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Larks are plate

Home Treasury























*The Home Treasury.*

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The Chronicle of the Valiant  
Feats, Wonderful Victories &  
Bold Adventures of  
*Jack the Giant-Killer,*  
who flourished in the Reign of  
the Good King *Arthur*:

*Newly edited from original Manuscripts,  
with fresh Illustrations.*



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# Jack the Giant-Killer.

## Part I.



WHEN King Arthur reigned in Britain, there lived near the Land's-end in Cornwall, a farmer, who had an only son, named Jack. This Jack was cousin to his namesake "Jack" whose history in slaying the Giant of the Beanstalk is recounted in another volume. The hero of the present tale was a brisk fellow and of ready wit: whatever he could not perform by strength he completed by policy: nobody and nothing could baffle him. He listened eagerly to all the talk of the



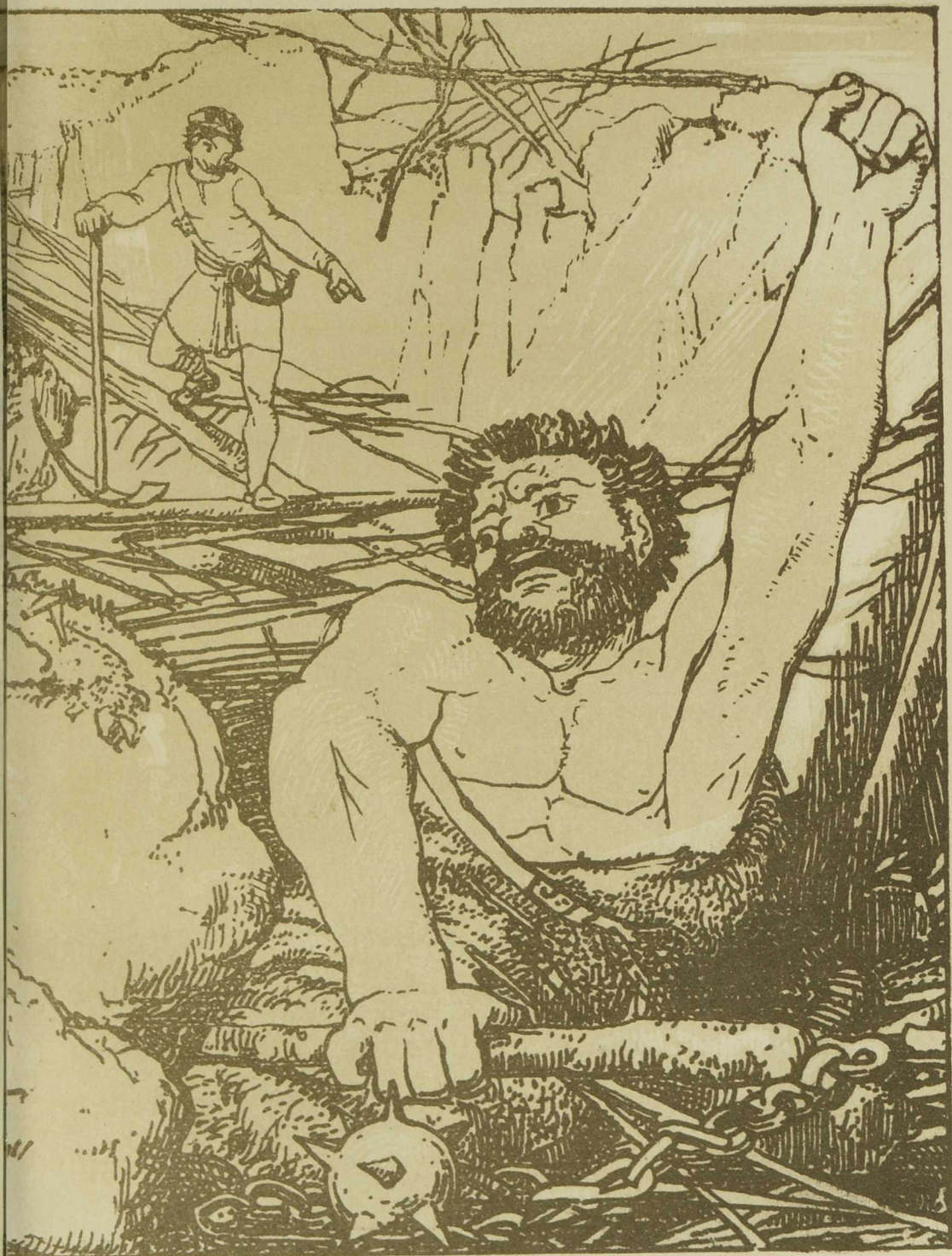
great deeds of the brave knights of King Arthur's round table, and wished to imitate them.

