

LITTLE GIANT

Written by

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EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY

Somewhere in rural New England. The hardwoods are beginning to crisp into the burnt reds and oranges of fall. A dirt road winds through the thinning canopy.

A MAN, 30's, walks down the road. He's quiet, thoughtful. He runs his hand over trees on the road side like old friends. He carries a GRAPHIC NOVEL in one hand.

He stops at a drive way and looks up to a battered two story colonial style house. Chipped white paint, an assortment of rusting disassembled machines in the yard, slowly being reclaimed by the woods.

In front of the house, a FOR SALE reality sign, that seems half hearted.

The man looks down at the graphic novel, opens the first page. On it -- a map of a magical land, surrounded by curling dragons and mythical creatures. He closes his eyes.

FLASH

EXT. COLONIAL HOUSE. NIGHT - FLASHBACK

SUPER: 20 Years Ago

The same house but looks to be in better shape. The machines are less rusty. The lawn less overgrown. The lights are on and through the windows, a few guys laughing and drinking.

Muted ROCK MUSIC plays inside.

We zero in on a hollow under the house. Maybe a fox hole. Creeping closer the sounds of the gathering big to drown out and the hole draws us in. Something breathes in there...

We ZOOM INTO it -- through the dark and out into --

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LITTLE GIANT LAND - DAY

Suddenly we are in a magical place. Two suns shine brightly above. A canopy of wild wispy blue trees, heavy with fruit. Waterfalls that flow upward like fountains. There are mythical creatures sunning themselves by the water.

Coming over a hill is a young boy, TANNER, 9, human, in what seems to be modified mid 16th century samurai armor. Beside him walks a boy of similar height boy, but different species.

This is LITTLE GIANT, his hair is frozen blue flame, sinewy iridescent skin, and he wears a robe of creeping ivy.

TANNER

That's what I said! Okay, how do you say "Fall" in Zyrgish?

LITTLE GIANT

Tempash.

Tempash. Okay. That kind of sounds like what it is. How's this?

Tanner speaks to the empty space in ZYRGISH, a coarse but melodic language of his own. (*when anyone speaks in Zyrgish subtitles will follow)

TANNER

*Xi tempash seetoo kree
zorcara.*

(In fall the leaves are beautiful)

LITTLE GIANT

Ci drooga, Tanner.
(Very good, Tanner)

SWOOSH. Over them a giant CHIRCAZ swoops by, a griffin like dragon, Tanner points up to it laughing, giddy.

TANNER

A chircaz!

LITTLE GIANT

De zaga drifco?
(Do you want to ride?)

Tanner nods, brimming with excitement. They stand back as the Chircaz lands before them, it's wings sending little tornadoes of dust. But as Tanner steps up to the creature.
BLACK.

The twin suns blink on and off. Tanner looks up quizzically.

CUT TO:

INT. CLOSET - NIGHT

Tanner sits on a pile of coats and blankets in a closet. Its's dark besides his sputtering flashlight. He smacks it a couple of times and the beam steadies.

The sound of the men cracking jokes outside.

Tanner flips a page on a big sketch book. His flash light illuminates drawings of big fantastical maps, creatures, worlds. The trees and creatures we just saw. Little Giant.

He continues his conversation to the empty room.

TANNER

Will the Chircaz let us ride?

(listens)

Then how can we gain its trust?

Tanner's flash light sputters again, then dies. It's nearly dark. A light seeps under the door. He reaches the door handle and tests it. Locked.

TANNER (CONT'D)

Mom? I have to pee!

He jiggles the door, then pounds on it. Nothing.

TANNER (CONT'D)

Dad? Please!

VOICE (O.S.)

Shut up!

An empty beer can CLANGS off the door, followed by the sound of drunk men laughing. They turn up the music.

Tanner collapses on the dirty floor. He wraps himself tightly in a musty blanket, snuffles and closes his eyes.

INT. CLOSET - LATER

Tanner wakes with a start. The light still pours in from under the door, but the house is silent. He sees a little stream of liquid the runs to the door to his pant leg. He peed.

Tanner gets up with a shiver and tries the door again. Still locked. He pounds on it.

TANNER

Some one, open the door! Please!

He shakes the door, wears himself out. Collapses on the ground in sobs.

TANNER (CONT'D)

Please, Little Giant, I need you.
Help me.

Silence. A dark cool coming over him.

TANNER (CONT'D)
Dark, dark, doom, doom.

He stomps his feet in a ritual fashion.

