

Albert the Candy Man



Little Marilyn had already got used to the crazy stories that the Sandman told her and didn't ask so many questions any more. After all, it was a good thing that the Sandman tried to give his best and managed to make up some stories for her. His stories may have been a little crazy but they were nevertheless stories.

„So, how are we doing today?“ asked the Sandman, sitting at the edge of Marilyn's bed and kicking up his heels.

„Pretty good,“ said Marilyn and stroked the Sandman's head, for a very long time.

„By the way,“ said the Sandman looking at Marilyn. „My story today is about stroking someone's head for a long time.“

„Oh, really?“ Marilyn got very excited.

„That's right,“ said the Sandman. „I'm going to tell you a story about an elf and his adventures.“

„Alright then.“ Marilyn was ready to listen and put her head on the pillow

„Once upon a time there was an elf named Albert who lived in a thick forest,“ the Sandman started in a soft voice.



„He had no other work than baking delicious bread. Albert was a kind-hearted elf and sold his bread for a very cheap price – you only had to stroke his head for three times for each loaf of bread.“

„I know this elf!“ cried Marilyn. „There is a song about him!“

„Hush,“ the Sandman waved his hands. „You might know him from a song but I knew him personally and I know everything that happened outside the song as well.“

„Oh, I see,“ Marilyn got curious. „Tell me then!“

And the Sandman continued with his story:

„Albert had a wife called Clara and two little daughters. His wife was upset with Albert for being so kind.

„Why do you keep baking the bread if you don't get anything for it? Get yourself a decent job that would bring food on the table for the family!“

Albert looked sullen after his wife's scolding and started baking even more bread. He baked so many loaves of bread that he finally got bald after being stroked so many times. His hair just wore off from the top of his head.

„I've had enough!“ said Clara one morning

and packed her suitcase.

„The children and I are going to stay at my mother’s. Meanwhile, you stay here and think about your life. Give me a call once you’ve become wiser.“



Albert sat on the edge of his bed and sulked for three days in a row. Then he picked up his hat and tried to put it on his head. The hat kept slipping off his bald head. Albert looked in the mirror and had to admit to himself:

„I am an old, fat and bald elf! Who on earth

would want to hire someone like me?“

Lost in his sad thoughts and holding his hat in his hand, the Sandman finally found himself at the doorstep of Santa’s office.

„What’s wrong, Albert?“ Santa asked while stretching out comfortably in his leather armchair. „Can’t you make a living by baking bread anymore?“

„You see, Santa,“ replied Albert, „I can make a living alright but my hair is gone and my wife left me.“

„Oh, I see,“ mumbled Santa. „So this is how things are.“

„That’s it,“ Albert sighed. „Maybe you have a job that I could do?“

Santa gave it some thought and came up with an offer.

„I’m short of Snoopers and Candy Givers.“ He giggled about the funny job titles and explained in more detail.

„You have to peek into children’s windows to see whether they are naughty or nice. If some kid is being very mischievous, you won’t put candy in his slipper. Got it?“

„Got it!“ said Albert and accepted the job.

The rumours about a bald elf called Albert the

Spy started spreading long before Christmas.

But Albert was doing his job properly and tried to distribute the candy that was left over from naughty kids to nice children, doing it in honest way and in public.

He distributed the candy in the street and in parks, on the stairs of school buildings and anywhere he had the chance to.

As people can sometimes be very cruel, soon rumours started spreading about Albert the Spy also being a part-time Candy Man.

