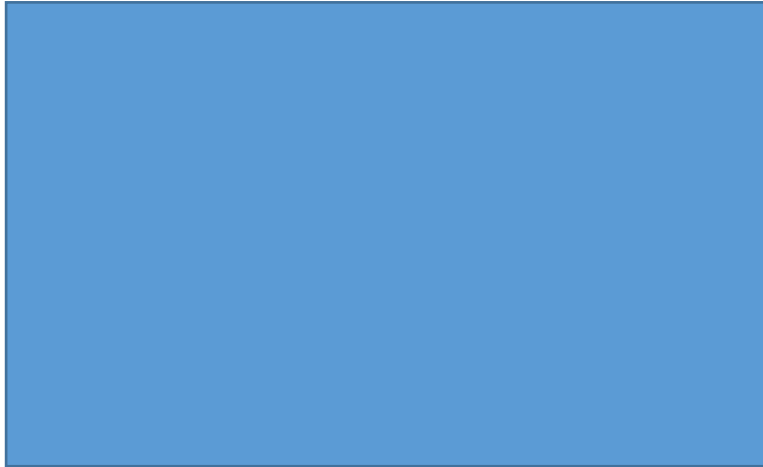


4 Disasters Everywhere

Giant Jim slept so well that he did not wake up until he was disturbed by a strange roaring noise, and a splashy feeling all over his face. He opened his eyes, only to have a bucket of cold water tossed in his face by Mrs Careless, the Mayoress.



Behind the Mayoress stood an angry crowd of townspeople.

‘Look what you’ve done!’ they yelled. ‘You’ve smashed our Dance Hall! You’ve smashed all our instruments. We are supposed to be having our Grand Disco Dance next week. Now what are we going to do?’ And they all began to shout things at

Giant Jim.

‘You’re the biggest, clumsiest oaf in the world!’

‘You’re the stupidest giant that ever was!’

‘And your hen’s laid an egg on our library!’

Giant Jim was even more upset than the townspeople. He muttered ‘Sorry! I’m sorry!’ over and over again. He stood up and tried to mend all the instruments, but he only made matters worse. He tried to put the Dance Hall roof back on, but it crumpled in his hands and all the tiles smashed round his feet, as if he’d just dropped a big bag of marbles.

‘Go away!’ cried Mrs Careless. ‘You giant, ginger, jelly-brain!’

‘Leave us in peace!’ shouted Mr Sniffing. ‘Giants always cause trouble wherever they go, and we don’t want trouble here. I want to change my library book,’ he complained, ‘but I can’t because your giant hen is laying eggs on top of the library. Has she got a card? If she hasn’t got a library card she’s not allowed in the library – or *on* the library,’ he added sniffily. Mr Sniffing was backed up by a noisy crowd who shouted that hens weren’t allowed in the library anyway.

‘You’d better do something,’ Poppy Palmer warned Giant Jim.



Giant Jim reached down and picked up Florence Fluffybum, but he was in such a fluster that he dropped her egg and it fell –

