

The Cobbler and the Dragon

In the days when trees could cry and cats could fly there lived in Poland, underneath Wawel 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 special who could rid the city of this terrible beast.

Princes came and Princes went. Some ran as soon as they clapped their eyes on Smok. Others ventured under the city and were never seen again. In the end, a cobbler called Krak arrived in the city. "You'll never defeat the dragon," declared the King dubiously, noticing that the cobbler had no sword.

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

First, Krak took a leathery cow's skin. Next, he stuffed it full of the hottest herbs and spices together with a bag full of sulphur! After that, he sewed the skin together to make it look like a dead cow. Finally, Krak threw the mighty meal straight down into Smok's lair calling triumphantly, "Dinner time, my beauty!"

Starving, the dragon ate it up in one 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, until in the end it 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.