



# Stories From Around the World

## The Enchanted Watch





## French Folktale

# *Many Years Ago...*

Once on a time there lived a rich man who had  
three sons.

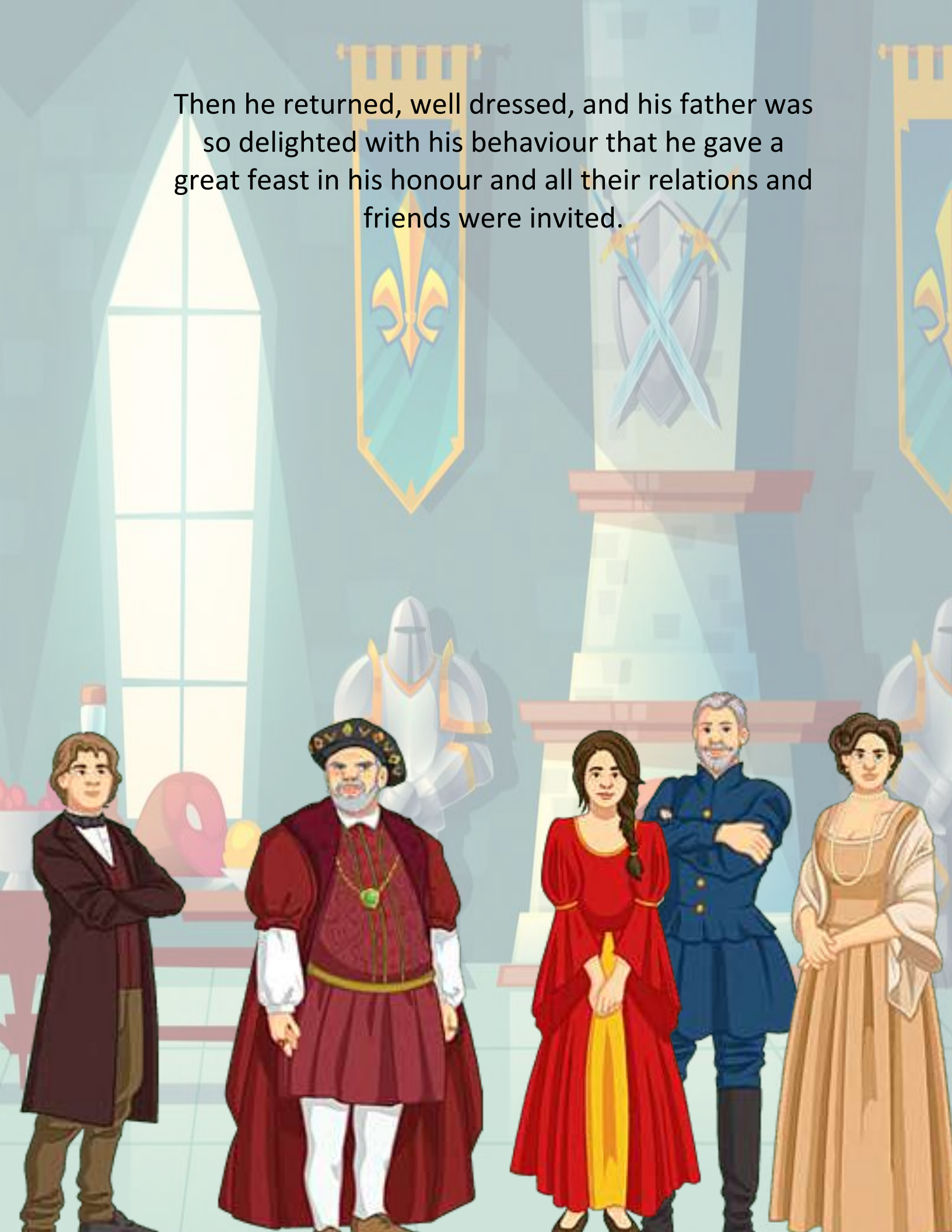




When they grew up, he sent the eldest to travel  
and see the world, and three years passed before  
his family saw him again.



Then he returned, well dressed, and his father was so delighted with his behaviour that he gave a great feast in his honour and all their relations and friends were invited.





When the rejoicings were ended, the second son begged leave of his father to go in his turn to travel and mix with the world.



