



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

The Pumpkin Giant

Mary E. Wilkins Freeman

Long ago, before the time of our grandmother or great-grandmother, there were no pumpkins. People had never tasted pumpkin pie or stewed pumpkin. That was the time of the Pumpkin Giant.

Since the beginning of the world, there have been good and bad giants. The Pumpkin Giant was a very bad giant. He looked dangerous and behaved badly. He gave people chills of fear, which were called Giant Chills. The Pumpkin Giant was very tall for a giant and had a big yellow face. His eyes glowed like fiery coals and it seemed like his whole head was lit by candles. His wide mouth stretched across half of his face and he had pointed white teeth. He lived in a castle, as was customary for giants.

The Pumpkin Giant liked to eat anything that was fat. Everyone was afraid of this giant. Even the king had his throne reinforced because he was afraid of an attack by the giant. He was also very worried about his only daughter, Princess Ariadne Diana, who was the fattest princess in the world. She had never taken a step in her twelve years of existence and could only roll. The princess was never allowed to leave the palace without an armed guard of fifty knights.

Meanwhile, the Pumpkin Giant, who was causing terrible destruction everywhere, became increasingly hungry. Finally, the desperate king announced that he would appoint as a knight whoever brought him the head of the giant. All the men in the kingdom wanted to become knights, so they all tried to think of a way to kill the giant. The problem was that they were all too afraid to get close to the giant.

Now there was a man who lived not far from the castle and only owned a house with a potato field. He had a fat son. This family was so afraid of the giant that the mother had been in bed with Giant Chills for two years. The potato harvest was not going well and they barely had enough to eat. The father's name was Patroclus, the mother's name was Daphne, and the boy was called Aeneas.

One morning, the father and son were digging up new potatoes. Some of these potatoes were very large. Their work was not going well because even Patroclus had Giant Chills that day.

Suddenly, the earth shook violently. Patroclus and Aeneas looked up and saw the Pumpkin Giant approaching with his mouth wide open. "Hide behind me, dear

son!" shouted Patroclus. Aeneas obeyed, but it was no use because you could see his cheeks on either side of his father's vest because he was very fat. Patroclus was not normally a brave man, but he was brave in an emergency.

The Pumpkin Giant came closer and closer, and opened his mouth wider and wider. Then Patroclus grabbed the biggest potato he could find and threw it into the mouth of the Pumpkin Giant. The giant gasped and choked, he gasped for breath and finally fell to the ground and died.



Meanwhile, Patroclus and Aeneas had run home quickly and looked out the window to see the giant lying very still on the ground. At that moment, Daphne was cured of Giant Chills and stepped out of bed for the first time in two years. Patroclus took a meat knife and they went to the potato field. They approached the giant carefully. They were afraid he would suddenly jump up, but he didn't. He was really dead. Then they chopped off his head.

The king was informed of the death of the Pumpkin Giant and was very pleased. His Giant Chills also immediately disappeared and his daughter Ariadne Diana could play outside again without her guards. But the king forgot to make Patroclus a knight.

Patroclus and Daphne were very upset, but Aeneas didn't care. He now had the head of the giant to play with, and that was reward enough for him. The other boys looked longingly at Aeneas's toy, but eventually, the head broke in the fall and lay scattered in pieces over the field.

In the spring, hundreds of pumpkins suddenly grew in the potato field. People thought they saw the Giant Heads appearing above the ground and that the rest of the Giants would follow. "At first, there was only one Pumpkin Giant," they said, "but now there will be a whole army. One giant was already terrible, dear help, how will this go on?"

But after some time, nothing appeared above the potato field except the heads, and people were less worried. The king had given his daughter a new bodyguard, just in case.

Aeneas always wanted to put everything in his mouth. He had tasted almost every flavor in his immediate surroundings, but he had not yet tasted Giant Heads. Day and night, he wondered what the head of the giant would taste like, and one day he sneaked into the potato field and cut off a piece. It tasted sweet and delicious. He ate until he had eaten two-thirds of the head. Then he asked his mother if she had an antidote, although he did not feel sick at all. But perhaps a Giant Head was poisonous.

"Oh, Aeneas, my dear son!" cried Daphne despairingly, "there is no antidote for a Giant Head! What are we going to do now?"

Then they both burst into tears. They were afraid that Aeneas would die without an antidote. Patroclus also cried when he came home. They looked at Aeneas, expecting to see him die at any moment. But the opposite was true. He had never felt better. At sunset, Aeneas exclaimed happily, "I'm not going to die. You can stop crying. I'm going to eat another piece of the Giant Head. I'm still hungry."

His father and mother were still worried because he was their only son. Aeneas returned with the whole head.

"Look, we can all eat here, and it tastes even better than potatoes!" he exclaimed.

Patroclus and Daphne hesitated, but they were very hungry, so they ate a piece of the Giant Head. Daphne thought it would taste even better cooked, so she stewed the Giant Head in a pan. She also thought she could make a cake out of it and had it baked in the oven. The Giant Head cake tasted excellent, so they collected the rest of the Giant Heads and stored them in the cellar. This way, they could bake many more cakes.

One morning, the king came by the cottage and smelled a delicious scent. He sent a servant inside to see where the smell came from.

"The lady of the house bakes cakes of the Giant Heads," said the servant.

"What?" bellowed the king. "Bring me a piece of cake at once."

The servant brought a cake, but first, the knights tasted it to make sure it was not poisonous. Then the king took a bite.

"I have never tasted anything so delicious in my life," exclaimed the king joyfully. "Call the woman out immediately."

So Daphne came out trembling, and Patroclus and Aeneas too. "Tell me everything about these delicious cakes, and I will reward you."

Then Patroclus fell to his knees and told the whole story of the Giant Heads.

The king blushed with shame. "And I forgot to knight you, noble brave man, and I forgot to make a lady of your admirable wife."

Then the king leaned down from his saddle, struck Patroclus with his royal sword and knighted him. The whole family moved to the royal palace. The roses were removed from the royal garden and pumpkins were sown. That's what the Giant Heads were called from then on. Patroclus helped the king and Daphne supervised the baking of pumpkin pies in the royal kitchen. And Aeneas married

Princess Ariadne Diana!

A poem was engraved above the entrance of the Pumpkin Giant's castle in honor of the Pumpkin Giant, which you can still read to this day. And the king paid for it with fifty pumpkin pies!

Stories help us explore cultures, learn moral lessons, connect with nature — or simply have fun. That's why ririro.com offers 3,000+ free stories — fairy tales, fables, bedtime stories, myths and more — for every age, in 13 languages, with free printable PDFs and often audio. Reading should be a right, not a privilege. Share ririro.com and spread the joy of reading.

Instagram: @ririro_reading · Pinterest: pinterest.com/ririrocom