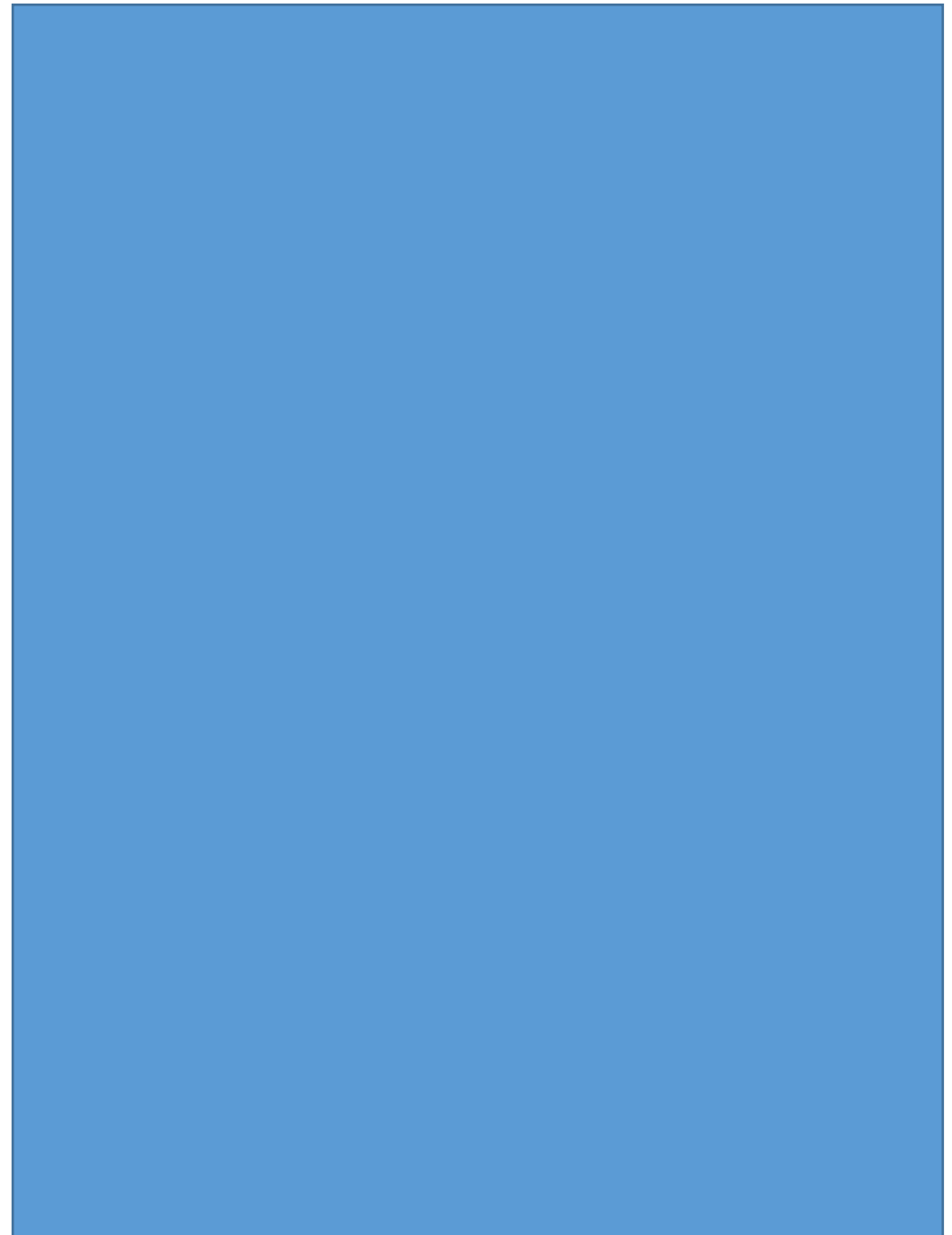
KER-SPLATT!

– right on to the library roof, and cracked open. Egg splattered out all over the streets. It dribbled down the library walls and windows.

‘Urgh!’ yelled Mrs Careless, the Mayoress. ‘I’ve got egg on my best frock.’

‘Splurgh!’ cried Mr Goodbody. ‘I’ve got egg on my head.’

Farmer Palmer came running up the High Street. ‘That stupid giant has put all my sheep in the cornfield, and all my ducks in the cow field, and all my cows in the river!’