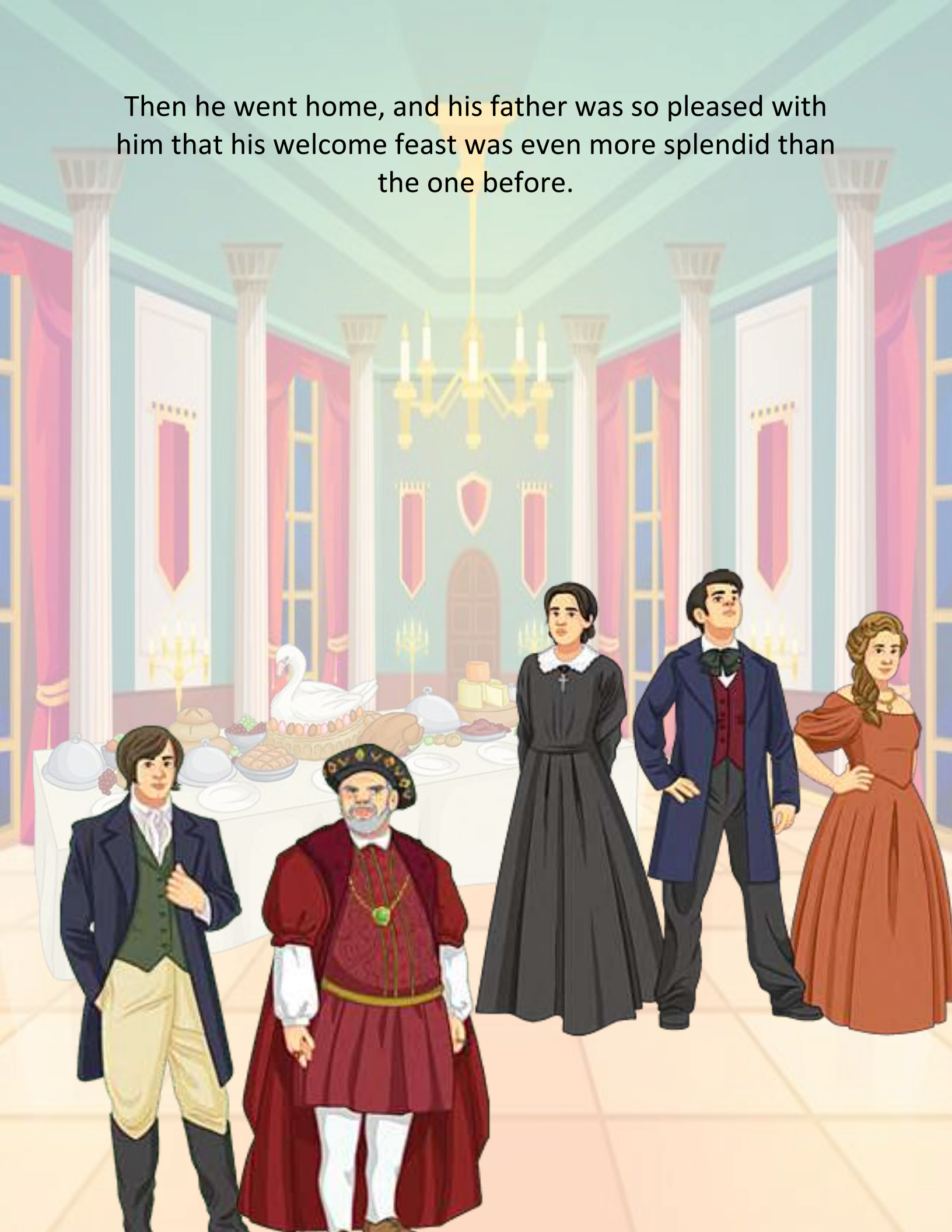
The father was delighted, gave him plenty of money for his expenses, and said, "If you behave as well as your brother, I will do honour to you as I did to him."

The young man promised to do his best, and his conduct during three years was all that it should be.





Then he went home, and his father was so pleased with him that his welcome feast was even more splendid than the one before.



The third brother, whose name was Jenik, or Johnnie, was considered the most foolish of the three. He never did anything at home except sit over the stove and dirty himself with the ashes.





But he too begged his father's leave to travel for three years. "Go if you like, but what good will it do you?" said his father curtly.





The father saw him depart with joy, glad to get rid of him, and gave him a handsome sum of money for his needs.