In those days St. Michael's Mount of Cornwall, which rises high out of the sea half a mile from the main land, was kept by a huge giant. He was eighteen feet high, and three yards round; and his fierce and grim looks were the terror of all the people.

He dwelt in a gloomy cave on the mount, and used to wade over to the main land in search of his prey. When he did so, the people left their houses; and after he had glutted his appetite upon their cattle, he would throw half a dozen oxen upon his back, and tie sheep and hogs round his waist like a bunch of candles, and so return back to the Mount. The giant had done this for many years, and the coast of Cornwall was greatly impoverished by his thefts.

Jack resolved to destroy him, and therefore











took a horn, a shovel, a pick-axe, and a dark lantern. Early in a long winter's evening, he swam over to the mount. There he fell to work at once; and before morning, had dug a pit twenty-two feet deep, and as many broad. He covered it at the top with long sticks and straw, and strewed some mould over them to make them look just like solid ground. He then put his horn to his mouth, and blew a loud tantivy, tantivy. The giant awoke with the noise, and came towards Jack, roaring, in a voice like thunder,—“ You saucy villain, you shall pay dearly for breaking my rest. I will broil you for my breakfast.”

He had hardly spoken these words, when he came advancing, and then tumbled headlong into the pit. St. Michael's Mount shook with his fall, and the sea about it was disturbed.

“ O ho! Mr. Giant,” quoth Jack, “ Where



are you now? Will nothing serve you for breakfast but broiling poor Jack?"

The giant now tried to rise; but Jack struck him a blow on the crown of the head which killed him at once, and then he buried him.

When the justices of Cornwall heard of this valiant action, they sent for Jack, and declared that he should always be called

**“Jack the Giant-Killer.”**

And they also gave him a sword and belt, upon which was written in letters of gold,

Here's the valiant Cornish man  
Who slew the giant Cormoran.

The news of Jack's exploit soon spread; and another giant, called old Blunderbore, vowed to have his revenge on Jack, if it should ever be his fortune to get him into his power. This



giant kept an enchanted castle in the midst of a lonesome wood.

About four months after the death of Cormoran, as Jack was taking a journey to Wales, he passed through this very wood; and being weary, he sat down by the side of a pleasant fountain, and he fell into a deep sleep.

The giant came to the fountain for water, just at this time, and found Jack there; and as the lines on Jack's belt shewed who he was, the giant lifted him up, and laid him gently upon his shoulder to carry him to his castle. But as he passed through the thicket, the rustling of the leaves awoke Jack; and he was much startled when he found himself in the clutches of Blunderbore. Yet this was nothing to his fright soon after; for when they reached the castle, he beheld the floor covered all over with the skulls and bones of the dead. The



giant told Jack, with a horrid grin, that men's hearts, seasoned with pepper and vinegar, were his daintiest food. When he had said this, he locked Jack in an upper room, while he went to fetch another giant who lived in the same wood, to feast with him upon little Jack.

While he was away Jack heard dreadful shrieks and groans from many parts of the castle; especially a mournful voice which cried

Do what you can to get away,  
Or you'll become the giant's prey.  
He's gone to fetch a monster, who  
Before he kills will torture you.

