

# The Giant.

*By Leonid Andreyev.*

*Translated for "The Russian Review."*

... And then there came the giant, the big, great Giant. Such a great, big one. There he came, on and on. Such a funny Giant... His hands are huge and thick, and his fingers are outspread, and his feet are huge, and so thick. That's how thick they are. Then he came... and then, down he fell. You understand, he fell, fell right down. His foot caught on a stair, such a stupid Giant he is, such a funny one. So, you see, his foot caught on a stair. He opened his mouth, and... there he is lying, lying right down, as funny as a chimney-sweep. What have you come here for, Mister Giant? Get out of here, Mister Giant. Sasha is such a dear, such a nice, good little boy; he clings so gently to his mother, to her heart... to her heart, such a dear, lovely little child. He has such dear, fine eyes, clear, clean; and everybody loves him so much. And he has such a nice little nose, and little lips, and he is not naughty at all. It was such a long time ago that he was naughty; he ran and shouted and rode a hobby-horse. You know, Giant, Sasha has a horsie, a fine horsie, a big one, with a tail, and he mounts it and rides far, far away, to the little river and to the forest. And down in the little river there are little fishes. Do you know, Giant, what fishes are? No, no, Giant, you do not know, you are stupid, but Sasha knows: they are so little and nice. The sun shines over the water, and they play, little, cunning, lively fishes. Yes, stupid Giant, but you do not know that...

— What a funny Giant; he came and fell down. That's what I call funny! He was going up the stairs, and his foot caught on the stair, and... down he fell. What a stupid Giant! Serves you right, Giant, do not come here; nobody has called you, stupid Giant that you are. It was long ago that Sasha was naughty, was shouting and running, but now he is gentle, so dear, and mamma loves him so dearly, dearly. She loves him so much, more than anybody else in the world, more than herself, more than life. He is her little sun, her happiness, her joy. See, now he is a tiny, quiet, little child, and his life is tiny, but later he will grow big, big like the Giant; he will have a big beard, big, big whiskers, and his life will be a big, shining, beau-

tiful one. He will be good, clever, and strong, like the Giant, such a strong, clever man, and everybody will love him, and everybody will love him, and everybody will look at him and be glad. There will be sorrow in his life,—every man meets sorrow,—but there will be joys also, great, shining like the sun. He will enter the world, fair and intelligent, and the blue sky will shine over his head, and birds will sing songs to him, and brooks will murmur gently. And he will look at it all and say: How wonderful the world is . . . how wonderful the world is . . .

— This is impossible. I hold you, my little boy, firmly and tenderly, tenderly. Are you afraid of the dark here? Look, it is light in the window. There is a lantern in the street; it stands over there and gives light. Is it not funny? To us also it gives some light, the dear lantern. It said to itself: let me give them also a little bit of light; it is so dark there, so dark . . . Such a tall, funny lantern. To-morrow, too, it will be shining, to-morrow! Lord, to-morrow!

— Yes, yes, yes. The Giant. Sure, sure. Such a huge, huge Giant. Bigger than a lantern, than a steeple, and how funny he is: came and fell down. Oh you stupid Giant, how did it happen that you did not notice the stairs? — “I was looking up, and did not see them,” says the Giant in a deep voice, you know, in a deep, deep, voice, way down, — “I was looking up.” You had better look down, you stupid Giant, then you would be able to see. My Sasha is so dear, so dear and clever; he will grow even bigger than you are. And then he will walk straight over the city, right over woods and mountains; he will be so strong and brave; he will be afraid of nothing, of nothing at all. If he comes to a river, he steps right over it. Everybody looks at him. People open their mouths . . . but he steps right straight over it. And his life will be so big, and brilliant, and beautiful. And the sun will shine, the dear darling sun. It will come out in the morning and shine, such a darling sun . . . Lord! — — There he came, the Giant . . . and down he fell. Such a funny, funny, . . . Oh! . . . funny Giant.

Thus, late at night, a mother spoke to her dying boy. She was carrying him to and fro in the dark room, and she spoke. And the lantern shone in through the window, and in the next room the father listened to her words, and wept.