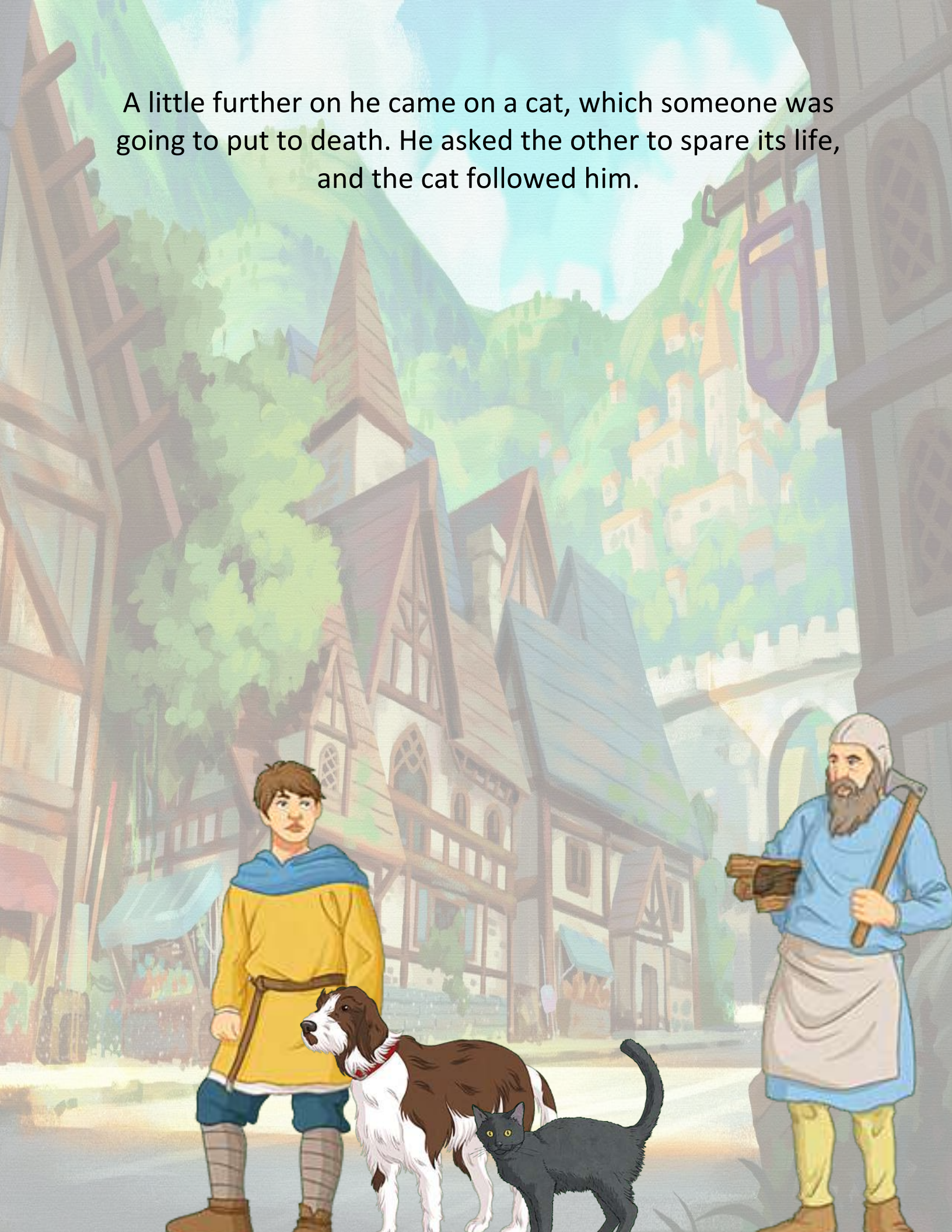


Once, as he was making one of his journeys, Jenik chanced to cross a meadow where some shepherds were just about to kill a dog. He entreated them to spare it, and to give it to him instead. They willingly did, and he went on his way, followed by the dog.





A little further on he came on a cat, which someone was going to put to death. He asked the other to spare its life, and the cat followed him.





Finally, in another place, he saved a serpent, which was also handed over to him. Now they made a party of four - the dog behind Jenik, the cat behind the dog, and the serpent behind the cat.