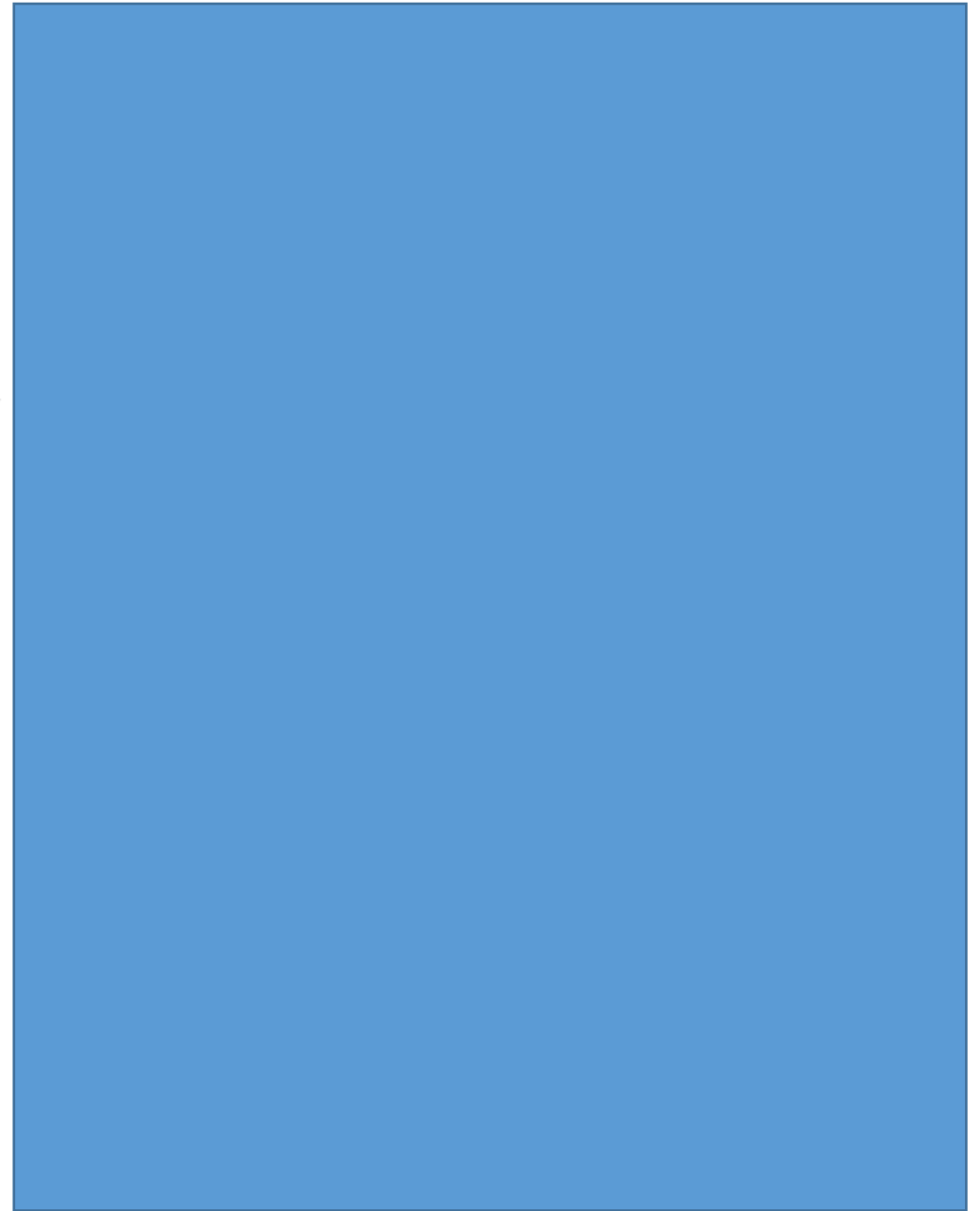
‘Stupid, stupid giant!’ yelled the crowd.

And then someone in the crowd threw an egg at Giant Jim.

It hit the giant on his knee. A jeer went up from the crowd, and a moment later everybody seemed to be throwing eggs at the poor giant and shouting at him and calling him names. He hurried away, clutching Florence Fluffybum, with eggs hitting his back and trickling down to his feet.

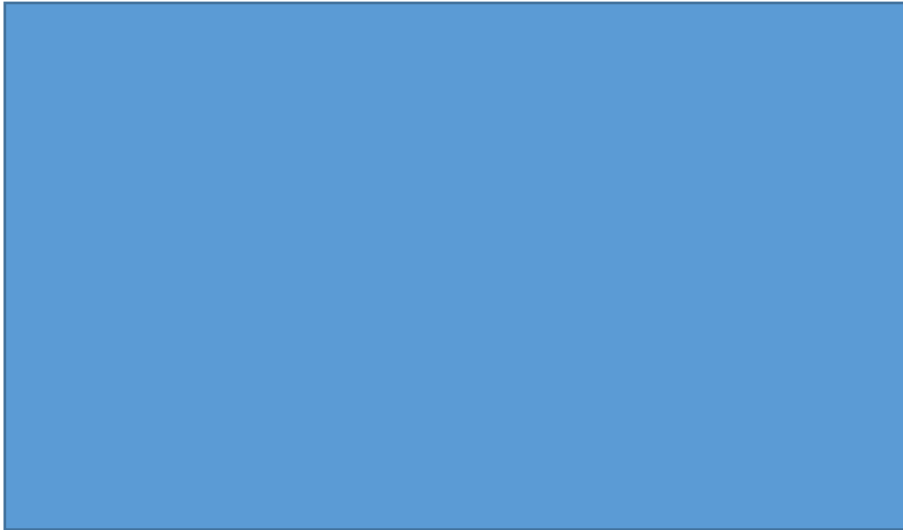
Poppy Palmer tried desperately to stop everyone. But nobody could hear her small voice above the cheering and jeering. Poppy stood in the town square, watching the yelling crowd chase after the giant, and tears rolled down her cheeks.

