

on to Cornelius's shoulders, pinning him to the bed.

All in three blinks of Brother Cornelius's eyes.

Brother Renard's eyes, on the other hand, were squeezed closed in a kind of trance, the chair rocking furiously under him as he fought to contain his imaginings, his fists clenching and unclenching.

On the bunk, Cornelius was flailing madly to fight off the animation. The jester wrapped his loose legs around Brother Cornelius's waist and sprang from the bunk again, taking the terrified monk up to the ceiling beam. Cornelius's scream became a whimper when the jester dropped back down to the bed, leaving the herbalist clinging to the oak crossbeam, high above the floor.



## SEVEN

‘Let me try to ... to animate a way down for you, Brother Cornelius,’ called Solon, hunting frantically around the tiny room for something he could use to sketch.

He could find nothing. Then he remembered. The Abbot had stripped the room bare to avoid Brother Renard using any tools to animate.

Brother Renard was still rocking and shuddering. A thick, green beanstalk embroidered on the border of the quilt shot upwards, winding and knotting itself over and under the bunk, quickly smothering the headless jester in vines. The jester shook his jingling hat and exploded in a cloud of red and yellow stripes. The moment he had disappeared, the beanstalk grew directly up to the crossbeam and curled around it, sprouting thick, green leaves and white flowers above where Brother Cornelius was dangling.

‘I believe in his own way,’ shouted Solon to the terrified monk, ‘that Brother Renard may be offering his assistance. He must be in a battle inside his own imagination.’

‘I do appreciate Brother Renard's motives, but I've no intention of climbing down from this height on one of his shaky