

# **baby iron teeth**

## **a synopsis**

Two gardeners prepare to tell a story.

The gardeners plant a seed that grows into Prince Ivan.

Ivan's parents - the King and the Queen - try to get Ivan to speak to them but he either can't or won't. They are frustrated by his silence and decide to 'grow' another baby. They add things to make the baby grow faster and bigger.

When the baby emerges it is huge and hungry and already speaks.

The gardeners warn Prince Ivan that the baby is a witch with iron teeth and that in six weeks time she will have grown as tall as a tree. They give Ivan a horse and encourage him to ride towards the Palace of the Sun at the End of the World.

As he journeys, Ivan meets two old ladies who are sewing. They explain that they are running out of needles and that when they have broken the last one, they will no longer be able to keep the sky, the earth and sea stitched together.

Ivan meets a giant who is pulling up trees. The giant explains that when he has pulled up the last tree then he will die.

Ivan meets another giant who is mashing mountains. This giant explains that when he has mashed the final mountain then he too will die.

Finally Ivan reaches the Palace of the Sun where the Little Sister of the Sun is waiting for him. Together they play among the towers of the Palace. But Ivan can see from there that the Palace he left is being destroyed by Baby Iron Teeth. And he can't see his parents. He decides he must go back to find out what's happening.

The Little Sister of the Sun gives him three gifts - a fistful of fish-bones, a bundle of wood and a handful of mud - and tells him that he will know when to use them.

As he journeys back he meets the mountain-masher giant, who is about to mash his final mountain. Ivan throws down his handful of mud which grows into new mountain ranges, thereby saving the giant's life. The giant promises to help him if called.

Ivan then meets the tree-puller giant, who is about to pull up his last tree. Ivan throws down the bundle of wood which grows into new forests, thereby saving the giant's life. The giant promises to help him if called.

Ivan then meets the two ladies who sew. They have one needle left. Ivan hands them the fistful of fish-bones, thereby allowing them to continue to stitch the world together. They give Ivan a length of twine.

When Ivan reaches the Palace there is no sign of his parents. Baby Iron Teeth is very welcoming and invites him to stay for supper. She goes to light the oven and asks him to dance loudly so that she can hear that he's still there.

While he's dancing, a pair of spiders appear. They are the gardeners, who have turned themselves into spiders to avoid being eaten by Baby Iron Teeth. Ivan realises that Baby Iron Teeth plans to eat him. He makes his escape - with Baby Iron Teeth in pursuit.

Ivan twists the twine that the old ladies gave him around Baby Iron Teeth. But she bites her way out.

Ivan calls on the tree-puller giant who provides branches to entangle Baby Iron Teeth. But she bites her way out.

Ivan calls on the mountain-masher giant who provides rocks to pile up onto Baby Iron Teeth. But again, she bites her way out.

Finally Ivan calls to the Little Sister of the Sun who pulls him up to the towers of her palace with her silken scarf.

Baby Iron Teeth tries to starve Ivan and the Little Sister of the Sun by eating up everything around the palace.

The Little Sister of the Sun points out that the Baby must be a witch, because only witches have iron teeth. And that the way to destroy a witch is with water. They need it to rain. Ivan has an idea. He invites the baby to measure their weights by balancing on a see-saw. If the Baby is heavier than he is, then she can eat him. Baby Iron Teeth agrees. But Baby Iron Teeth is so very heavy that when she jumps on the see-saw Ivan goes soaring into the sky up to the rain-clouds. When he hits the rain-clouds he causes the rain to fall and the witch dissolves into a puddle of mud.

Ivan happily agrees to stay with the Little Sister of the Sun in her palace and the gardeners' story is finished.