

The clever girl

Once upon a time, many years ago, there was a rich man who had a wagon and a poor man who had a mare. One night, when the two men were lodged at the same inn, the poor man's mare gave birth to a colt. But the mare was standing on a hill so the newborn colt rolled downhill until he came to a halt between his mother and the wagon.

When the rich man saw what had happened, he grinned and told the poor man that his wagon had given birth to a colt. The poor man told him not to say such nonsense. The mare was the mother of his colt and it was impossible for a wagon to give birth to a horse. And this ridiculous argument was the start of a story that all the people in the land still remember with admiration--the story of: The Clever Girl

Well, since the rich man and the poor man couldn't see eye to eye, they went to the king, who was so bored traipsing up and down the palace that he thought he'd have some fun by playing a while with his two subjects. After hearing them both out, he told them that to decide who was right, they'd have to answer four riddles: What is the strongest and fastest thing in the world? What is the world's best source of nutrition? What is the softest thing in the world? And what is the most beautiful thing in the world?

The next day the rich man answered that the strongest, fastest thing in the world was His Majesty's best horse; the best source of nutrition was His Majesty's fattest pig; the softest thing in the world was His Majesty's feather pillow; and the most beautiful thing in the world was His Majesty's portrait.

Then the king summoned the poor man who answered that the strongest, fastest thing in the world was the wind; the Earth was the best source of nutrition since it fed all human beings; the softest thing in the world was a hand because when sleeping people always lean their face on their hand and there is nothing softer than a caress; and finally, there was nothing more beautiful than a sound sleep.

The king, astonished and baffled by his answers, asked him if anyone had helped him. And the poor man's eyes shone as he told the king that his seven-year-old daughter had helped him.

But the king was miffed that a young girl--and the daughter of a poor wretch at that --could answer his riddles so astutely and wisely, so he decided to teach her a lesson. He gave the man a thread and told him that since his daughter was so clever, he wanted a towel woven by her with that thread by the next day. The poor man went home terrified because he knew it was impossible for his daughter to find the time to do it. But when he got home, his daughter set his mind at ease.

The next day, the man returned to the palace and gave the king a branch saying that his daughter wanted him to know that she would be glad to weave the towel that he had asked for, but that she would do it on a loom that His Majesty would have built with that branch.

The king was furious when he heard these words, but he had to swallow them in silence because

he was left speechless. When he finally replied to the poor man he said,

"I order your daughter to appear before me tomorrow morning the way I will now tell you."

The poor man went home trembling because of what he had to tell his daughter.

"The king told me," he explained, "that you have to go to the palace tomorrow morning, but you must not be dressed or naked, you must not go on foot or on horseback, and you must bring a gift but no present."

His daughter set his mind at ease. And early next morning, she took off her clothes, mounted a hare and set out for the palace.

When she arrived in front of His Majesty, her body covered by a simple net, she offered him a quail, but just as the king stretched out his hand to take the gift, the quail flew off and the king was left without a present.

The king, amazed at how the child had figured out how to obey his orders, saw he had lost and asked her to be his servant, but the girl said she had to help her father fish in the apple tree. The king smiled and said that everyone knew that what she was saying made no sense. Then the girl answered that since His Majesty was so wise, why was he taking so long to decide something that everyone knew: that colts were born from mares and not from wagons.

The king saw she was right, so the newborn horse belonged to the poor man. And after saying that, he went back to walking around the palace as bored as ever, while the girl went home with her father.

Script: Manel Riera-Eures

- 
- 
- Amb el suport de 

© CCRTV Interactiva, S.A. | Televisió de Catalunya, S.A.

- [Avís legal](#) |
- [Segell de qualitat](#) |
- [Contacta 54€0](#) |
- - [Idiomes](#)
 - [Català](#)
 - [Castellano](#)
 - [English](#)