

The Giant Blueberry

Retold by Judy Freeman

Long ago, in ancient Rome, there lived a poor farmer named Marcus who tried to make a living growing blueberries. It wasn't easy. One morning, he went outside to tend his blueberry bushes. There, hanging from the bush, was the hugest, most gorgeous berry that Marcus had ever seen. It was round and blue and simply gigantic. It was surely the most perfect berry that there ever was. Marcus ran into town and told everybody he saw about his amazing blueberry. People came from all over to view it. Marcus bragged, "Did I lie? Is this the most remarkable berry you've ever seen? Look how enormous it is!"

All day, people came by to remark on his prodigious berry. They said, "You weren't kidding. That's one big, fabulous berry."

Marcus was so proud. He said, modestly, "Yeah, well, if you take good care of your berries, your berries will take good care of you!"

Early the next morning, Marcus stepped outside to check on his blueberry bushes. Who did he spy but a disreputable-looking man lurking by the blueberry bushes. As soon as he saw Marcus, the man plucked the giant berry from the bush, hoisted it into his arms, and started to run away with it.

"Stop, thief! That's my magnificent, one-of-a-kind blueberry, the biggest and best blueberry I've ever grown. Where are you going with my beautiful blueberry?" Marcus cried.

Cradling the berry in his arms—this was one big piece of fruit—the man turned and hollered, "Hey, buddy, I've come to seize your berry, not to praise it!"