

The Cobbler and the Dragon

In the days when trees could cry and cats could fly there lived in Poland, underneath Wawell Hill, beside the Vistula River, a terrible dragon called Smok.

First, Smok stole their beloved cats and dogs. Next, he ate their treasured sheep and cows. In the end, Smok paid his attention to grabbing young maidens! Soon it was the turn of the King's daughter to be fed to the dragon. In desperation, he offered his daughter's hand in marriage to anyone who could rid the city of this terrible beast.

Princes came and Princes went. Some ran as soon as they clapped their eyes on the grotesque dragon. Others ventured underground and were never seen again. In the end, a cobbler called Krak travelled to the city. "You'll never defeat Smok," declared the King dubiously, noticing that the cobbler didn't even possess a sword.

"Do not worry," replied Krak with confidence, "I will give him a meal that he will not forget in a hurry!"

Later that day, Krak took a leathery cow's skin, stuffed it full of the hottest herbs and spices together with a bag of sulphur. Then, he sewed the skin together to make it look like a dead cow. Krak crept towards the lair of the vicious dragon. A roar disturbed the silence. Krak froze with fear. Quietly, Krak lowered the cow into the unknown...

Starving, the dragon ate it up in one ginormous gulp. First, he felt a burning pain. Next his stomach roared like fire. Finally, the dragon flew to the river Vistula where he drank and he drank and he drank until the river was almost dry. The more he drank, the more his stomach swelled. Suddenly, his stomach burst with a huge bang!

So, it was the cobbler who married the princess and became King Krak. In fact, he was so popular that they named the city after him – Krakow.