

LEGEND: WHEEL OF MISFORTUNE

by Eoin Dignan

This story is based on two fairy tales: *Jiří and the Wheel*, and *The Evil Stepmother of the Machoca Abyss*. It's also inspired by historical events, local architecture and landscapes, three cultural traditions (Ride of the Kings, Neckyada and Walpurgis Night), and present-day Brno.

Story 1

Room 1: THE PUB

The year is 1638 and your name is Jiří Birk. It is 7 years before the invasion of the Swedes and life in Lednice is idyllic. Wine sourced fresh from the Palavian hills, a Unesco Biosphere Reserve, is less than a morning's hike away and flows into Lednice like fresh spring water.

But you are not in a celebratory mood. You are alone in a pub, slumped on your stool, your head flat against the table, drowning your sorrows. You have been sent into exile from Brno by your family after rejecting control of the family business. Instead, you wanted to pursue your passion for technology and adventure. You wanted to build and sell wheels, and then wagons, and *then* see all of Europe.

And why not? Brno is almost exactly in the center of continental Europe. Yet, here you are, alone, your only friend is your reflection in an empty glass of wine. You haven't even finished one wheel. Everyone in Lednice knows about you - and your wheel that will never be completed. Your family were right; you aren't a businessman. You have 6 tolar as your entire life savings. You are a good-for-nothing who dreams of a wheel so perfect that it is impossible to complete.

Suddenly, you hear a trumpet.



“Shut up! I’m feeling sorry for myself”, you slur.

The trumpet announces the post arriving from Brno and there are two letters for you, Jiří Birk.

TASK:

DECIPHER THE MESSAGE FROM YOUR FAMILY. THERE ARE WINE STAINS ALL OVER IT SO YOU CAN’T READ EVERY LETTER. WHAT DOES IT SAY?

2nd Letter: Commission for a wheel. The Brno mayor needs a rep_____ent wheel for his stagecoach. He has heard that you have wa____d your life on a parti_____ly mag_____ent wheel. If you can bring it to the City Hall before the city gates close tomorrow at 9pm you _____ rec____ve 12 Tolars.

Your eyes light up: your first customer. It’s twice my life savings! I’m rich!

1st Letter: Jiří, your father o_e_ a 12 tolar ___bt to a creditor. He has one week to re____ it or he will be exe_ut_d. Bring 12 tolars or don’t come to the f_n_r_l.

Or maybe not. You have to be a good son. Your eyes fill with tears...

SOLUTIONS:

1st Letter: Commission for a wheel. The Brno mayor needs a replacement wheel for his wagon. He has heard that you have wasted your life on a particularly magnificent wheel. If you can bring it to the city hall before the city gates close tomorrow at 9pm you will receive 12 Tolars.

2nd Letter: Jiří, your father owes a 12 tolar debt to a creditor. He has one week to repay it. Bring 12 tolars or don’t come to the funeral.



>>> **Room 2**



Room 2: LOST IN PALAVA HILLS (92 WORDS):

You race to your home, which is in a chicken coop next to the bar. It is all you can afford. Finding your wheel is not a problem; it is there next to the chickens.

Deep breath. “It is time. Let’s finish this”.

Your indecisiveness and perfectionism ends now. You have always told the world that Jiří Birk’s wheel is incomplete. But you continue to work and work until the job is done. It isn’t perfect, but it’s worth a lot more than 12 Tolars. You’ve spent your heart and soul on it. It’s good enough to save your father’s life. Now, that’s all that counts.

But finding your way to Brno is more difficult than finishing the wheel. From Lednice, it is 66.9 kilometres away.

You start walking and pushing your wheel, but, because you are now slightly hungover, you immediately get lost in the hilly forests surrounding Lednice.

To your left, you see a Bright Light. Seems miraculous. “Jesus, is that you?”

To your right, you see a unicorn, but that is supernatural. >>> **Room 3**

Which way do you want to go?

TASK: SPOT THE DIFFERENCE:

Both are surrounded by forest. The Task will be a description of the two forest landscapes, e.g.

The landscape near the unicorn looks like:...

The landscape with the bright light looks like ...



Choose the picture that best matches the direction you want to go.



Room 3 UNICORN ADVENTURE: Neckyada

You are walking towards the unicorn when you notice your feet are quite wet, and now your knees are wet too. You look down. You are in a river. And it's quite big. Oooops! . You need to build a raft so you can reach the unicorn and ride it to Brno. This should be easy. Raft-building runs in Czech blood. There is a traditional festival called Neckyáda, which requires participants to build rafts out of crazy, improvised materials such as bathtubs ('Necky' in Czech). Now it's your turn.

