



The giant was really rather stupid. Instead of waiting till he got to Shrewsbury before filling his spade with earth, which he could have done quite easily, he filled it with earth outside his own cave.

It was a hot day. And even giants get tired, especially when they are carrying a lot of crumbly earth they are trying hard not to spill. Somewhere, it must have been when he stubbed his toe on a boulder and almost dropped the earth on his own foot, he missed the way.



"I appear to be lost," he said, and sat down beside the road – still holding the spade of earth – and waited for someone to come and tell him which direction to take.

Presently, a cobbler, who had been to Shrewsbury himself to collect all the boots and shoes that needed mending,



"Hallo there!" boomed a voice high above the cobbler's head. The cobbler thought at first a hill had spoken. "How far is it to Shrewsbury?"

The cobbler was surprised, but he wasn't one to frighten easily and he thought to himself 'Ho, ho, what can a giant like THAT be doing with a spade full of earth like THAT ... he's up to not good, I'll be bound.' Aloud he said, "Why do you want to know?" "I'm going to dam the river and flood the town so that all the people who live there will drown," said the giant.



"Something must be done about this . . . and quickly,' thought the cobbler.

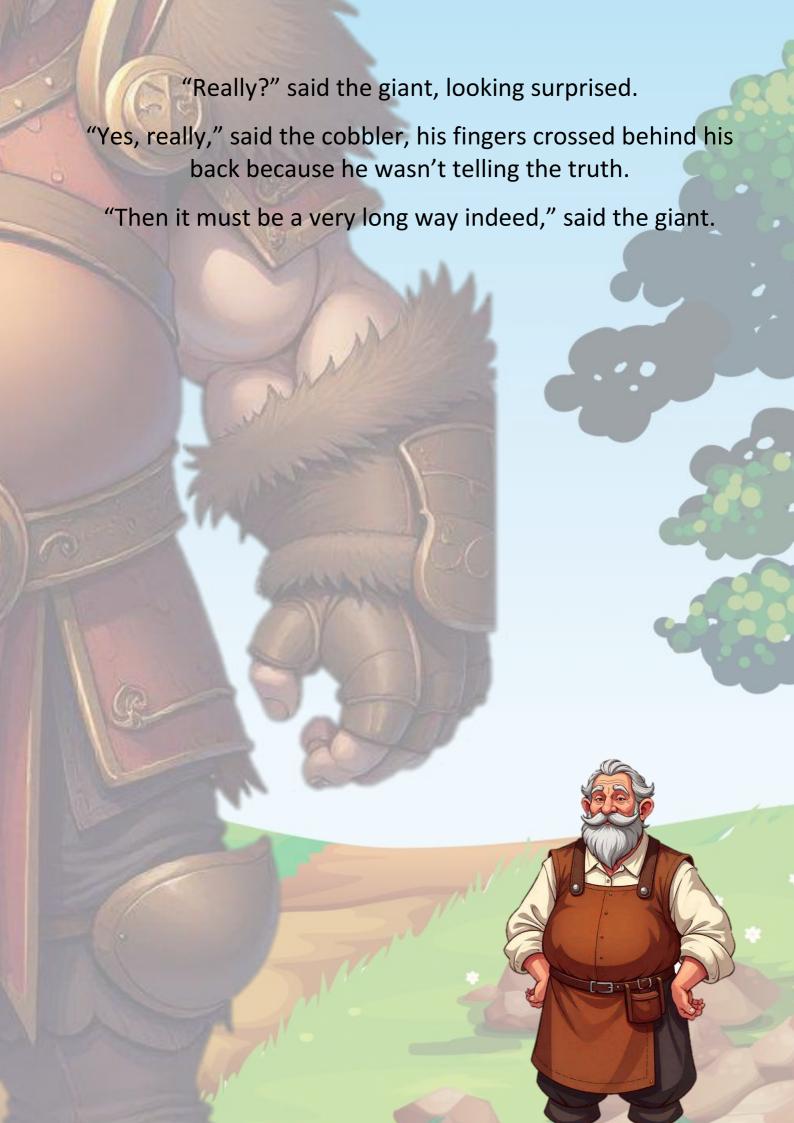
"Do you know how far it is to Shrewsbury?" he asked.