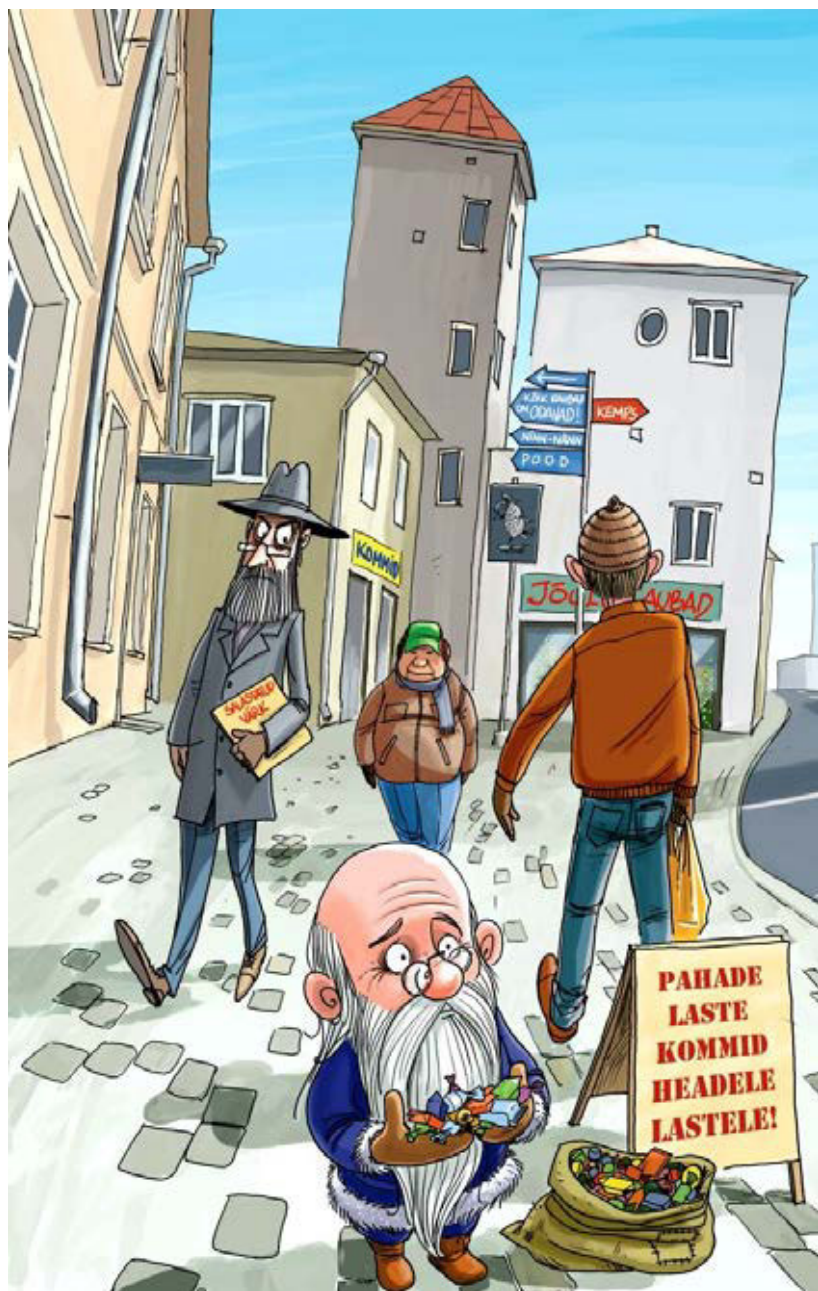
Candy Man is the kind of an evil guy who tries to tempt children with candy so that they would leave home. Oftentimes children get lost and end up in a lot of trouble.

„I’m no Candy Man!“ Albert tried to justify himself. “I’m just a bald elf who offers nice children the candy that is left over from naughty kids!“

Some people believed Albert, some didn’t. The meanest ones still pointed a finger at him:

„See, there is Albert the Spy! He’s the Candy Man!“

Finally, the kind-hearted Albert had had enough. He quit his job as a Christmas elf, took his belongings and went back to the forest.



For the money that he had earned working for the Santa, he bought a wig and started baking scrumptious bread once again.

The hardships that Albert had experienced had made him wiser, though. Now he only asked to be stroked once for every loaf of bread. Instead of the second and the third time, he asked 50 cents for each.

This way, Albert the Elf's bakery got back on its feet. In a couple of months' time he already started to build a new house. In a year, Albert's wife Clara returned with their two lovely daughters.

One fine day Albert felt happy again. At his wife's request, he changed the last remaining stroking for a 50-cent coin and soon bought a new car for the family.

Rumours about Albert the Spy and the Candy Man were around for a long time. Albert himself didn't pay much attention to them and kept on baking his mouth-watering bread.“

The Sandman finished his tale with a long sigh and kept sitting in silence for a long time. Finally he turned to Marilyn and was surprised to see that she wasn't asleep yet.



„Why are you still awake?“ asked the Sandman.

„I can't sleep. I felt so sorry for the poor kind elf that I almost started to cry.“ She stared at the ceiling for a while and then asked a question:

„Did Albert remain bald?“

The Sandman thought about it for a while and replied:

„No, he didn't. He got a hundred thousand hairs transplanted on his head and they were attached to it even more strongly than his real hair. Hair transplantation is really expensive but very wealthy people can afford it. That also applies to very wealthy elves.“

Marilyn heaved a sigh of relief and stared at the ceiling, feeling content. The Sandman took advantage of the moment and sprinkled some dream sand in her eyes. Soon enough Marilyn was fast asleep and the Sandman tucked her in gently.