>>> **Room 4**



Room 4 UNICORN ADVENTURE: Ride of the Kings - Are you nice or naughty?

Congratulations Jiří. You made it to the other side of the river. Unfortunately, you are not looking at a unicorn, it's just a horse with fancy clothes - of course! The horse is participating in the *Ride of the Kings*.

The Ride of the Kings is a Moravian Easter Festival that is on the UNESCO Representative List of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. The custom features prominently in *The Joke* by a Brno native, the famous author Milan Kundera, who also wrote *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*.

The horse's owner is sleeping next to it.

You have two options:

1. *You can steal the horse. The owner is sleeping. It would be easy.*
2. *You can offer the rider some money to borrow the horse and ride it to Brno before the gates close.*

The two options lead to two distinct tasks:

1. Horse Theft TASK: Match the conditional start and end sentences to steal the horse, tame it and pull the wheel.

>>> Room 5

2. Negotiation TASK: Match the conditional start and end sentences. Wake up the horse rider without upsetting him. Negotiate with the horse rider, agree to give him 6 Tolars, (all your savings) tame horse, pull wheel.

>>> Room 8





Room 5 HORSE THEFT

You arrive at Brno's city gates - Jiří Birk, with your wheel, here to rescue your father, but a horse thief. You decide to get rid of the horse before you arrive. You are afraid people will ask questions about where you got it. Your family all know you are poor; you don't want them to think you are also a thief. You leave the horse in a field outside the city limits because otherwise questions would be asked.

You reach City Hall. The Mayor is incredibly happy. You feel proud, and liberated, and no longer a big loser, and you are sure this will help your wheel-building career.

"This is extraordinary! How could you arrive in time? When we commissioned you it was merely a joke, a drunk bet between my friends and I!"

"Mr. Mayor, I am poor and I have no customers, nor the resources to build another wheel, but my wheel is so comfortable, and so aerodynamic that I could ride it all the way from Lednice without a single horse for help. Tell the world that if they want a wheel, Jiří Birk's are the best."

The mayor agrees, and he is so impressed he offers to hang the wheel in the City Hall as a permanent advertisement so that every Brnak could know of your work.

You thank the mayor but tell him you must run; your father's life is in danger. He gives you a small cloth bag with your 12 Tolars.

You have never felt prouder than bringing the 12 Tolars to your family. However, your contentment does not last long. Rumors soon spread all around the city. Can you hear them?

TASK: What are the rumours?

*E.g. Th_t J_r_ B_rk_s_ l_r. N_h_rs_? _t's th_ D_v_l th_t br__ght h_m h_r_!
H_'s l_d h_s s_ l_nd n_w h_'s c_m_t_ st_l_rs!*



SOLUTION:

That Jiří Birk is a liar. No horse? It's the Devil that brought him here! He's sold his soul and now he's come to steal ours!

The townspeople's threats soon come true. You are ostracised and die soon after. Your family abandons you. You have no money, no food, no funeral service and no obituary.

>>> **Room 6**



Room 6 TUGENDHAT ESCAPE

But this is not the end of Jiří's story. You stole a ceremonial horse from the Ride of the Kings. This was blasphemy, and you had not made amends to the rider. You do not die; you enter purgatory, and every night your soul wanders Brno's night sky.

How do we know this? We can see it in Brno's most famous piece of architecture, the Villa Tugendhat. The Villa was built between 1929 and 1930 and remains the Czech Republic's only Modern Architecture piece to be included on UNESCO's list of World Cultural Heritage Sites. Its most famous feature is its Onyx Wall, which shimmers and changes colour, becoming translucent at sunset and sunrise. This Onyx Wall was recently the subject of a Booker Prize-nominated novel, and a cinema adaptation, called *The Glass Room*.

The house is also famous for its troubled history. Why is that? Because it is haunted - by Jiří, who lives in the soil underneath, leaving only a shimmer upon its Onyx Wall as he comes and goes after dark.

>>> **Room 7**

Room 7 MISCHIEF-MAKING:

Why are you escaping, you wonder? To make mischief of course. When you make mischief your thoughts are strange. Even though you don't understand them, you feel compelled to act.

TASK: Unscramble your wild thoughts to see the results of your actions (Backwards sentences - aka demonic). Demonic Possession Generator:
<https://www.topster.net/text/umdrehen.html>.