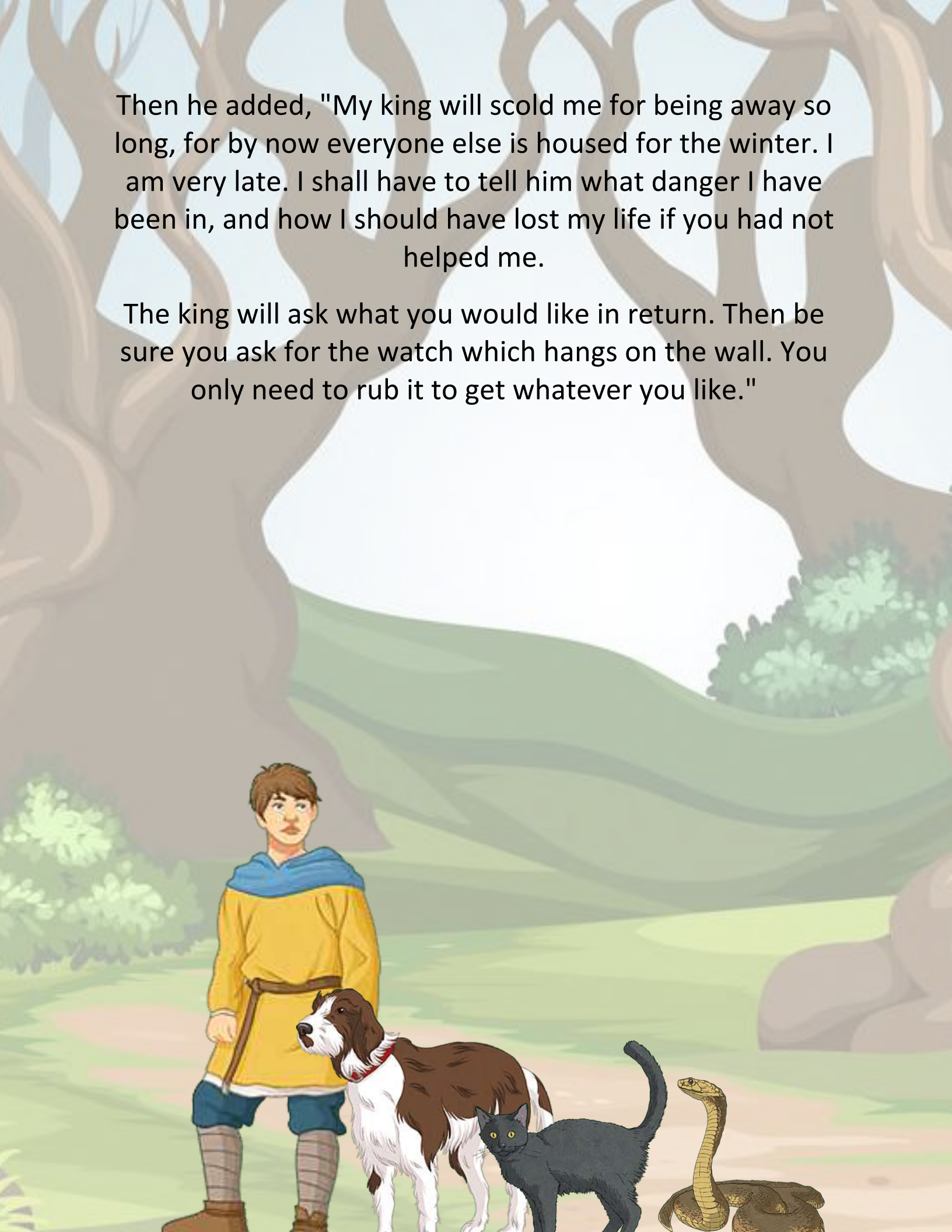


Then the serpent said to Jenik, "Go wherever you see me go," for in the autumn, when all the serpents hide themselves in their holes. This serpent was going in search of his king, who was king of all the snakes.



Then he added, "My king will scold me for being away so long, for by now everyone else is housed for the winter. I am very late. I shall have to tell him what danger I have been in, and how I should have lost my life if you had not helped me.

The king will ask what you would like in return. Then be sure you ask for the watch which hangs on the wall. You only need to rub it to get whatever you like."





No sooner said than done. Jenik became the master of the watch, and the moment he got out, he wished to put it to the test right there in a meadow.



He was hungry, and thought it would be delightful to eat a loaf of new bread and a steak of good beef washed down by a flask of wine, so he scratched the watch, and at once it was all before him. Imagine his joy!





Evening soon came, and Jenik rubbed his watch, and thought it would be very pleasant to have a room with a comfortable bed and a good supper.

At once they were all before him. After supper he went to bed and slept till morning, as honest men do.



Then he set forth for his father's house and the feast that would be awaiting him. But as he returned in the same old clothes in which he went away, his father flew into a great rage, and refused to do anything for him.





Jenik went to his old place near the stove, and dirtied himself in the ashes without anybody minding.





The third day, feeling rather dull, he thought it would be nice to see a three-story house filled with beautiful furniture, and with vessels of silver and gold.





So he rubbed the watch, and there it all was.



Jenik went to look for his father, and said to him, "You offered me no feast of welcome, but permit me to give one to you, and come and let me show you my place."





The father was much astonished, and longed to know where his son had got all this wealth. Jenik did not reply, but asked him to invite all their relations and friends to a grand banquet.



So the father invited them all, and everyone was amazed to see such splendid things, so much place, and so many fine dishes on the table. After the first course, Jenik asked his father to invite the king and his daughter the princess.





He rubbed his watch and wished for a carriage ornamented with gold and silver, and drawn by six horses, with harness glittering with precious stones. The father did not dare to sit in this gorgeous coach, but went to the palace on foot beside the carriage.



