

The Legend of the Wawel Dragon



In a cave at the bottom of Wawel Hill there once lived a terrible fire-belching dragon. The king promised that whoever killed the dragon could marry his beautiful daughter and become king when he died.

Many brave knights tried to kill the monster, but before they could get close enough, the dragon blew fire on them, and they were burned to death.

One day, a young, handsome but poor shoemaker's apprentice named Krak offered to kill the dragon. He had no armour, no horse and no sword, only his shoemaker tools, but he was smart and he had a plan.

He stuffed a dead sheep with powdered sulphur and stitched it up with the shoemaker's thread. Then he put the sheep by the dragon's cave and waited behind a rock for the monster to come out.

When the greedy dragon came out and saw the sheep, it immediately swallowed the bait. The sulphur caught fire like a match, and the dragon felt its stomach burning. It ran to the river to quench the fire in its stomach, but drank so much water that its belly filled up, like a balloon. Finally, because its belly was so swollen, the dragon exploded and died.

Krak and the princess married, and after some time Krak became king. He built a castle on top of Wawel Hill, and for hundreds of years this was where the kings of Poland lived. Around the hill the people built a city, which they named Krakow after Krak, their new king.