With spaces:

.s'bukaJ ot oohs oohs oohs won ,oop fo sllems dna uoy ekil skool tl
.eutats a esiladnav dna htrim emos ekam s'tel ,hcruhC eht potA
.rehtom ruoy llet lliw l ro yaled t'nod dna yas l sa od ,retsam ruoy
won ma l ,krej hsilooof uoy ,kriB iriJ

SOLUTION: Jiří Birk, you foolish jerk, I am now your master, do as I say and don't delay or I will tell your mother. Atop the Church, let's make some mirth and vandalise a statue. It looks like you and smells of poo, now shoo shoo shoo to Jakub's.

.no tsaef ew luos ruoy si ti ,def era ew dna ,daed era uoy woN .teg
uoy tahw si siht dna sesroh esoht elots uoy ,tserof taht ni dnA
.detnuah ti ees ot ekil d?ew ,)OOB(hcruhC a edistuo ,eutats a
s'ereht oS

So there's a statue, outside a Church (BOO!), we'd like to see it haunted. And in that forest, you stole those horses and this is what you get. Now you are dead, and we are fed, it is your soul we feast on.



.no evom a teg og esaelp os gnolhcs a tsuj s'ti ,gnol oot ekat t'now tl
.nialliv a flesruoy ekam dna ereht tuo og ot eraperp esaelp woN .os
epoh yllaer ew ,sey seY ?deracs uoy era dna ,ereht uoy erA

Are you there, and are you scared? Yes yes, we really hope so. Now please prepare to go out there and make yourself a villain. It won't take too long, it's just a schlong so please go get a move on.

But other times, you have your own motives, like payback on the Mayor who must have spread those rumours and told the city that you had had the Devil's help.

Other times, you are simply motivated by boredom. Check out the epilogue for more examples of Brno's eccentric art.

>>> **Room 12 Epilogue**



Room 8 RENTED HORSE:

You arrive at Brno's city gates. Reluctantly, you give the young man his 6 Tolars. Now you officially have nothing in the world except your wheel. You get off the horse and, as soon as your feet touch the Brno soil, the rider and his horse _____.

You are confused, but you have no time to sit around and ponder. Your father's life

_____.

Choose 2 from the 4 idioms to complete the gaps:

- hangs by a thread
- vanish into thin air.
- Wrong
- Wrong

You reach City Hall. The Mayor is incredibly happy. You feel proud, and vindicated, and no longer a loser, and you are sure this will help your career.

"This is extraordinary! How could you arrive in time? When we commissioned you it was merely a prank, a drunk bet between my friends and I!"

You decide to do a little bit of marketing: "Mr. Mayor, I am poor and I have no customers, nor the resources to build another wheel, but my wheel is so comfortable, and so aerodynamic that I was able to ride and roll this single wheel the way from Lednice without a single horse for help. Tell the world that if they want a wheel, Jiří Birk's are the best."

The mayor agrees to advertise your wheel. When the parade is finished, he promises, he will hang your wheel in the City Hall as a permanent advertisement so that every Brnak can know about your work.

You thank the mayor profusely but tell him you must run . Your father's life is in jeopardy. You receive your 12 Tolars.



You have never felt prouder than bringing the 12 Tolars to your family.

However, your contentment does not last long.

Rumors soon spread all around the city. Can you hear them?

TASK: What are the rumours? (**Listening task: decipher the whispers/mumbled speech - an important skill when dealing with Irish people!)** **Reading task: Words with all the vowels missing.**

*E.g. Th_t J_r_ B_rk_s_ l__r. N_h_rs_? _t's th_ D_v_l th_t br__ght h_m h_r_!
H_'s s_ld h_s s__l__nd n_w h_'s c_m_t_ st__l__rs!*

SOLUTION:

That Jiří Birk is a liar. No horse? It's the Devil that brought him here! He's sold his soul and now he's come to steal ours!

The townspeople's threats soon come true. You are ostracised, and you die soon after. Your family abandons you. You have no money, no food, no funeral service and no obituary.

>>> **Room 9**



Room 9 SWEDISH BELLS

However, this is not the end of your story as Jiří (WHY NOT? You may ask yourself.) You were chosen for a special quest. But can you interpret and fulfil the prophesy?

TASK: DECIPHER THE PROPHECY which is in a secret code (back to front)

.ton did uoY .esroh eht nelots evah dluow ynaM .tset a erew redir dna esroh tahT .nesohc neeb evah uoy - kriB iriJ

Jiří Birk - you have been chosen. That horse and rider were a test. Many would have stolen the horse. You did not.

