



Pies by Giants

Each day in the Village of Kleinen Tal, with the first sign of sunrise, all members of every family jump out of bed, slip on lederhosen, and scrub the sleep from their faces.

“Hurry children, porridge on the hearth!”

“Brush your hair and teeth!”

“Milk the cow!”

They fill bowls with porridge and jars with fresh milk, slip it all into baskets and quickly make their way to the top of the highest hill overlooking the valley, their animals following close behind. Once they reach it, they slip inside caves and in the darkness, they eat their morning meal, quietly waiting for what comes next.

In time, the ground shakes as two figures rise from the east, starting out tiny and growing much larger as they move closer. Their shadows stretch over the ground in front of them as they approach, their arms filled with bags of flour and jars of fresh butter.

Loud banging sounds accompany the clattering noises as the two large people drop the bags and set down the jars. Together they arrange boulders around the crater of a nearby volcano, stacking one on top of the other to create a stone tent over the heat. They pour the flour onto the flat ground below the hill, drop giant chunks of butter into the flour, and dip a pitcher into the cold water of the nearby lake. The mammoth woman takes half of the dough and the enormous man takes the other half. While the man warms some of the water in the volcano's caldera, the woman kneads the dough until it holds together and, with a tree trunk, rolls out a large round that she lifts up and slaps over the rooftops of the houses in the valley.

Whispered voices echo within the caves:

“How long, do you think?!”

“Do they know that we're here?!”

“Children! Stay away from the entrance!”

The massive woman takes the dough, slips it into the oven made of stones, and drops it over the crater that releases the heat into the tent of rocks. In two others just like it, the man sets caldrons atop the bubbling lava.

The whispers start again:

“Are they about to finish?”

“That’s only three. There are usually four. So maybe a few minutes more?”

The caves barely contain the nervous anticipation. How long before they can come out again?

And then comes the booming voice. “Fee-fi-fo-fum.” A pause. The woman takes in a breath through her enormous nostrils.

The man climbs up the side of the hill, then shouts, “Fiddle-dee!” He looks about, peering under the canopy of trees covering his feet.

“Come little creatures,” the woman shouts. “The pies are ready,”

Finally, one brave soul creeps to the entrance of one of the caves. “What kind today, mistress giant?”

“Ah.” The woman plucks him up between two of her giant fingertips, looks directly into his tiny eyes with her large gaze. “Cherry. Or chocolate.”

“Does the chocolate have whipped cream?”

“Whipped cream?!” She throws back her head and laughs so loudly that the leaves of the trees shake and the clouds move slightly to the north. Her face grows serious. “No, just meringue.”

The young man’s face brightens. “I would love a chocolate meringue.”

The giant woman smiles and sets him gently on the ground. “So a slice of meringue for you, but you’ll have to share it. It’s far too large for just one young man.”

“Of course,” he says.

And once they know that it’s safe, all the people pour out of their caves, their hands raised as they stand side by side.

“Cherry, please.”

“Chocolate for us.”

“A little of both.”

A small slice is quite enough for all who want it. The ground continues to tremble as the rest of the giants come to join them.

When all of their treats are consumed, the people of the Village of Kleinen Tal set off down the path. As they return to their homes, they lick their sticky fingers and think of their next task. No one is sad, though, for the next morning, just after the sun rises, they will jump out of bed, slip on lederhosen, scrub the sleep from their faces, and anticipate the next tasty batch of pies by giants.