

clever-clogs and the cunning princess

BILL So would you really have done it?

GILL Really done what?

BILL You wouldn't really, would you? Not really?

GILL Not really what?

BILL You know what I mean.

GILL Yes, I know what you mean. But they don't.

BILL She wouldn't really have done it. Not really.

GILL They still don't know what you mean.

BILL It was just to frighten me.

GILL Are you going to explain?

BILL But I'm not easily frightened.

GILL Well?

BILL We must tell them the story.

GILL Of course we must.

BILL Then they can decide.

GILL That's why we're here. To tell them the story.

BILL Of course.

GILL So where shall we start?

BILL At the beginning.

GILL Of course. And where is the beginning?

BILL The beginning is when it all began.

GILL When it all began for who?

BILL For me. For you. For both of us.

GILL So there are two beginnings.

BILL Are there?

GILL My beginning and your beginning.

BILL That's tricky.

GILL Yes.

BILL Once upon a time.

GILL Once upon a time.

BILL There was a handsome young soldier.

GILL There was a wise and beautiful princess.

BILL This handsome young soldier...

GILL Handsome?

BILL Very handsome.

GILL Says who?

BILL She thought I was handsome.

GILL Did I really?

BILL I could tell by the way she looked at me.

GILL O yeah?

BILL Yeah. That's why I don't think she would really have done it.

GILL I wouldn't be so sure. Anyway that was much later on. We hadn't even met when the story started.

BILL That's right. We didn't even know each other existed.

GILL That's right.

BILL So this handsome young soldier...

GILL Who's going to act this handsome young soldier?

BILL Me.

GILL How?

BILL What do you mean?

GILL Who's going to believe that you're young? Let alone handsome.

BILL I'm not that old.

GILL You are too.

BILL Really?

GILL Really.

BILL But I can act young.

GILL Perhaps I should act the handsome young soldier.

BILL You.

GILL I think I could do a better job than you.

BILL And so I get to act the wise and beautiful princess?

GILL Perhaps not such a good idea.

BILL So this handsome young soldier.

GILL So this wise and beautiful princess.

BILL He was guarding a tower.

GILL She was living in a Palace of silver and gold.

BILL A huge tall tower.

GILL A beautiful and ancient Palace.

BILL The hugest tallest tower you ever did see.

GILL I bet it wasn't that big.

BILL I bet it was.

GILL I bet it wasn't as high as a tree.

BILL I bet it was much higher than a tree.

GILL I bet it wasn't as high as a church.

BILL I bet it was much higher than a church.

GILL I bet it wasn't as high as a mountain.

BILL I bet it was as high as a small mountain. Not as high as a huge big mountain perhaps. But I never said it was.

GILL And the wise and beautiful princess, she sat all day long in the library of the Palace and she read every book in the Library.

BILL Every book?

GILL Every page of every book in the Palace library.

BILL Every page?

GILL Every word of every page of every book in the Palace library.

BILL How many books were there?

GILL What?

BILL How many books.

GILL I don't know, I didn't count.

BILL So maybe just five. Well that's not very clever at all.

GILL No, there were tons more than five. There were hundreds, maybe thousands.

BILL And you read them all.

GILL Of course I did. That's how come I was so wise.

BILL And how come you thought you were so beautiful?

GILL I could tell from looking in my mirror.

BILL Ah – your mirror.

GILL Yes my mirror.

BILL Your special mirror.

GILL My very special mirror.

BILL But that comes later.

GILL Much later.

BILL I was the best tower guarder in the whole land.

GILL I was the wisest Princess in the whole land.

BILL Look this is confusing.

GILL Is it?

BILL I've got to tell them about the tower.

GILL They want to know about the Princess.

BILL Can't we do it in bits. I do a bit, you do a bit?

GILL What am I going to do while you're doing your bit?

BILL You can help make my bit exciting.

GILL And then you'll help me?

BILL Course I will.

GILL And you won't just make a joke of it all the time?

BILL Course I won't.

GILL Cos it's very serious – some of it.

BILL Course it is.

GILL Go on then.

BILL Go on what?

GILL About the tower.

BILL There never was such a good tower guarderer as me.

GILL You're good at guarding that tower young man.

BILL Thank you Your Majesty.

GILL Here, have a medal.

BILL Thank you very much Your Majesty. Then one night. One very, very dark night...

GILL Whoooo.

BILL Now who are you?

GILL I'm an owl.

