



Once upon a time there was an old man who had worked hard all his life, and was now taking his last breaths. His wife, his elder son, and his younger son were all stood about his bed, and he spoke to each of them in turn.

To his wife he said, "Do not forget me."

To his elder son, Matau, he said, "Work hard and be brave."

To his younger son, Jobik, he said, "Be patient and hope."

After this he passed away. This advice was all he had to leave his family, for they were very poor.

Eight days after the funeral Jobik was lying in the box bed. He had been crying all day over his father, but it was now nearly midnight, and he and everyone else were fast asleep. Suddenly he heard a noise, and then a voice calling "Jobik, Jobik". He stuck his head out of the box bed into the room. It was dimly lit and he thought he saw his father sitting beside the table. He wanted to run and embrace him, but then he grew frightened and hid his head beneath the bedclothes.

The next morning his mother and brother did not believe him when he told them what he had seen.

"Why, you should have asked him what was the matter," they laughed. "He must want to tell you something."

The next night the spirit appeared again.

"How can I help you, Father?" said Jobik.

"Ah, my son," said the old man. "I promised when I was alive to make a pilgrimage to Quelven, but I did not keep my word. Please fulfil my pledge and make the pilgrimage yourselves." So saying, he disappeared.

Jobik told his mother and brother what had happened, and this time they did believe him.

"Very well," said his mother. "When the good weather comes your brother and I will go to Quelven. You can stay here and look after the house while we are away."

Poor Jobik was lame and walked very slowly, so he was always left behind. This time, however, he was determined to go to Quelven. When

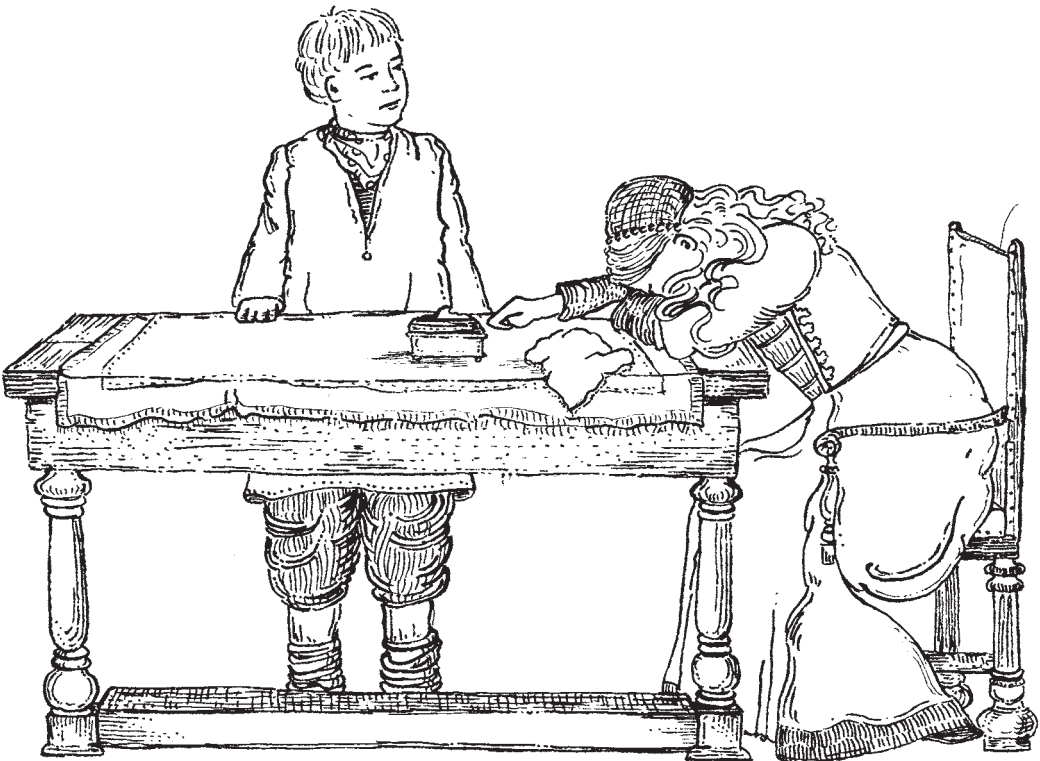
the day came he arose very early and said that he was going hunting in the forest. He took his little sling and set off along the forest paths, in the direction of Quelven. Towards evening he lost his way and found himself in a tangled thicket. The stars were appearing and he could hear the cries of wild animals. Growing afraid, he climbed a tree, and hid amongst the branches.

After a while, he saw a light coming towards him. It was a lantern that hung from a giant's hat. He was carrying an ox over his shoulders, and he sat down at the foot of Jobik's tree and began to roast the animal over a fire.

Jobik saw all this with dismay. He did not want the giant beside him all night and he decided to chase him away. He slipped a pebble into his sling, and fired it at the giant's face. The pebble hit his nose but bounced off like a rubber ball on a wooden table. The giant scratched himself and muttered:

“The flies are biting hard tonight. No doubt there is a storm brewing.”

Jobik climbed lower and fired the next pebble above the giant's ear. The giant raised his head and saw Jobik in the tree.



“Oh, so it’s you throwing hazel nuts at me,” he said. “Stop those tricks and come and join me. We can eat and then attend to business.”

He took Jobik in his huge hand and set him on the ground. He would have shared the ox with him, but the boy could not eat it, so the giant ate it all. When he had finished he dropped Jobik into his knapsack and set off at a great speed. Mountains, deserts and valleys passed by in the blink of an eye, and Jobik could hear the giant’s breath coming and going like a pair of bellows. At length they stopped beside a beautiful castle, surrounded by a high wall.

