

Jack the Giant-Killer

A long, time ago, when good King Arthur reigned in Cornwall, there lived near Land's End a farmer who had one only son called Jack. Now Jack was strong and brave boy and so quick witted that nobody nor nothing could worst him.

In those days on the Mount of Cornwall lived a huge giant named Cormoran. He was eighteen feet in height, and about three yards round the waist and was the terror of all Cornwall. Whenever he wanted food he would wade over to the main-land, where he would fill his enormous belly with whatever came in his way. People ran out of their houses, screaming, while he seized their cattle. This terrible giant thought nothing of carrying half-a-dozen oxen on his back at a time; and as for their sheep and hogs, he would tie them round his waist like a bunch of tallow-dips. He had done this for so many years, that all of Cornwall was in despair.

Now one day Jack happened to be at the town-hall, eating a pasty, while the magistrates were sitting in the council about the Giant.

"What reward will be given to the man who kills Cormoran?" brave Jack asked.

"The giant's treasure will be the reward," they said.

"Then I accept the challenge," relied Jack.

So he got a good Cornish shovel, his pickaxe and a horn and went over to the Mount. On a dark winter's night he fell to work, and before morning had dug a pit four fathoms deep, and nearly as broad, covering it over with long sticks, straw and soil.

At the break of day Jack stood on the opposite side of the pit and he put the horn to his mouth and blew with all his might. The noise roused the giant, who came rushing from his cave, bellowing: "Who dares disturb my rest? You shall pay dearly for this. I will take you whole and broil you for breakfast." He had no sooner uttered this, than he tumbled into the pit, and made the very foundations of the Mount shake.

"What do you think of broiling me for your breakfast now, eh?" Taunted Jack, whereupon he gave him a most weighty knock with his pickaxe on the very crown of his head, and killed him on the spot. At once, he filled up the pit with earth, and went to search the cave, which he found contained much treasure.

From that day on Jack was known as "Jack the Giant Killer". Now should you ever visit the Mount, look below the castle walls where you'll find large heart shaped stone. If you climb on to the stone and listen very carefully, from below your feet you will hear the gentle beating of Cormoran's heart!

