



# The Brothers Grimm

Rapunzel





# *Once Upon a Time*

There was once a man and a woman who longed in vain for a child. But at last, it seemed as if God would answer their prayer.





From the window at the back of their house they could see a wonderful garden full of beautiful flowers and herbs. It was surrounded by a high wall, and no one dared go into it because it belonged to a powerful witch, and everyone was afraid of her.



One day the wife was standing by this window and looking down into the garden, when she caught sight of a lovely bed of Rapunzel, which is kind of lettuce. It looked so fresh and green it made her mouth water. Her craving for the Rapunzel grew every day. It was so frustrating to be able to see it but never to eat it that she began to waste away.





When her husband saw her so pale and wan, he asked,  
“What’s wrong, darling?”

“Oh,” she answered, “if I can’t eat some of that Rapunzel  
I shall die.”

Her husband loved her, and he thought, Sooner than let  
my wife die, I shall get her some of that Rapunzel,  
whatever the cost.





As dusk fell, he climbed over the wall into the witch's garden,  
snatched a handful of Rapunzel, and took it to his wife.



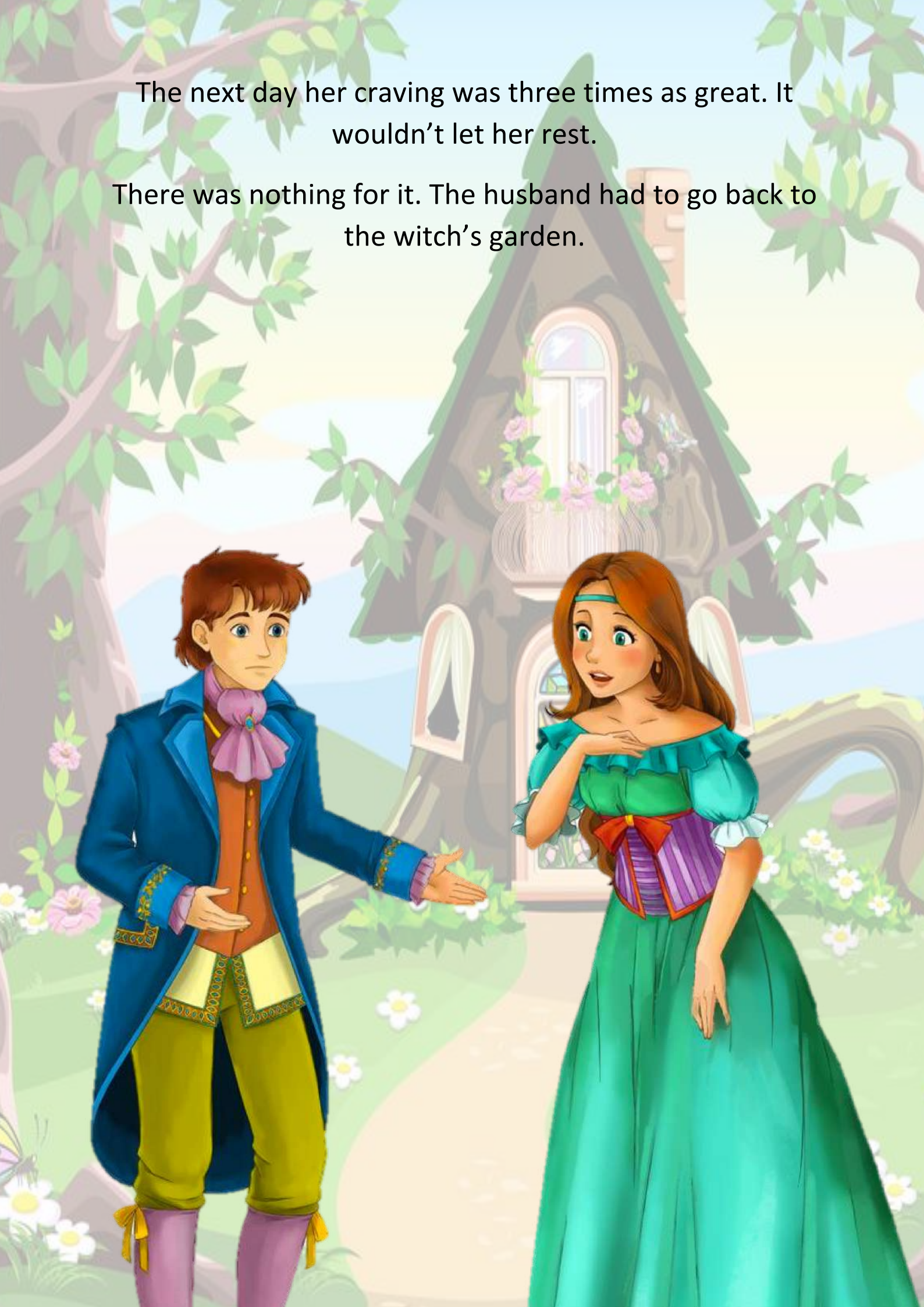
She made it into a salad straight away and ate it greedily.  
It tasted goo to her; so very good.