‘How can they be so horrid?’ she



cried. 'He only wants to be friends.'

Giant Jim stumbled stickily to the edge of the lake. He couldn't bear to feel all that egg and eggshell clinging to him. He plunged into the lake with all his clothes on and started washing frantically. Water began to slop over the edges of the lake.



It splashed out over the top.

It splashed out over the bottom,

and it splashed out all the way

down the edges.

A stream of water began to trickle towards the town and the more Giant Jim splashed around, trying to get rid of all that egg, the more water went down the hill. Soon the stream became a brook, and the brook became a river,

and the river became a flood, and the flood became a –

DISASTER!

'Help!' yelled Mrs Careless, the Mayoress. 'We're all going to drown! Now look what you've done!'

'There's a fish swimming round my living room,' complained Mrs Goodbody.

'There are frogs hopping up and down my stairs,' squeaked Mr Sniffing.

Constable Dunstable got out his bicycle and rode through the wet streets waving his pair of handcuffs.

'Now I shall really have to arrest the giant,' he said severely.

Poppy and Crasher were most upset.

'It's not the giant's fault,' they cried. 'He was only trying to get himself clean, and the only reason he was dirty was because you threw eggs at him.'

'Well, he threw an egg at us,' sniffed Mrs Sniffing, 'and it was a very big egg.'

‘He didn’t throw it. He dropped it and it was an accident. You threw eggs at him on purpose. It’s not fair.’ Crasher jumped on to his inflatable crocodile and went chasing after Constable Dunstable, crashing into everything on the way.



Nobody would listen to Poppy or Crasher. They were too upset because there was water all over their carpets and their furniture was floating away down the streets. Some of them pulled on great rubbery boots and went wading after the giant. Some of them climbed into rowing boats and went splashing after him.

Giant Jim looked out from his giant bath (which didn’t have much water left in it) and saw the enormous crowd of townspeople coming after him. They were waving their fists and shouting



angry words. Some of them were carrying big pieces of wood.

Giant Jim was much, much bigger than any of them, but he was very scared.

‘I don’t think I like it here any more,’ he muttered.

‘Don’t go!’ cried Poppy. ‘It’s just that they haven’t got used to you yet.’

‘We all like you!’ yelled Crasher, as his crocodile crashed into a tree and got stuck among the branches.

But Giant Jim put Florence Fluffybum back in her basket and strapped his saxophone to his back.

‘I thought it would be nice here,’ he told Poppy and Crasher. ‘I thought I could be helpful and have lots of friends and people

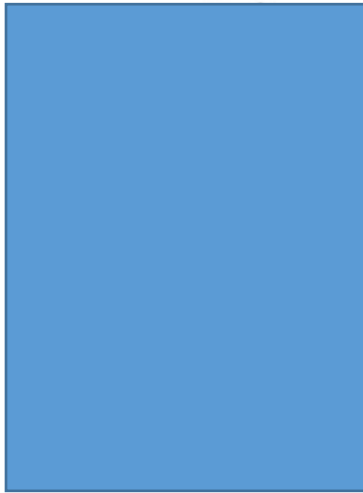
to talk to. But I'm too big and clumsy.' He got to his feet and strode away over the far hills and quickly disappeared.

'Hurrah!' shouted the townspeople. 'That got rid of him.'

'It's not fair,' murmured Poppy sadly.

'No, it isn't,' agreed Crasher, and he climbed off his crocodile, fell from the tree and crashed into the flood.

'You silly, clumsy boy!' laughed Mrs Crasher, and she waded into the flood water, rescued her son and gave him a big hug. Crasher turned to her.



'How come when I'm silly you laugh and give me a hug, but when Giant Jim is silly you all throw eggs at him and chase him away?'

Mrs Crasher looked rather surprised. 'I don't really know,' she

admitted. 'I have never thought about it, but I can tell you one thing. That giant is much too big to hug.'