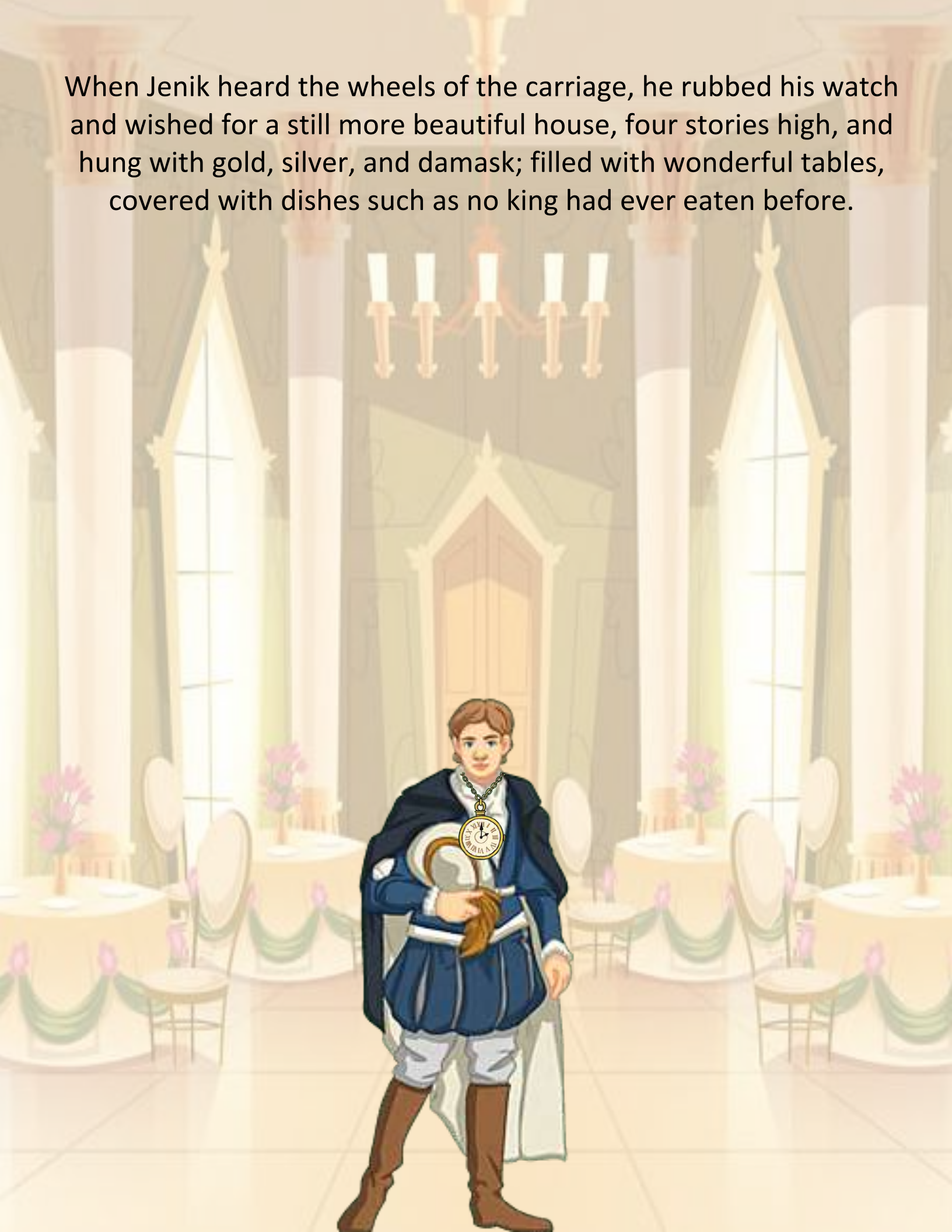


The king and his daughter were greatly surprised with the beauty of the carriage, and mounted the steps at once to go to Jenik's banquet. Then Jenik rubbed his watch afresh, and wished that for six miles the way to the house should be paved with marble. The king had never travelled over such a fine road.