BILL Oh, I thought perhaps you were being a ghost.

GILL No I'm an owl. Obviously.

BILL Obviously.

GILL Twit-te-whooo.

BILL Obviously. Anyway, there I was guarding the tower one dark, dark night. When I heard a noise.

GILL Squeak, squeak.

BILL What's that?

GILL It's a bat.

BILL No, that's not what I heard.

GILL Grrrrrr.

BILL And it wasn't a bear.

GILL [HOWL]

BILL And it wasn't a wolf.

GILL So what was it?

BILL The noise came from inside the tower. From behind the big wooden door.

GILL And what did it sound like?

BILL A bit snuffly and snorty really.

GILL Like a pig?

BILL A bit like a pig.

GILL [SNUFFLE & SNORT]

BILL You make a very good pig.

GILL Thank you. [SNUFFLE & SNORT]

BILL What's that? Who's there?

GILL [SNUFFLE & SNORT]

BILL Is there someone in there?

GILL Let me out.

BILL What are you doing in there.

GILL I've been locked in here for ten long years. Now let me out.

BILL I've been guarding this tower for ten long years and I never knew there was anybody inside it.

GILL If you let me out then whenever you need help I'll be there.

BILL Yes all right. I'll just open up the heavy wooden door.

GILL That wasn't very clever.

BILL What wasn't?

GILL Just opening up the door after you'd been guarding it for ten years.

BILL I didn't realise. You see I always thought I was guarding the tower in case somebody was going to attack it. I didn't know there was anybody inside.

GILL Still not very clever.

BILL It turned out all right in the end though.

GILL Maybe.

BILL So I opened up the door.

GILL Thank you very much. What's your name?

BILL They call me Clever-Clogs.

GILL Do they now. And why's that?

BILL Because I'm clever.

GILL Are you then? Do you know who I am?

BILL No I don't at all.

GILL Didn't think you did. I'm a little bit naughty I am. That's why the King locked me up. I like making mischief. And I've got some special mischief making magical powers. Because I'm a little bit of a naughty imp, I am.

BILL Oh I see.

GILL But I like you Clever-Clogs. I don't know why.

BILL Perhaps because I'm young and handsome.

GILL No, I don't think that's the reason. So if ever you need help just say my name and I'll be at your side.

BILL What is your name?

GILL And now I'm off to spread a little mischief around the world, cos that's what naughty imps do.

BILL But what's your name?

GILL My turn now.

BILL No, I've got a bit more to do first.

GILL No, you've done plenty. It's my turn.

BILL But they want to know what happened to me when I let the naughty imp go.

GILL They'll have to wait.

BILL Just a little bit.

GILL No, they need to know what was happening to me. Just let me start my story. It's only fair.

BILL Yes, I suppose.

GILL So soon, with all this reading, I knew everything there was to know in the whole wide world.

BILL Everything?

GILL Everything.

BILL Did you know all the capital cities in all the countries in the world?

GILL Yes.

BILL Did you know the names of all the dinosaurs there ever were?

GILL Yes.

BILL Did you know...

GILL Everything. I knew everything. Maths and science and history. I could speak every language that was ever invented. And I knew all the stories that had ever been told.

BILL So you were a bit of a brain-box.

GILL It was just interesting. But do you know, sometimes I was just a little bit lonely. Cos there was never anybody to play with. Dad, dad can I have someone round to play?

BILL No time darling, not with all your books to read.

GILL Dad.

BILL Maybe tomorrow. Not today.

GILL And so it carried on. Till one day.

BILL Ah Yelena, my little Princess.

GILL He wasn't really like that.

BILL What?

GILL My dad. He wasn't all creaky and bent like that. He was just a normal dad.

BILL He was a King.

GILL Well he was just a normal King.

BILL But it's more fun like this.

GILL It's not real.

BILL But it's still more fun.

GILL Well as long as they know that my dad wasn't really like that.

BILL Good news, Yelena, good news. You're to be married.

GILL I'm what?

BILL You're to be married.

GILL That's not good news.

BILL It most certainly is. I've found you a Prince.

GILL Someone I've never met?

BILL You'll meet him tomorrow. At the wedding.

GILL I am not marrying someone I don't know.

BILL You will do as you're told.

GILL I won't do it.

BILL You most certainly will. You've wasted your life so far with your nose always stuck in a book. Time to do something useful, like getting married.

GILL I haven't decided yet what I want to do with my life.

BILL I've decided for you.

