

The BFG 5

She saw an enormous cavern with a high rocky roof.

The walls on either side were lined with shelves, and on the shelves there stood row upon row of glass jars. There were jars everywhere. They were piled up in the corners. They filled every nook and cranny of the cave.

In the middle of the floor there was a table twelve feet high and a chair to match.

The Giant took off his black cloak and hung it against the wall. Sophie saw that under the cloak he was wearing a sort of collarless shirt and a dirty old leather waistcoat that didn't seem to have any buttons. His trousers were faded green and were far too short in the legs. On his bare feet he was wearing a pair of ridiculous sandals that for some reason had holes cut along each side, with a large hole at the end where his toes stuck out. Sophie, crouching on the floor of the cave in her nightie, gazed back at him through thick steel-rimmed glasses. She was trembling like a leaf in the wind, and a finger of ice was running up and down the length of her spine.

'Ha!' shouted the Giant, walking forward and rubbing his hands together. 'What has us got here?' His booming voice rolled around the walls of the cave like a burst of thunder.

The Giant picked up the trembling Sophie with one hand and carried her across the cave and put her on the table.

Now he really is going to eat me, Sophie thought.

The Giant sat down and stared hard at Sophie. He had truly enormous ears. Each one was as big as the wheel of a truck and he seemed to be able to move them inwards and outwards from his head as he wished.

'I is hungry!' the Giant boomed. He grinned, showing massive square teeth. The teeth were very white and very square and they sat in his mouth like huge slices of white bread.

'P . . . please don't eat me,' Sophie stammered.

The Giant let out a bellow of laughter. 'Just because I is a giant, you think I is a man-gobbling cannybull!' he shouted. 'You is about right! Giants is all cannybully and murderful! And they *does* gobble up human beans! We is in Giant Country now! Giants is everywhere around! Out there us has the famous Bonecrunching Giant! Bonecrunching Giant crunches up two wopsey whiffling human beans for supper every night! Noise is earbursting! Noise of crunching bones goes crackety-crack for miles around!'

'Owch!' Sophie said.

'Bonecrunching Giant only gobbles human beans from Turkey,' the Giant said. 'Every night Bonecruncher

is galloping off to Turkey to gobble Turks.'

Sophie's sense of patriotism was suddenly so bruised by this remark that she became quite angry. 'Why Turks?' she blurted out. 'What's wrong with the English?'

'Bonecrunching Giant says Turks is tasting oh ever so much juicier and more scumdiddlyumptious! Bonecruncher says Turkish human beans has a glamourly flavour. He says Turks from Turkey is tasting of turkey.'

'I suppose they would,' Sophie said.

'Of course they would!' the Giant shouted. 'Every human bean is diddly and different. Some is scumdiddlyumptious and some is uckyslush. Greeks is all full of uckyslush. No giant is eating Greeks, ever.'

'Why not?' Sophie asked.

'Greeks from Greece is all tasting greasy,' the Giant said.

'I imagine that's possible too,' Sophie said. She was wondering with a bit of a tremble what all this talking about eating people was leading up to. Whatever happened, she simply must play along with this peculiar giant and smile at his jokes.

But were they jokes? Perhaps the great brute was just working up an appetite by talking about food.

'As I am saying,' the Giant went on, 'all human beans is having different flavours. Human beans from Panama is tasting very strong of hats.'

'Why hats?' Sophie said.

'You is not very clever,' the Giant said, moving his great ears in and out. 'I thought all human beans is full



of brains, but your head is emptier than a bundongle.'

'Do you like vegetables?' Sophie asked, hoping to steer the conversation towards a slightly less dangerous kind of food.

'You is trying to change the subject,' the Giant said sternly. 'We is having an interesting babblement about the taste of the human bean. The human bean is not a vegetable.'

'Oh, but the bean *is* a vegetable,' Sophie said.

'Not the *human* bean,' the Giant said. 'The human bean has two legs and a vegetable has no legs at all.'

Sophie didn't argue any more. The last thing she wanted to do was to make the Giant cross.

'The human bean,' the Giant went on, 'is coming in dillions of different flavours. For instance, human beans from Wales is tasting very whooshey of fish. There is something very fishy about Wales.'

'You means whales,' Sophie said. 'Wales is something quite different.'

'Wales is *whales*,' the Giant said. 'Don't gobblefunk around with words. I will now give you another example. Human beans from Jersey has a most disgustable woolly tickle on the tongue,' the Giant said. 'Human beans from Jersey is tasting of cardigans.'

'You mean jerseys,' Sophie said.

'You are once again gobblefunking!' the Giant shouted. 'Don't do it! This is a serious and snitching subject. May I continue?'

'Please do,' Sophie said.

'Danes from Denmark is tasting ever so much of



dogs,' the Giant went on.

'Of course,' Sophie said. 'They taste of great danes.'

'Wrong!' cried the Giant, slapping his thigh. 'Danes from Denmark is tasting doggy because they is tasting of *labradors*!'

'Then what do the people of Labrador taste of?' Sophie asked.

'Danes,' the Giant cried, triumphantly. 'Great danes!'

'Aren't you getting a bit mixed up?' Sophie said.

'I is a very mixed-up Giant,' the Giant said. 'But I does do my best. And I is not nearly as mixed up as the other giants. I know one who gallops all the way to Wellington for his supper.'

'Wellington?' Sophie said. 'Where is Wellington?'

'Your head is full of squashed flies,' the Giant said. 'Wellington is in New Zealand. The human beans in Wellington has an especially scrumdiddlyumptious taste, so says the Welly-eating Giant.'

'What do the people of Wellington taste of?' Sophie asked.

'Boots,' the Giant said.

'Of course,' Sophie said. 'I should have known.'

Sophie decided that this conversation had now gone on long enough. If she was going to be eaten, she'd rather get it over and done with right away than be kept hanging around any more. 'What sort of human beings do *you* eat?' she asked, trembling.

'*Me!*' shouted the Giant, his mighty voice making the glass jars rattle on their shelves. 'Me gobbling up human beans! This I never! The others, yes! All the others is gobbling them up every night, but not me! I is a freaky Giant! I is a nice and jumbly Giant! I is the only nice and jumbly Giant in Giant Country! I is THE BIG FRIENDLY GIANT! I is the BFG. What is *your* name?'

'My name is Sophie,' Sophie said, hardly daring to believe the good news she had just heard.

The Giants

'But if you are so nice and friendly,' Sophie said, 'then why did you snatch me from my bed and run away with me?'

'Because you *SAW* me,' the Big Friendly Giant answered. 'If anyone is ever *SEEING* a giant, he or she must be taken away hipswitch.'

'Why?' asked Sophie.

'Well, first of all,' said the BFG, 'human beans is not really *believing* in giants, is they? Human beans is not *thinking* we exist.'

'I do,' Sophie said.

'Ah, but that is only because you has *SEEN* me!' cried the BFG. 'I cannot possibly allow *anyone*, even little girls, to be *SEEING* me and staying at home. The first thing you would be doing, you would be scuddling around yodelling the news that you were actually *SEEING* a giant, and then a great giant-hunt, a mighty giant look-see, would be starting up all over the world, with the human beans all rummaging for the great giant you saw and getting wildly excited. People would be coming rushing and bushing after me with goodness knows what and they would be catching me and locking me into a cage to be stared at. They would be putting me into the zoo or the bunkumhouse with all those squigling hippodumplings and crockadowndillies.'

Sophie knew that what the Giant said was true. If