

Ivan, the Giant, and the Maiden

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4/13/03

Russian Fairy Tales, Russian 0090

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In a certain land in a certain kingdom there lived a king. The king had three sons, the oldest was Peter, the middle child was Emeyla, and the third was named Ivan. When they were old enough the son's of the king all asked their father for permission to take a wife. The king told his sons that the one to bring the most beautiful wife back would inherit the kingdom, and then granted his first two sons their requests but told the third son that he was not ready. The king's first son went and in a long time or a short time came back with one of the finest maidens that Ivan had ever seen. Impressed with his brother's find, Ivan again asked his father for permission to go and find a wife, and again the King told him no. Some more time passed and the second of Ivan's brothers returned home with a maiden more beautiful than the first brother's wife. Again Ivan went to the king for permission to go and look for a wife. The king, seeing that his son would not give up, agreed to let him search for his wife. Ivan set out on a horse from the stables and traveled down the road. He traveled for a long time or a short time and finally he reached a fork in the road. Not knowing which way he should travel, Ivan sat down and made camp. Soon the sun began to set behind the trees and Ivan decided that it would be best to rest for the night and quickly fell asleep. He slept by the road until day came and when he woke up he saw a deer standing in the road staring at him. Being fairly hungry he drew his bow and prepared to shoot at the animal. "Please do not shoot me," the deer said. "And why not," asked Ivan, "I am hungry." "If you spare my life I will tell you how to find the most beautiful woman in Russia," the deer replied.

Ivan thought for a moment or two and then agreed with the deer that he would not eat him. The deer then said, "If you travel to the thrice ninth kingdom in the thrice tenth land by the right path you will find her sitting in a rowboat in the middle of the pond. But she is stuck without any paddles by which she may get back to shore." "Thank you," replied Ivan and he set off down the right path and into the woods. Ivan traveled again for a long time or a short time and came to a clearing in the woods. In the middle of the clearing he saw a marvelous house three times the size of the castle. He wondered who could possibly live in such a large house when a giant entered the clearing across from him and entered the house. Ivan became scared and walked a little farther down the path and set up camp for the night. In the middle of the night the giant awoke Ivan from his sleep with terrible growling. Ivan quickly got up and tried to run away, but the giant overtook him, grasped him in one hand and said, "What are you doing in MY woods?" Ivan could not think of a good lie and simply stated, "Looking for a wife kind giant." "Really," replied the giant, "How do I know that you did not come to slay me?" Ivan replied, "I assure you kind giant that I did not come to slay thee, I am not a warrior but a prince looking for a woman stuck in the middle of the pond with no paddles." The giant accepted this answer and said to Ivan, "I know of this maiden but she is in my pond and I do not wish to let you have her." Not wanting to give up easily Ivan drew his sword and prepared to fight the giant. "You just told me that you are not a warrior but now you draw your sword against me? I see that you really desire this woman and I will make you a deal." "What would that be?" asked Ivan. "It is hard for me to obtain enough meat for a meal," he replied "if you can catch enough deer to fill me up, then you may take the maiden." Ivan agreed and for a long time or a short time he ran through the woods

around the gigantic house trapping and shooting deer. After he had caught a large amount, he returned to the giant's home. The giant picked up Ivan's catches in his hands and delivered them to his cooks. After his meal was prepared the giant sat down to eat his fill. Ivan quickly salted all of the food on his plate before he could notice. He ate and ate and ate but could not finish all of the meat placed before him. "Ivan," he roared, "you have done well in hunting my dinner, now it is time for your reward." The giant then picked up Ivan and put him on his shoulder, and took off through the woods. When they reached the pond Ivan saw the fair maiden sitting in the boat. "Are you not thirsty?" said Ivan. Having eaten a lot of salt the giant became very thirsty, so he quickly ripped a tree out of the ground, hollowed it, and used it like a straw to drink all of the water from the pond. Ivan then ran to the boat now stuck in the mud at the bottom of the place the pond used to be. She thanked him for rescuing her and agreed to marry him in his kingdom. Ivan sat her on his horse and they began to travel back to Ivan's home. When they arrived, Ivan's brothers became jealous of him for his wife was far more beautiful than either of theirs. Ivan's father, the king then gave Ivan half of his kingdom and promised him the rest when he was to die. Ivan became very prosperous and wealthy and set a date for his marriage to his new bride. I was at the wedding too! I drank beer, it ran down my mustache but it did not enter my mouth.