The next day her craving was three times as great. It wouldn't let her rest.

There was nothing for it. The husband had to go back to the witch's garden.





At dusk, he climbed the wall again. But when he came down on the other side, he nearly jumped out of his skin. There stood the witch, right in front of him!

She glared at him. “How dare you sneak into my garden and steal my Rapunzel! I’ll make you wish you hadn’t.”





“Have mercy,” he pleaded. “I had to do it. My wife saw the Rapunzel from our window, and she felt such a craving for it that she would have died if she hadn’t got some to eat.”

The witch’s face softened. “If that’s the case, I will let you pick as much Rapunzel as you like, on one condition. When your wife’s baby is born, you must give it to me. I will look after it and love it like a mother.”

The man was so frightened he would have agreed to anything.



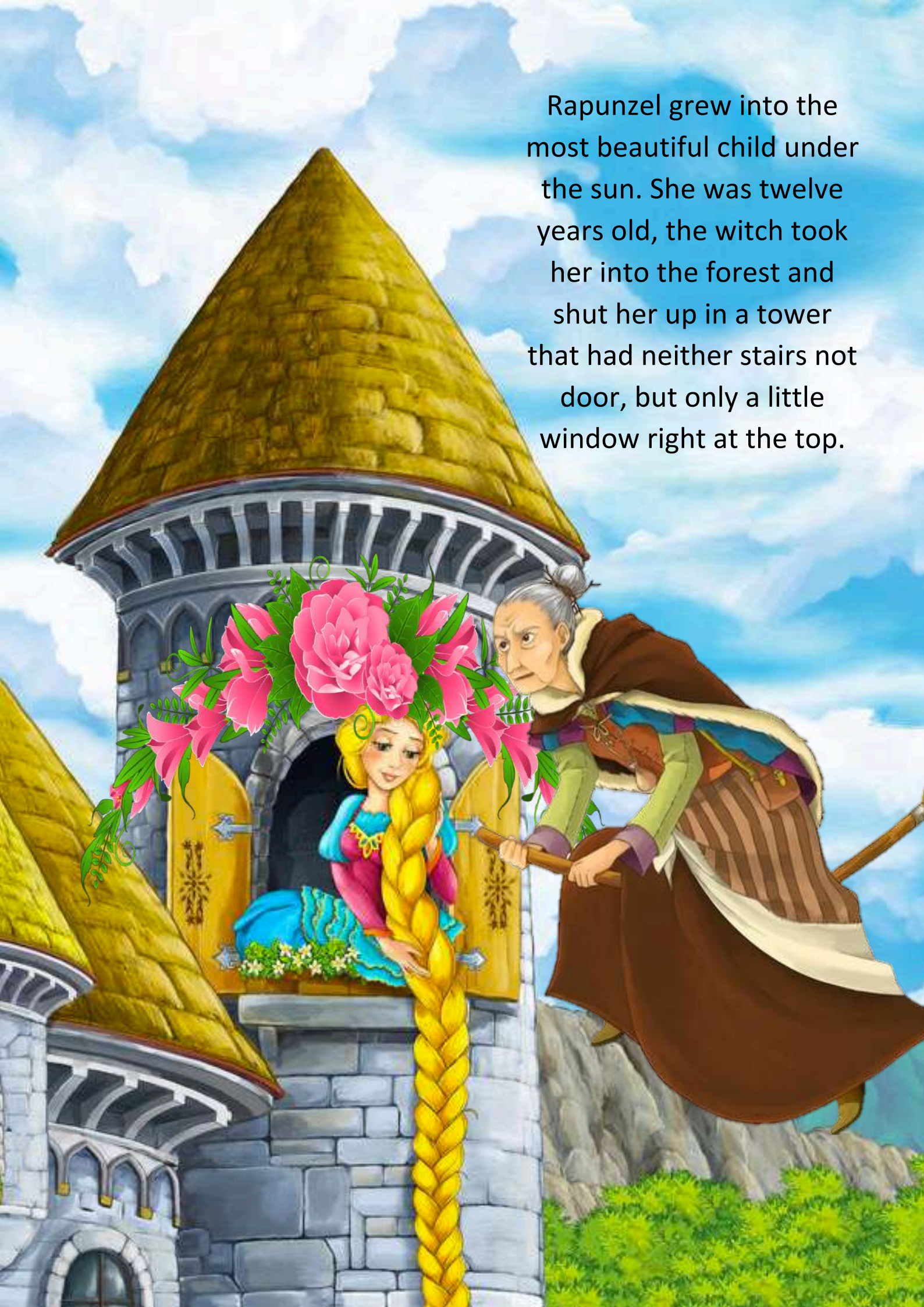


So when the baby was born, the witch came and took it away. It was a baby girl, and the witch called her Rapunzel.





Rapunzel grew into the most beautiful child under the sun. She was twelve years old, the witch took her into the forest and shut her up in a tower that had neither stairs nor door, but only a little window right at the top.