GILL Do you love me, Dad?

BILL Yes. And that's why I've found you a particularly handsome Prince.

GILL Dad, it's my life. It's for me to choose.

BILL I'm old and wise and so can choose better than you can.

GILL Dad.

BILL Yes Yelena.

GILL How about this. I set a little task –a game – for this handsome Prince. If he manages to carry out the task then fine, I marry him. If not...

BILL If not?

GILL Well certainly I don't marry him. And perhaps we decide on a little punishment as well. So that other Princes think twice before wasting my time. We could have some fun, Dad.

BILL And what little punishment did you and your dad decide on?

GILL Wouldn't you like to know?

BILL But it wasn't the punishment you tried to frighten me with.

GILL How do you know?

BILL Cos I don't believe you're that fierce.

GILL So next morning...

BILL My turn now.

GILL Just a little bit more.

BILL You've had your go.

GILL Just what happened when the Prince arrived.

BILL And what you did to him?

GILL So next morning then?

BILL Good morning. I'm the Prince what's come to marry you.

GILL Good morning. Thank you for calling round. I'm afraid my father forgot to explain something rather important. Before you can marry me you have a task to complete. Nothing too terrifying. But if you fail in this task, then I'm afraid the marriage is off. And so is your head.

BILL I beg your pardon.

GILL It's quite usual you know. It happens all the time in the stories I read. So are you going to have a go at the task? If you succeed you marry me. If you don't then it's off with your head.

BILL Thank you for explaining that to me. I won't waste your time. I'm going.

GILL That's not what he said at all.

BILL Then he was an idiot.

GILL He was dazzled by my beauty.

BILL Well there you are. He was a complete idiot.

GILL He asked what the task was.

BILL So what's the task then?

GILL You have to hide somewhere where I can't find you.

BILL That's all?

GILL That's all. And you get three goes.

BILL I won't need three goes. One'll do fine.

GILL But the first go wasn't fine.

BILL Oops. Give me a moment.

GILL And the second go wasn't fine either.

BILL Ah. You're a bit good at this.

GILL Last chance.

Right then, your go. Carry on with your story.

BILL But what happened to him?

GILL Well he didn't marry me. Obviously.

BILL So you found him.

GILL I must have done.

BILL And then what happened to him? When you found him?

GILL He failed in his task.

BILL But you didn't though, did you? Not really.

GILL What happened when you let the naughty imp escape? That's what we all want to know. I bet the King was angry.

BILL You know what? I didn't wait to find out.

What a fool I am. That wasn't clever at all. I let the naughty imp go and I don't even know his name so he won't be able to help me.

GILL Did you call?

BILL It's you again.

GILL I thought you said my name.

BILL I don't know your name.

GILL Naughty imp – that's my name.

BILL Then I did say your name. What am I going to do now?

GILL Travel. That's what I suggest. You've spent the last ten years of your life guarding a tower. How boring is that. Travel. Have some adventures. Have some fun.

BILL Sounds good to me.

GILL Anything else I can help you with?

BILL Can't think of anything at the moment.

GILL Then I'll be off about some mischief.

BILL And I set off to have some great adventures.

I put to sea in a great big sailing ship. We were attacked by Pirates. I fought them off all by myself

GILL All by yourself?

BILL Well, with a bit of help from the naughty imp.

Then I went exploring in the wild woods. I made friends with the wolves. I fought off the bears.

GILL All by yourself?

BILL With a bit of help from the naughty imp.

I found myself struggling through a baking hot desert. Sand in my eyes. Dying for a drink. I thought perhaps this was one adventure too many. But I managed to find my way out.

GILL All by yourself?

BILL With a bit of help from the naughty imp. And a passing camel.

But do you know something. Despite having all these great adventures I was getting a bit lonely. I wanted someone to talk with. To really talk with.

Then one day I noticed this cave.

GILL You didn't go in?

BILL Why not?

GILL A deep dark cave.

BILL Very deep.

GILL And dark.

BILL Very dark.

GILL There might have been spiders.

BILL I like spiders.

GILL I don't believe you.

BILL They're delicious.

GILL You eat spiders.

BILL No of course not. Just joking you.

GILL It was still a daft thing to do. To go into a cave.

BILL If there's a cave, it has to be explored.

 And soon I found myself in a whole underground kingdom. With a Palace and everything. But there was no-one around. No-one to talk to.

 Through the Palace I wandered. Room after room. Fabulous wealth. Gold, silver, diamonds and pearls.