.rehtaf ruoy evas ot redro ni redir esroh a ot sgnivas efil eritne ruoy evag uoY

You gave your entire life savings to a horse rider in order to save your father.

.flesmiH suseJ ,seY .rehtaF siH rof flesmiH decifircas osla ohw naM fo noS eht saw tl .sgniK fo ediR eht ni tnapicitrap yna tsuj ton saw redir esroh tahT

That horse rider was not just any participant in the Ride of Kings. It was the Son of Man, who also sacrificed Himself for His Father. Yes, Jesus Himself.

.onrB evas lliw uoy sraey 7 ni dna legnA naidrauG s'ytic eht eb lliw uoy - uoy rof snalp reggib era ereht esuaceb ylnu tuB .elpoep eht fo sdnah eht ta eid uoy tel ew dna dehsinav esroh ehT

The horse vanished and we let you die at the hands of the people. But only because there are bigger plans for you. You will be the city's Guardian Angel and in 7 years you will save Brno.

A Swedish Army will come to destroy Brno. They will conquer the city and kill everyone. But you can stop it. All you need to do is convince Petrov Church to ring its bell early.

What on earth does that mean? To find out the extraordinary consequences of this information,

>>> **Room 10**



Room 10 TUGENDHAT

Jiří remains Brno's Guardian Angel. How do we know? We can see it, in Brno's most famous piece of architecture, the Villa Tugendhat. The Villa was built between 1929 and 1930 and remains Czech Republic's only Modern Architecture piece to be included on UNESCO's list of World Cultural Heritage Sites. It's most famous feature is its Onyx Wall, which shimmers and changes colour, becoming translucent at sunset and sunrise. This Onyx Wall was recently the subject of a Booker Prize-nominated novel, and a cinema adaptation called *The Glass Room*. But what creates this spectacular shimmer? Is it the Onyx, or is it a Higher Power? Is it the Spirit of Jiří Birk, who sacrificed himself for the city, coming and going at sunrise and sunset to save and support the people of Brno?

>>> [Room 11](#)



Room 11 GUARDIAN ANGEL (Patron Saint of Public Transport):

Why does Jiří leave? What did he do after saving the city from the Swedes? His good deeds didn't stop. As Guardian Angel, he became Brno's Patron Saint of Public Transport (*in the opinion of your author...*). Jiří's enthusiasm for innovative transportation and adventure remains central to Moravian culture.

With its horse-drawn tram in 1869, Brno was THE FIRST city in the Czech Republic to install a tram system (up yours Prague!) and today the tram system is incredibly affordable and incredibly extensive.

TASK: How comprehensive are Brno's Trams? Something related to a tram map. Imperatives? Creation of a very comprehensive and extensive public transport system, the first tram system in the Czech Republic (horse-drawn, 1869).

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trams_in_Brno

That's not all. It's a pity the bicycle hadn't been invented in 1638. Today's Brno is at the intersection of two EuroVelo routes (Europe's cross-border bicycle route network), while nearby Lednice joins onto a third. From your bicycle, you can use this dedicated cycle network of routes intersecting Brno and Lednice to visit 23 different countries.

FINAL TASK - complete this really, really advanced 3rd conditional sentence:

If only Jiří _____ route markers on the trees in Palava, he _____
_____ lost and this story _____ ended a long
time _____.

SOLUTION: If only Jiří had had route markers on the trees in Palava, he would never have got lost and this story would have ended a long time ago.

THE END



>>> **Room 12 Epilogue**



Room 12 EPILOGUE:

You may think none of this story is true. While your author has certainly used their imagination to fill in some gaps in our knowledge much of this story is based on real Czech traditions and legends. Some of these legends may even be true. Apparently, Jiří not only built the wheel FROM SCRATCH in one day but he really DID roll his wheel all the way to Brno from Lednice, and the Mayor really DID hang it from the City Hall and the townspeople really DID think it was the work of the Devil.

Jiří's legacy lives on in Moravia. So why not visit? There are so many opportunities to experience Brno's spirit of adventure and eccentricity (see pictures below). You can take part in Neckyáda, or Jiří's commemorative race and really trying to roll a wheel 66.9km in one day.



Room 13 MACHOCA ADVENTURE: Walpurgis Night

As you are walking towards the light you hear screams and laughter. You put your wheel down for a moment to look and listen, the light seems to be a small fire. With no other choices, you pick up your wheel and continue to walk towards the light. As you walk you notice you are becoming rather hot. Oh, that's not a small fire - it's a gigantic fire.

