



Adventure Stories

The Enchanted Pig



A Long Time Ago ...

There lived a King who had three daughters. Now it happened that he had to go out to battle, so he called his daughters and said to them:

‘My dear children, I am obliged to go to war. The enemy is approaching us with a large army. It is a great grief to me to leave you all.

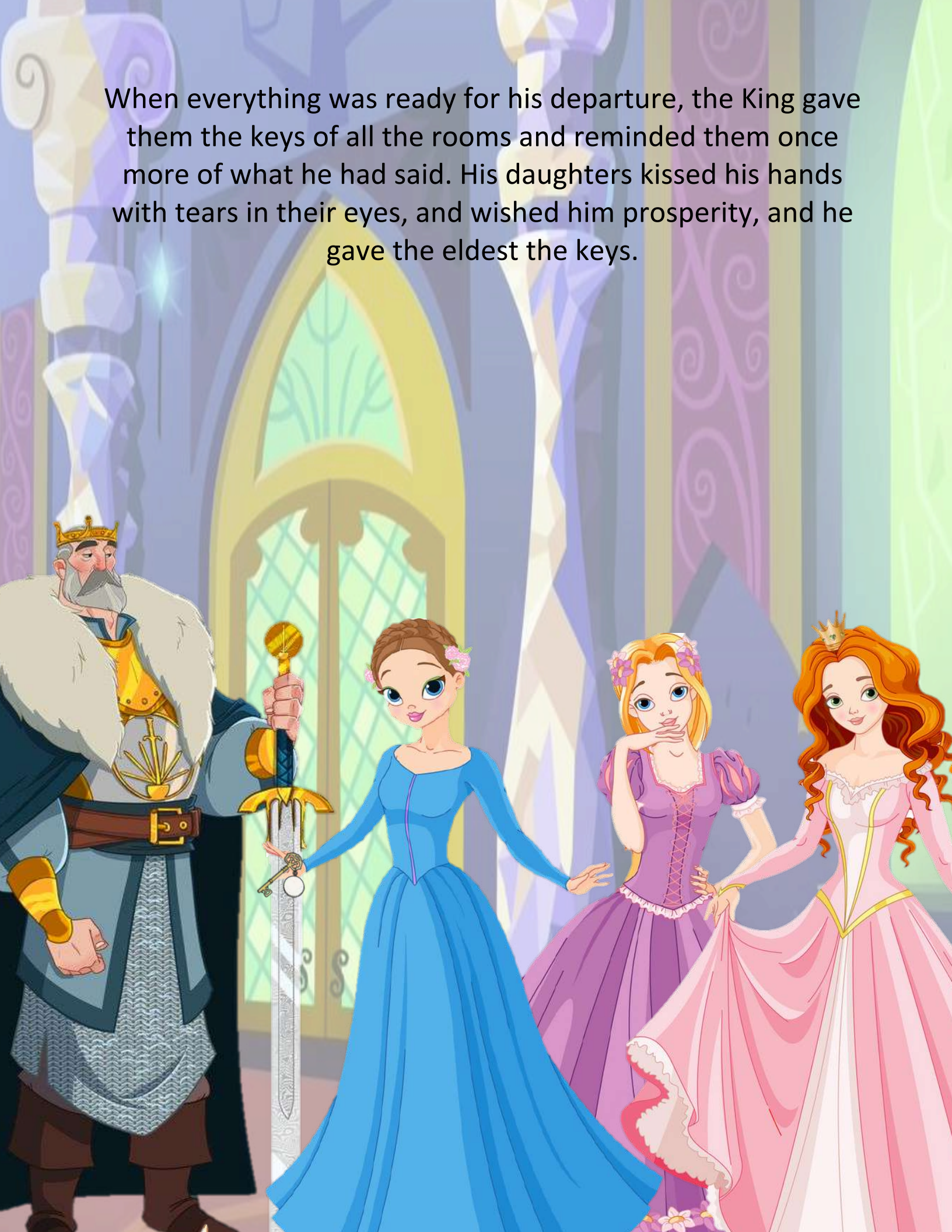


During my absence take care of yourselves and be good girls; behave well and look after everything in the house. You may walk in the garden, and you may go into all the rooms in the palace, except the room at the back in the right-hand corner; into that you must not enter, for harm would befall you.'

'You may keep your mind easy, father,' they replied. 'We have never been disobedient to you. Go in peace and may heaven give you a glorious victory!'



When everything was ready for his departure, the King gave them the keys of all the rooms and reminded them once more of what he had said. His daughters kissed his hands with tears in their eyes, and wished him prosperity, and he gave the eldest the keys.



Now when the girls found themselves alone, they felt so sad and dull that they did not know what to do. So, to pass the time, they decided to work for part of the day, and to enjoy themselves in the garden for part of the day.

As long as they did this all went well with them. But his happy state of things did not last long. Every day they grew more and more curious, and you will see what the end of that was.



‘Sisters’, said the eldest Princess, ‘all day long we sew, spin and read. We have been several days quite alone and there is no corner of the garden that we have not explored.

We have been in all the rooms of our father’s palace and have admired the rich and beautiful furniture: why should not we go into the room that our father forbade us to enter?’



‘Sister,’ said the youngest, ‘I cannot think how you can tempt us to break our father’s command. When he told us not to go into that room, he must have known what he was saying and have had a good reason for saying it.’

‘Surely the sky won’t fall about our heads if we DO go in,’ said the second Princess. ‘Dragons and such like monsters that would devour us will not be hidden in the room. And how will our father ever find out that we have gone in?’



While they were speaking thus, encouraging each other, they had reached the room; the eldest fitted the key into the lock and snap! The door stood open.

The three girls entered, and what do you think they saw?



The room was quite empty and without any ornament, but in the middle stood a large table and on it lay a big open book.

Now the Princesses were curious to know what was written in the book, especially the eldest, and this is what she read:

‘The eldest daughter of this King will marry a prince from the East.’



Then the second girl stepped forward, and turning over the page she read:

'The second daughter of this King will marry a prince from the West.'

The girls were delighted and laughed and teased each other.



But the youngest Princess did not want to go near the table or to open the book. Her elder sisters however left her no peace and, they dragged her up to the table and in fear and trembling she turned over the page and read:

‘The youngest daughter of this King will be married to a pig from the North.’

Now if a thunderbolt had fallen upon her from heaven, it would not have frightened her more. She almost died of misery and if her sisters had not held her up, she would have sunk to the ground and cut her head open.



When she came out of the fainting fit into which she had fallen in her terror, her sisters tried to comfort her, saying:

‘How can you believe such nonsense? When did it ever happen that a king’s daughter married a pig?’

‘What a baby you are!’ said the other sister; ‘had not our father enough soldiers to protect you, even if the disgusting creature did come to woo you?’



The youngest Princess would fain have let herself be convinced by her sisters' words and have believed what they say, but her heart was heavy. Her thoughts kept turning to the book, in which stood written that great happiness waited her sisters, but that a fate was in store for her such as had never before been known the world.

Besides, the thought weighed on her heart that she had been guilty of disobeying her father.