GILL But not all the rooms were done out so nicely. There was one room in particular, one room which wasn't done out nicely at all.

BILL Not yet. We haven't got there yet.

 And then I heard a rumbling. And a quaking. And the Palace was all of a-shaking. And I thought the whole lot was about to come tumbling down. But do you know what it was?

GILL I do, yes. Because I heard it too. In fact I heard it a lot more than you. And I think it's time I explained how that happened.

 It wasn't just one Prince who did his best to hide and didn't quite manage. Not just one Prince who lost his head.

BILL Lost his head?

GILL Fell madly in love with me. No. Eleven of them tried to hide and eleven of them failed.

BILL And they never knew how you knew.

GILL That's exactly right. I would just go up to my bedroom. Have a peep in my mirror.

BILL Your special mirror.

GILL My very special mirror. And then wherever they were hiding...

BILL In the darkest, dampest dungeon.

GILL Found you.

BILL At the top of the tallest tree.

GILL Found you.

BILL Right in the middle of a prickly rose bush.

GILL Too easy – found you, found you, found you.

BILL Yelena, I don't understand. I find you the handsomest and richest Princes in the world. You could be living a life of luxury. And what do you do? You play these silly games and every time the Princes lose. There won't be any Princes left at all if this carries on.

GILL You don't get it, do you dad. I'm not interested in Princes and their riches and a life of luxury. I want someone to talk with, to really talk with and joke with. And someone who might just be a little bit clever.

BILL I don't know where you get such dreadful ideas. Not from me, that's for sure.

GILL My books couldn't talk with me exactly. But all the same, I learned a lot of wonderful things from my books. I learned how to make my mirror.

BILL Your special mirror.

GILL My very special mirror.

And I learned how to fly. I learned how to make a pair of wings to tie to my back that let me soar in the air, high in the air - like an eagle. No-one could catch me now. If I needed peace and quiet then away I flew, up into the clouds, drifting on the wind, looking down on the earth below.

BILL Yelena, come down here this instant. I wish you wouldn't do that, it's really not very ladylike.

GILL Did I care about being ladylike? I was free. People knew all about me. The flying Princess. The Princess who couldn't be caught.

BILL But when I met you, you had been caught.

GILL Yes I had. I was tricked.

He came zooming out of the clouds. I had gone for an early morning fly. I'd never seen anyone else up in the sky. But suddenly there he was, flying straight towards me. On a carpet. A flying carpet.

BILL Yelena. It's Yelena isn't it. The cunning Princess. Full of clever tricks.

GILL Who are you?

BILL I need your help Yelena. I need you to use your cunning if you will?

GILL You must be a magician if you can fly.

BILL Oh no not really. Not nearly as powerful as you. Say you'll help.

GILL What is it you want me to do?

BILL It's my son, you see.

GILL Your son.

BILL He sits all day with his nose in a book. It isn't healthy. Not what a boy should do.

GILL Does he?

BILL And then he tries to talk to me about all that he's read but I don't understand. Don't know half of what he's going on about.

GILL Is that right?

BILL Do you think you could have a word.

GILL It's not really what I do.

BILL I can't think of anyone else in the whole wide world clever enough to talk with him. Oh Yelena, wise and cunning Yelena, say you will.

GILL I'll think about it.

BILL It'll be too late. He's fading away in front of my very eyes. Forgets to eat, forgets to sleep he's so stuck in his books.

GILL He needs my help.

BILL He does indeed.

GILL Of course I'll come.

BILL Then hold on tight to the carpet.

GILL Are we nearly there yet?

BILL Not far now.

GILL This is further than I thought.

BILL Keep tight hold.

GILL Perhaps I should have told my father.

BILL We're about to land.

 My palace is in this cave.

GILL A palace in a cave?

BILL Why not? My kingdom is under the ground. You must have read about it in one of your books.

GILL I'm not sure I did.

BILL So perhaps there are still some things for you to learn.

GILL Perhaps there are.

BILL Well here we are. Just through here.

GILL Where's your son?

BILL Now here's the great sadness in my life, Yelena. I don't have a son.

GILL I don't understand.

BILL Nor a daughter. I don't have a child at all.

GILL Then why have you brought me here?

BILL I'd like a son. I hope one day to have a son. And so I've brought you here to wait until that time when I do have a son. Because you will make him a wonderful wife.

GILL But that's terrible. You're keeping me here until you have a son for me to marry.

