

Pilgrim's Progress

Through the Valley of the Shadow of Death

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 the pilgrims had come upon the borders of the Valley of the Shadow of Death. This valley was longer than the other, and it was strangely haunted with evil things. But the women and children went into it the more bravely because they had Great-heart for their guide.

The first sound they heard was a great groaning, which seemed to fill the whole place. Then they heard strange shouts and screams; and as they went farther, they felt the ground to shake under them, as if some hollow place was there.

"Oh, when shall we get through this doleful place?" asked one of the boys.

Then the guide took the two younger ones by the hand to lead them. "Be of good courage," he said to those behind. "Look well to your feet, lest you step in some snare."

When they had come to about the middle of the valley, Christiana stopped suddenly.

"I see something in the road before us," she said. "It is a strange shape, unlike anything I have seen before."

"What is it, mother?" asked James, the little boy.

"An ugly thing, child; an ugly thing."

"But, mother, what is it like?"

"I cannot tell what it is like. Now it is near; now it is far off; now it is near again."

"Well, well!" said Great-heart. "Let all keep close to me."

Then he went forward with his sword drawn. The strange shape came on, and he struck it a fierce blow. Then the shape vanished and was seen no more.

So they went on more bravely. But Mercy, looking behind her, saw a great lion following after them; and now it gave a roar so deep and loud that all the valley echoed with the sound.

The hearts of all ached with fear. But Great-heart went behind, and set them in the road before him. Then he stood his ground to give battle to the lion.

The beast paused; it roared once again at the brave man who dared stand against it; and then it drew back and came no farther.

They went on again, and Great-heart led them as before. And now a vast pit yawned before them and seemed to cover the whole road; and a great mist and darkness fell around them!

"Stand still, and wait," said Great-heart. And as they stood and trembled, a light shone through the darkness, and they saw their way clearly past the mouth of the pit.

So on they went; and one of the boys said, "When shall we see the end of this valley?"

"Look well to your feet," said the guide; "for you are among the snares and the pitfalls."

They looked to their feet, and went on; but they were much troubled by the snares.

At length they drew towards the end of the valley; and there they saw a cave where in former times many giants dwelt. But now the worst of these giants had grown so old and feeble, that they could do nothing but sit in the door of the cave and grin at the pilgrims who were passing.

Suddenly, however, one giant who was younger than the others, came out to meet Great-heart and his company. The name of this giant was MAUL, and he had slain many pilgrims through his cunning.

"Hello, Great-heart!" he cried. "How many times have you been forbidden to do those things?"

"What things?" asked Great-heart.

"You know what things — but I will put an end to your trade," roared the giant.

"Well," said Great-heart, "before we begin to fight, let us know what it is about."

Now the women and children stood trembling in the roadway, and knew not what to do. But Great-heart stood before them with his sword drawn. "Explain your words," he said to the giant.

"You rob the country," said Maul. "You rob it in the very worst way, and I have come out to punish you."

"Come, fellow," answered Great-heart, "speak plainly, and say what you mean."

"Well, then," said Maul, "you are a kidnapper. You kidnap women and children and take them into a strange country, as you are doing now."

But Great-heart answered, "It is false! I serve my master by protecting the weak, by lifting up those who are fallen, and by leading them in the right way. If you wish to fight with me — I am ready for you!"

The giant came up, and Great-heart went to meet him; and as he went he lifted up his sword — but the giant had a club.

So now they began; and at the first blow the giant struck Great-heart down upon one of his knees. With that the women and children cried out in great dismay — but Great-heart soon recovered himself and was up again. Then he laid about him with skill and strength and gave the giant a wound in the arm. And thus they fought for a whole hour in the heat of the sun.

Then they sat down and rested awhile; and when they had taken breath, they leaped up and began fighting again. And Great-heart with a full blow, brought the giant down to the ground.

"Hold! hold!" cried Maul. "Give me a fair chance."

So Great-heart let him get up; and when they had breathed again they went at it even harder than before. The giant raised his club aloft and struck with full force at Great-heart's head; and had not the brave man leaped quickly aside, his skull would surely have been crushed.

But now Great-heart made a fierce thrust with his sword. It pierced the giant's huge body just under the fifth rib, and the blood rushed out. The fight was ended; for Giant Maul fell helpless to the ground, and his club dropped from his hands.

Then the women and children rejoiced because they had been delivered from so great peril. And they went on, following their guide, until they were safe on the farther side of the valley.

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