



And finally... Hooray for the small guy

Jack And The Beanstalk is just one fairy tale that tells us giants can be defeated.

The idea of small things (Hobbits, for example) facing up to huge, powerful and frightening forces is one of the great plotlines of world storytelling. Remember David and Goliath?

All that's appropriate, given the example I want to share, of the small defying the large.

A publisher of spectacularly beautiful children's books has announced it will no longer deal with Amazon.

Two imaginative women (one American, one English) started Barefoot (barefootbooks.com) 20 years ago, believing small is beautiful.

They've become a publishing house with a mission. In Oxford, they run a play centre and cafe for mothers and children, and their ethos is about making the world a better place.

That's why they've said 'No' to the many tentacled monster that sucks the life out of independent retailers. What an example!

From now on, they will sell only through bookshops, their website and 'ambassadors'.

This isn't just brave, it contains a lesson about the way all of us can live.

There's a connection between the culture of convenience (so easy to click and buy) vs the culture of communication, for which virtual living is no substitute.

How can we have intimate and fulfilling relationships with others (of a personal or business nature) if we let ourselves buy into what's convenient and cheap, missing out on serendipitous conversations in bookshops and on street corners?

Just as important is the fact the word 'can't' is not allowed in this fairy story. Supposing Jack had said he couldn't possibly climb that beanstalk?

Supposing all the storybook characters allowed seemingly impossible tasks to defeat them?

Now a feisty publisher announces it will no longer deal with Amazon. Hooray!

Similarly, we can all refuse to allow big worries to defeat our essential life spirit. We can believe in the 'happy ever after' — by taking control.

TROUBLED? WRITE TO BEL

Bel answers readers' questions on emotional and relationship problems each week.

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A pseudonym will be used if you wish.

Bel reads all letters, but regrets she cannot enter into personal correspondence.