“Do you see that castle, little one?” asked the giant. “I want you to help me get over the walls. Take these three eggs and climb into the courtyard. There you will find a great serpent with a blue mark on its forehead. Throw these eggs at it and take care not to miss.”

Jobik obeyed and when he entered the courtyard he hurled the eggs at the serpent. It fell down dead and he called out “I have done it.”

“Very good,” said the giant. “Now fetch a pickaxe from the castle and make a hole in the wall for me to come in by.”

Jobik began hacking at the wall and when the hole was large enough the giant thrust in his head. Soon Jobik became very weary.

“I am tired,” said Jobik, “can’t you squeeze through?”

The giant pushed in his shoulders but could go no further. He made a supreme effort and broke free, but the wall came tumbling down on top of him.

Seeing that he was dead, Jobik breathed a sigh of relief for he was glad to be rid of his troublesome companion. He entered the castle and passed through many beautiful rooms. Everything was silent, and there was no one to be seen except in the last room. Here he found a beautiful maiden fast asleep with her head resting on a table. Beside her lay a handkerchief and a snuff box. Jobik put these in his pocket, then fearing he would waken the maiden, he left the castle and re-entered the forest. He wandered for nearly a month, until at last he met his mother and brother, returning from their pilgrimage. They were surprised and angry when they saw him, and insisted that he come back to the village with them.

One evening, they came to the edge of the forest through which they had been walking for several days. Beside the road stood a beautiful house, which had just been built.

“It is wonderful how quickly things happen here,” said Metau. “On our way that house wasn’t even there – and now it is furnished and inhabited.”

What is more, over the doorway was a sign which read:

“Here food and drink are free
To all who tell a wonderful tale of adventure.

“Let us go in,” said Metau. “I’ll tell enough tales to earn us a night’s board and lodging.”

When they entered, the owner of the house asked them if they knew any interesting stories.

“Oh yes,” said Matau.

“Then eat your fill,” said the owner.

When they had finished, Jobik said that he also knew a story.

“You, poor simpleton,” said his mother and brother, laughing.

“And why not?” cried their host. “Something could have happened to him that you know nothing of. Tell us your story, child.”

So Jobik told them about how he had left the house and walked through the forest, and about his meeting with the giant.

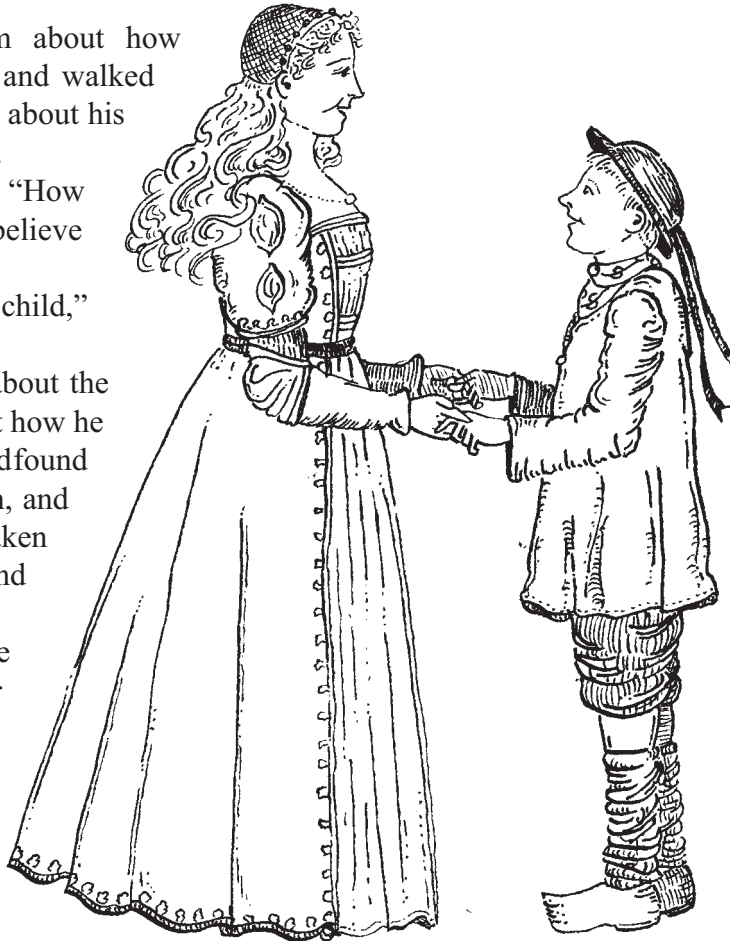
“Really,” said Matau. “How can we be expected to believe such nonsense?”

“Easily; go on my child,” said their host.

Jobik told them all about the giant’s death and about how he had entered the castle and found the slumbering maiden, and about how he had taken the handkerchief and snuffbox.

“Do you still have them?” asked their host.

“Yes, of course,” said Jobik and pulled them out of his pocket.



Their host went to a door, opened it, and led out a beautiful girl.

“This is your deliverer, my child,” he said to her.

The maiden ran to Jobik and began to thank him. “I will never be able to repay you,” she said. “For many years I have been imprisoned in that castle, guarded by the serpent, and every day the giant tried to break his way in and slay me. Their deaths set me free, and my only regret was that I did not know who was my saviour. I decided to build this house, and set up that sign, in the hope that he would pass this way. Now here you are, and it is my turn to do all I can to thank you.”

The maiden kept her word. She gave Jobik lands and farms, and to the amazement of his mother and brother he became the richest man for twenty leagues around. He behaved generously to his family, and he gave Matau one of his farms, and put his mother in charge of his affairs. As for his father, he continued to honour his memory for all the days of his life.

Told by a nun, at Kermaria