You see a witch!

Shriek!

Nope, that's just a large puppet that looks like a witch. And then you remember that it's Walpurgis Night. On this day people light huge bonfires to scare witches away into the night sky.

You move into the circle of light given off by the enormous bonfire and guess there must be more than a hundred people standing around it. A couple of people move aside to make space for you and your wheel when suddenly there is whispering and pointing and before you know it a woman is pointing at you and shouting! Several large men grab you and they try to take your wheel but you hold onto it tightly.

The people at the bonfire think you are a witch roaming the forest with an enchanted wheel. Prove you aren't. In those days, people had strange ideas about witches. For example, witches were believed to float on water and weigh the same as a duck¹ (this is a reference to a scene from the film *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*). The townspeople interrogate you. Don't misinterpret their questions or you will be burned alive! Listen closely to the comparatives and superlatives, and don't forget the articles and prepositions!

E.G. Are you (heavy) than _ cow or (light) _ cow?

¹ This is a reference to a scene from the film *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*.

Are you (ugly) as _ frog or (not ugly) as _ frog?

Are you ugly (put into comparative and answer) than a frog?

Are you + beautiful than _ goat?

Do you go to _ work ___ a broomstick or ___ wagon?

Finally the villagers believe that you are Jiří Birk and not a witch, and they let you and your wheel go. But whilst they were questioning you nobody was looking after the fire and it has burned low! A real witch flies down on her broomstick, and somehow grabs you and your wheel. On the plus side, you have got your free ride. And the witch has your wheel, she probably wants to make a new broomstick out of all that nice wood.

Choose the TWO idioms that best describe this situation:

Every cloud has a silver lining.

-

Another string to your bow.

-

>>> **Room 14**

Room 14 Machoca Abyss - THE SON

You, Jiří, awaken 100km away. You are now 138.7m underground, in the Machocha Abyss, which is the largest sinkhole in Central Europe. The Machoca Abyss can be explored as a tourist with caving or diving activities, but beware of witches!

You are sleepy and this might be a dream, but you do not seem to be alone in this cave. A young boy is also here. Awkward. To break the ice, you tell a joke.

ICEBREAKER TASK:

who / a / the / “What / beach?” / witch.” / you / do / to / sand / call / witch /
goes / “A

SOLUTION:

“What do you call a witch who goes to the beach?” “A sand witch.”

>>> **Room 15**



Room 15 MACHOCA ADVENTURE

You laugh. He doesn't. He hates witch jokes. He asks you your name
"Jiří Birk" you reply.

"Do you have *any* idea where you are?", he says angrily, "This is the Machoca Abyss.
Your father will be dead by sunset. Wake up!"

You wake from your dreaming and remember the seriousness of your situation. The
Machoca Abyss sounds familiar.

You remember the story of the big cave that got it's name when that evil lady, Machoca,
married that rich widower. The widower had a son and Machoca accepted the child as
her step-son, until she had her own son.

After this, she tried to kill her step-son by throwing him into the Abyss so that Machoca's
natural born son would receive the widower's inheritance. Somehow, the step-son was
rescued by the townspeople, who were so disgusted with the stepmother that they
threw her into the Abyss days later.

You rub your eyes and the kid is still there.

"In case you are wondering, Jiří Birk, yes, I am the step-son," he said. "And you are not
dreaming now."

"But you were rescued?", you say, confused.

"You have no idea how much danger you are in. My stepmother lives. I have come to
rescue you. She was turned away by the Devil. She waits in the Abyss and feeds on the
souls of the innocent. They keep her alive. She will ask you to bring her 1 pure soul. Do
NOT do her dirty work. When she takes you above ground, follow the sound of horses.
It is the only way to save your father."

You hear a loud crash. You turn to look and see a frail, malnourished woman somehow
dragging a heavy cauldron. The witch! And the boy is gone.

>>> **Room 16**



Room 16 Machoca Abyss - THE MOTHER

“Was the boy here? Or the old man?” the witch asks you.

You shake your head.

“They villagers can NOT find you. You think I have kidnapped you?”

You nod.

The witch says. “I have saved you. They are hunting you, Jiří Birk. You are lucky I found you first on Walpurgis Night. They knew you were alone. You can’t be alone. Only I can keep you safe.”

“What do you want from me? I need to...”

