

## SILLY-BILLY AND THE SPIES

In the meanwhile, Johnny, all dizzy and confused by the potion of oblivion, was flying over the jungle and was singing:

“My name is Silly-Billy  
The job I do so well  
Is find the spies and take them  
To the Witch for show and tell.

“I am a spy catcher  
And a magician too  
To find you is my duty  
Spies, out, all of you.”

Suddenly he spotted a suspicious looking object that was flying in front of him.

“This is certainly a spy”, said Silly-Billy-Johnny to himself. “I am running to arrest him. Frrr ...”

He stretched his legs to the back, he stretched his arms to the front, the way Superman does, and he rushed like a bullet towards the unknown object. As he was approaching it he noticed that it was a flying rocking chair.

“I caught you, spies, you can’t escape from me”, roared Johnny, and grabbed the chair.

“Ifyufindme, someone is holding on to our chair”, said Lizzie, and she bent over to see.

“Let go, let go of the chair”, shouted Ifyufindme. “Can’t you see that you are disturbing our flight?”

“I caught you. Now we’ll go directly to Witch Higgledy-Piggledy”, yelled Johnny.

Liz was out of her mind with joy when she saw Johnny.

“Oh, Johnny, Johnny, brother dear, you are finally here. Let’s get out of this place ... Come, climb on to the chair, there is room for the three of us.”

Without saying a single word Johnny kept pulling the chair toward a big red mountain.

“Get off right away”, he ordered.

He took a ribbon from his pocket and tied Liz’s and Ifyufindme’s hands.

Liz could not believe her eyes.

“Johnny, what on earth are you doing? Don’t you see that I am your sister, Lizzie?”

“I have no sister and my name is not Johnny. Johnny? Whoever heard of such a name? I am the terrific Silly-Billy, the brave young man in the service of Witch Higgledy-Piggledy, and I arrest you in the name of the law of Planet Allispossible.”

“The Witch gave him the syrup of oblivion for sure”, said Ifyufindme.

“Oh, God! What are we going to do now? My brother does not recognize me. Please do something, Ifyufindme.”

“Now our hands are tied, Lizzie. We’ll just have to wait. What else can we do?”

“Go on then, you megaspies. You’ll present yourselves to the Witch”, said Johnny and pushed Lizzie and Ifyufindme towards the opening of the mountain. He put them in one of the elevators and they went down to the ground floor, 950 levels down, that is. Liz was trying to make Johnny remember.

“Johnny, remember, you have a friend Manuel, he is all round and chubby and tomorrow is his birthday?”

Johnny scratched his head.

“Manuel ... Manuel ...” This name rang a bell. But then he thought

“Nonsense. These guys are megaspies, they are trying to mislead me. But they’re not going to succeed.”

He took two handkerchiefs from his pocket and he tied them around their faces, covering their mouths.

“Now, you will not talk”, he said. “Just be reasonable and walk.”

When they came to the horizontal elevators Johnny pressed number 333.

They arrived at a long yellow hallway. A blue hallway followed the yellow one, and another one, mustard color, followed the blue. At the end of the third hallway, Johnny opened a door and ... they found themselves in a perfectly round room. At the center of the room there was a round crystal table. In the middle of the table there was a three-legged seat, and on it was sitting ... their very own Professor. All around him were elderly

gentlemen. Liz wanted to scream, but her mouth was covered with the handkerchief.

“All the accused are here”, said Witch Higgledy-Piggledy.

“Let the Green Trial begin”, said Solon in a loud voice.

The Seven Sages stood in a row one after the other. Prudence approached Liz and Ifyufindme and she removed the handkerchiefs from their mouths.

“We don’t wish to silence people with gags”, she said. You will speak freely. Then she went near the Professor, she unfastened the seatbelt and said, “Follow the Seven.”

So they started walking in this order: The Seven Sages went first, the Professor, who was staggering slightly, followed after them, Witch Higgledy-Piggledy followed behind the Professor, and behind her followed Johnny, Liz and Ifyufindme. Prudence was the last one to follow behind everybody else. The two sages up front were holding the Golden Tripod. They all left the Courtroom and they proceeded to a long green hallway. Finally, they entered a large room, and at that moment, the voice of the Tree was heard saying:

“Witch Higgledy-Piggledy, pronounce the charges, please.”

The Witch pushed with her toes and she was thrown high up, riding on a ... shovel.

“The spies have stolen my armchair, so for the time being I have to use this. ATTENTION EVERYBODY.”

She took a big funnel, brought it to her mouth and started in a loud voice:

“FIRST CHARGE: ASSASSINATION OF THE FLOWERS AND PLANTS

SECOND CHARGE: ASSASSINATION OF THE TREES

THIRD CHARGE: ASSASSINATION OF THE FISH

FOURTH CHARGE: ASSASSINATION OF THE BIRDS“FIFTH CHARGE:

ASSASSINATION OF THE ANIMALS

SIXTH CHARGE: ASSASSINATION OF THE CHILDREN

SEVENTH CHARGE: ASSASSINATION OF THE EARTH, THE AIR, AND THE WATER.”

Then the voice of the Tree said, “Let the flowers of the Earth come in. The Wisest of the Wise cannot equal the wisdom of a flower.”

All at once the room was transformed into a magnificent flower garden.

All the flowers of the world were represented in there. From the humblest wildflowers, the poppies and the chamomile to the most noble ones, such as roses, lilies and orchids. And the most unusual aspect of this garden was that the flowers could talk. They were moving their little heads around and were talking to each other in delicate and feeble voices or in stronger voices, or in soft melodic voices or even in piercing voices sometimes. The flowers were talking about the three accused ones.