BILL That's exactly right.

GILL Well I'm not staying.

BILL Oh but you are.

GILL I shall spread my wings and fly in the sky.

BILL Not down here in my underground palace you won't. You will be comfortable enough but this door will stay firmly locked with you behind it.

GILL And there I stayed for a very long time.

BILL Until I came climbing down into the underground palace.

GILL Yes you did. And I tricked you.

BILL Yes you did.

I hear a rumbling. And a quaking. And the Palace is all of a-shaking. And I think the whole lot is about to come tumbling down. But do you know what it is? It's somebody snoring. I gently push open a door. And there I see him. The naughty imp pretty near snoring his head off.

So this is where the naughty imp lives. And he must be the king of this underground world.

In between all this terrible snoring I can hear him muttering something in his sleep.

GILL If only I had a son. If only I had a son. If only I had a son.

BILL He wants a son? Well, if he wants a son to share all these riches with I'll find him a son all right.

There's a book by the side of his bed. How a Prince is Born. A Prince can only be born from a Queen. That's obvious. But it's not very helpful. Because there isn't a Queen around here. There's only King Naughty Imp. So I carefully scrape out the word Queen and I carefully write in the word King. A Prince can only be born from a King. Brilliant.

GILL No, that's stupid. How can a Prince be born from a King. A baby has to be born from a woman not from a man. So a prince can only be born from a Queen.

BILL Well of course I knew that. But maybe the naughty imp didn't. Not if he was having to read a book about it.

Anyway, then something happened that was a bit rude.

GILL How rude?

BILL His body made a noise.

GILL What kind of noise?

BILL A rude noise. The kind of noise your body makes my accident. When it doesn't mean to.

GILL A kind of [FART SOUND] noise?

BILL Yes, a kind of [FART SOUND] noise.

GILL You can't talk about that, it's rude.

BILL Well I'm not wanting to be rude. But it's important for the story that everybody understands what happened. So they can see how clever I was.

GILL But you mustn't say the word.

BILL So King naughty Imp is asleep. And by accident his body makes this huge big noise.

GILL [FART SOUND]

BILL And it was such a loud sound that it woke him up.

GILL Who are you? What are you doing here?

BILL I'm your son. I've just been born.

GILL What nonsense. I recognise you.

BILL You know the big noise your body made just now by accident that woke you up?

GILL Yes?

BILL That was me being born.

GILL Is that how it works?

BILL Yes. Look in the book.

GILL A Prince can only be born from a King. Oh I see. Well I'm a king.

BILL And I'm a Prince. Cos I've just been born from you. When you did that loud noise.

GILL But I'm sure I've seen you before.

BILL No you can't have done, cos I've only just been born.

GILL You're that young idiot that let me out of the tower.

BILL No, the idiot had brown eyes. My eyes are blue.

GILL Did he? I never noticed.

BILL Are you happy to have a son?

GILL Very happy indeed. Come on then son, let me show you round your new home. The emerald entertainments room. The diamond dining-room. The ruby bedroom – that's for you. The Pearl Palace. All of this is yours my son.

BILL And this door? What's behind this door?

GILL That door is to stay locked. You're not ready for that door, son. Not yet. Maybe one day. But not yet.

BILL So what's behind it.

GILL I'm off to spread a little mischief around the world. Here are the keys to the Palace. You can go wherever you like except through that door. Do you understand?

BILL I understand.

GILL On no account are you to unlock that door.

BILL I understand.

GILL I have a son!

BILL Well you can't help but wonder. After you've played in the Pearl Palace, slept in the Ruby Bedroom, had dinner in the Diamond Dining-Room you need something else to do.

What's behind that door? Why can't I unlock it? He thinks I'm not ready. But I am. I'm ready for anything.

Hello. Is there anybody there? Or any thing? Hello?

GILL Hello?

BILL Hello?

GILL Who are you? You're not the Naughty Imp. Or are you just tricking me.

BILL No I'm not the Naughty Imp. I'm his son.

GILL He hasn't got a son.

BILL He has now. It's me.

GILL Will you let me out of here.

BILL No I can't.

GILL Please.

BILL I can't. I'm not allowed.

GILL You're the Naughty Imp playing a trick on me.

BILL I'm not. Really I'm not.

GILL I don't believe you. You might sound young but I bet you're just as old and as bent and as ugly as ever.

BILL No I really am quite young. And pretty handsome as it happens.