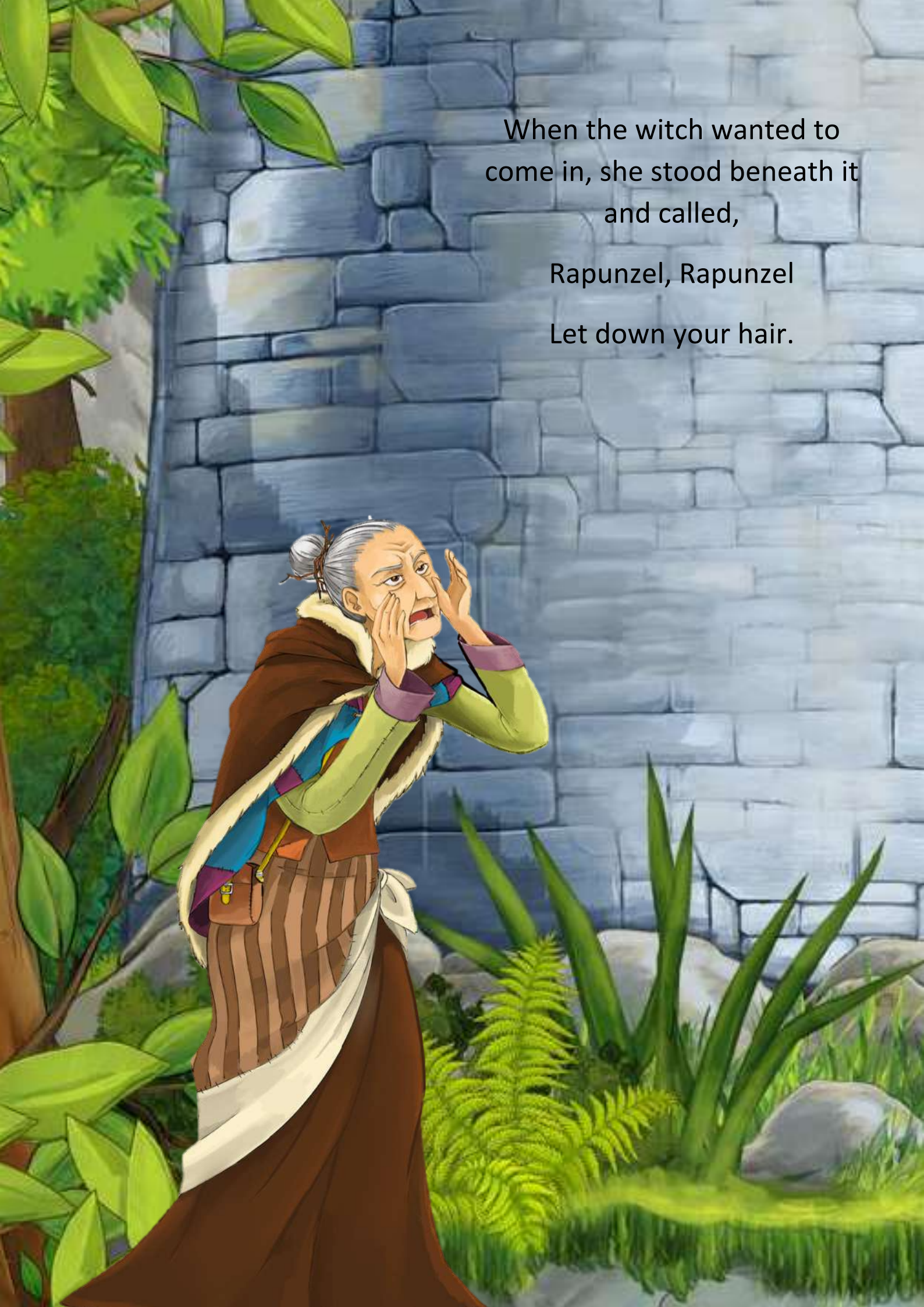




When the witch wanted to  
come in, she stood beneath it  
and called,

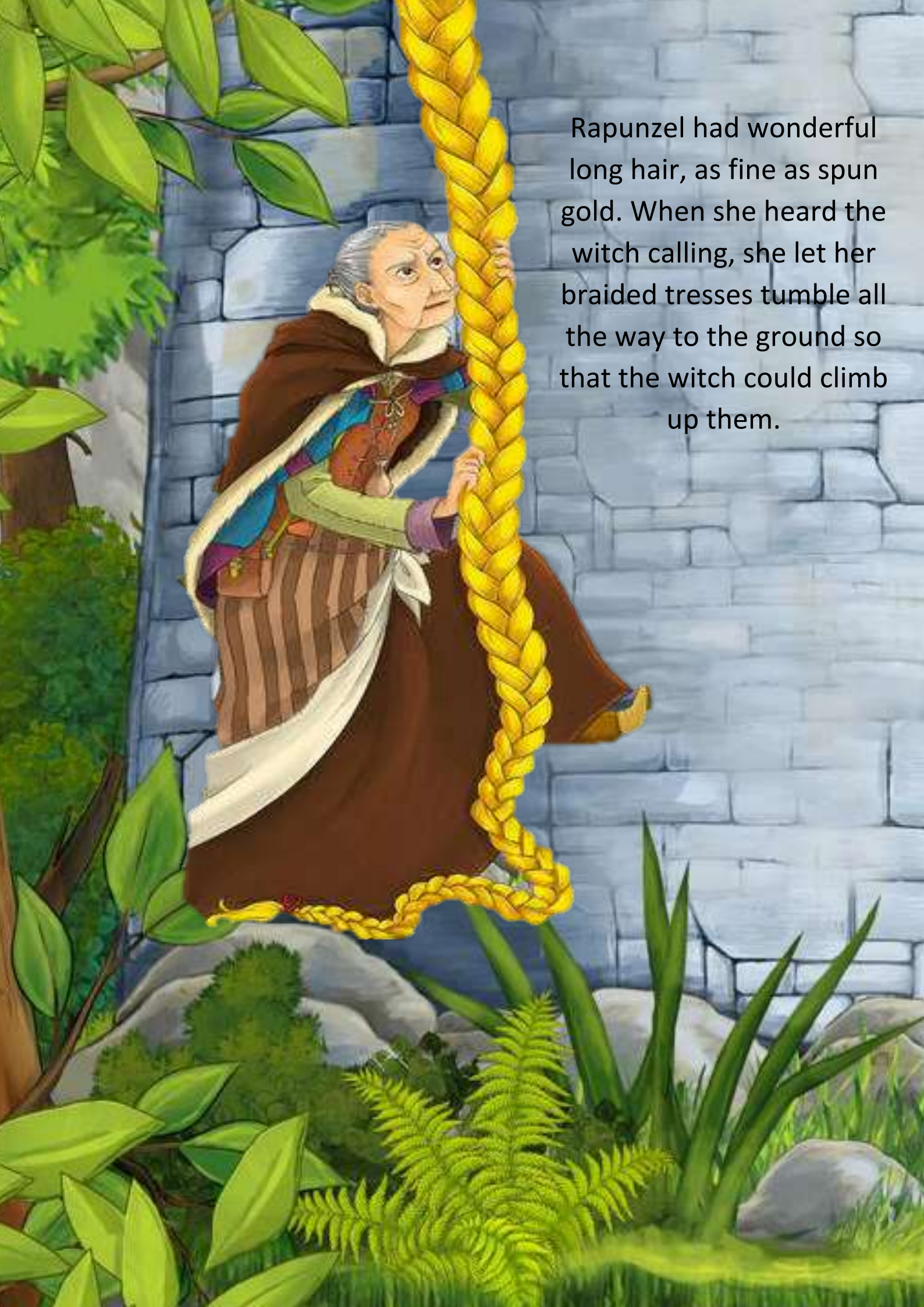
Rapunzel, Rapunzel

Let down your hair.





Rapunzel had wonderful long hair, as fine as spun gold. When she heard the witch calling, she let her braided tresses tumble all the way to the ground so that the witch could climb up them.





A few years later, a prince  
happened to pass through  
the forest and rode by the  
tower. From it, he heard  
someone singing.





It was Rapunzel, who often  
sang to herself.





Her voice was so lovely and haunting that the prince stopped to listen. He wanted to climb up to her, but when he looked for the door to the tower, he could not find one.