This warning shocked poor Jack. He rushed to the window, and beheld the two giants coming arm in arm. The window of the room was right over the gates of the castle. "Now," thought Jack, "either my death or freedom is at hand." There were two strong cords in the



room. Jack made a large noose, with a slip-knot at the ends of both these; and as the giants were unlocking the iron gates, he cast the ropes over each of their heads. He then threw the other ends of the ropes across a beam of the ceiling, and pulled with all his might, till he had throttled the giants. When he beheld them quite black in the face, he slid down the ropes, drew his sword, and killed both the giants, and thus saved himself from their cruelty.

Taking a great bunch of keys from the belt of Blunderbore, Jack entered the castle again. After a strict search he found thirty ladies tied up by the hair of their heads, who told him that their husbands had been slain by the giant, who had condemned them to be starved to death, because they would not eat their murdered husbands.

“Sweet ladies,” says Jack, “I have put an



end to the monster and his brother ; and I give you this castle, and all the riches that it contains, to make some amends for the dreadful pains you have felt." He then presented them with the keys, and proceeded on his journey to Wales.

In this journey Jack lost his way ; and when night came on, he wandered in a valley between two lofty mountains for some hours without seeing any dwelling-place, but at last came to a large and handsome house. He went up to it boldly, and knocked loudly at the gate ; when there came forth a huge giant with two heads, but only one eye in the centre of each head. He spoke to Jack very civilly, for he was a Welsh giant ; and all the mischief he did was done under a false show of friendship. Jack told him that he was a benighted traveller ; on which the monster bid him welcome, and led him into a room, where there was a good bed. Jack un-



dressed himself quickly ; but though he was weary, he could not go to sleep, for he heard the giant walking backward and forward in the next room, and saying to himself,

“ Though here you lodge with me this night,  
You shall not see the morning-light ;  
My club shall dash your brains out quite.”

“ Say you so ?” thought Jack. “ Are these your Welsh tricks upon travellers ? I hope to prove as cunning as you are.”—Then getting out of bed, he groped about the room, and at last found a large thick billet of wood. He laid it in his own place in the bed, and then hid himself in a dark corner of the room.

In the dead of the night, came the giant with his club, and struck many heavy blows on the bed, in the very place where Jack had laid the billet ; and then he went back to his own room, thinking he had broken all Jack’s bones.



In the morning early Jack walked into the giant's room to thank him for his lodging. The giant started when he saw him, and began to stammer out—"Oh! ah! oh! how did you sleep last night? I hope nothing disturbed you in the night?"

"Nothing worth speaking of," said Jack, carelessly; "a rat, perhaps, gave me three or four slaps with his tail."

The giant wondered at this, but did not answer a word. He brought two great bowls of hasty pudding for their breakfast. Jack wished to make the giant believe he could eat as much as himself; so he contrived to button a leathern bag inside his coat, and slipped the hasty pudding into this bag, while he seemed to put it into his mouth. When breakfast was over, he said to the giant—"Now I will show you a fine trick:" and taking a knife, ripped up the



leathern bag, which the giant thought was Jack's body, and all the hasty pudding tumbled out upon the floor.

“Ods splutter hur nails!” cried the Welsh giant, who was ashamed to be outdone by such a little fellow as Jack, “hur can do that hurself;” so he snatched up the knife, plunged it into himself, and in a moment dropped down dead.

Jack having thus outwitted the Welsh monster, went on his journey; and a few days after he met with King Arthur's only son, who was travelling in Wales, to deliver a beautiful lady from a wicked magician that held her in his enchantments. When Jack found that the young prince had no servants, he begged leave to attend him; and the prince at once granted his request.

One night they lost their way, and the prince



was uneasy at thinking where they should lodge. "Sir," said Jack, "be of good heart. Two miles further there lives a giant, whom I know well; he has three heads, and will fight five hundred men, and make them fly before him."

"Alas!" replied the king's son, "we had better never have been born than meet with such a monster." "My lord," said Jack, "leave me to manage him; and tarry here till I return." Jack then rode on at full speed; and when he came to the gates of the castle, he knocked with such force that all the hills rang again. The giant, with a loud voice, roared out, "Who is there?" and Jack made answer, and said, "No one but your poor cousin Jack."