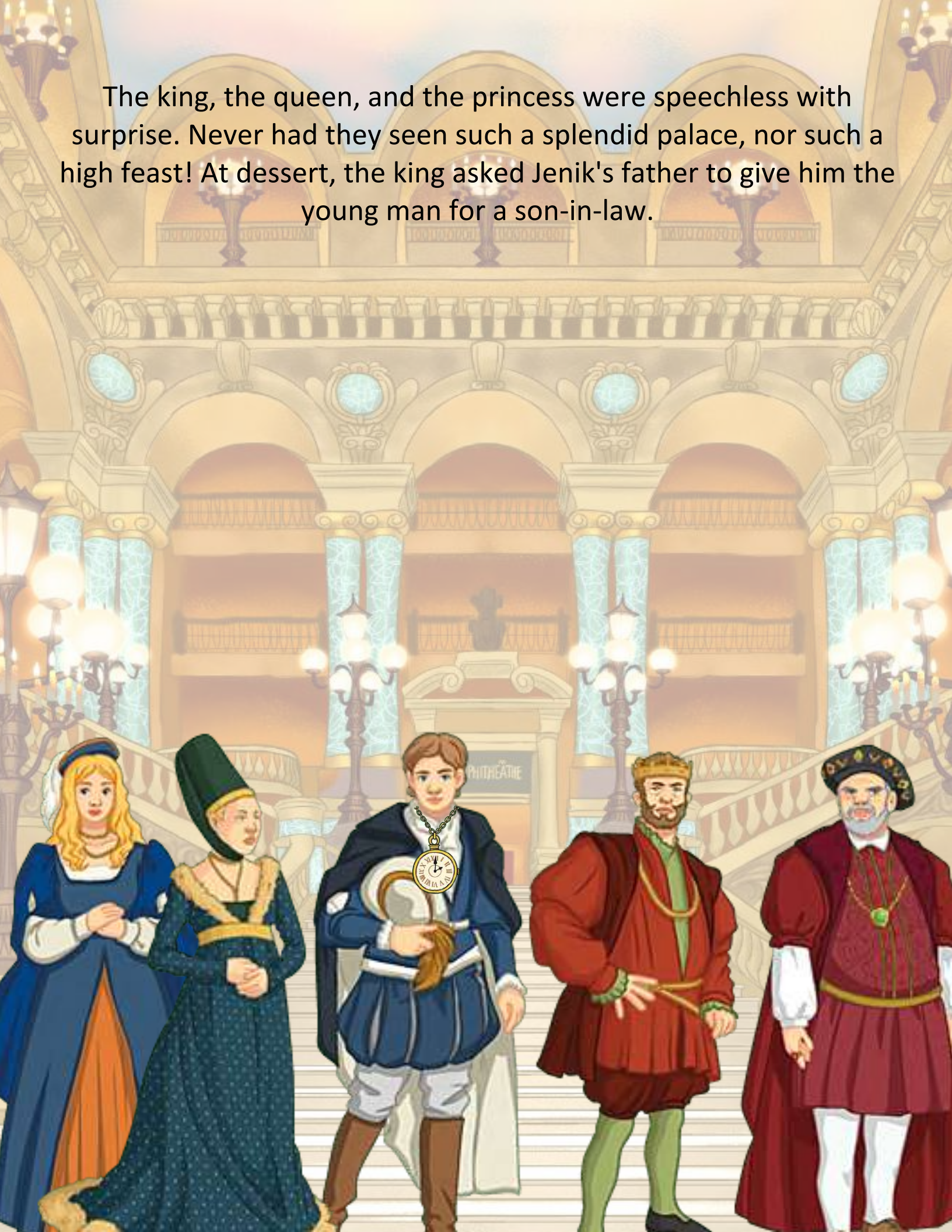


When Jenik heard the wheels of the carriage, he rubbed his watch and wished for a still more beautiful house, four stories high, and hung with gold, silver, and damask; filled with wonderful tables, covered with dishes such as no king had ever eaten before.





The king, the queen, and the princess were speechless with surprise. Never had they seen such a splendid palace, nor such a high feast! At dessert, the king asked Jenik's father to give him the young man for a son-in-law.





The marriage took place at once, and the king returned to his own palace, and left Jenik with his wife in the enchanted house.



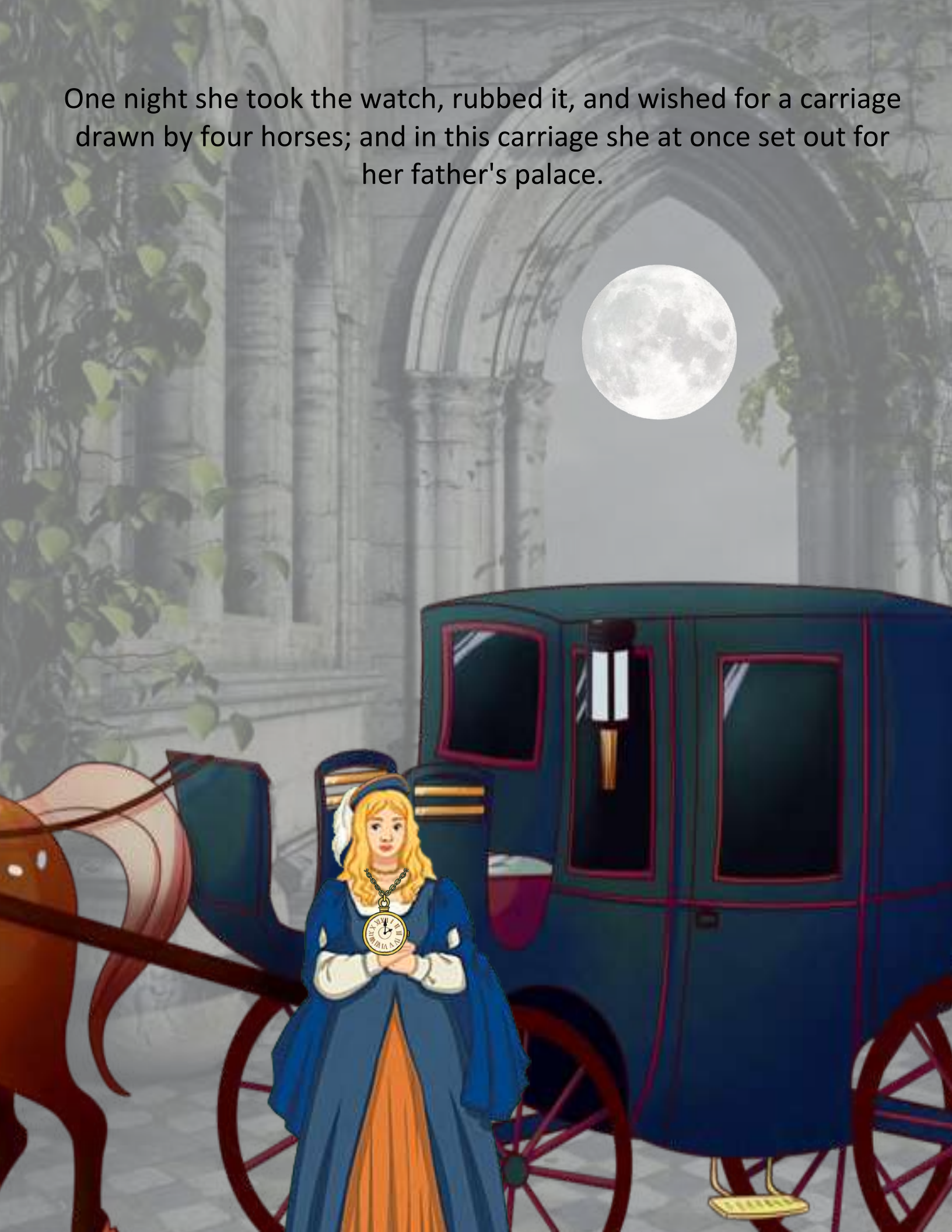


At the end of a very short time Jenik began to bore his wife. She asked how he managed to build palaces and to get so many precious things. He told her all about the watch. Afterwards she did not rest till she had stolen the precious talisman.





One night she took the watch, rubbed it, and wished for a carriage drawn by four horses; and in this carriage she at once set out for her father's palace.





