arrow had found its way to his chest. The arrow was big and it had gone deep into his breast. The soldiers had brought a new weapon that could shoot large arrows a long distance.

Gondolar was breathing hard and he was in great pain.

Lowanda asked the other servants to help her, but they refused. This might be their opportunity to escape. If the giant died, they would be able to leave.

Lowanda managed to pull the arrow out of his chest. She had to use both hands and put her feet against his side to do it. She took pieces of cloth and pressed them against the wound. Gondolar was very weak. His color was pale.

It took several days until Gondolar woke up. The other servants had escaped, but for some reason Lowanda was still by his side.

When Gondolar woke up, he looked around and noticed that the fortress was empty of slaves. Then he noticed Lowanda cooking something on the stove.

“Why did you stay? You could have gone with the others,” Gondolar spoke in a weak voice.

“You needed my help. I didn’t want you to die,” she replied.

“I can’t believe you stayed with me. You are a very special person. You may go now. I’m feeling better,” the giant said weakly.

“No, I’ll stay with you until you have fully recovered. Just promise me that you will let me go when you are well,” Lowanda responded.

Gondolar was too weak to argue.

Lowanda nursed Gondolar back to health. Then the day came for her to leave. Gondolar was not happy that she was leaving, but he always kept his promises.

Lowanda was sad to go. She had become fond of the giant. He was much gentler than she could ever believe.

Before she left, she ran up to him, climbed up on a chair, and gave him a big hug around the neck. As she did, a tear fell from her cheek onto Gondolar’s neck.

He felt a strong pain where the tear had fallen. He pushed Lowanda away hard enough that she fell onto the floor. Then he began to hold the spot where the tear had fallen.

Lowanda sat on the floor watching in surprise.

“What have you done to me? What’s happening?!” he said, as he fell to his knees in great pain.

He fell to the floor screaming at the pain. It was worse than the arrow that had hit him in the chest.

Lowanda looked on in fear. She did not know what was happening. Gondolar was changing. He was getting smaller. His color was changing. He was no longer the size of a giant. He was becoming like a normal human. He did not move for a long time.

When he opened his eyes, Gondolar looked up at Lowanda.

“What happened to me?” he asked as he looked at his hands and feet.

“You turned into a human, I think,” replied Lowanda who was still in shock.

“Now I remember. When I was a boy, a wizard came to our house to beg for food. My parents did not give him anything to eat, so he got angry. They said he was an evil wizard, and they would not give him food, or anything else.

“He told my parents they would pay a price for not feeding him, so he turned me into a giant. I ran away to the forest since everyone was so afraid of me. I have no idea how long ago that was,” Gondolar told his story.

Lowanda was surprised at the tale she just heard.

“My parents told me that story when I was younger. They told me the boy ran into the woods and was never seen again. He was my brother.”

Raising her eyebrows after realizing who he was, she continued, “That means you must be my brother Randolph! Our parents will be so happy to see you and to have you back!”

Lowanda had a big smile on her face and then she hugged her brother.

The two siblings climbed down the tree and followed the trail back to the village.

Word that the giant was dying had spread throughout the region.

Everyone was happy to see Lowanda, but none of the people in the town knew who the man was that was with her.

They asked her about the giant. They wanted to know if it had died.

“The giant is no more!”

“This is my brother Randolph. He has returned,” she told the crowd and they cheered.

Lowanda took her brother to their parents. To his surprise, they were the king and queen of the kingdom. He had forgotten that he was a prince and Lowanda was a princess!

VOCABULARY: (*Match the word to its definition*)

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| 1. mystery ____ | a. basement, lowest level of a house |
| 2. spectacular ____ | b. brothers and sisters |
| 3. hero ____ | c. dim, lack of color |
| 4. cellar ____ | d. fort, stronghold |
| 5. creature ____ | e. big scary animal |
| 6. fortress ____ | f. champion, savior |
| 7. hypnotize ____ | g. secret, unknown |
| 8. beast ____ | h. fascinate, spellbind, captures the mind |
| 9. pale ____ | i. remarkable, great, amazing |
| 10. siblings ____ | j. person, living being |

TRUE / FALSE:

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Gondolar was a giant. | T / F |
| 2. There were many giants left in Argamania. | T / F |
| 3. Gondolar built fortresses in the trees. | T / F |
| 4. Gondolar killed all the hunters who came to kill him. | T / F |
| 5. Gondolar lived in a cave in the mountain. | T / F |
| 6. Soldiers came to find Gondolar. | T / F |
| 7. The Girl's name was Molanda. | T / F |
| 8. The hunters worked in the forest and built houses for Gondolar. | T / F |
| 9. Gondolar was shot by a gun in the chest. | T / F |
| 10. Gondolar's real name was Randall. | T / F |

MULTIPLE CHOICE:

1. How many slaves did Gondolar have? _____
 - a) about five
 - b) about twenty
 - c) about thirty
 - d) none

2. Who did Gondolar find in his trap? _____
 - a) Lowanda
 - b) Molanda
 - c) his mother
 - d) a hunter

3. What hit Gondolar in the chest? _____
 - a) an arrow
 - b) a rock
 - c) a spear
 - d) a bullet

4. What was Gondolar's real name? _____
 - a) Randolf
 - b) Prince Randall
 - c) Lowando
 - d) Gondolar

COMPREHENSION: *(Write a complete sentence to answer the question.)*

1. What did giants want?

2. What would the hunter who brought a giant's head to his town receive?

3. What did Gondolar build to catch the hunters?

4. Where did the slaves live?

5. Where did Gondolar find Lowanda?

6. What was Lowanda doing when Gondolar found her?

7. Who took care of Gondolar after he was hit with an arrow?

8. Who ran away from the fortress after Gondolar was hit with an arrow?

9. What happened when Lowanda's tear fell on Gondolar's neck?

10. Who were the parents of Randolph and Lowanda?