"What news, cousin Jack?" "Dear uncle," said Jack, "heavy news."—"Pooh! what heavy news can come to me? I am a giant with three heads; and can fight five hundred men, and



make them fly like chaff before the wind.”  
“Alas!” said Jack, “here is the king’s son coming with two thousand men to kill you, and to destroy the castle and all that you have.”

“Oh! cousin Jack,” said the giant, in a piteous tone, “this *is* heavy news indeed; but I have a large vault under ground, where I will hide myself, and you shall lock, bolt, and bar me in, and keep the keys till the king’s son is gone.”

Jack having made the giant fast in the vault, went back and fetched the prince, and they both made themselves merry with the wine and other dainties that were in the house.

Early in the morning, Jack furnished the king’s son with supplies of gold and silver, and set him three miles forward on his journey, out of the scent of the giant.

He then went back to let his uncle out of



the vault, who asked Jack what he should give him as a reward for saving his castle. "Why, good uncle," said Jack, "I desire nothing but the old coat and cap, with the old rusty sword and slippers that are hanging at your bed's head." "Aye," said the giant, "thou shalt have them as a reward; and pray keep them for my sake, for they are things of great use. The coat will make you invisible; the cap will give you knowledge; the sword will cut through any thing; and the shoes are of vast swiftness: these may be useful to you in all times of danger; so take them with all my heart." Jack gave many thanks to the giant, and then set off to the prince.

They soon arrived at the dwelling of the beautiful lady, who was under the power of a wicked magician. She received the prince with fair words, and made a noble feast for



him ; when it was ended, she arose, and wiping her mouth with a fine handkerchief, said, “ My lord, you must shew me this handkerchief to-morrow, or lose your head.” She then went out of the room, taking the handkerchief with her.

The prince went to bed right sorrowful ; but Jack put on his cap of knowledge, which told him that the lady was forced, by the power of the enchantment, to meet the wicked magician every night. Jack now put on his coat of darkness, and his shoes of swiftness, and was present at the meeting, and saw the lady give the handkerchief to the magician. Whereupon Jack with his sword of sharpness, at one blow, cut off his head, and regained the handkerchief for the prince ; the enchantment was ended in a moment, and the lady restored to her virtue and goodness.



She returned with the prince to the court of King Arthur, where they were received with welcome; and the valiant hero Jack was made one of the knights of the Round Table.



Here ends the first Part, which leads to the second, where you may have a further account of the valiant exploits and bold adventures of this noble hero Jack the Giant-Killer.



## Part II.



ACK having been so lucky in all his adventures, resolved not to be idle for the future, but to do what services he could for the honour of the king and the nation. He therefore humbly besought



King Arthur to furnish him with a horse and money, that he might travel in search of new and strange exploits. "For," said he to the king, "there are many giants yet among the mountains of Wales: therefore, if it please you, sire, to favour my designs, I will soon rid your kingdom of these giants and monsters." When the king heard this offer, and thought of the cruel deeds of these blood-thirsty giants, and savage monsters, he gave Jack every thing proper for such a journey. Thereupon, Jack took leave of the king, the prince, and all the knights of the Round Table, and set off. He went along over hills and mountains, until he came to a large forest, through which his road lay. On a sudden he heard piercing shrieks. He forced his way through the trees, and saw a huge giant, thirty-five feet high, dragging along by the hair of their heads a knight



and his beautiful lady, one in each hand. Jack alighted from his horse, and tying him to an oak, put on his invisible coat, under which he carried his sword of sharpness.

When he came up to the giant, he made many strokes at him, but could not reach his body, on account of his great height. Still he wounded his ancles in many places: at last, putting both hands to his sword, and aiming with all his might, he cut off both the giant's legs, below the garter; so that his body tumbled to the ground.

Jack then set one foot upon his neck, and cried out, "Thou cruel wretch, behold, I give thee the just reward of thy crimes." And so plunging his sword into the giant's body, the monster gave a loud groan, and yielded up his life; while the noble knight and his lady were joyful at their deliverance. They heartily











thanked Jack for what he had done, and invited him to their house, to refresh himself. "No," said Jack, "I cannot be at ease till I find out this monster's dwelling."