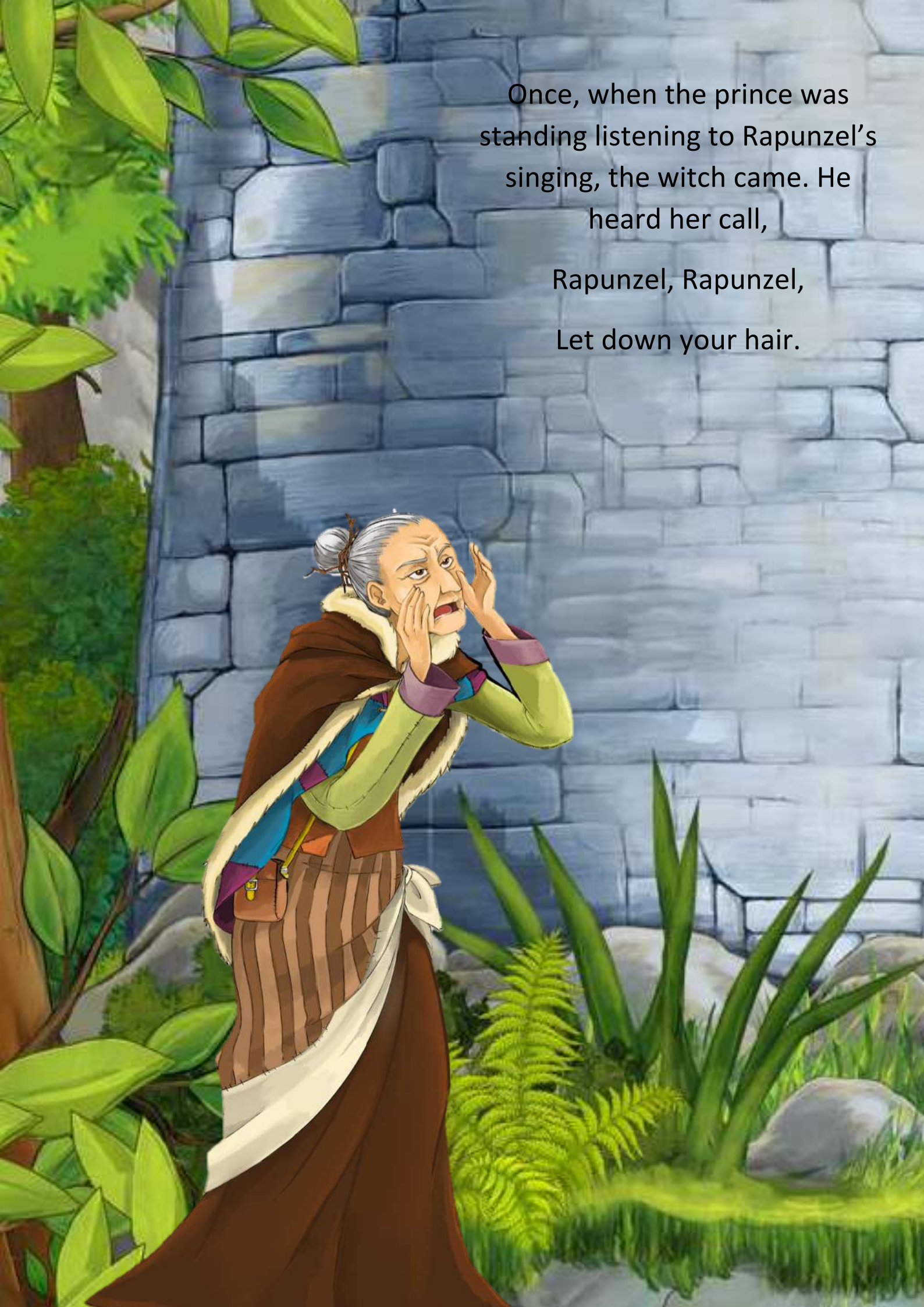


He rode away, but the singing had moved him so much that he came back every day to listen to it.



