



# Wawel's dragon legend

PSP 2 under the name of Hans Christian Andersen

Radom

Poland



A long, long time ago, in a den at the foot of Wawel Hill, there lived a terrible dragon. None of the inhabitants of the City of Cracow knew when and whence the beast had appeared. People said there was no way and no weapon to defeat the beast.



As the days passed the monster seemed to feel more and more at home under Wawel Castle. Every day he would emerge from his den and demand a young girl for breakfast. It devoured sheep, cows and horses by the dozen. It destroyed fields, crops and cottages with the flames from its fiery jaws. Fear and terror reigned in the town.



Wise King Krak thought long and hard how to overcome this great misfortune. Having taken counsel from the wisest of the local citizens, he passed the following decree:

*He who once and for all puts this dragon down Shall receive my royal crown  
So come and defeat this most horrid beast And win my daughter 's hand and a wedding feast.*



Many a brave and valiant knight made his way to Cracow to defeat the monster. Yet all their efforts came to nothing. Nobody was able to kill the beast or even drive it away



Time passed, fewer and fewer knights came to visit. More and more people began to desert the town. Until one day a young man, a shoemaker known to no one, knocked on the gates of the town. He wore no arms and wore no armour. Some twine, a needle and a sharp mind were his only weapons. The guards at the gate would not let him pass but when they learned the purpose of his visit they immediately led him to the castle of King Krak.



*Your Majesty!* I know how to defeat that dreadful dragon' said the boy, bowing low.  
,And just how do you propose to do that', Krak asked in astonishment.  
Many have tried to kill the beast, but none has succeeded!  
,Your Highness! I know I am just a poor shoemaker, but please put your trust in me.  
All I need is some lambskin, some sulphur and some mustard seed.'  
The king mumbled something to himself but when the boy revealed his plan he gave it some thought and then nodded his acceptance.



All night long a candle burned in the shoemaker's room and curious Krakovians would look through the window to see him at work. He took the lambskin, filled it with sulphur, pitch and mustard seed, and skilfully sewed up the hole in the belly of the stuffed sheep. The people of Kraków returning to their homes wondered what this boy was up to and what the morning would bring.



At sunrise the shoemaker threw the bag with the stuffed lamb onto his back and set off for the dragon's den. There he laid his bait, hid himself in the bushes and waited to see what would happen. The monster awoke.

**,I could do with a bite'**, the dragon thought to itself and went out of its den.

**,What a tasty morsel!'**, he exclaimed with glee when he saw the lamb which the shoemaker had prepared. He greedily jumped and with one snap of his jaws swallowed it whole.



And this is when the sulphur the shoemaker had put in the stuffed lamb began to burn inside the monster's belly. The monster rushed to the banks of the River Vistula to quench its burning thirst. It drank and drank and drank... but the more it drank, the more it felt the fiery flames in its belly, which swelled up like a balloon. And suddenly... bang, the dragon exploded. The explosion was so mighty that all the furniture in all the chambers of Wawel castle shook and trembled. The pictures fell from the walls and most of the china in the castle kitchen cracked.



Great was the joy of the inhabitants of the town when they learned of the dragon's death. Everywhere one could hear the sound of trumpets heralding the good news.