The knight hearing this grew sad, and replied, "Noble stranger, it is too much to run a second hazard. This monster lived in a den under yonder mountain, with a brother of his, more fierce and cruel than himself: therefore, if you should go thither and perish in the attempt, it would be heart-breaking to me and my lady; so let me persuade you to go with us, and desist from any further pursuit."

"Nay," said Jack, "even if there were twenty, I would shed the last drop of my blood before one of them should escape me. When I have done this task, I will visit you."

Jack had not rode a mile and a half, before he came in sight of the mouth of the cavern;



and nigh the entrance of it he beheld the other giant sitting on a huge rock, with a knotted iron club at his side, waiting for his brother. His eyes flashed like flames of fire, his face was grim, and his cheeks seemed like two flitches of bacon; the bristles of his beard were as thick rods of iron wire; and his long locks of hair hung down upon his broad shoulders like curling snakes. So Jack alighted from his horse, and turned him into a thicket; then he put on his invisible coat and drew a little nearer to behold this figure; and said softly, "O monster! are you there? it will not be long before I shall take you fast by the beard." The giant, all this while, could not see him by reason of his invisible coat: then Jack came quite close to him, and struck a blow at his head with his sword of sharpness; but missing his aim, only cut off his nose, whilst the giant



roared like loud claps of thunder. And though he rolled his glaring eyes round on every side, he could not see who had given him the blow; yet he took up his iron club, and began to lay about him like one that was mad.

“Nay,” said Jack, “if this is the case, I will kill you at once.” So he slipped nimbly behind him, and jumping upon the rocky seat as the giant rose from it, he thrust his sword up to the hilt in his body. After a hideous howling, the giant dropped down dead.

When Jack had thus killed these two monsters, he searched their cave for treasure. He passed through many dark windings, which led him to a room paved with freestone; at the end of it was a boiling cauldron, and on the right hand stood a large table, where the giants used to dine upon their human victims. He then came to a window secured with iron bars,



through which he saw a number of wretched captives, who cried out when they saw Jack, "Alas ! alas ! young man, are you come to be one among us in this horrid den ?" "I hope," said Jack, "you will not tarry here long ; but pray tell me what is the meaning of your captivity." "Alas !" said one, "We have been taken by the giants that hold this cave, and are kept till they have a feast, then the fattest of us is killed, and cooked. It is not long since they took three for this purpose."

"Say you so," said Jack, "I have given them such a dinner, that it will be long enough before they want any more." The captives were amazed at his words. "You may believe me," said Jack, "for I have slain both, and sent their heads in a waggon to King Arthur, as trophies of my victory." To shew them that what he said was true, he unlocked the gate,



and set them all free. Then he led them to the great room, where they feasted plentifully. Supper being over, they searched the giant's coffers, and Jack shared the store among the captives. Jack started at sunrise to the house of the knight, whom he had left not long before.

He reached the knight's castle, and was received with the greatest joy. In honour of Jack's exploits, a grand feast was given, which lasted many days. The knight presented Jack, as a mark of respect, with a ring, on which was engraved the giant dragging the knight and the lady by the hair.

Among the guests present at the feast were five aged gentlemen, who were fathers to some of those captives who had been freed by Jack from the dungeon. These old men pressed round him with tears of joy, and returned him thanks. One day the bowl went round



merrily, and every one drank to the health and long life of the gallant hero. The hall resounded with peals of laughter and joyful cries.

But, lo! in the midst, a herald, pale and breathless, with haste and terror, rushed in, and told the company that Thundel, a giant with two heads, having heard of the death of his two kinsmen, was come to take revenge on Jack, and that he was now near the house, the country people all flying before him.

At this dismal news, the very boldest of the guests trembled; but Jack drew his sword, and said, "Let him come, I have a rod in pickle for him also. Pray, ladies and gentlemen, walk into the garden, and you shall joyfully behold the giant's defeat and death."