TANNER (CONT'D)
(In Zyrgish)
*By all of the powers of the Giants,
big and small. By the spells, and
secrets of Zyrga, I summon you! I
summon you Little Giant! To help me
and protect me!*

Tanner SCREAMS and throws the jacket. He falls back onto the ground again. Silence.

Then -- beyond him in the impenetrable darkness, an unearthly sound of... breathing? Scraping. *Crawling*. Tanner sits up and peers into the dark.

TANNER (CONT'D)
Hello?

Two glowing orbs blink open, like eyes, they look back at him. A deep breathy voice, like wind in the oaks speaks.

LITTLE GIANT
(In Zyrgish)
Yes. I'm here, friend. I'm here.

The shadow, the orbs, it is the LITTLE GIANT.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

The first light of dawn creeps into the house. The remnants of a party. Beer cans, ashtrays. Someone passed out on the couch.

A low hum emanates from the closet. It grows in intensity, the walls seem to shake. The door rattles on its hinges.

The door BLASTS open, slamming against the wall to reveal Tanner in the door way, a look of dark determination on his face.

The front door opens. EMMA, Tanner's mother, steps inside in a nurse scrubs. Back from the night shift, laden with bags. When she sees Tanner, wet pant leg, shivering in the closet, she drops everything.

EMMA

Tanner?

BLACK OUT

EXT. COLONIAL HOUSE - PRESENT DAY

The man peeks into dusty windows. It's too dark inside to see much besides the furniture covered in sheets and a thick layer of dust. He tries the door -- locked.

He walks around to the back side of the house and stops, looking at two old white oaks that stand together in a clearing.

He flips to a new page in the graphic novel depicting two such trees with wise faces. Their roots are intertwined. One of them reaches a branch-hand down to give a small creature a plump blue fruit.

FLASH

EXT. FOREST GLADE - DAY - FLASHBACK

The same two ancient white oaks have begun to turn yellow earlier than the rest of the trees. Tanner jumps over a log and stares at them for a moment.

TANNER

Do you think they're best friends?
And underneath the ground, they are
holding hands?

Closer to the trees, we see more character, scars, burns, bird's nests, whole histories. Tanner puts his hand out to the open air like he is holding an imaginary hand.

LITTLE GIANT

(Zyrgish)

Of course. True friends do.

He smiles to his imaginary friend.

TANNER

They've lived longer than anyone,
but in Little Giant Land everyone
remembers that, so they still
listen to the trees. And the trees
tell them all the secrets.

LITTLE GIANT

And secrets give you powers.

As they walk into the woods, there is a whisper of shadow outlining Little Giant, holding Tanner's hand.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY

Tanner walks still holding the invisible hand. He speaks in Zyrgish now, totally lost in imagination.

TANNER

(Zyrgish)

*If we could open a new portal,
could I come home with you. We
could swim in the purple seas, or
ride a Chircatz!*

(listens)

*But, this isn't my real home. No, I
don't belong here --*

THWAP! A PINECONE smacks him in the back. Tanner spins around to see two boys TOM and CUTTER, 10, trouble makers, snickering beside the road. Tanner slowly picks up the pine cone.

CUTTER

What freak?

TOM

Are you gonna cry about it?

CUTTER

Throw it back I dare you.

Tanner looks to his left, a rage boils in him.

TANNER

Sewes compf!

CUTTER

What did you say freak?

TOM

He can't speak english. He's
'special'.

TANNER

No, that's all you can speak. It
means you're stupid!

Tanner hurls the pine cone back at them, hitting Cutter in the leg.

CUTTER

You're dead.

They sprint at Tanner. Tanner retreats into the woods. Dodging trees, but the bigger boys are faster. They are on him in no time.

Cutter shoves him hard into the ground and Tom holds him down. Cutter punches him and they start rubbing leaves into his face.

TOM

Say it again you little psycho. Say it.

Tanner squirms under the weight of Tom. He opens his mouth but they stuff leaves into it. Cutter laughs at him as he sputters on leaves and tears.

TANNER

(Zyrgish)

Dark dark doom doom!

CUTTER

What? I couldn't hear you!

But suddenly, something is wrong, a shadow darkens their faces. The black cloud of Little Giant looms over them, dark and terrible and more physical than ever. Red eyes blink open and an other-worldly ROAR fills the air, shaking the very ground.

The boys SCREAM and run toward the road. Cutter jumps the ditch but slips. His leg *snaps*, and he lets out a deep guttural cry. Tom keeps running.

Tanner, scrambles the other way into the woods. He runs and runs, tears streaming, the cries of the other boys disappearing behind him.

EXT. COLONIAL HOUSE. NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Tanner hides under the porch. Rocking back and forth holding his knees, in shock. Behind him the red and blue lights of a cop car flash off of the house.