“You need to save your father. And I need to save my son. Let’s make an alliance. I will deliver you to Brno before sunset. But you must do something for me. Steal my real child. That widower and his son are demons. They take my innocent baby’s life force to support their stay on earth. They keep him in my old house. I can take you there but there is a curse on me. When I leave the Abyss I cannot set foot on the ground.”

“My wheel?”, you ask.

“Bring it. How else will you save your father’s life?”

>>> **Room 17**



Room 17 MACHOCA ADVENTURE

You arrive at the witch's old house. She is hovering above ground on her broomstick because she cannot touch the earth.

“To save my child, we must cast a spell. When it is complete, time will freeze. You will have 1 minute to run inside the house and rescue my child before the world is unfrozen and the old man and his son catch you and consume you.

To create the spell, you need to collect ingredients for my cauldron. Here is my recipe. You will be safe as long as you don't go near THAT house.” She stretches a finger and points to a house two fields away.

“Be quick Jiří Birk.”

(This seems like an opportunity for a tongue twister in the listening version or even just a bit of fun for students to grapple with: “Watch where you walk and then walk to the watch and this weird, wee witch will wheel your wheel like you wish.”)

Then the witch drops you on the ground in the middle of a forest.

As soon as you land, you hear the sound of horses.

What will you do? Complete the witch's recipe or follow the sound of horses?

Choose wisely or you will die.

Witch's recipe >>> Room 18

Sound of Horses >>> Room 19



Room 18 Witch's recipe

TASK (PRONUNCIATION): what goes in her cauldron? Match the phrases to create a rhyme.

Hubble bubble, tin foil and ... choose from 4 possibilities to complete the rhyme.

>>> Room 20

Room 20

“There is only one more thing I need”, says the witch when you are finished collecting the items for her cauldron. “A toenail, from you.”

That’s pretty weird, you think: “Ehm... why?...”

“Without a piece of you, you will be frozen in time too. And how will you save my baby if you are frozen?”

Reluctantly, you agree. To be honest, you haven’t cut your toenails in years. It’s time. You take off your boot...

TASK 2: SAVE THE CHILD WITHIN ONE MINUTE. Possible to have a timer? I think this activity should be a maze. You have to read the directions and navigate a maze (house floor plan). Or, it’s a picture of the house. The baby is hidden. You have to read the instructions and find precisely where the baby is. It will be somewhat difficult/hidden.

You have completed the witch’s task and returned the child to her. You climb onto her broomstick and she fulfils her promise. She transports you and your wheel straight to Brno City Hall.

>>> Room 21



Room 19 Sound of Horses: Son

Running and dragging your wheel, you follow the sound of horses. It gets louder and louder until it is deafening. Like thunder. Finally, you reach the road and find hundreds of unicorns. No! Wait! They aren't unicorns! They are horses in fancy clothes. You have joined the Ride of the Kings.

The Ride of the Kings is a Moravian Easter Festival that is on the UNESCO Representative List of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. The custom features prominently in *"The Joke"* by Brno native Milan Kundera, who also authored *"The Unbearable Lightness of Being"*.

Finally, the last horse passes along the route and, on the other side of the road, you see the young boy from the Abyss along with his horse, also ornately dressed.

"You chose well", he says. "I will take you to Brno City Hall on my fine horse. You will have your money before sunset. But I have some terms."

1. Negotiation TASK: Match the conditional start and end sentences. Make an agreement with the son that you will ride the horse to Brno with him. He will not leave you alone with the horse, nor will he get off the horse to help you attach the wheel. Pull the wheel.

>>> **Room 22**



Room 22 JIRI TRUSTED the SON

You arrive at Brno's city gates. The stepson tells you that he can neither get off the horse nor come with you to the City Hall. You must now go alone. When you arrive at City Hall, The Mayor is incredibly happy. You feel proud, and vindicated, and not a loser, and you are sure this will help your career.

"This is extraordinary! How could you arrive in time? When we commissioned you it was merely a prank, a drunk bet between my friends and I!"

"Mr. Mayor, I am poor and I have no customers, nor the resources to build another wheel, but my wheel is so comfortable, and so aerodynamic that I could ride it all the way from Lednice without a single horse for help. Tell the world that if they want a wheel, Jiří Birk's are the best."

The mayor agrees, and he is so impressed he offers to hang the wheel in the City Hall as a permanent advertisement so that every Brnak could know of your work.

You thank the mayor profusely but tell him you must run. Your father's life is in jeopardy. You receive your 12 Tolars.

You have never felt prouder than bringing the 12 Tolars to your family.