GILL Now that I really do not believe.

BILL You'd be surprised.

GILL Surprise me.

BILL All right I will.

[HE OPENS THE DOOR]

I shouldn't have done that.

You're beautiful.

GILL So you're not the Naughty Imp.

BILL No.

GILL You're his son. You don't look like him at all.

BILL It's a long story.

GILL I haven't time to hear it. Can I have a glass of water?

BILL Of course you can.

GILL And now I must fly.

BILL No wait – who are you? Come back. You're beautiful.

GILL What are you standing there like that for?

BILL Oh dear.

GILL Is that all you have to say?

BILL Oh dear oh dear oh dear.

GILL Don't tell me.

BILL I opened the door.

GILL You opened the door.

BILL And I saw her standing there.

GILL You saw Yelena. The cunning Princess.

BILL Is that who she was.

GILL Was?

BILL I let her go.

GILL You let her go.

BILL I let her go.

GILL You're an idiot – what are you?

BILL I'm an idiot.

GILL You're a nincompoop no less.

BILL I'm a nincompoop no less.

GILL Do you know how much planning went into catching Yelena? You think it's easy to trap the cunning Princess? She's the wisest and the wiliest woman in the whole wide world.

BILL What does wily mean?

GILL Wily means she uses all the tricks she knows to stop getting caught.

BILL And I let her go.

GILL Are you sure you're not the halfwit who let me out of the tower?

BILL No the halfwit's hair was fair.

GILL Did he? I never noticed.

BILL I'll find her.

GILL You think?

BILL I have to. I know I have to be with her.

GILL You don't stand a chance.

BILL I think I do. From the way she looked at me I really think I do.

GILL You're dreaming.

BILL If I am then it's a very nice dream indeed.

GILL Did you really think I was beautiful?

BILL Of course I did. I thought you were the most extraordinary person I'd ever met.

GILL Extraordinary's not the same as beautiful.

BILL It's better the beautiful.

GILL Are you sure?

BILL And what did you think of me?

GILL I was just thinking how to escape. How to trick you. I wasn't thinking anything else.

BILL No there was something in the way you looked at me.

GILL You're making it up.

BILL Where do I start looking for her?

GILL You start by borrowing my flying carpet. Then you travel over the mountains and through the clouds until you see the sparkle of the Great Lake. Yelena the Wise lives by the side of that lake.

BILL Thank you. Wish me luck.

GILL You'll need it son. Others before you have tried and failed. She's full of cunning tricks. And she's dangerous too. Take care.

BILL High in the air the magic carpet flew me.

GILL I was already flying through the air on my wings. The freedom of the sky after having been stuck underground for so long.

BILL Finally I saw you in the distance. A tiny speck. I slowed down so you wouldn't see me.

GILL The Great Lake sparkling below. How I longed for a swim. To wash away the grime of the underworld. So down I flew.

BILL And I followed at a distance.

GILL I untied my wings from my back.

BILL I hid myself behind a bush.

GILL Which bush?

BILL The laurel bush.

GILL Ah, that's where you were.

I hung my wings on a tree. My precious wings.

BILL Her wings. Ah, her wings.

GILL The cool, clear, cleanness of the water. A dream of mermaids and fish and the fresh splash of water round my body.

So that when I came out of the water...

BILL Yelena. Yelena the Wise. The cunning Princess.

GILL The son of the Naughty Imp.

BILL Not really. Clever-Clogs, that's who I am.

GILL Not really the son of the Naughty Imp.

BILL Not really. I tricked him.

GILL Then you must be Clever-Clogs indeed.

BILL I want you to meet my real family. My father's dead but I want you to meet my mother.

GILL Why do you want me to meet your mother?

BILL Because I want you to marry me.

GILL Don't be ridiculous. Where are my wings?

BILL I have your wings. So you can't fly away. You can't escape.

GILL Give me my wings.

BILL Certainly not. You'll just fly away from me.

GILL Do you really think you can catch me if I don't want to be caught?

BILL Come and meet my mother.

GILL You think you're clever, Clever-Clogs.

BILL Come and meet my mother. And we rode together on the magic carpet.

GILL This is going to be difficult.

BILL What do you mean?

GILL Well now there's you, me and your mother. Three characters, two actors.

BILL Good. We're going to have be cunning. Mother!

MOTHER Where have you been Clever-Clogs? We haven't seen you for years.

BILL Sorry mum, I've been busy. This is Yelena, we're getting married.