A POLICE OFFICER talks to Emma at the front door. His father RUSS, 30s, perpetually angry stalks out to them and yells at the cop. Emma's eyes are red from crying.

The police officer makes a note in his pad then heads back toward his vehicle. Emma turns to the woods and screams.

EMMA

TANNER!!

Russ grabs her arm, but she spins back and pushes him away. They yell at each other and Emma storms back inside. Russ walks to the edge of the driveway and glares out.

Under the porch, Tanner wriggles further back into the darkness, shrinking, staying hidden.

EXT. COLONIAL HOUSE. NIGHT - PRESENT DAY

The man looks under the rotting porch to a dark hollow. He takes a beautiful FOUNTAIN TIP pen out of his chest pocket. It's tipped with a wire wrapped red stone.

He opens a blank page on a sketch book and sketches a quick and artful pen drawing the porch. Peering underneath --

EXT. COLONIAL HOUSE. PORCH - LATER THAT NIGHT

Tanner sleeps in the dirt, curled up in the lap of a shadow. A CRACK of branches in the woods, and Little Giant's orb-eyes snap open. They glare protectively out into the forest.

Tanner wakes and looks at the moonlight beaming through the slotted stairway above.

INT. COLONIAL HOUSE. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Tanner creaks open the back door and slips inside. He carefully takes a canvas bag from under the sink and starts to fill it with whatever food he can find. An orange, pop tarts, beef jerky.

A COUGH and a SNORT, stop Tanner in his tracks. He freezes, holding his breath, but no other sounds follow.

Tanner sneaks to the edge of the kitchen and peeks through the doorway into the --

LIVING ROOM

Ken is asleep on the couch, wrapped in an old quilt. Consumed by the heavy breath of a deep boozy sleep.

Tanner carefully closes the door.

EXT. COLONIAL HOUSE - NIGHT

Tanner slips back out the kitchen door and runs down the steps. He presents his haul to the shadows.

TANNER
I got supplies, food and water.
Enough to get us out there. Let's
go.
(in Zyrgish)
Come on.

And the boy and his shadow slip out into the night forest.

EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Tanner and Little Giant walk through the woods. Tanner is more chipper and alive than we've ever seen him. He eats a slice of orange.

TANNER
What will the food be like in
Little Giant Land? I want to try
the Kolemi fruits. The ones the
Sand Dragons eat and it makes their
scales so shiny. To the blue sands
of Koola Koola!
(in Zyrgish)
Here you go!

He offers a slice of orange to Little Giant, but it slips through his smoke like fingers.

EXT. FOREST - MORNING

Tanner jumps over logs and swats at leaves with a stick. Little Giant hovers along beside him, he seems to be becoming more solid, more substantial.

TANNER
When we get there, you just have to
help me open the portal. I can go
through all by myself.

Little Giant stops floating behind. Tanner turns to him.

LITTLE GIANT
(Zyrgish)
You cannot go there.

TANNER
Why not?

LITTLE GIANT
Your body has to stay here.

TANNER

I'll leave it here then. I don't even want it! I want to go.

LITTLE GIANT

You cannot go.

TANNER

But I... I don't know how to live here.

LITTLE GIANT

Then you must learn how.

(then)

But, there is something more --

Then a shout from somewhere deep in the woods.

VOICE (O.S.)

TANNER! Are you out here?

Emma leads a search party, sweeping the woods a fair way off. Tanner sneaks off quickly.

TANNER

We have to go.

EXT. FOREST ROAD - DAY

Tanner stomps down the road, clearly he and Little Giant have been fighting.

TANNER

I hate it here. There's no magic!

LITTLE GIANT

But there is. You --

TANNER

You don't know what it's like. When nobody likes you. You don't know!

LITTLE GIANT

I'll protect you. I'll help.

TANNER

Then help me leave.

Little Giant stops, stays silent.

TANNER (CONT'D)

I don't even need you, I know where
the portal is. It's under the
covered bridge.

LITTLE GIANT

Listen --

TANNER

No! La la la la.

Tanner clamps his hands over his ears and stalks off down the road. Behind him a TRUCK turns down the road, picking up speed and kicking up dust.

Little Giant tries to get Tanner's attention as the truck bears down on them, but Tanner is SINGING loudly now to drown out Little Giant.

LITTLE GIANT

TANNER.

Little Giant bleeds further into reality, becoming solid again, he grabs Tanner's hand just as the truck reaches them. Tanner's eyes go wide, but he freezes. Little Giant shoves Tanner back into the ferns alongside the road.