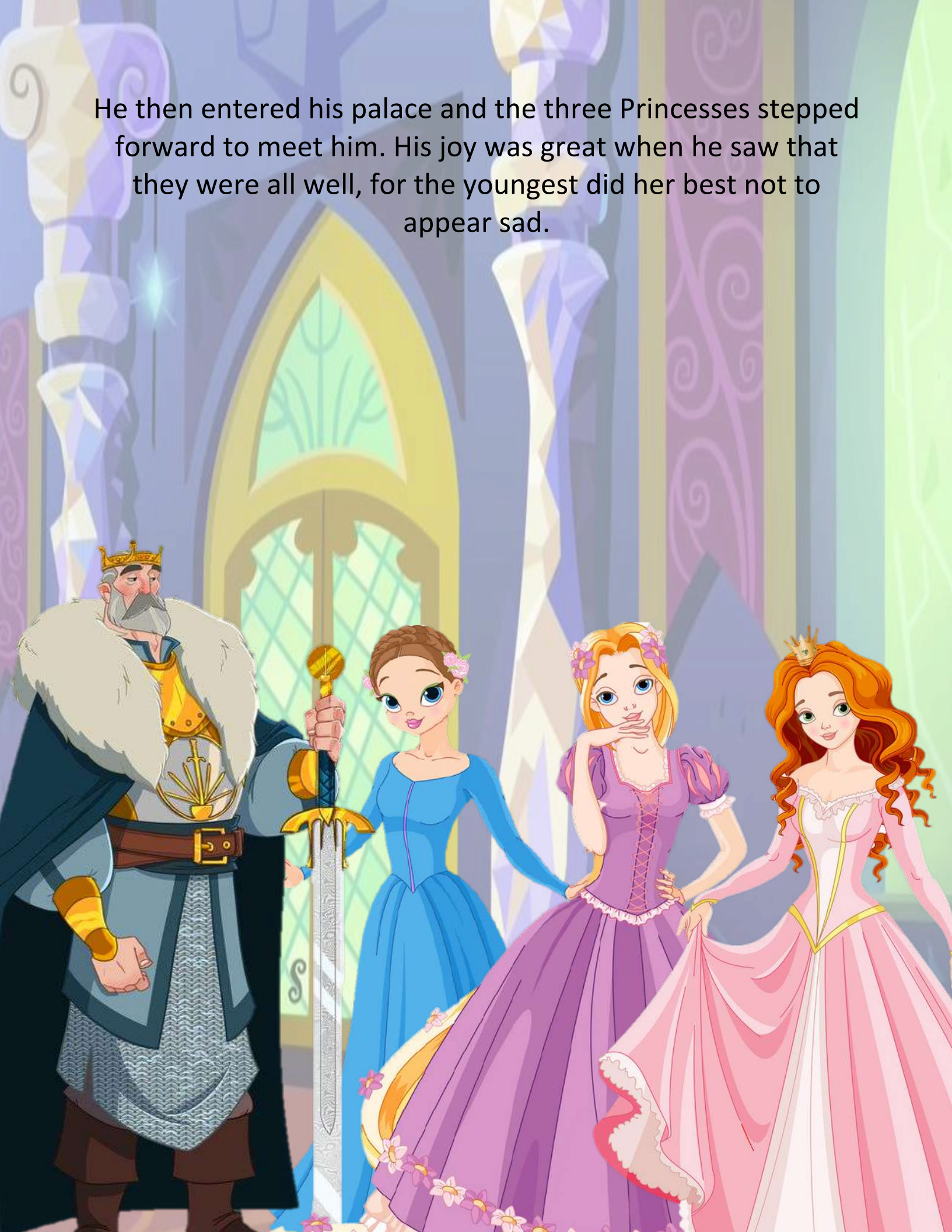
She began to get quite ill and, in a few days, she was so changed that it was difficult to recognize her; formerly she had been rosy and merry, now she was pale and nothing gave her any pleasure. She gave up playing with her sisters in the garden, ceased to gather flowers to put in her hair and never sang when they sat together at their spinning and sewing.



In the meantime, the King won a great Victory and having completely defeated and driven off the enemy, he hurried home to his daughters, to whom his thoughts had constantly turned. Everyone went out to meet him with cymbals and fifes and drums, and there was a great rejoicing over his victorious return. The King's first act on reaching home was to thank Heaven for the victory he had gained over the enemies and the three against him.



He then entered his palace and the three Princesses stepped forward to meet him. His joy was great when he saw that they were all well, for the youngest did her best not to appear sad.



In spite of this, however, it was not long before the King noticed that his third daughter was getting very thin and sad-looking. And suddenly, he felt as if a hot iron were entering his soul, for it flashed through his mind that she had disobeyed his word.



He felt sure he was right; but to be quite certain he called his daughters to him, questioned them and ordered them to speak the truth. They confessed everything but took good care not to say which had led the other two into temptation.

The King was so distressed when he heard it that he was almost overcome by grief. But he took heart and tried to comfort his daughters, who looked frightened to death. He saw that what had happened had happened and that a thousand words would not alter matters by a hair's-breadth.



Well, these events had almost been forgotten when one fine day a prince from the East appeared at the Court and asked the King for the hand of his eldest daughter. The King gladly gave his consent.



A great wedding banquet was prepared and after three days of feasting the happy pair were accompanied to the frontier with much ceremony and rejoicing.



After some time the same thing befell the second daughter,
who was wooed and won by a prince from the West.



Now when the young Princess saw that everything fell out exactly as had been written in the book, she grew very sad. She refused to eat and would not put on her fine clothes nor go out walking and declared that she would rather die than become a laughingstock to the world.

But the King would not allow her to do anything so wrong and he comforted her in all possible ways.



So, the time passed, till lo and behold! One fine day an enormous pig from the North walked into the palace and going straight up to the King said, 'Hail! Oh King. May your life be as prosperous and bright as sunrise on a clear day!'

'I am glad to see you well, friend,' answered the King, 'but what wind had brought you hither?'

'I come a-wooing,' replied the Pig.



Now the King was astonished to hear so fine a speech from a Pig and at once it occurred to him that something strange was the matter. He would gladly have turned the Pig's thoughts in another direction, as he did not wish to give him the Princess for a wife; but when he heard that the Court and the whole street were full of the pigs in the world, he saw that there was no escape and that he must give his consent. The Pig was not satisfied with mere promises and would not go away till the King had sown a royal oath upon it.