MOTHER Oh you are, are you. So what sort of girl have you brought home to me?

BILL She's a princess, mum. And she's very wise and very cunning.

MOTHER Oh she is, is she? Well I hope she's good enough for my son.

BILL Have we still got that old chest mum? The one with the heavy iron lock?

MOTHER Of course we have. It's in the corner where it always was.

BILL There's something I need to lock in there, mum. And now I'm off to see the King. I'm going to invite him to my wedding. You can start getting the wedding feast ready, mum.

MOTHER Oh I can, can I? Stays away for years on end then expects a wedding feast. Young people nowadays. When I married his father we had a crust of bread and a cup of tea. And we thought we were the lucky ones. And now they all expect a feast.

GILL Let me help.

MOTHER That's very sweet of you dear. So you're a bit of a princess are you?

GILL That's right.

MOTHER And what sort of a princess are you dear?

GILL I'm not sure what you mean.

MOTHER Are you one of these posh, stuck up princesses, dear, think you're too good for the likes of me and my son?

GILL No, I'm not one of those princesses at all. Mother?

MOTHER Yes dear?

GILL You don't mind if I call you mother since soon I'm to marry your son?

MOTHER I don't mind at all, dear. Call me mum if you like.

GILL I ought to try on my dress.

MOTHER Oh yes dear. How lovely.

GILL It's locked in the chest mother. And Clever-Clogs has taken the key.

MOTHER Well he's not such a Clever-Clogs after all. Because I've got another one.

GILL We could have a little peep together, couldn't we?

MOTHER Of course we could. No harm done.

GILL Mother, I'm dreadfully thirsty. Do you think you could fetch me a glass of water?

MOTHER Why not dear. Fetch and carry, fetch and carry.

Where have you gone? Dear, where are you? Where have you gone?

BILL Mum, he's coming. The King is coming. The King is coming to my wedding.

MOTHER That's nice dear.

BILL Yelena will be so pleased.

MOTHER Do you think so dear?

BILL I know so. Where is she?

MOTHER Well there's a question.

BILL The chest. How did she open the chest.

MOTHER She wanted to try on the dress.

BILL What dress?

MOTHER The dress in the chest, dear.

BILL There was no dress in the chest. Just her wings. She's tricked us.

MOTHER Doesn't surprise me dear. I always thought she was that sort of princess. Never much liked her.

BILL And the King is coming and everything.

MOTHER What a shame.

BILL I've been a fool. It's finished. My adventures are over. I'm obviously not clever enough.

MOTHER Never mind dear. It's nice to have you back.

BILL Even this magic carpet isn't mine. Better take it back where it belongs.

MOTHER All right dear. But hurry won't you. I'll put the kettle on.

BILL My heart was heavy as I rode the carpet back to the underground palace.

GILL Would you really have given up?

BILL I very nearly did.

GILL You'd have let me go?

BILL I didn't think you wanted to know me. And you were obviously a whole lot smarter than me.

GILL Obviously. But you're very funny.

BILL I don't think I'm funny. And I don't know anybody else thinks I'm funny.

GILL But I do.

So son. You're back. She's tricked you then. I told you she would.

BILL I have to tell you something. I'm not really your son.

GILL Are you not?

BILL No. You know that stuff about your body making a noise by accident and me being born?

GILL Yes.

BILL It isn't true.

GILL I know.

BILL You know?

GILL It was a quite ridiculous story. I've always known exactly who you are. You're Clever-Clogs. You were a guard. You let me out of the tower.

BILL So why did you treat me like I was your son?

GILL Because I like you. And I wish I had a son. So then, what next?

BILL I'm giving up. I'm going home.

GILL Without Yelena?

BILL She's not for me.

GILL My son giving up? I don't think so.

BILL I'm not your son.

GILL You are if you wish to be. Stop trying to kidnap her. Win her fair and square.

BILL How?

GILL If you're my son you're a Prince. If you're a Prince then you can try the task.

BILL The task?

GILL You have to hide. If she can't find you then you marry her.

BILL And if she does find me?

GILL She'll have your head off your shoulders. So they say.

BILL Do they now? All the same I'll do it. I'll win her fair and square.

GILL Take this. It might help.

BILL What's this.

GILL Steel and flint. Strike these together and you'll make a spark. Light some dry grass and a great grey eagle will appear to carry you to the clouds. If Yelena finds you there then strike a spark into the lake. A giant fish will appear to carry you in his mouth to the bottom. If Yelena finds you there then truly there is nowhere to hide.