The truck smashes through Little Giant with a wisp of smoke, and comes screeching to a stop. Russ jumps out and stalks toward the side of the road.

RUSS

Tanner?! I saw you boy! Where are
you? That kid is the fucking
hospital 'cause of you!

Russ chops his way through foliage on the other side of the road. Tanner tries to creep out of the ferns.

RUSS (CONT'D)

The whole goddamn town is looking
for you. I swear to god if I...

Tanner starts to scamper off but Russ hears the brush move.

RUSS (CONT'D)

Hey! Get back here!

Tanner makes a break for it, down a hill, sprinting for his life. Russ jumps in his truck and follows.

EXT. COVERED BRIDGE - DAY

Tanner runs to the bridge with Russ's truck not far behind, romping over forest paths.

Tanner makes it to the bridge and runs to the center. The covered roof in disrepair, holes letting in little patches of sunshine. Russ's truck stops at the entrance and he gets out.

RUSS

Where do you think you're going?

Tanner climbs up onto the rail and looks down to the creek below, it feels dizzyingly high. Russ stalks toward him.

TANNER

(whispering)

Where's the portal, where's the portal?

He searches the creek below.

RUSS

Get off there kid, are you fucking crazy?

TANNER

Dark, dark, doom, doom.

(Zyrgish)

Powers of giants, big and small.

Open me a door to my own true home!

Something begins to swirl down below! Tanner struggles over the edge, but Russ grabs him and yanks him back over the side. He grabs Tanner by the front of the shirt in a rage.

RUSS

You little bastard, you're a menace. I'm gonna --

He lifts his hand to slap Tanner across the face when -- WHAM! A shadow slams him clear across the bridge into the other railing.

Little Giant is there again. He wheezes in way that sounds pained hollow.

LITTLE GIANT

(Zyrgish)

Are you okay?

TANNER

I think so.

Then Little Giant collapses on the road, the wheezing grows, and it seems to be leaking smoke into the air.

TANNER (CONT'D)

Are you?

LITTLE GIANT

Friend, listen.

TANNER

The portal is opening, we have to go.

LITTLE GIANT

No, stop.

The swirling shadow that it Little Giant solidifies into a true form. Now a small dark mass of a creature, clearly hurt. His glowing orb eyes slitted.

LITTLE GIANT (CONT'D)

There is magic here...

Little Giant reaches up with a wispy arm and PLUCKS one of his eyes out and hands it to Tanner. Tanner takes it carefully.

TANNER

But you can't...

LITTLE GIANT

You make it.

Tears well in Tanner's eyes. He tries to protest.

BLAM BLAM -- BULLETS RIP through the semi solid mass of Little Giant. He falls back through the railing and down into the creek.

TANNER

NO!!

Tanner scrambles to the edge. All he can see is the spinning portal below dwindle to spot and disappear.

Russ stands by his truck, bloody and ragged holding a smoking RIFLE. Tanner glares at him. Time slows down.

Emergency vehicles arrive on the scene. Emma is there, getting out of her car, panic on her face. She runs to Tanner and holds him tight.

FADE OUT.

INT. EMMA'S CAR - DAY

The car packed with bags and boxes. Emma drives with a blank expression. IN THE REAR VIEW -- Russ watches them from the Colonial house.

Tanner sits in the front seat, cheeks tear stained and heavy. He stares out the window and watches the forest drift by. As they pass the covered bridge, Tanner cranes his neck. But they pass by with no sign of Little Giant.

Tanner looks down and in his palm is the little red round stone -- Little Giant's eye.

EXT. COVERED BRIDGE - PRESENT DAY

The man taps his pen on the graphic novel. At the base of the pen -- the wire wrapped red eye stone.

The man - OLDER TANNER, looks at the last page of the graphic novel, it's a beautiful picture of a covered bridge leading to a magical world through a portal.

He walks to the middle of the bridge and looks over the edge into the swirling waters below. He carefully unwraps the red eye stone and turns it over in his fingers.

OLDER TANNER

(sotto)

Dark, dark, doom, doom.

He drops the stone into the water. Tanner looks off into the distance, clutching his graphic novel in a tight roll.

The air around him darkens, a breeze picks up. The hairs on Tanner's neck stand up. He lifts himself up onto the railing. Closes his eyes. He leans forward.

Then, a shadow grows behind him. Dark tendrils of shadow fingers wrap around his shoulders. A voice resonates from everywhere around him. Like the deep oaky breeze it once was, but now deeper, resonating with dreamy harmonics.

LITTLE GIANT

(In Zyrgish)

The giants, big and small.

(then)

Welcome you home my friend.

BLACK OUT