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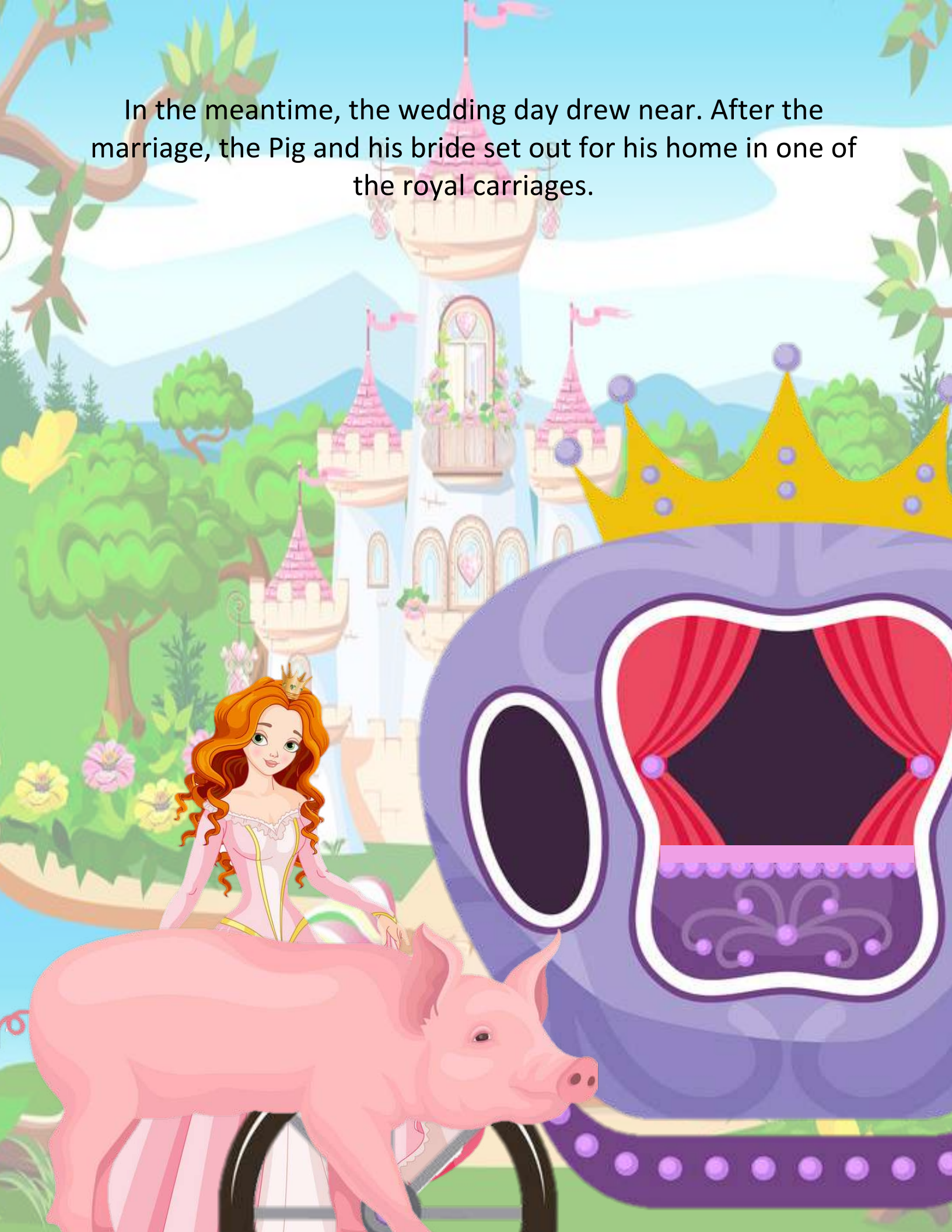
The King then sent for his daughter and advised her to submit to fate, as there was nothing else to be done. And he added:

‘My child, the words and whole behaviour of this Pig are quite unlike those of other pigs. I do not myself believe that he always was a pig. Depend upon it some magic or witchcraft has been at work. Obey him and do everything that he wished, and I feel sure that Heaven will shortly send you release.’

‘If you wish me to do this, dear father, I will do it,’ replied the girl.



In the meantime, the wedding day drew near. After the marriage, the Pig and his bride set out for his home in one of the royal carriages.



On the way they passed a great bog, and the Pig ordered the carriage to stop and got out and rolled about in the mire till he was covered with mud from head to foot.



then he got back into the carriage and told his wife to kiss him. What was the poor girl to do? She bethought herself of her father's words and, pulling out her pocked handkerchief, she gently wiped the Pig's snout and kissed it.



By the time they reached the Pig's dwelling, which stood in a thick wood, it was quite dark. They sat quietly for a little, as they were tired after their drive; then they had supper together and lay down to rest.



During the night the Princess noticed that the Pig had changed into a man. She was not a little surprised, but remembering her father's words, she took courage, determined to wait and see what would happen.



And now she noticed that every night the Pig became a man and every morning he was changed into a Pig before she awoke. This happened several nights running and the Princess could not understand it at all. Clearly her husband must be bewitched. In time she grew quite fond of him, he was so kind and gentle.



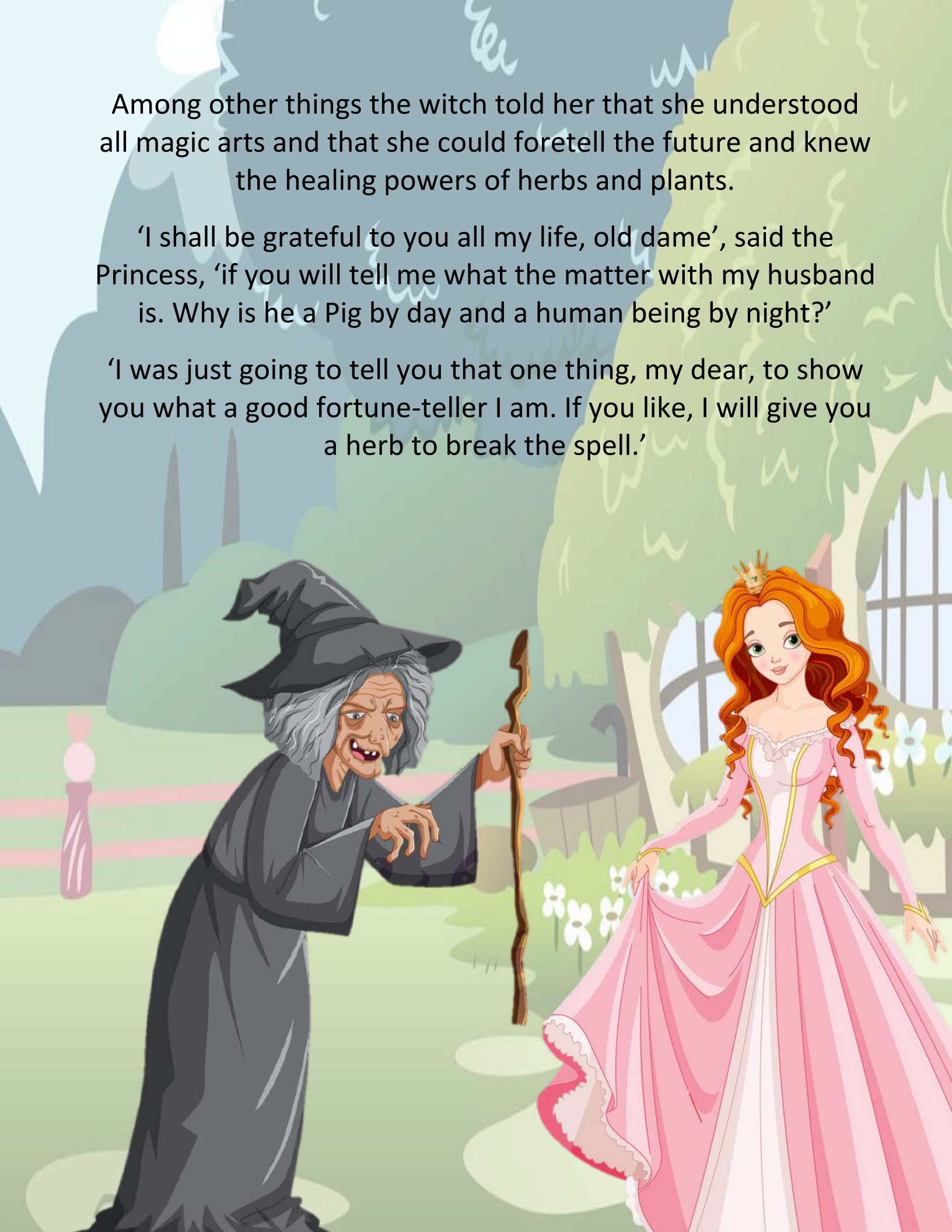
One fine day as she was sitting alone, she saw an old witch go past. She felt quite excited, as it was so long since she had seen a human being and she called out to the old woman to come and talk to her.



