

The Iron Man

The Iron Man has appeared in the countryside and is causing havoc, eating everything metal he can find. The local farmers have to think of a way to stop him.

The Iron Man stood up straight. Slowly he turned, till he was looking directly at Hogarth.

“We’re sorry we trapped you and buried you,” shouted the little boy. “We promise we’ll not deceive you again. Follow us and you can have all the metal you want. Brass too. Aluminium too. And lots of old chrome. Follow us.”

The Iron Man pushed aside the boughs and came into the lane, Hogarth joined the farmers. Slowly they drove back down the lane, and slowly, with all his cogs humming, the Iron Man stepped after them.

They led through the villages. Half the people came out to stare, half ran to shut themselves inside bedrooms and kitchens. Nobody could believe their eyes when they saw the Iron Man marching behind the farmers.

At last they came to the town, and there was a great scrap-metal yard. Everything was there, old cars by the hundred, old trucks, old railway engines, old stoves, old refrigerators, old springs, bedsteads, bicycles, girders, gates, pans – all the scrap iron of the region was piled up there, rusting away.

“There,” cried Hogarth.
“Eat all you can.”

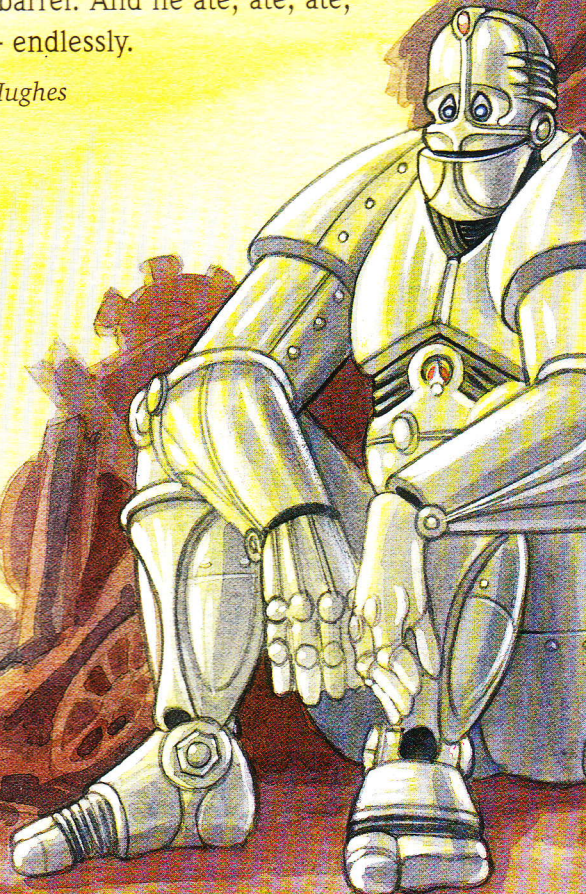
The Iron Man gazed, and his eyes turned red. He kneeled down in the yard, he stretched out on one elbow. He picked up a greasy black stove and chewed on it. He followed that with a double-decker bedstead and the brass knobs made his eyes crackle with joy. Never before had the Iron Man eaten such delicacies. As he lay there, a big truck turned into the yard and unloaded a pile of rusty chain. The Iron Man lifted a handful and let it dangle into his mouth – better than any spaghetti.

So there they left him. It was an Iron Man’s heaven. The farmers went back to their farms. Hogarth visited the Iron Man every few days. Now the Iron Man’s eyes were constantly a happy blue.

He was no longer rusty.

His body gleamed blue, like a new gun barrel. And he ate, ate, ate, ate – endlessly.

Ted Hughes



TEXT

- 1 a) What two things was the boy sorry for?
b) What did he promise not to do again?
- 2 a) As the Iron Man and the men walked through the village, why do you think the people came out to stare? b) How else did they react?
c) What does this indicate about how they felt?
- 3 a) List five things in the scrap-metal yard that would please the Iron Man.
b) Why do you think he would be happy?
- 4 Describe how the Iron Man reacted to the scrap-metal yard.
- 5 Quote some words from the passage to show that the Iron Man saw the metal objects as food.
- 6 a) Explain how you felt about the Iron Man at the beginning of the passage.
b) How did you feel about him at the end? How was this different?

SENTENCE

- 1 Copy this passage, changing all the verbs into the passive.
My mum weighed some flour and broke some eggs into a bowl. She creamed the butter with the sugar until it was light. She then combined all the ingredients and mixed them. Finally she put the cake to bake in the oven.
- 2 Copy this passage, changing all the verbs into the active.
An electric plug was taken by my mum. A screwdriver was placed in the back of the plug. The screw attaching the two plastic pieces was removed. The brown wire was connected to the right terminal. The blue wire was connected to the left terminal. The earth wire was connected to the terminal at the top. The two pieces of the plug were joined together again and the plug was tested.

WORD

- 1 From which one country do these words or expressions come?
au revoir café menu encore fiancée hors d'oeuvre au pair
- 2 Write the words in sentences to show what they mean.
- 3 Find out where these words come from.
ballet depot cabaret bouquet croquet parquet
Look at the word endings. How can this help you to learn to spell them?
- 4 From which language do these words or expressions come? What do they mean?
post mortem post meridian vice versa anno domini
- 5 From which countries do these words come?
siesta karate anorak chocolate opera
- 6 Write the words in sentences to show what they mean.