BILL But isn't this using tricks again?

GILL It's only a little bit of trickery. What do you expect from a Naughty Imp? Good luck son. Off you go.

BILL Thank you – father.

GILL I was waiting for you. I was hoping you would come. I was looking forward to the next part of the battle.

BILL Why did you make it so hard?

GILL I don't know the answer to that. And now it gets difficult again.

BILL Why?

GILL Because there are three characters again. You, me and my father.

FATHER You've come to what?

BILL I've come to carry out the task. I'm determined to marry your daughter.

FATHER Out of the question. This task is only for Princes.

BILL That's what I am. I'm a Prince.

FATHER You don't look like a Prince to me. Much too shabby. Who's your father?

BILL King Naughty Imp, King of the Underworld.

FATHER Oh he is, is he? Didn't know he has a son.

BILL Well he has. And here he is.

FATHER No, sorry. The task has been called off. My daughter seems to have lost interest.

GILL Says who dad?

FATHER Well haven't you. You seem to have lost interest to me.

GILL It's always quite fun to see them try dad. Isn't it? You don't really think he'll do it do you?

FATHER Him? Doesn't stand a chance.

GILL Then why not let him try?

FATHER Why not indeed? You know the rules? Three chances to hide. And when you fail then it's off with your head.

BILL If I can't marry Yelena, then it might as well be off with my head.

FATHER Brave words, young man. Let's see what you can do. We'll close our eyes and count to 50.

[CLEVER-CLOGS STRIKES THE FLINT AND LIGHTS SOME GRASS. A GIANT EAGLE APPEARS]

EAGLE Climb on my back, Clever-Clogs. We'll fly high above the third layer of clouds.

From here she won't be able to see us at all. There's nothing between us and the heavens.

GILL But it was all so easy. Up I went to my bedroom. Looked into my mirror.

BILL Your special mirror.

GILL My very special magical mirror. And there I could see everything in the whole wide world. None of the Princes had flown on an eagle before but even so I could see you. Up above the third layer of cloud. Nothing between you and the heavens. Come down Prince Clever-Clogs. Back down to earth with you.

Second chance.

BILL And if this one fails then there's nowhere to hide.

[CLEVER-CLOGS STRIKES THE FLINT. A HUGE FISH APPEARS]

FISH Come on then, Clever-Clogs. Climb into my mouth. I'll swim to the bottom of the lake and bury myself in the mud. She'll never find us in the gloom.

GILL But it was easy-peasy. Up I went to my bedroom. Looked into my mirror.

BILL Your special mirror.

GILL My very special magical mirror. And there I saw you in the fish's mouth buried in the mud at the bottom of the lake. Not all the trickery in the world can help you Prince Clever-Clogs. Back up here you come.

Last chance.

BILL That's it then. The Naughty Imp himself said that if you found me at the bottom of the lake then there was nowhere else to hide.

GILL One... two...

BILL And then an idea came to me. Where this idea came from I have no idea. But suddenly I had this idea in my brain.

GILL You have a brain.

BILL I know sometimes it seems like I don't but just occasionally it comes up with good ideas. And this was an especially good idea.

When she sees me she's in her bedroom. There must be something in her bedroom that helps her.

And while Yelena was counting with her eyes closed I crept up to her bedroom. And when I looked in her mirror suddenly I could see everything in the world that there was to see.

So that's how she knows where I'm hiding.

GILL Forty-nine... fifty. Coming ready or not.

BILL Where to hide? There's nowhere. Hide behind the mirror.

[HE EXACTLY MIRRORS HER MOVEMENTS AND EXPRESSIONS]

GILL Where is he now? I can't see him. What's happening? I can only see me. I can't see the whole wide world anymore. Just me. And I'm not sure I like what I see. Do I really look so cross and fierce. No I don't like it. I hate it, I hate it.

And I smashed the mirror.

BILL Into a thousand pieces.

GILL So there you are. You've won.

BILL No it's us who's won. We're both the winners.

GILL We are.

BILL We are.

 And that's our story.

GILL Our story of Clever Clogs.

BILL And the cunning Princess.

 And now tell me. Would you really have done it? Would you really have had my head cut off? If I hadn't hidden behind the mirror so you couldn't find me, is that really what you would have done?

GILL Do you know what?

BILL What?

GILL You'll never know. Will you?

 What a very good thing that it's just a story.