**Wicked Witch of Itch**

This story is about [Emma] who is [8] years old and lives in [Eastwood, Nottingham] who had very itchy [arms and knees] because she had eczema.

This story is about someone who beat an itch. But this was no ordinary itch. It was the wicked witch of itch herself – the itchiest, tickley-est, prickliest, peskiest, most horrible itch on Earth… and her name was Ivana Itchovitch.

Ivana Itchovich was from the beautiful snow-white wastelands of Siberia, but had come to Britain because Siberia was so cold that her powers had frozen there and wouldn’t work properly. So she had packed her bags (which were stuffed full of itching powder, sand, iron filings, straggly bits of hair and all sorts of other itch-making things) and set off around the world.

Ivana’s plan was cruel and simple – she wanted to pester and fester and frustrate children with excruciating itchiness. Why she wanted to do that nobody knows, but there is no doubt that she was very cruel indeed.

As well as having her bags of itch-making stuff Ivana Itchovich, the wicked witch of Itch, had one extremely cunning, extremely devious trick that would make her evil plan succeed.

The trick was this: she would trick children into making the itch worse by doing something they thought would get rid of it. It was a horrible and mean trick but it was very clever. It was a bit like if you hide something somewhere so obvious that no one would even think of looking there.

This is the secret spell that Ivana used to make children do her work for her:

“Eyes of newt stir by the batch,

If children itch, then make them scratch;

Make the scratch feel ultra nice,

Mix in heads of fifty mice;

Leg of frog and mud from ditch,

***The more they scratch, the more they itch!*”**

This spell tricked the children into scratching to make the itch better, but that if they scratch *too* *much* they actually end up making the itch *worse*.

It was a very nasty trick indeed, and designed by Ivana to make children itchy, frustrated and fed up. “Heh heh hehehehehhhhh..hhh..!” Ivana cackled and wheezed, “with this plan I’ll drive all them little blighters crazy, heheheh heh hehhhhh..hhh..”

One of the people who Ivana Itchovich visited lived in [Eastwood, Nottingham]. She was a very clever, funny and brave girl called [Emma], and she was [8] years old. [Emma] had started having a little itch on her back and arms. Ivana the wicked witch of itch spotted this and made her *scratch* it a lot, transforming it into an enormous, eye-watering, scream-out-loud agonising itch. She was horrible. She made [Emma] itchy day and night (but was *especially* annoying at night).

Amongst other places, Ivana Itchovich stayed on [Emma] ’s itchy [arms and knees]. She did this because it was extra annoying for [Emma] \_ and, if she was truly honest, Ivana was actually quite scared of [Emma] and wanted to hide.

Ivana Itchovich would drive [Emma] mad – she was so itchy that she would scratch her back against lots of corners and walls and table edges.

[Emma] would also ask her mum to scratch her itchy [arms and knees] too. These things felt very nice but when they happened lots and lots it made Ivana itchier and witchier – “Yeeessssss, lots of scratching makes me stronger – keep it up! Heh heh heh heeehhhh!” she would mutter to herself.

But [Emma] was much more clever and brave than Ivana Itchovich thought. There were lots of things she could try to turn the tables back onto the Witch of Itch, to show that she was in control, she was the boss, and that she could get rid of Ivana. Of course [Emma] loved a good scratch – who doesn’t? That was fine, it was the *‘too much’* scratching in Ivana’s spell that she had to sort out to stop her getting stronger.

What could [Emma] do to get rid of Ivana Itchovich? For starters, a clever doctor had given [Emma] a special cream to put on his back, so her and her mum tried that. But Ivana Itchovich clung on – she was still there and itchier than ever!

So [Emma] and her mum thought about what else would make Ivana go away. They realised that when [Emma] was busy doing something interesting like playing with her favourite things or running about Ivana Itchovich would disappear. But [Emma] couldn’t really go running about in bed could she?

So [Emma] and her mum had to think of other things that they could do to get rid of Ivana Itchovich. There were some good practical jokes that Ivana didn’t like being played on her.

One of them was to stoke [Emma] ’s back with fingers instead of nails – this would make [Emma] feel a bit better, and because it wasn’t scratching it wouldn’t make Ivana the witch of itch stronger.

Ivana Itchovich was also allergic to oatmeal – some children had got rid of her for a few hours by having a nice oatmeal bath before bed, as mad as that sounds. They would put some porridge oats in a tied up sock and leave it in the bath (which the witch of itch didn’t like them doing one single bit).

[Emma] and her mum also knew that wool and other fabrics could get Ivana itchier and witchier, so they went for things like cotton instead.

They also knew that Ivana hated the cold – that was why she left Siberia in the first place. So they could try putting cold compresses on [Emma]’s itchy [arms and knees] to drive her away.

Trying out lighter scratching, or for less time, was also a good trick for making Ivana weaker and weaker.

Probably the most important weapon against Ivana Itchovich was [Emma] herself. One thing he could do was to try what she could to stop itching as much as Ivana wanted her to. She could train himself to take nice slow breaths: this would mean breathing in for 10 seconds, holding it in for 10 seconds, then slowly blowing it out again for 10 seconds. This would take a lot of strength and control from [Emma] – just the kind of thing that put Ivana off.

[Emma] and her mum started trying some of these ideas for beating Ivana Itchovich. It was very hard work doing it, because Ivana’s spell had made it such a nice and lovely feeling to scratch too much. But slowly and surely [Emma] , with the help of her mum, managed to scratch less. They stopped scratching enough to make Ivana no itchier or witchier than she already was, and that horrible prickly tickly feeling began to get less and less. Ivana Itchovich could hear them singing to her while she tried to cling on to [Emma] :

**“I’m scratching less, You get the sack. Go Ivana *get off my back*!”**

“Grrrragghhhaarr!!! I don’t likes the sound of all them telling me they’re the boss round ‘ere!” shrieked Ivana, and slowly but surely she started to leave [Emma] alone. Ivana Itchovich began to realise that [Emma] was the boss of her – she was no longer the boss of her, she couldn’t trick [Emma] into scratching too much and making her itchier anymore.

[Emma] felt very relieved that Ivana Itchovich had got weaker, and she could be very proud of himself for standing up to her and sorting her out. She knew that scratching less would help her to go away if she ever came back… (although she still like a bit of a good old scratch everyone now and then…)

**THE END**

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