

START

MRS PHELPS

Goodbye Miss Honey. And good luck with the Tolstoy.

#2c – Good Luck With The Tolstoy

MISS HONEY almost bumps into Matilda. A moment. Leaves.

As I was saying, Matilda, I'm not hinting, but if you did happen to have a story you wanted to tell me, I could –

MATILDA

Who was that lady?

MRS PHELPS

That lady? That was Miss Honey. She's going to be your teacher.

MATILDA

That lady... that lady is my...?

MRS PHELPS

Yes your teacher. Now look, are you going to tell me a story or not?

MATILDA

(still far away)

Once upon a time...

#3 – Acrobat Story I

MRS PHELPS gives a squeak of delight. Runs to get some chairs for them to sit on a large one for her a small one for Matilda, but MATILDA leaps up on the big one to tell the story. With no other option MRS PHELPS sit on the small one.

Once upon a time the two greatest circus performers in the world – an escapologist, who could escape from any lock that was ever invented, and an acrobat, who was so skilled it seemed as if she could actually fly – fell in love and got married.

They performed some of the most incredible feats together anyone has ever seen and people would come from miles around: Kings, Queens, Celebrities and Astronauts. And not just to see their skill, but also to see their love for each other, which was so deep that it was said that cats would purr as they passed them and dogs would weep with joy.

They moved into a beautiful, old house on the edge of town and in the evenings they would walk and take the air. And each night the children of the town would wait in anticipation, hoping for a glimpse of the shiny white scarf that the acrobat always wore – for then they knew they had only to cry 'tricks, tricks' and the great

(MATILDA)

performers would instantly oblige, with the most spectacular show, just for them. But, although they loved each other, although they were famous, and everyone loved them, they were sad.

ACROBAT

WE HAVE EVERYTHING...

MATILDA

'We have everything that the world has to offer' said the wife

ESCAPOLOGIST

WE HAVE EVERYTHING...

MATILDA

'But we do not have the one thing in the world we want most'.

ESCAPOLOGIST & ACROBAT

BUT THE ONE THING...

MATILDA

'We do not have a child.'

ESCAPOLOGIST

PATIENCE, MY LOVE.

MATILDA

'Patience, my love' the husband replied *'time is on our side. Even time loves us'.*

MRS PHELPS

Oh Matilda!

MATILDA

But time is the one thing no-one is master of. And as time passed they grew quite old and still they had no child. At night they listened to the silence of their big empty house and they would imagine how beautiful it would be if it was filled with the sounds of a child playing.

MRS PHELPS

Matilda, this is very sad.

MATILDA

Do you want me to stop?

MRS PHELPS

Don't you dare!

MATILDA

Their sadness overwhelmed them and drew them on to ever more dangerous feats, as their work became the only place they could escape the inescapable tragedy of

(MATILDA)

their lives. And so it was they decided to perform the most dangerous feat ever known to man.

MATILDA & ESCAPOLOGIST (OFF)

'It is called'...

MATILDA

said the husband, announcing the event to the world's press who had gathered to listen with bated breath...

MATILDA & ESCAPOLOGIST (OFF)

'The Burning Woman Hurling Through The Air With Dynamite In Her Hair Over Sharks And Spiky Objects, Caught By The Man Locked In The Cage. AND... it is the most dangerous feat ever known to man'

Applause, cheers, fanfare. Pause.

MATILDA & ACROBAT (OFF)

'It is our destiny,'

MATILDA

said his wife smiling sadly and slipping her hand into his

MATILDA & ACROBAT (OFF)

'it is where the loneliness of life has led us'.

MRS PHELPS gasps. Silence.

MRS PHELPS

Well? What happened?

MATILDA

I... I don't know. Not yet, anyway.

MRS PHELPS

What? But I... isn't there some more, I mean just a little bit. Isn't there a little bit more?

MATILDA gets up to go. MRS PHELPS gets a grip, stands.

Well, I suppose your mother will be waiting for you. Is she here? I'd love to meet her actually, maybe I could -

MATILDA

Bye, Mrs Phelps. I'll see you tomorrow.

MRS PHELPS

After your first day at school.

The school gates.

Sound of a klaxon. SMALL KIDS come on, slinking, scared, looking around.