“This kid here cut a wildflower one day and threw it out, just for the fun of it”, said a red carnation, slapping Johnny angrily in the forehead. “He is guilty of first degree murder. He has to be punished.”

“Hey! What’s going on? Where am I?” asked Johnny, shaking his head. The carnation’s slap had brought him back, he had recovered from the effect of the Witch’s herb.

“Oh, Johnny, my dear, dear brother. We are in Court”, said Lizzie, “and you can’t even remember who you are. Now they’ll give us the death sentence.”

“Lizzie ... what are you doing here? Didn’t you go to record stories?” asked Johnny.

“Oh, Johnny, you finally woke up. Look, Ifyufindme, look, my brother woke up! Liz was jumping and dancing with joy.”

“I agree with the carnation”, said a purple dahlia. “The inconsiderate people of Earth have to hear our voices.

“On Earth they believe that we cannot talk”, said a narcissus.

“Because the people on Earth cannot hear anything but their own voices”, mocked a lovely white daisy.

“Can you imagine that? The people on Earth believe that only they have a voice. They claim that neither the animals, nor the birds, not even us, the plants, can talk.”

The flowers burst out laughing.

“As far as some ‘wise’ professors are concerned, some who think they know it all”, laughed a fragrant lily, “like this foolish one here who came to our Planet uninvited ...”

The Professor was sitting on the Tripod with this head down.

“Say something, Professor, sir, don’t you hear the accusations thrown at you?” Liz elbowed the Professor.

“What, what?” said the Professor, surprised. Lady ... Lady Imprudence’s wine was so good. I have to make a note of it in my notebook.”

The Professor looked for his notebook, and then he remembered that he didn’t have one.

“A notebook and a pencil, please”, he ordered.

A notebook and a pencil danced right in front of his nose.

“The tree is teasing me again”, he mumbled. He grabbed the notebook at once and started chasing the pencil around.

“Enough”, said the voice of the Tree sternly. “Can’t you see, sir, that the Trial has already started and you are causing delays. Let the vegetables come in.”

The next moment the flowers vanished and the room was transformed into a vegetable garden. The vegetables were talking louder than the flowers.

“Us vegetables have been the victims of utter exploitation by the humans and it doesn’t even cross their minds to thank us, declared a tomato”, all red from anger.

“They are giving us hormones to grow larger and heavier”, sighed an enormous zucchini.

“And they couldn’t care less if they make us look heavy as if we were pregnant”, complained a chubby eggplant.

“My grandfather was a small cucumber, crunchy and tender. And here I am, big like a giant and full of seeds”, grumbled a huge cucumber.

“We have already come to a verdict, Wise Tree of Knowledge”, declared the onion, angrily. “All the accused are guilty of high treason.”

“GUILTY! GUILTY! GUILTY!” shouted all the vegetables in unison.

“Thank you all. Now it is the turn of the shrubs and bushes”, said the Tree.

When the shrubs and the bushes entered, the vegetable garden was suddenly transformed into a field covered with shrubs.

“The humans set fire and burnt us to create building grounds and lots”, shouted all the shrubs together in chorus. And right after they rushed to surround the Professor and the two children. The bushes were hard and thorny and they scratched the arms and legs of the children, and there were also smears of blood on their faces.

“GUILTY! GUILTY! GUILTY!” shouted all the shrubs together.

“Help! Help!” screamed Liz.

“Enough”, said the voice of the Tree. “Let the Trees come in.”

And at that moment the room was transformed into a forest with tall, towering trees.

“This is him, I recognize him”, said a eucalyptus tree, bending its trunk threateningly over the Professor. “He was present when my brother was being slaughtered in cold blood. “Assassin! The assassin should be tried”,

shouted the eucalyptus tree, and all the trees together repeated like an echo: "The assassins should be tried! The assassins should be tried!"

"We have heard enough", said the voice of the Tree again. "What does the defendant have to say?"

Prudence got up.

"We accept the charge", she said. "Professor Mightysharp is guilty."

"Whaaat? What is this woman saying?" questioned the Professor, who was still somewhat dizzy from the wine.

"Professor, sir, they have just proclaimed you guilty", shouted Liz to the Professor. "Why aren't you protesting?"

"I am protesting very strongly and I am denying every accusation."

"Too late now. Your lawyer has accepted the charges", said the voice of the Tree.

"This woman is not my lawyer. I don't accept a woman as my lawyer."

At that moment Witch Higgledy-Piggledy, who up to now was following the events quietly riding on her shovel, rushed towards the Professor.

"Because of what you have just now said, you master spy, I will turn you into a frog this very moment. Tweedle-dee tweedle-daa and rib-rib ribbit rabbit", shouted the Witch, and she touched him with her shovel. And right away the Professor turned into a slippery brown frog.

"Oh, my God! Our Professor is a frog", shouted Liz. "What are we going to do now, Johnny?"

Then the trees started moving their trunks and branches menacingly, and shaking their leaves and murmuring:

“The assassins to the dock, the assassins to the dock ... We will not wait patiently, we will not wait patiently.”

The Professor-Frog was leaping from here to there and everywhere screaming: “Ribbit! Ribbit! Ribbit!”

Ifyufindme whispered to Liz, “I’m telling you, Lizzie, only a miracle could save us now.”

Liz, Johnny and Ifyufindme were feeling helpless. They crowded together and all three of them were waiting for the miracle, which, in fact, didn’t take long to happen.