However, your contentment does not last long. Rumors soon spread all around the city. Can you hear them? It sounds like the stepson's voice, hissing in the night sky as you run home.

TASK: What are the rumours? (**Listening task: decipher the whispers/mumbled speech - an important skill when dealing with Irish people!**) **Reading task: Words with all the vowels missing.**

*E.g. Th_t J_r B_rk_s_l_r. N_h_rs?_t's th_D_v_l th_t br__ght h_m h_r_!
H_'s s_ld h_s s_l_nd n_w h_'s c_m_t_st_l_rs!*



SOLUTION:

That Jiří Birk is a liar. No horse? It's the Devil that brought him here! He's sold his soul and now he's come to steal ours!

The townspeople's threats soon come true. You are ostracised, and you die soon after. Your family abandons you. You have no money, no food, no funeral service and no obituary.

>>> **Room 23**

Room 23 TUGENDHAT

But this is not the end of Jiří's story. When you died, you didn't go to Heaven or Hell, but to Purgatory, and every night your soul wanders Brno's night sky. How do we know this? We can see it in Brno's most famous piece of architecture, the Villa Tugendhat. The Villa was built between 1929 and 1930 and remains Czech Republic's only Modern Architecture piece to be included on UNESCO's list of World Cultural Heritage Sites. It's most famous feature is its Onyx Wall, which shimmers and changes colour, becoming translucent at sunset and sunrise. This Onyx wall was recently the subject of a Booker Prize-nominated novel, and a cinema adaptation called *The Glass Room*. The house is famous for its tumultuous troubled history. Why is that? Because it is haunted, by Jiří, who lives in the soil underneath, leaving only the shimmer upon its Onyx Wall as he comes and goes.

Why are you here, you often wonder? And why are you escaping? Boredom? You are very bored, and very lonely too. But when you leave your Onyx tomb to make mischief, your thoughts are strange. Even though you don't understand your thoughts, you feel compelled to act.

TASK: Unscramble your wild thoughts to see the results of your actions (Backwards sentences - aka demonic).

With spaces:



**.s'bukaJ ot oohs oohs oohs won ,oop fo sllems dna uoy ekil skool tl
.eutats a esiladnav dna htrim emos ekam s'tel ,hcruhC eht potA
.rehtom ruoy llet lliw l ro yaled t'nod dna yas l sa od ,retsam ruoy
won ma l ,krej hsiloofo uoy ,kriB iriJ**

Jiří Birk, you foolish jerk, I am now your master,

Do as I say and don't delay, or I will tell your mother.

Atop the Church, let's make some mirth and vandalise a statue.

It looks like you and smells of poo, now shoo shoo shoo to Jakub's.

-

**.no tsaef ew luos ruoy si ti ,def era ew dna ,daed era uoy woN .teg
uoy tahw si siht dna sesroh esoht elots uoy ,tserof taht ni dnA
.detnuah ti ees ot ekil d?ew ,)!OOB(hcruhC a edistuo ,eutats a
s'ereht oS**

So there's a statue, outside a Church (BOO!), we'd like to see it haunted.

The witch was right, on Walpurgis night, you really should have listened

Now you are dead, and we are fed, and it's your soul we feast on.

-

**.no evom a teg og esaelp os gnolhcs a tsuj s'ti ,gnol oot ekat t'now tl
.nialliv a flesruoy ekam dna ereht tuo og ot eraperp esaelp woN .os
epoh yllaer ew ,sey seY ?deracs uoy era dna ,ereht uoy erA**



Are you there, and are you scared? Yes yes, we really hope so. Now please prepare to go out there and make yourself a villain. It won't take too long, it's just a schlong, but goes Ding Dong, so please go get a move on.

But other times, you have your own motives, like payback on the Mayor who must have spread those rumours and told the city that you had had the Devil's help.

Other times, you are simply motivated by boredom. Check out the epilogue for more examples of Brno's eccentric art.

>>> **Room 12 Epilogue**



Room 21 JIRI TRUSTED the MOTHER

You arrive at Brno's city gates and thank the Witch sincerely: "I hope you and your family will be happy together".

You are astonished as she gets off the broomstick and walks you to gates. You didn't think she could walk on earth: "No, thank *you*, Jiří Birk. You have cured me and I shall enjoy all my days on Earth with my family because of you".

You shed a tear, and feel proud.

When you arrive at City Hall, The Mayor is incredibly happy. You feel proud, and vindicated, and not a loser, and you are sure this will help your career.

