

Big-Stamp Two-Toes the Barefoot Giant

*Complete chapter 21 from the book, Big-Stamp Two-Toes the Barefoot Giant,
the illustrations are not included.*

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This story is told by the spirit of 'The Rock', a huge boulder sitting all by itself in the forest. Tiptoes Lightly and the gnomes, Pine Cone and Pepper Pot, were sitting on it and decided to pay a visit to the rock spirit. So they spun around like tops, clapped their hands, and went inside.

"I was once part of Snowy Mountain," said the rock spirit. "I lived there for long ages. In those days a dragon lived underneath the mountain. He was a hot dragon and often rumbled deep in the earth. Sometimes he shook the ground so hard that huge boulders broke off the side of the mountain and came tumbling down."

"One day a giant passed by. His name was Big-Stamp Two-Toes the Barefoot Giant because he had only two toes on each foot and he never wore shoes."

"But why did he only have two toes?" asked Pine Cone.

"That's another story," said the rock spirit, "but, at the end, he stamped the ground so hard that three toes fell off each foot and never grew back again! After that everybody called him Big-Stamp Two-Toes the Barefoot Giant."

"What happened then?" asked Pepper Pot.

"Well, as the giant passed by the mountain it happened that the dragon rumbled and shook beneath the earth, and a huge boulder broke off the peak of Snowy Mountain. It rolled down the mountain side, crushing smaller rocks to powder and smashing trees to smithereens. Unfortunately the boulder also landed on the giant's foot.

'Ouchi-ouchi ouch!' cried the giant, jumping up and down and clutching his foot. 'Who threw that rock at me?' he shouted.

But, of course, nobody answered.

'Who threw that rock at me?' shouted the giant again in his loudest voice – but still nobody replied.

Big-Stamp Two-Toes stormed around Snowy Mountain looking for the culprit, but without finding anybody.

'Whoever threw it must have been at the top of the mountain,' said Big-Stamp to himself, and he climbed to the peak in seven strides. He stood on the highest point and looked around. Just then the dragon rumbled and shook the earth again and the giant lost his balance. Down he fell, rolling and shouting and cursing, all the way to the foot of Snowy Mountain.

'I'll get you for that!' he shouted angrily, and started to rip the top off the mountain.

He hadn't dug far when the dragon burst out of the hole. Fire and smoke roared upwards, lightning flashed down from the sky, and ash and brimstone filled the air. What a terrible fight it was between the giant and the dragon! All day it lasted, and no one was sure who would win. But at last the giant hit the dragon over the head with a massive blow of his club. The dragon dove back underneath Snowy Mountain, and from that time onwards has not said so much as a peep to anyone.

Then Big-Stamp did a war dance. He whooped and hollered and smashed down trees. He picked up the rock that had fallen on his foot and hurled it at Snowy Mountain.

'Take that back and never throw stones at me again!' he yelled, and marched off beating his chest and telling himself what a great fellow he was."

"But giants cannot throw very well," said the rock spirit, "and he missed the mountain. The boulder sailed over the peak and landed far beyond in a forest."

"And that's how you came to be here," exclaimed Pine Cone and Pepper Pot, jumping up and down. "What an exciting life!"

"One exciting day is plenty for me," said the rock spirit. "It's so much nicer sitting still and basking in the sun."

"Thank you for telling us your story," said Tiptoes. "We'd like to stay longer but we have to be at Jeremy Mouse's house by lunch time."

Then the three friends spun around like tops, clapped their hands, and left.