Among other things the witch told her that she understood all magic arts and that she could foretell the future and knew the healing powers of herbs and plants.

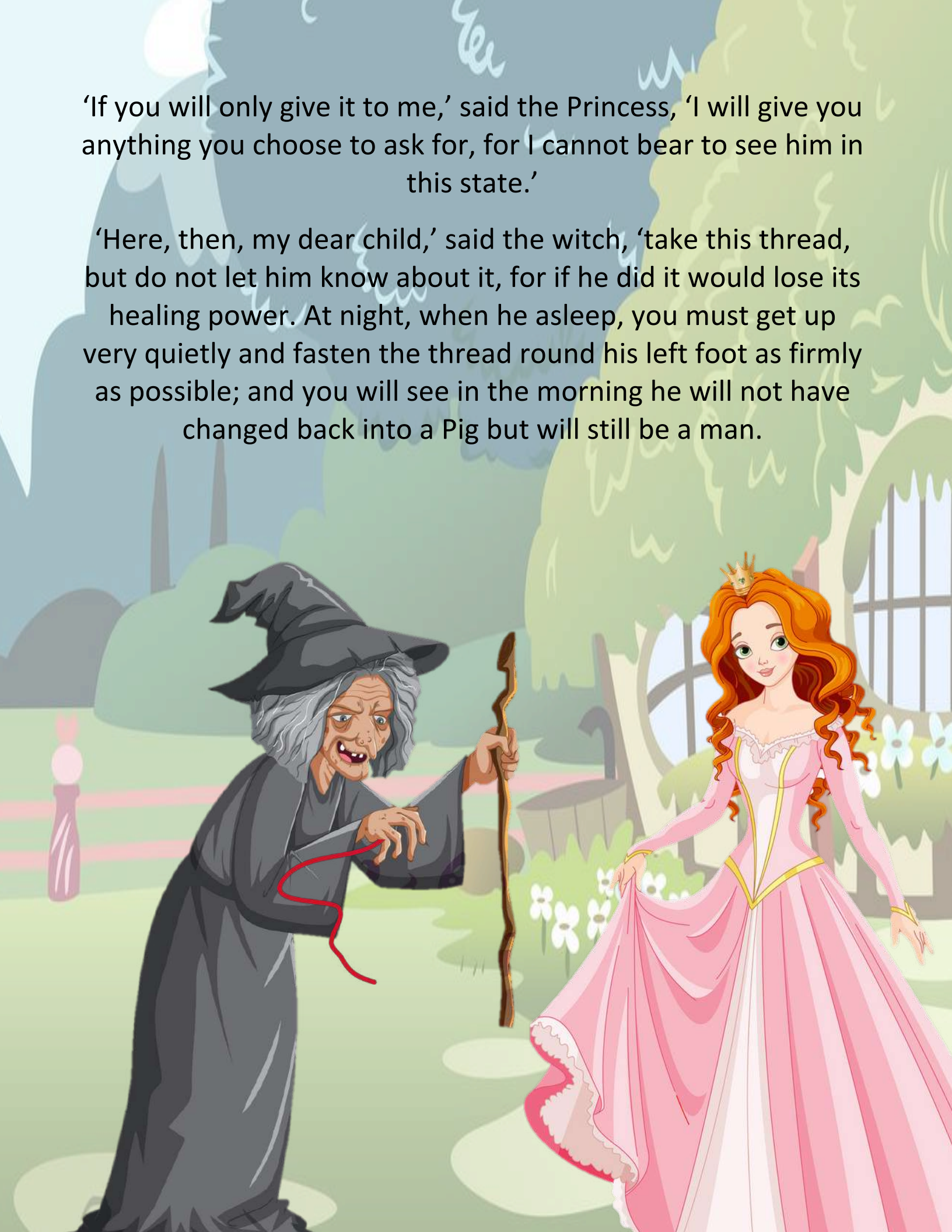
‘I shall be grateful to you all my life, old dame’, said the Princess, ‘if you will tell me what the matter with my husband is. Why is he a Pig by day and a human being by night?’

‘I was just going to tell you that one thing, my dear, to show you what a good fortune-teller I am. If you like, I will give you a herb to break the spell.’



‘If you will only give it to me,’ said the Princess, ‘I will give you anything you choose to ask for, for I cannot bear to see him in this state.’

‘Here, then, my dear child,’ said the witch, ‘take this thread, but do not let him know about it, for if he did it would lose its healing power. At night, when he asleep, you must get up very quietly and fasten the thread round his left foot as firmly as possible; and you will see in the morning he will not have changed back into a Pig but will still be a man.’



‘I do not want any reward. I shall be sufficiently repaid by knowing that you are happy. It almost breaks my heart to think of all you have suffered, and I only wish I had known it sooner, as I should have come to your rescue at once.’



When the old witch had gone away the Princess hid the thread very carefully and at night, she got up quietly, and with a beating heart she bound the thread round her husband's foot. Just as she was pulling the knot tight there was a crack, the thread broke for it was rotten.



Her husband awoke with a start and said to her, 'Unhappy woman, what have you done? Three days more and this unholy spell would have fallen from me and now, who knows how long I may have to go about in this disgusting shape?

I must leave you at once and we shall not meet again until you have worn out three pairs of iron shoes and blunted a steel staff in your search for me.' So, saying he disappeared.



Now, when the Princess was left alone, she began to weep and moan in a way that was pitiful to hear; but when she saw that her tears and groans did her no good, she got up, determined to go wherever fate should lead her.



On reaching a town, the first thing she did was to order three pairs of iron sandals and a steel staff, and having made these preparations for her journey, she set out in search of her husband.



On and on she wandered over nine seas and across nine continents;
through forests with trees whose stems were as thick as beer-
barrels; stumbling and knocking herself against the fallen
branches, then picking herself up and going on; the boughs of the
trees hit her face and the shrubs tore her hands, but on she went
and never looked back.



At last, wearied with her long journey and worn out and overcome the sorrow, but still with hope at her heart, she reached a house.

Now who do you think lived there? The Moon.

The Princess knocked at the door and begged to be let in that she might rest a little.



The mother of the Moon, when she saw her sad plight, felt a great pity for her and took her in and nursed and tended her.
And while she was here the Princess had a little baby.



One day the mother of the Moon asked her:

‘How was it possible for you, a mortal, to get hither to the house of the Moon?’

Then the poor Princess told her all that happened to her and added, ‘I shall always be thankful to Heaven for leading me hither and grateful to you that you took pity on me and on my baby and did not leave us to die.’



Now I beg one last favour of you; can your daughter, the Moon, tell me where my husband is?’

‘She cannot tell you that, my child,’ replied the goddess, ‘but, if you will travel towards the East until you reach the dwelling of the Sun, he may be able to tell you something.’

Then she gave the Princess a roast chicken to eat and warned her to be very careful not to lose any of the bones, because they might be of great use to her.



When the Princess had thanked her once more for her hospitality and for her good advice and had thrown away one pair of shoes that were worn out, and had put on a second pair, she tied the chicken bones in a bundle and taking her baby in her arms and her staff in her hand, she set out once more on her wanderings.



