

## The Revenge of the Blood Thirsty Giant

### A Tlingit Legend



The people were frightened. High in the Rocky Mountains where they lived, an evil giant roamed, killing anyone he found. The people were afraid to leave the village. A hunting party had gone out and aimed arrows at the giant's heart. But nothing could stop him.

"It is because he has no heart," the people decided. "That is why he wants to kill everyone and drink blood. How do you destroy a creature if it has no heart?" They turned in desperation to their chief.

Chief Red Bird had been puzzling over that very question. Every time another member of the village was killed by the giant, Red Bird became more determined to find the answer. Finally he decided what he must do. He called his people together and announced: "Every creature that walks the earth has a heart. As your chief, I will go and find the heart of this evil giant so we can be rid of him forever."

The next morning Red Bird set out for the path where the giant had last attacked. When he heard branches break and the earth tremble, he knew the giant was approaching. He lay down and pretended to be dead.

The giant laughed as soon as he saw Red Bird. "These humans are so afraid, they drop dead as soon as they hear me coming. This one is still warm." He picked up Red Bird, threw him over his shoulder and returned to his home.

There he flung Red Bird on the floor, took out his skinning knife and called to his son to bring wood for a fire. When the son did not answer, the giant went out to get the wood himself, grumbling all the while about his lazy son.

As soon as the giant left, Red Bird heard someone else approaching quietly. It must be the giant's son. Red Bird grabbed the skinning knife and hid behind the door. He was surprised by how small the boy was. "This is the son of the giant?" he thought. Red Bird jumped on him and held up the skinning knife.

"Tell me where your father's heart is," Red Bird growled. The boy was terrified. "My father is mad," he said. "The madder he gets, the bigger he grows. I stay away from him. If he finds me here with you he will kill us both. Let me go before he returns." "I will only let you go if you tell me where his heart is," Red Bird repeated, raising the knife.

"It is in his left heel," the boy cried. He struggled free and ran for his life. Red Bird hid behind the door and waited. As soon as the giant stooped to enter and put his left foot inside, Red Bird drove the knife into the giant's heel and through his heart. The giant fell, mortally wounded. As he was dying he uttered a last threat: "Even though you kill me, I will continue to feed on human blood until the end of time."

"No, you won't," said Red Bird. He made a fire and threw the body of the giant into it. Then he took the ashes and scattered them to the wind. They rose in a cloud. It turned into a swarm of mosquitoes that came back to attack Red Bird. One landed on his nose and bit him.

Red Bird wiped the mosquito away. "What a nuisance," he thought. Then he saw the little stain of blood on his hand. "Maybe you will keep biting us. Maybe you'll get a drop of blood now and then. But at least you're not killing anyone anymore."

Answer the following questions in COMPLETE sentences!!

1. What is the difference between a folk-tale and a legend? (2 marks)

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2. Who are the Tlingit people and where do they live? Why is that important to the story? (2 marks)

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3. What word tells the reader that the giant's wounds will kill him? (2 marks)

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4. Have you ever read a legend? What was it explaining? (2 marks)

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