

## Pilgrim's Progress

### Giant Despair

By [John Bunyan](#)

*The Pilgrim's Progress from this world — to that which is to come, in the similitude of a dream*

*Retold for Children and Adapted to School Reading, by James Baldwin, 1913*

Now I saw in my dream, that not far from the place where the pilgrims lay — there was a castle called Doubting Castle. The owner of that castle was GIANT DESPAIR, and it was on his grounds, that Christian and Hopeful were now sleeping.

This giant, getting up in the morning early, went out to walk in his fields; and there he beheld the two men asleep, being over-wearied with struggling in the storm. He beat with his club upon the ground, and called out to them in a grim and surly voice:

"Wake up there, you! Get up, I say!"

In much alarm, and scarcely knowing where they were, they sprang to their feet and looked him in the face.

"Who are you? And why are you here, trespassing on my grounds?" he gruffly asked.

They told him that they were pilgrims, and that they had lost their way.

"Well," said the giant, "you have trespassed upon my grounds, you have trampled upon and broken my shrubbery, and therefore you must go with me to my castle."

Then, with his great club in his hand — he drove them before him up to the great door of his castle; and he put them into a very dark and loathsome dungeon, where the light of the sun was never seen. There they lay helpless for three days and nights, without one bite of bread or drop of drink, or any friend to ask them how they did.

Now, Giant Despair had a wife, and her name was DIFFIDENCE. In the evening he told her about the prisoners he had taken, and asked her what he should do with them.

"Who are they?" she asked; "and where are they going?"

"They say they are pilgrims, and that they are bound for the Celestial City," answered the giant.

"That is a likely story," said the woman. "Tomorrow morning, give them a good beating — and see what they will say then."

So, as soon as he arose the next morning, he took his crab-tree club and went down into the dungeon. There he first began to abuse them by calling them all sorts of wicked names; but they made him no answer.

Then he fell upon them with his club and beat them most savagely — until they fell upon the floor and were not able to help themselves in the least. Having done this, he left them alone in the darkness, to moan and groan in their deep distress. And there they lay all that day, expecting only to die.

In the evening the giant's wife asked him what he had done with his prisoners. He told her that he had beaten them without mercy — but that they were still alive and groaning on the floor of the dungeon.

"Why don't you kill them at once?" she asked.

"Truly, that is what I should like to do," answered Giant Despair; "but I don't dare to put myself in danger of the law."

"Well, then, if I were you," said the woman, "I would give them some knives and tell them to kill themselves."

The giant was pleased with this advice, and early the next morning he went down into the dungeon again. He spoke to them in the same surly manner as before, and told them that they need never expect to get out of that place alive.

"You had better make way with yourselves — and so end your misery," he said. And with that, he placed sharp knives and a bottle of poison on the floor beside them.

But Christian answered him meekly: "We are sorry that we trespassed upon your grounds; and, indeed, we would not have done so but for the darkness. If you will kindly allow us to depart, we promise never to trouble you again."

This pleasant speech put the giant into a terrible rage. He rushed upon the helpless men and would have killed them with his club; but as he was going to strike — he fell into a fit and lost the use of his hand. For in sunshiny weather, he often had such fits.

When, by and by, he came to himself, he arose and left the dungeon quietly. And the pilgrims sat on the floor, and asked each other what they should do.

"Here we shall indeed perish," said Christian, "for there is no one to help us."

"Do you remember how brave you were in other places?" asked Hopeful. "Think how you fought with Apollyon. Think how you faced the terrors of the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Think how you played the man at Vanity Fair, and feared neither chain nor cage nor bloody death. So, let us bear up with what patience we can."

The next morning the giant went down into the dungeon again. There he found his two prisoners not only alive, but somewhat stronger than before, and the sight of them roused his anger again.

"What! Still alive?" he said gruffly.

Then he opened a little window in the wall of the dungeon and showed them the yard of the castle. It was strewn with white bones and skulls, and was indeed a dreadful place to look into.

"Do you see those bones?" said Giant Despair. "They are bones of men who were once pilgrims as you are. They trespassed upon my grounds and I tore them to pieces, just as I shall tear you when I am ready."

Then he gave them another beating, and left them in a worse state than before.

"It is strange how much they can endure," he said to his wife. "You would think that with all the beatings I have given them, and with all my advice — they would have come to an end before now."

"I am afraid that they are expecting someone to come and help them," answered the woman. "Or perhaps they have pick-locks in their pockets, and hope to open the doors with them and escape."

"Well, I never thought of that," said the giant. "Tomorrow morning I will search them."

Now, a little before day, Christian sprang up quickly and cried out, "What a fool I am! Here I am lying in this dungeon when I might as well be walking at liberty. I

have a key here in my bosom. It is called Promise, and I'm quite sure it will open any lock in Doubting Castle."

"That's good news, brother," said Hopeful. "Try it, and let us see what it will do."

Christian took the key from his bosom and began to try at the dungeon door. Quickly the bolts moved back, and the door opened.

Then Christian and Hopeful both went out; and when they had come to the outer door of the castle, they unlocked that also.

They crossed the courtyard softly, and came to the great iron gate. Christian fitted the key into the lock — but it took all his strength to turn it. At length they pushed the gate open; but it made such a creaking on its hinges, that Giant Despair heard it, and came rushing out in pursuit of his prisoners.

But when he had nearly overtaken them, he fell into another fit, and they escaped him. So they went on until they came to the stile; and having climbed it, they were again in the King's highway, and so were safe once more.

"I hope no other pilgrims will ever fall into the hands of that giant," said Hopeful.

"But they may do so," answered Christian. "The stile is easy to climb, and the grounds by the castle are very inviting."

"Let us put up a sign to warn those who may come after us," said Hopeful.

So they set up a pillar close by the stile; and upon one side of the pillar they wrote these words:

Over this Stile  
is the way to  
Doubting Castle  
which is kept by  
Giant Despair,  
who despises the King  
of the Celestial Country,  
and seeks to destroy his  
Holy Pilgrims.

Having put up this warning, they went again upon their way; and as they went they sang,

We wandered from the King's highway  
To seek an easier road;  
But wandering thus, we came unto

A giant's grim abode.

O Pilgrims, who may follow us,  
We bid you walk with care,  
Lest you like us do fall into  
The power of Giant Despair.

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