On and on and on she went across bare sandy deserts, where the roads were so heavy that for every two steps that she took forwards she fell back one; but she struggled on till she had passed these dreary plains.



Next she crossed high Rocky Mountains, jumping from crag to crag and from peak to peak. Sometimes she would rest for a little on a mountain and then start afresh always farther and farther.



She had to cross swamps ...



... and to scale mountain peaks covered with flints, so that her feet and knees and elbows were all torn and bleeding, and sometimes she came to a precipice across which she could not jump, and she had to crawl round on hands and knees, helping herself along with her staff.



At length, wearied to death, she reached the palace in which the Sun lived. She knocked and begged for admission.



The mother of the Sun opened the door and was astonished at beholding a mortal from the distant earthly shore and wept with pity when she heard of all she had suffered.



Then, having promised to ask her son about the Princesses' husband, she hid her in the cellar, so that the Sun might notice nothing on his return home, for he was always in a bad temper when he came in at night.



The next day the Princess feared that things would not go well with her, for the Sun had noticed that someone from the other world had been in the palace. But his mother had soothed him with soft words, assuring him that this was not so. So, the Princess took heart when she saw how kindly she was treated and asked:

‘But how in the world is it possible for the Sun to be angry?
He is so beautiful and so good to mortals.’



‘This is how it happens,’ replied the Sun’s mother. ‘In the morning when he stands at the gates of paradise, he is happy, and smiles on the whole world ...



... but during the day he gets cross, because he sees all the evil deeds of men, and that is why his heat becomes so scorching, but in the evening, he is both sad and angry, for he stands at the gates of death; that is his usual course. From there he comes back here.'



She then told the Princess that she had asked about her husband, but that her son had replied that he knew nothing about him and that her only hope was to go and inquire of the Wind.

Before the Princess left the mother of the Sun gave her a roast chicken to eat and advised her to take great care of the bones, which she did, wrapping them up in a bundle.



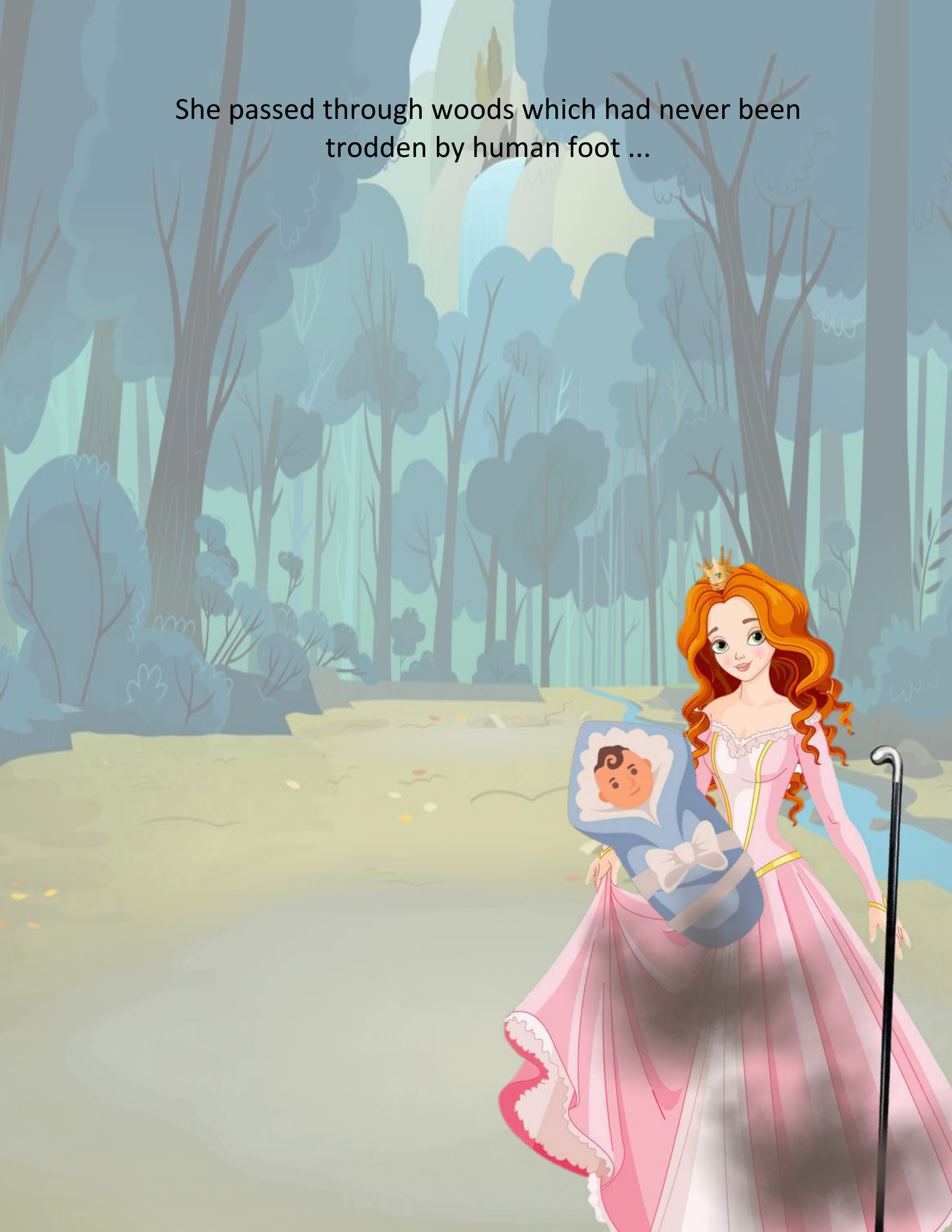
She then threw away her second pair of shoes, which were quite worn out and with her child on her arm and her staff in her hand, she set forth on her way to the Wind.