There she called to her own attendants, bade them follow her into the carriage, and drove straight to the seaside.





Then she rubbed her  
watch, and wished  
that the sea might be  
crossed by a bridge,  
and that a magnificent  
palace might arise in  
the middle of the sea.

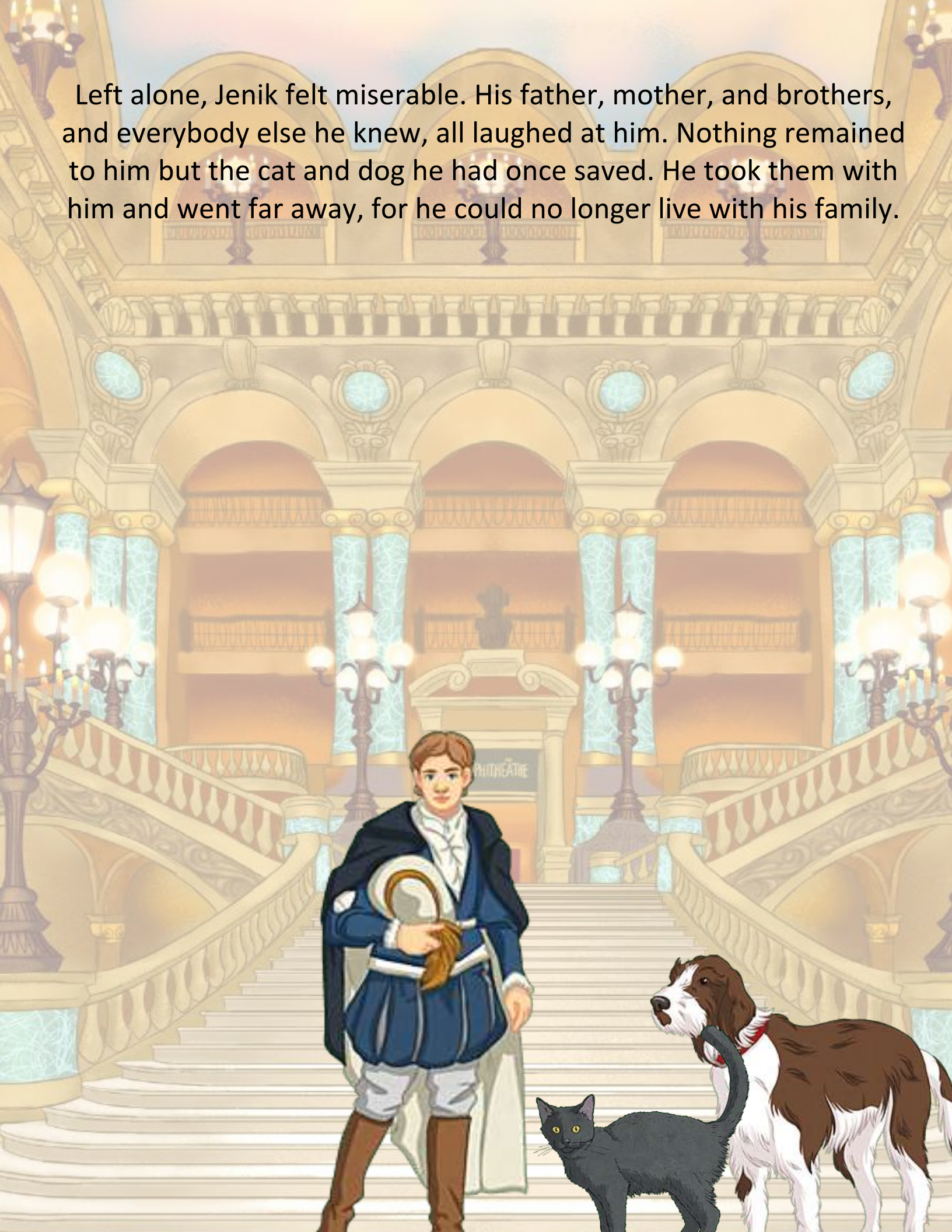


No sooner said than done. The princess entered the house, rubbed her watch, and in an instant the bridge was gone.





Left alone, Jenik felt miserable. His father, mother, and brothers, and everybody else he knew, all laughed at him. Nothing remained to him but the cat and dog he had once saved. He took them with him and went far away, for he could no longer live with his family.





