

THE DAY THE STORM CAME

Victoria Gabriella Barkalina has many names to match her many characters. She came from the great forest as a seedling travelling on the west winds until she came to rest in the park.

As a young sapling who would grow to become a Giant Sequoia, Victoria found that she could shape shift, taking on the form of the last person who spoke to her. She loved shape shifting because it meant she could be fleet of foot and move around the park; as long as she was back where she had been planted by sunset then all would be fine.

She spent long summer days talking to the other trees, learning their thoughts and secrets. She became the all-knowing guardian of the park. She spoke with the dandelions who told her that their seeds carried thoughts and good messages when they floated off on the winds. She spoke to the rosebushes who had grown over garden walls and fences and now lived as wild as the warm breeze. She made friends of the foxes, the hedgehogs, the flies and the bees. This is how she spent her days.

Until it was her thirteenth birthday, when she awoke to the warmth of the spring sun with a greeting from a young girl as she passed on her way to school. Victoria tried to shapeshift into the form of the young girl, but no matter how hard she tried, she just couldn't do it, and after struggling for many hours she gave up, sadly realising that she could not shape shift anymore.

The trees in the park became very concerned that Victoria did not visit them anymore, so they asked the foxes and hedgehogs, the flies and the bees to find out why she did not come to talk to them. It did not take the animals long to find her and when she explained that she could not move, the animals agreed to gather all the knowledge and bring it to her so that she could store it in her sap and be the all-knowing tree.

Back in the giant forest from where Victoria's seedling had come, there was great destruction as a tornado tore its way through the trees; not even the giant redwoods could defend the forest against the muscle-bound wild rage of the tornado. "If only Victoria the all-knowing tree were here," the sequoias and the fir trees cried. "She would know what to do."

The tornado, realising he was really strong and powerful but that he also needed knowledge, and hearing of the all-knowing tree, set himself the task of finding her and stealing the knowledge that would make him all-powerful and all-knowledgeable. He would be King of the Wild and everyone would have to bow to him.

He rode on the back of the west wind, keeping the eye of the storm, watching for the park where Victoria the Giant Sequoia, the tree of all knowledge, was firmly planted into the earth.

He travelled over the oceans, he passed over the mountains, the hills and meadows, the cities and towns until he came to the park and there, standing proud and tall, surrounded by trees and bushes, was Victoria Gabriella Barkalina, her roots firmly planted in the dark cool earth as the animals of the woodland danced in her shade.

The tornado lifted his tail and rose high above the clouds, stirring them into a grey relentless storm, turning the world dark, blotting out the sun. The tornado twisted into a dive towards the ground where Victoria stood.

Victoria heard the violent roar of the tornado heading towards her. She lifted her branches and caught him in full twist, throwing him backward. He stood and raged that she should give up all her knowledge so that he can be the strongest, wisest King of the Wild.

He called for her to give him all her knowledge, she refuses and tells him he is not the right person to be the guardian of such a precious treasure, that knowledge should be used for good and not for the evil he has in mind. They argue more and more, getting louder and louder, the more he demands, the more she holds her ground, he attacks her again but she fights back.





The animals all fear for Victoria and whilst they are no match for the tornado's strength, they throw themselves into the clash. The foxes snarl and scream digging their teeth into tails of the tornado, the roses wrap their stems around the tornado, digging their thorns into the body of the storm, the hedgehogs roll themselves into balls and then launch their spiky spines at the head of wind. The tornado shakes them off, throwing them, breathlessly, across the park.

The tornado twists her trunk and branches trying to break her, so that he can gather the knowledge that is stored deep within her sap. As her trunk twists, pain rushes through her sapwood. Victoria lets out a mighty call as she resists but she is struggling and the more the tornado twisted, Victoria did not know if she could carry on.

The dandelions clocks protected from the battle among the roots of the beech and oak trees, hear Victoria's mighty call and so they gather together all their good seedlings and arm them with good thoughts then launch them into the tornado. The thoughts spin and take hold, shaking themselves into the mind of the tornado. The tornado tries to shake them out but they hang on, grasping at any part of the storm that they can.

The tornado can feel the sting of the dandelion thoughts, they torment him to let go of Victoria, he falls to the ground, writhing and spinning, trying to cast the thoughts from his mind.

Victoria gathers her breath and whispers to the insects; a ladybird rises up flapping her delicate wings. The sky brightens and the sun appears, as the light and warmth bathe the writhing body of the tornado. It breaks up into small wisps of clouds that rise up to be carried away to the jail of the winds and as they pass through the sunlight a rainbow forms and the animals gather around Victoria and the trees bow toward her, thankful that all their secrets are still safely stored in the sap that flows around her all-knowing branches.

Based upon the ideas from Dosthill Rainbows and Brownies.

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