The knight's castle was surrounded by a moat, thirty feet deep, and twenty wide, over which lay a draw-bridge. Jack set men to



work, to cut the bridge on both sides, near the middle; and then dressing himself in his invisible coat, went against the giant with his sword of sharpness. As he came close to him, though the giant could not see him, yet he cried out,

“Fie! foh! fum!

I smell the blood of an Englishman;

Be he alive, or be he dead,

I’ll grind his bones to make my bread.”

“Say you so, my friend,” said Jack, “you are a clever miller indeed.” “Art thou,” cried the giant, “the villain who killed my kinsmen? Then I will tear thee with my teeth, and grind thy bones to powder.” “You must catch me first,” said Jack; and throwing off his invisible coat, he put on his shoes of swiftness, and began to run; the giant following him like a walking castle, making the earth shake.



Jack led him a dance round and round the walls of the house, that the company might see the monster ; and to finish the work Jack ran over the drawbridge, the giant pursuing him with his club. But when the giant came to the middle, where the bridge had been cut on both sides, the great weight of his body made it break ; and he tumbled into the water, and rolled about like a large whale. Jack stood by the side of the moat, and laughed and jeered at him, saying, " You told me, sirrah ! you would grind my bones to powder ! " The giant foamed and fretted to hear himself so scoffed at, and plunged from side to side of the moat ; but he could not get out to have revenge upon his little foe. At last Jack ordered a cart-rope to be brought to him. He then threw it over his two heads, and by the help of a team of ten horses, dragged him to the edge of the moat, when he cut off the



monster's heads, and sent them after the others to the court of King Arthur. He then went back to the table with the company, and the rest of the day was spent in mirth and good cheer.

After staying with the knight for some time, Jack grew weary of such an idle life, and set out again in quest of new adventures. He went over hills and dales, till he came to the foot of a very high mountain. Here he knocked at the door of a lonesome house, and an old man, with a head as white as snow, let him in.

“Good father,” said Jack, “can you lodge a traveller who has lost his way?” “Yes,” said the hermit, “I can, if you will accept such fare as my poor house affords.” Jack entered, and the old man set before him some bread and fruit.

The hermit said, “My son, I know you are the famous conqueror of giants; now, on the top of this mountain is an enchanted castle, kept



by a giant named Galligantus, who by the help of a vile magician gets many knights into his castle, where he changes them into the shape of beasts. Above all, I lament the hard fate of a duke's daughter, whom they seized as she was walking in her father's garden, and brought hither through the air in a chariot drawn by two fiery dragons, and turned her into the shape of a hart. Many knights have tried to destroy the enchantment, and deliver her, yet none have been able to do it, by reason of two griffins, which guard the gates of the castle, and destroy all who come near it. On the gates of the castle you will find an engraving, which shows the means of breaking the enchantment.

Jack promised that he would break the enchantment; and after a night's sleep, he arose early, and put on his invisible coat. When he had climbed to the top of the mountain, he saw the



two fiery griffins, but he passed between them without the least danger; for they could not see him, because of his invisible coat. On the castle-gate, he found a golden trumpet, under which were written these lines :

“Whoever can this trumpet blow,  
Shall cause the giant’s overthrow.”

Jack seized the trumpet, and blew a shrill blast, which made the gates fly open.

The giant and the conjuror now knew that their wicked course was at an end, and they quaked with fear. Jack, with his sword, soon killed the giant, and the magician was carried away by a whirlwind. The enchantment was broken; and every knight and lady returned to their proper shapes. The castle vanished away, and the head of the giant Galligantus was sent to King Arthur. The knights and



ladies rested that night at the old man's hermitage, and next day they set out for Arthur's court. Jack recited to King Arthur all his adventures, which the king's bards treasured up in their memory.

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Jack's victory over Galligantus was his last feat, which the chronicles have handed down to us. We know nothing more of him except that he married the duke's daughter whom he had rescued, and that he lived in great content.

Here endeth the chronicle of  
Jack the Giant-  
Killer.



















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JACK THE GIANT-  
KILLER

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