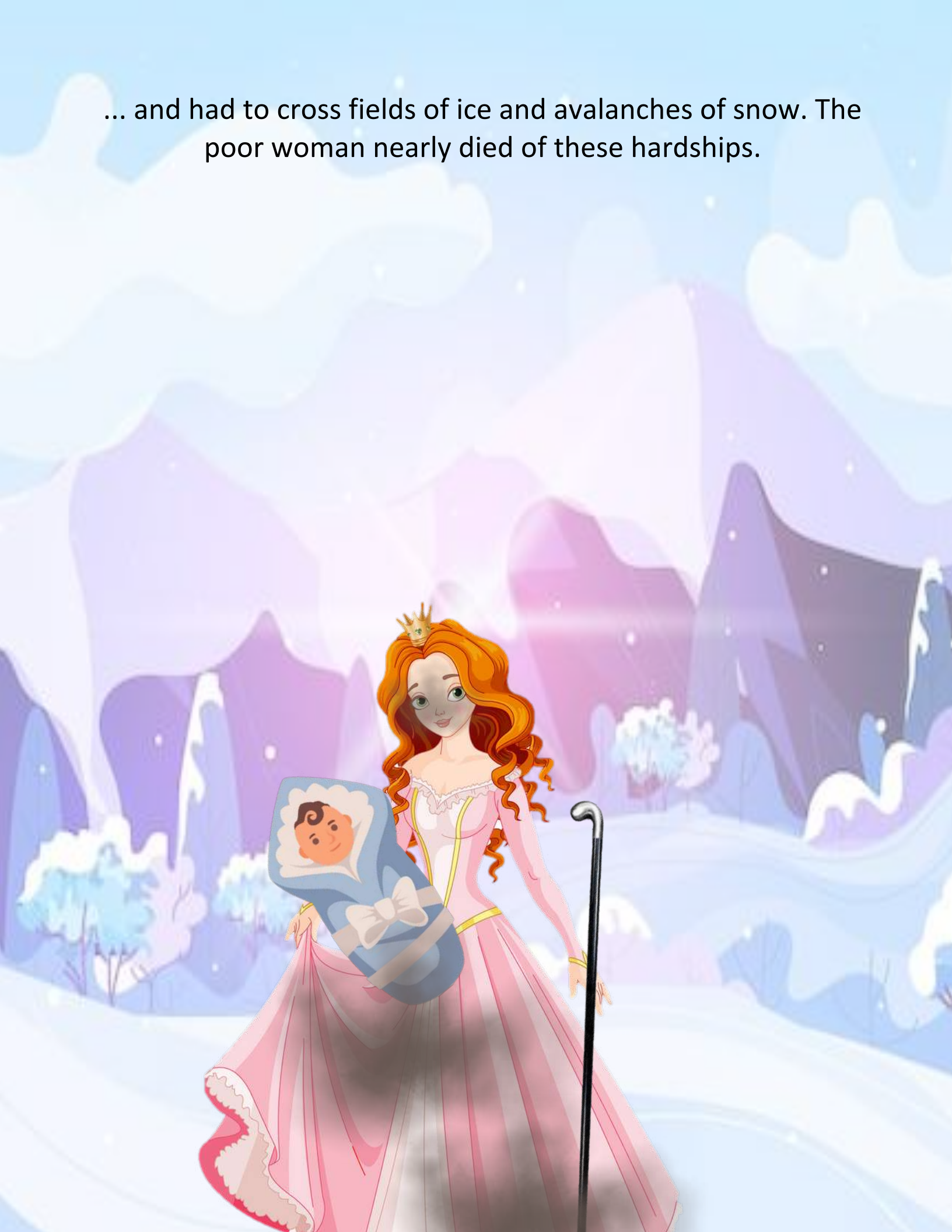
In these wanderings she met with even greater difficulties than before, for she came upon one mountain of flints after another, out of which tongues of fire would flame up.



She passed through woods which had never been
trodden by human foot ...



... and had to cross fields of ice and avalanches of snow. The poor woman nearly died of these hardships.



But she kept a brave heart and at length she reached an enormous cave in the side of a mountain. This was where the Wind lived. There was a little door in the railing in front of the cave, and here the Princess knocked and begged for admission



The mother of the Wind had pity on her and took her in, that she might rest a little. Here too she was hidden away, so that the Wind might not notice her.



The next morning the mother of the Wind told her that her husband was living in a thick wood, so thick that no axe had been able to cut a way through it; here he had built himself a sort of house by placing trunks of trees together and fastening them with withes and here lived alone, shunning humankind.

After the mother of the Wind had given the Princess a chicken to eat and had wanted her to take care of the bones, she advised her to go by the Milky Way, which at night lies across the sky, and to wander on till she reached her goal.



Having thanked the old woman with tears in her eyes for her hospitality, and for the good news she had given her, the Princess set out on her journey and rested neither night nor day, so great was her longing to see her husband again.



On and on she walked until her last pair of shoes fell in pieces. So, she threw them away and went on with bare feet, not heeding the bogs nor the thorns that wounded her, nor the stones that bruised her.



At last, she reached a beautiful green meadow on the edge of a wood. Her heart was cheered by the sight of the flowers and the soft cool grass, and she sat down and rested for a little.



But hearing the birds chirping to their mates among the trees made her think with longing of her husband and she wept bitterly and taking her child in her arms, and her bundle of chicken bone on her shoulder, she entered the wood.



For three days and three nights she struggled through it but could find nothing. She was quite worn out with weariness and hunger and even her staff was no further help to her, for in her many wanderings it had become quite blunted.



She almost gave up in despair but made one last great effort and suddenly in a thicket she came upon the sort of house that the mother of the Wind had described, but the door was up in the roof. Round the house she went, in search of steps, but could find none. What was she to do? How was she to get in?



She thought and thought and tried in vain to climb up to the door. Then suddenly she be-thought her of the chicken bones that she had dragged all that weary way and she said to herself: 'They would not all have told me to take such good care of these bones if they had not had some good reason for doing so. Perhaps now, in my hour of need, they may be of use to me.'



So, she took the bones out of her bundle and having thought for a moment, she placed the two ends together. To her surprise they stuck tight; then she added the other bones, till she had two long poles the height of the house; these she placed against the wall, at a distance of a yard from one another.

Across them she placed the other bones, piece by piece, like the steps of a ladder. As soon as one step was finished, she stood upon it and made the next one, and then the next, till she was close to the door.



But just as she got near the top, she noticed that there were no bones left for the last rung of the ladder. What was she to do? Without that last step the whole ladder was useless. She must have lost one of the bones.

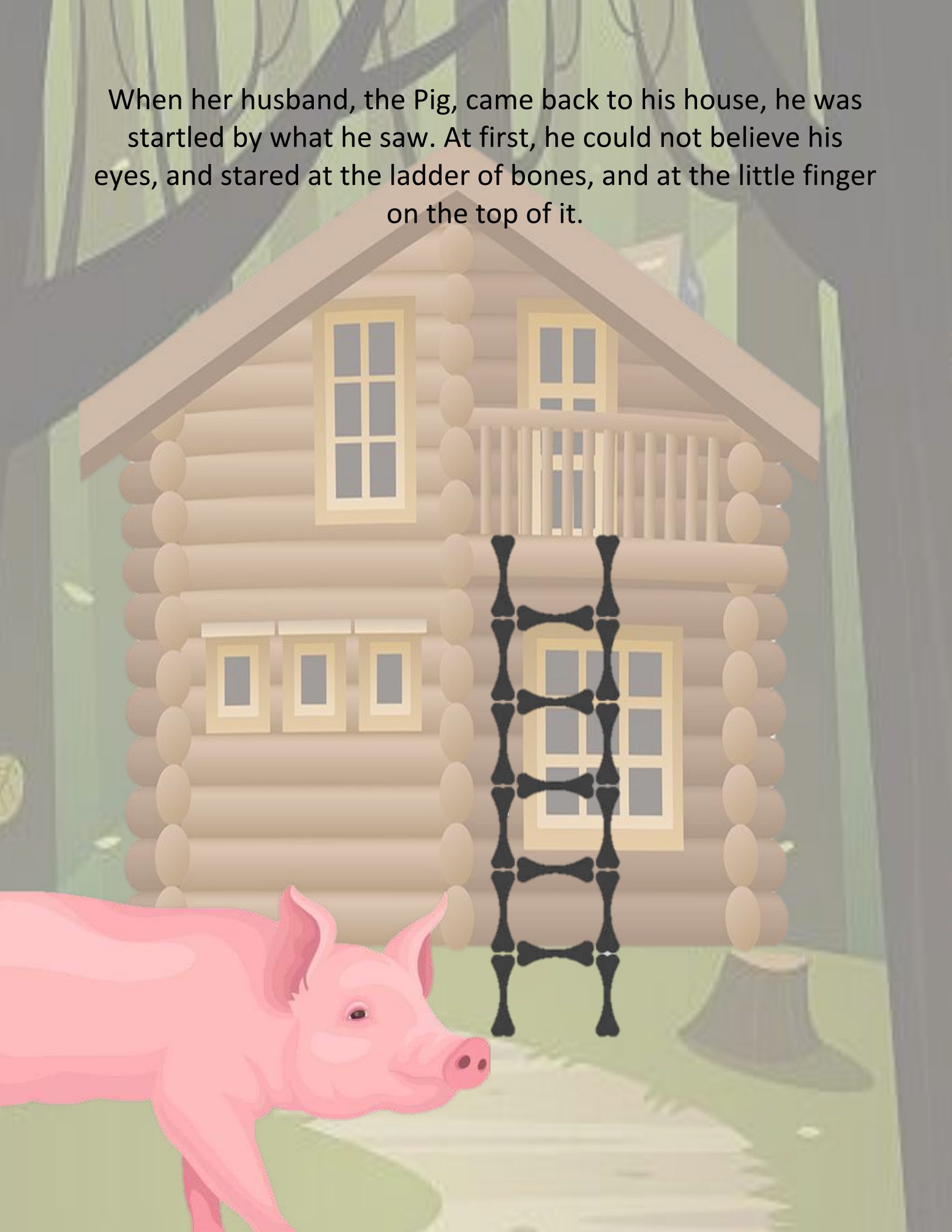
Then suddenly an idea came to her. Taking a knife, she chopped off her little finger and placing it on the last step, it stuck as the bones had done. The ladder was complete and with her child on her arm, she entered the door of the house.