"This is extraordinary! How could you arrive in time? When we commissioned you it was merely a prank, a drunk bet between my friends and I!"

"Mr. Mayor, I am poor and I have no customers, nor the resources to build another wheel, but my wheel is so comfortable, and so aerodynamic that I could ride it all the way from Lednice without a single horse for help. Tell the world that if they want a wheel, Jiří Birk's are the best."

The mayor agrees, and he is so impressed he offers to hang the wheel in the City Hall as a permanent advertisement so that every Brnak could know of your work (SEE PIC - PS curious about the dragon in the photo? Check out story no. x)

PICTURE TAKEN BY ME

TASK: Something regarding the wheel hanging in city hall?

>>> **Room 24**



Room 24

You thank the mayor profusely but tell him you must run. Your father's life is in jeopardy. You receive your 12 Tolars.

You have never felt prouder than bringing the 12 Tolars to your family.

However, your contentment does not last long. Rumors soon spread all around the city. Can you hear them? It sounds like the stepson's voice, hissing in the night sky as you run home.

TASK: What are the rumours? (**Listening task: decipher the whispers/mumbled speech - an important skill when dealing with Irish people!**) **Reading task: Words with all the vowels missing.**

E.g. Wh-t's th-t -wf-l sm_ll? L-k- -ld t--n--ls. Th-r- -t -s! Th-t J-r- B-rk! Wh- r-ll-d th-wh- -l fr_m L_dn_c_w_th n_h_rs_. The liar! L__k_t h_s f_ce - it's the Mark of the Witch that spreads all over his body and he stinks of dirty toenails. He's sold his soul and now he's come to steal ours!

SOLUTION:

What's that awful smell? Like old toenails. There it is! That Jiří Birk! Who rolled the wheel from Lednice with no horse. The liar! Look at his face! He wears the Mark of the Witch. It spreads all over his body and he stinks of dirty toenails. He's sold his soul and now he's come to steal ours!

The townspeople's threats soon come true. You did not realise it but the witch left her mark on you - a *Devil Lock* (it's a hairstyle!) that cannot be combed and smelly fungal nails. You are ostracised, and you die soon after. Your family abandons you. You have no money, no food, no funeral service and no obituary.

>>> **Room 25**





Room 25 TUGENDHAT

But this is not the end of Jiří's story. When you died, you didn't go to Heaven or Hell, but to Purgatory, and every night your soul wanders Brno's night sky. How do we know this? We can see it - in Brno's most famous piece of architecture, the Villa Tugendhat. The Villa was built between 1929 and 1930 and remains Czech Republic's only Modern Architecture piece to be included on UNESCO's list of World Cultural Heritage Sites. It's most famous feature is its Onyx wall, which shimmers and changes colour, becoming translucent at sunset and sunrise. This Onyx Wall was recently the subject of a Booker Prize-nominated novel, and a cinema adaptation called *The Glass Room*.

The house is also famous for its tumultuous, troubled history. Why is that? Because it is haunted, by Jiří, who lives in the soil underneath, leaving only the shimmer upon its Onyx Wall as he comes and goes.

TASK: ESCAPING FROM THE WALL - SOME KIND OF MAZE/PUZZLE - SOMETHING TO DO WITH TELLING TIME SO YOU KNOW WHEN IT'S TIME TO LEAVE?

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TASK: Unscramble your wild thoughts to see the results of your actions (Backwards sentences - aka demonic).

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won ma l ,krej hsilooF uoy ,kriB iriJ

Jiří Birk, you foolish jerk, I am now your master,

do as I say and don't delay, I'll have to tell your mother

Atop the Church, let's make some mirth and vandalise some statues.

One looks like you and smells of poo, now shoo shoo shoo to Jakub's.

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uoy tahw si siht dna sesroh esoht elots uoy ,tserof taht ni dnA
.detnuah ti ees ot ekil d?ew ,)OOB(hcruhC a edistuo ,eutats a
s'ereht oS**

So there's a statue, outside a Church (BOO!), we'd like to see it haunted.

Horrendous joy you bring my boy, his favourite toy to play with,

Now you are dead, and we are fed, and it's your soul we've tasted.

-

**.no evom a teg og esaelp os gnolhcs a tsuj s'ti ,gnol oot ekat t'now tl
.nialliv a flesruoy ekam dna ereht tuo og ot eraperp esaelp woN .os
epoh yllaer ew ,sey seY ?deracs uoy era dna ,ereht uoy erA**

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>>> **Room 12 Epilogue**

