

The Iron Man: part 2

One evening a farmer's son, a boy called Hogarth, was fishing in a stream that ran down to the sea. It was growing too dark to fish, his hook kept getting caught in weeds and bushes. So he stopped fishing, came up from the stream and stood listening to the owls in the wood further up the valley.

Suddenly he felt a strange feeling. He felt he was being watched. He felt afraid. He turned and looked up the steep field to the top of the high cliff. Behind that skyline was the sheer rocky cliff and the sea. And on that skyline, just above the edge of it, in the dusk, were two green lights. What were two green lights doing at the top of the cliff?

Then, as Hogarth watched, a huge dark figure climbed up over the cliff-top. The two lights rose into the sky. They were the giant figure's eyes. A giant black figure, taller than a house, black and towering in the twilight, with green headlamp eyes. The Iron Man! Hogarth began to run. He ran and ran.

Next morning all the farmers were shouting with anger. Where were their tractors? Their earth diggers? Their ploughs? Their harrows? From every farm in the region, all the steel and iron farm machinery had gone. Where to? Who had stolen it all? What had happened?

There was another clue. From farm to farm, over the soft soil of the fields, went giant footprints, each one the size of a single bed. The farmers in a frightened, silent, amazed crowd, followed the footprints. And at every farm, all the metal machinery had disappeared. The furious farmers began to shout. The Iron Man had stolen all their machinery. Had he eaten it?

So what did they do?

At the bottom of the hill, below where the Iron Man had come over the high cliff, they dug a deep, enormous hole. A hole wider than a house and as deep as three trees one on top of the other. It was a colossal hole. A stupendous hole! They covered the hole with branches.

When the farmers saw the Iron Man wallowing in their deep pit, they sent up a great cheer. He glared up towards them, his eyes burned from red to purple, from purple to white, from white to fiery whirling black and red.

Then under the lights of car headlamps, the farmers bought bulldozers and earth-pushers, and they began to push in on top of the struggling Iron Man all the earth they had dug when they first made the pit. Only Hogarth felt suddenly sorry. He felt guilty. It was he, after all, who had lured the Iron Man into the pit.

1. Imagine you are an interviewer and you want to ask the Iron Man about his past. Write five questions that you would ask him.
2. Think about how Hogarth was feeling and what he was thinking when he first discovered the Iron Man and helped the farmers trap him in the pit. Write a diary entry as Hogarth. Describe the key events, actions and feelings from Hogarth's perspective.
3. What do you think Hogarth will do next? Don't forget, he feels guilty but he is afraid of the Iron Man. What will he do?
4. What advice would you give him? What would you do if you were in his situation? Explain why.
5. Write a title for this part of the story. What is the main event that has happened? Think about how you can summarise this part in a title.
6. Why has the author included lots of questions in the text? What affect does this have on the reader? What is the author trying to get the reader to think/feel about the Iron Man and the situation Hogarth finds himself in?