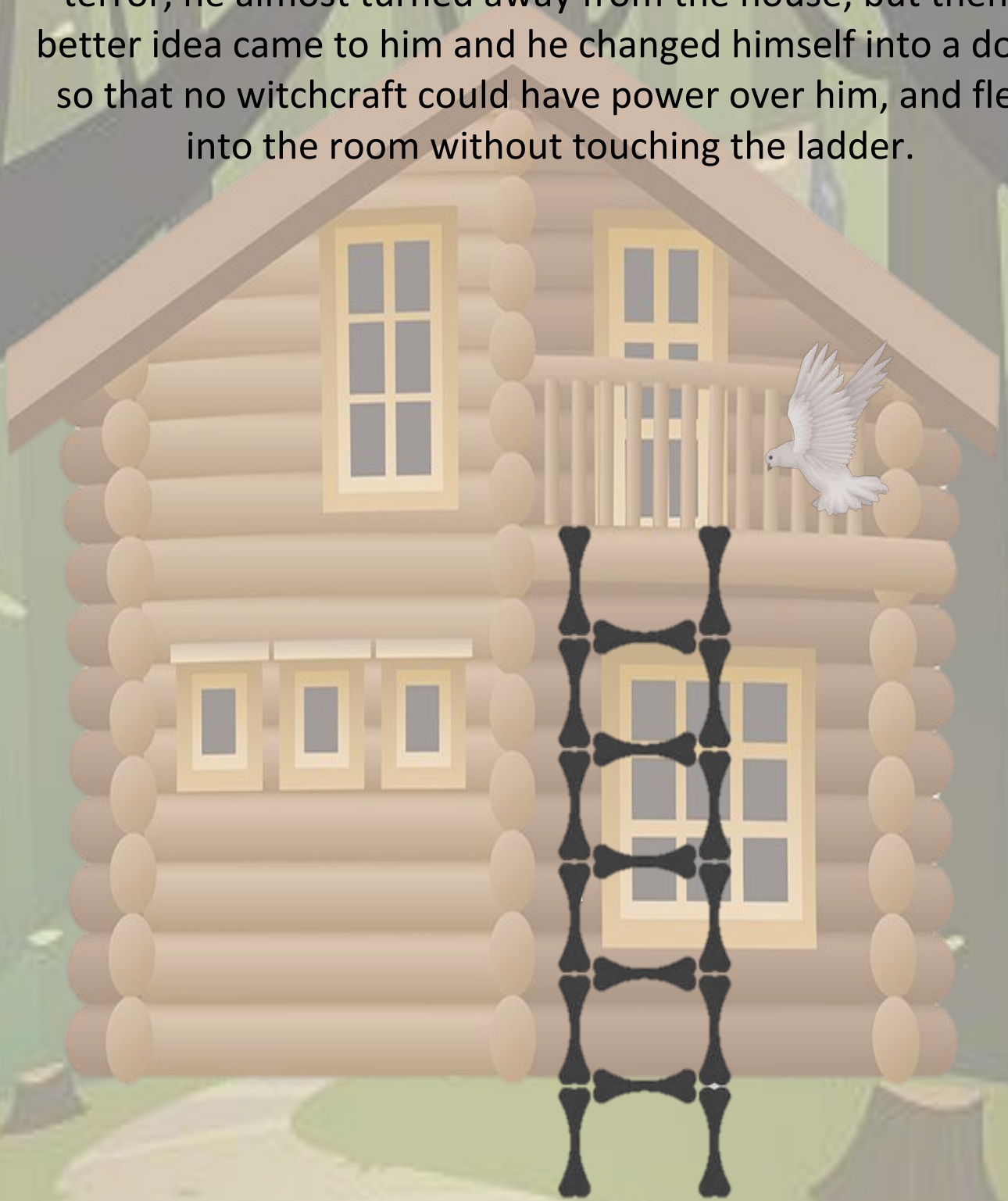
Here she found everything in perfect order. Having taken some food, she laid the child down to sleep in a trough that was on the floor and sat herself down to rest.



When her husband, the Pig, came back to his house, he was startled by what he saw. At first, he could not believe his eyes, and stared at the ladder of bones, and at the little finger on the top of it.