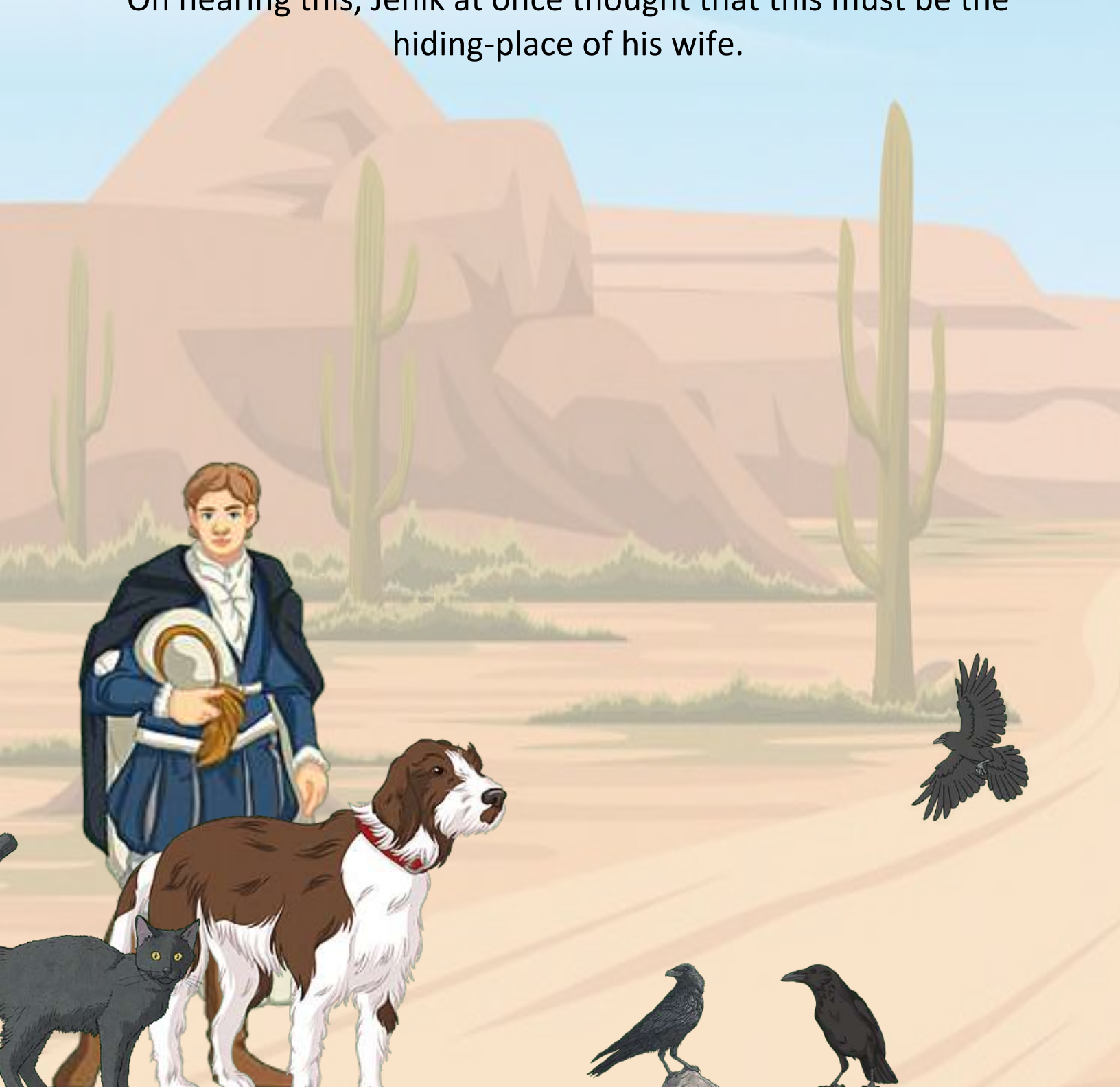
He reached at last a great desert, and saw  
some crows flying towards a mountain.





One of them was a long way behind, and when he arrived his brothers inquired what had made him so late. "Winter is here," they said, "and it is time to fly to other countries." He told them that he had seen in the middle of the sea the most wonderful house that ever was built.

On hearing this, Jenik at once thought that this must be the hiding-place of his wife.



So he went directly to the shore with his dog and his cat. When came to the beach, he said to the dog, "You are a good swimmer," and to the cat he said, "and you are very light; jump on the dog's back and he will take you to the palace. Once there, he will hide himself near the door, and you must sneak secretly in and try to get hold of my watch."





No sooner said than done. The two animals crossed the sea; the dog hid near the house, and the cat stole into the chamber.



The princess recognised him and guessed why he had come; and she took the watch down to the cellar and locked it in a box.





But the cat wriggled its way into the cellar, and the moment the princess turned her back, he scratched and scratched till he had made a hole in the box. Then he took the watch between his teeth, and waited quietly till the princess came back.



Scarcely had she opened the door when the cat was outside, and the watch with him.

The cat was no sooner beyond the gates than she said to the dog: "We are going to cross the sea; be very careful not to speak to me."





The dog laid this to heart and said nothing; but when they approached the shore he could not help asking, "Have you got the watch?"

The cat did not answer - he was afraid that he might let the talisman fall.



When they touched the shore the dog repeated his question.

"Yes," said the cat.

And the watch fell into the sea. Then our two friends began each to accuse the other, and both looked sorrowfully at the place where their treasure had fallen in.





Suddenly a fish appeared near the edge of the sea. The cat seized it, and thought it would make them a good supper.

"I have nine little children," cried the fish. "Spare the father of a family!"

"Granted," replied the cat; "but on condition that you find our watch."



The fish did so at once, and they brought the treasure  
back to their master.





Jenik rubbed the watch and wished  
that the palace, with the princess  
and all its inhabitants, should be  
swallowed up in the sea.



No sooner said than done.





Jenik returned to his parents, and he and his watch,  
his cat and his dog, lived together happily to the  
end of their days.

## *The End*