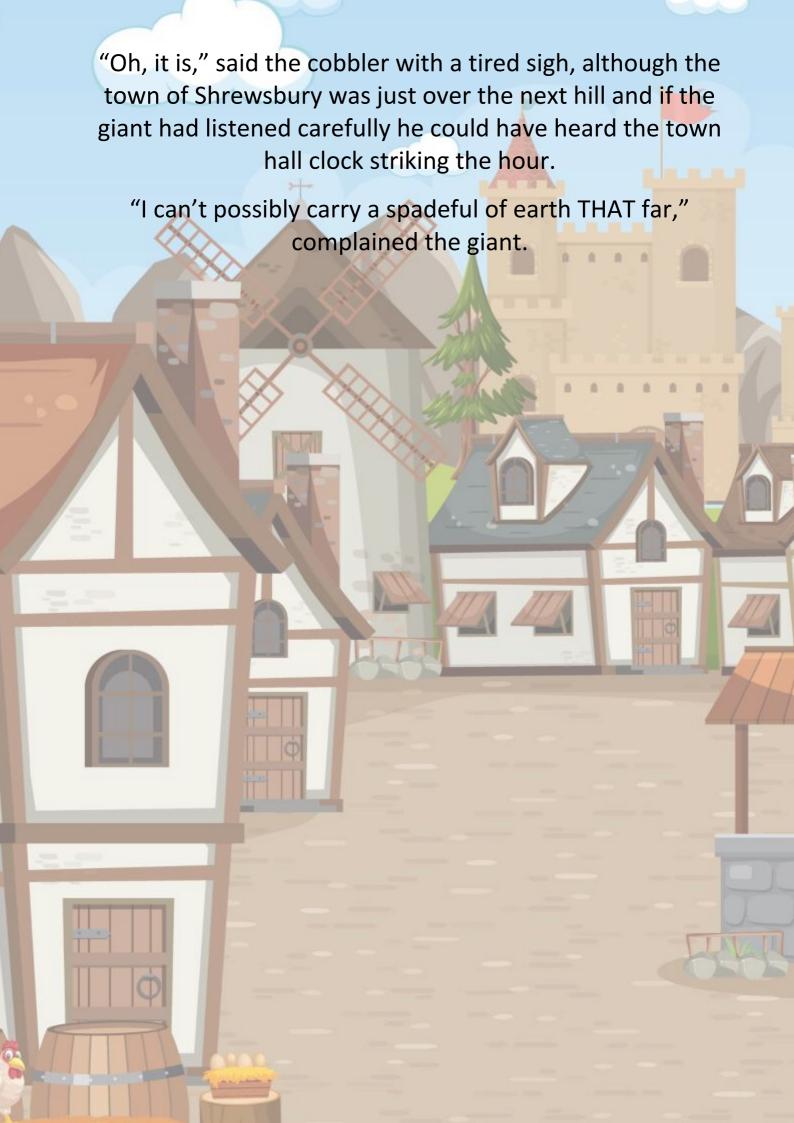
"I do not," said the giant, and because he was lazy as well as stupid, he added, "Not very far I hope."



"I've just come from there myself," said the cobbler, who was as quick-witted as the giant was stupid. "It's been a very tiring journey I must say." He opened his sack and tipped all the worn boots and shoes he had collected for mending onto the ground. "That's how many boots and shoes I've worn out since I left Shrewsbury," he said.









"That's good advice," said the giant, and tipped the earth off his spade. It fell with a roar, like a cloud burst of dark brown rain, and when the brown dust had cleared, the cobbler was standing beside a new hill. The giant was scraping his boots with the spade. There was enough earth sticking to them to make a small hill beside the big one.