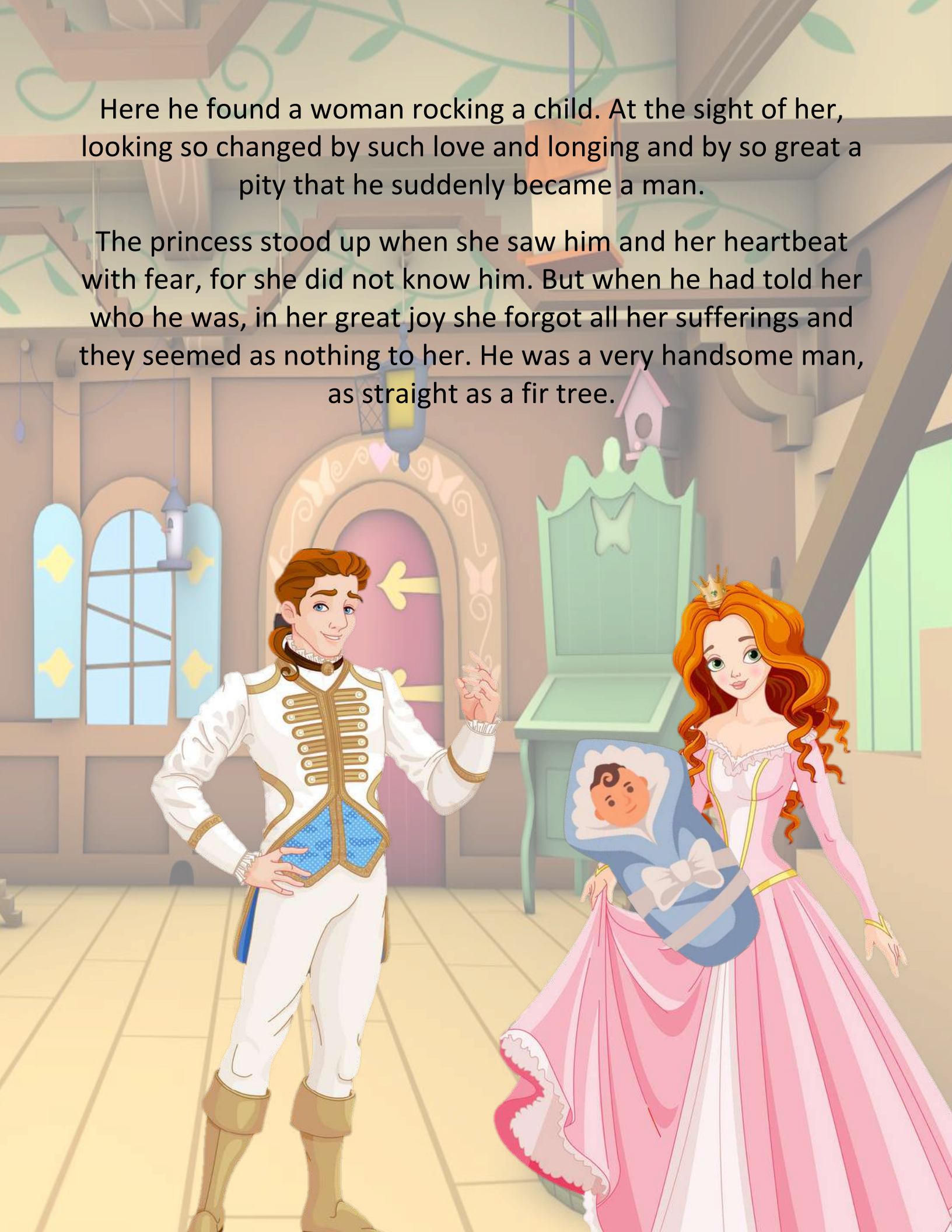


He felt that some fresh magic must be at work and in his terror, he almost turned away from the house; but then a better idea came to him and he changed himself into a dove, so that no witchcraft could have power over him, and flew into the room without touching the ladder.



Here he found a woman rocking a child. At the sight of her, looking so changed by such love and longing and by so great a pity that he suddenly became a man.

The princess stood up when she saw him and her heartbeat with fear, for she did not know him. But when he had told her who he was, in her great joy she forgot all her sufferings and they seemed as nothing to her. He was a very handsome man, as straight as a fir tree.



They sat down together, and she told him all her adventures and he wept with pity at the tale. And then he told her his own story.

‘I am a King’s son. Once when my father was fighting against some dragons, who were the scourge of our country, I slew the youngest dragon. His mother, who was a witch, cast a spell over me and changed me into a Pig.



It was she who in the disguise of an old woman gave you the thread to bind round my foot. So that instar of the three days that had to run before the spell was broken, I was forced to remain a Pig for three more years. Now that we have suffered for each other, and have found each other again, let us forget the past.'

And in their joy, they kissed one another.

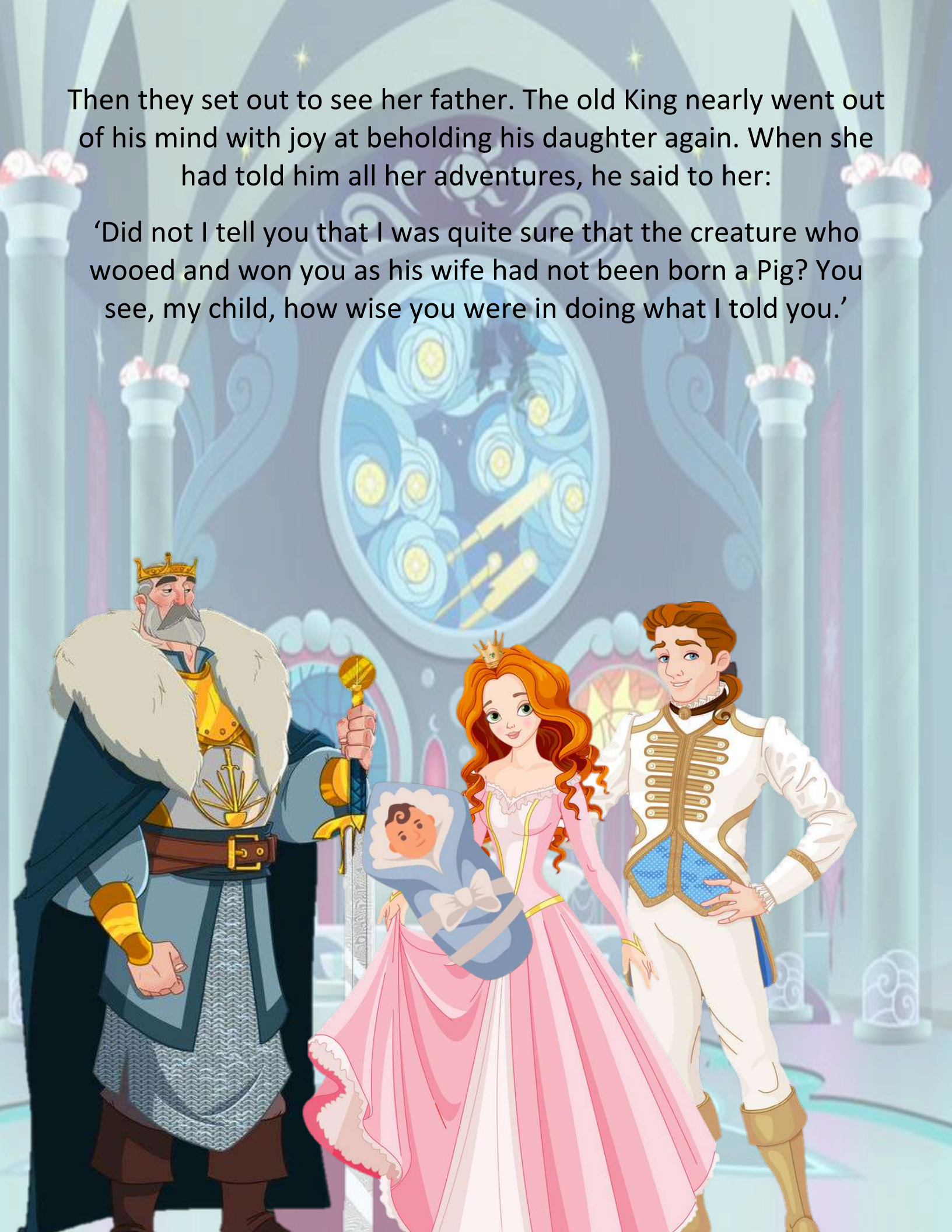


Next morning, they set out early to return to his father's kingdom. Great was the rejoicing of all the people when they saw him and his wife; his father and his mother embraced them both, and there was feasting in the palace for three days and three nights.



Then they set out to see her father. The old King nearly went out of his mind with joy at beholding his daughter again. When she had told him all her adventures, he said to her:

‘Did not I tell you that I was quite sure that the creature who wooed and won you as his wife had not been born a Pig? You see, my child, how wise you were in doing what I told you.’



And as the King was old and had no heirs, he put them on the throne in his place. And they ruled as only kings rule who have suffered many things. And if they are not dead, they are still living and ruling happily.

The End





THINK
DIGITAL ACADEMY