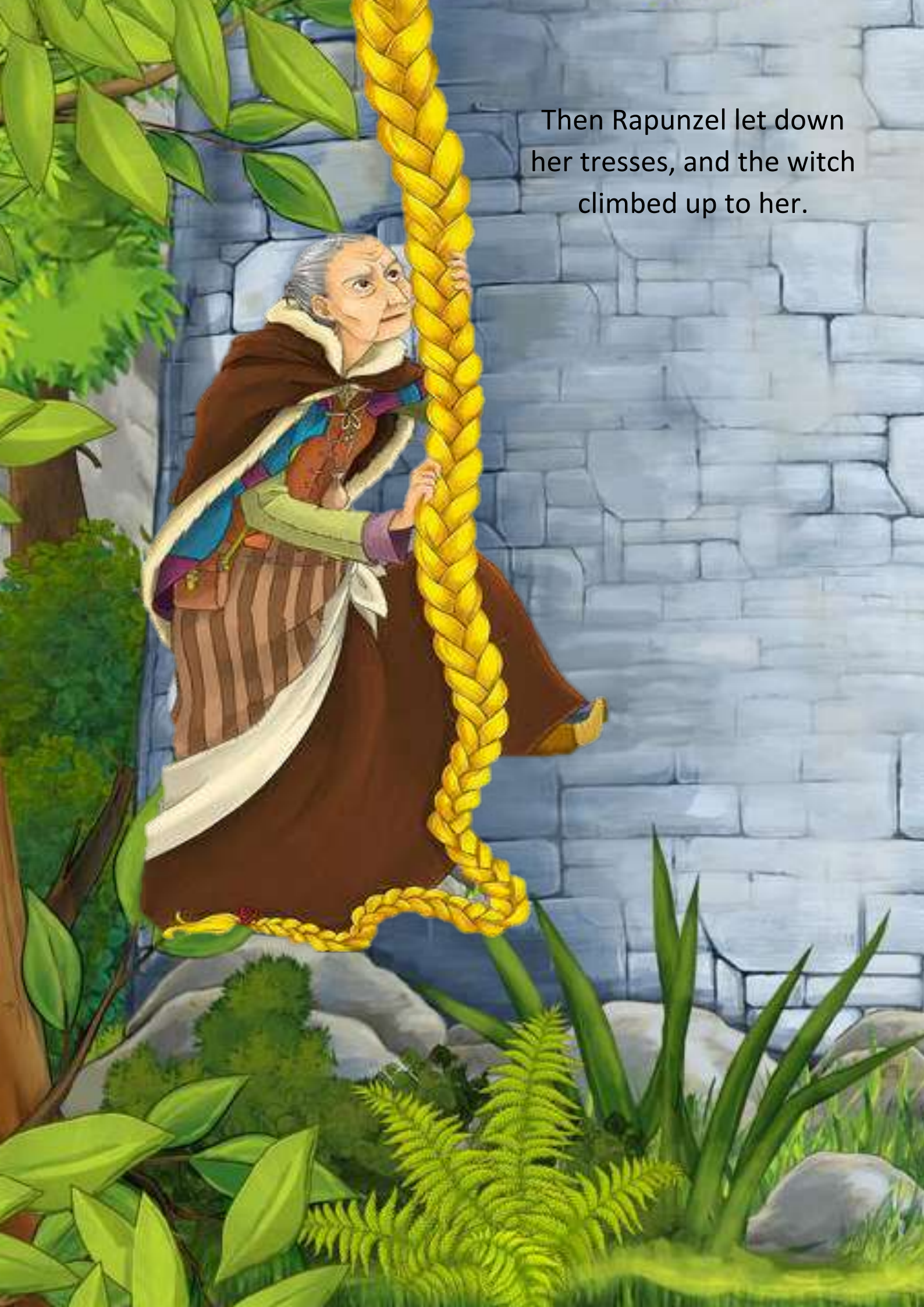


Once, when the prince was  
standing listening to Rapunzel's  
singing, the witch came. He  
heard her call,  
Rapunzel, Rapunzel,  
Let down your hair.





Then Rapunzel let down  
her tresses, and the witch  
climbed up to her.





Aha! He thought. If that is the ladder by which I can climb up to her, then I will try my luck.





Next day, as dark fell, he went to  
the tower and called,  
Rapunzel, Rapunzel,  
Let down your hair.





The hair fell down,  
and he climbed up.





At first Rapunzel was terrified. She had never seen a man before. But the prince spoke so gently to her that she lost her fear. He said, “My heart was so moved by your singing that I could not rest. Please marry me.”





He was so young and handsome, and Rapunzel thought he would love her more truly than the old witch. “Yes,” she said. “I will marry you.” And she gave him her hand.



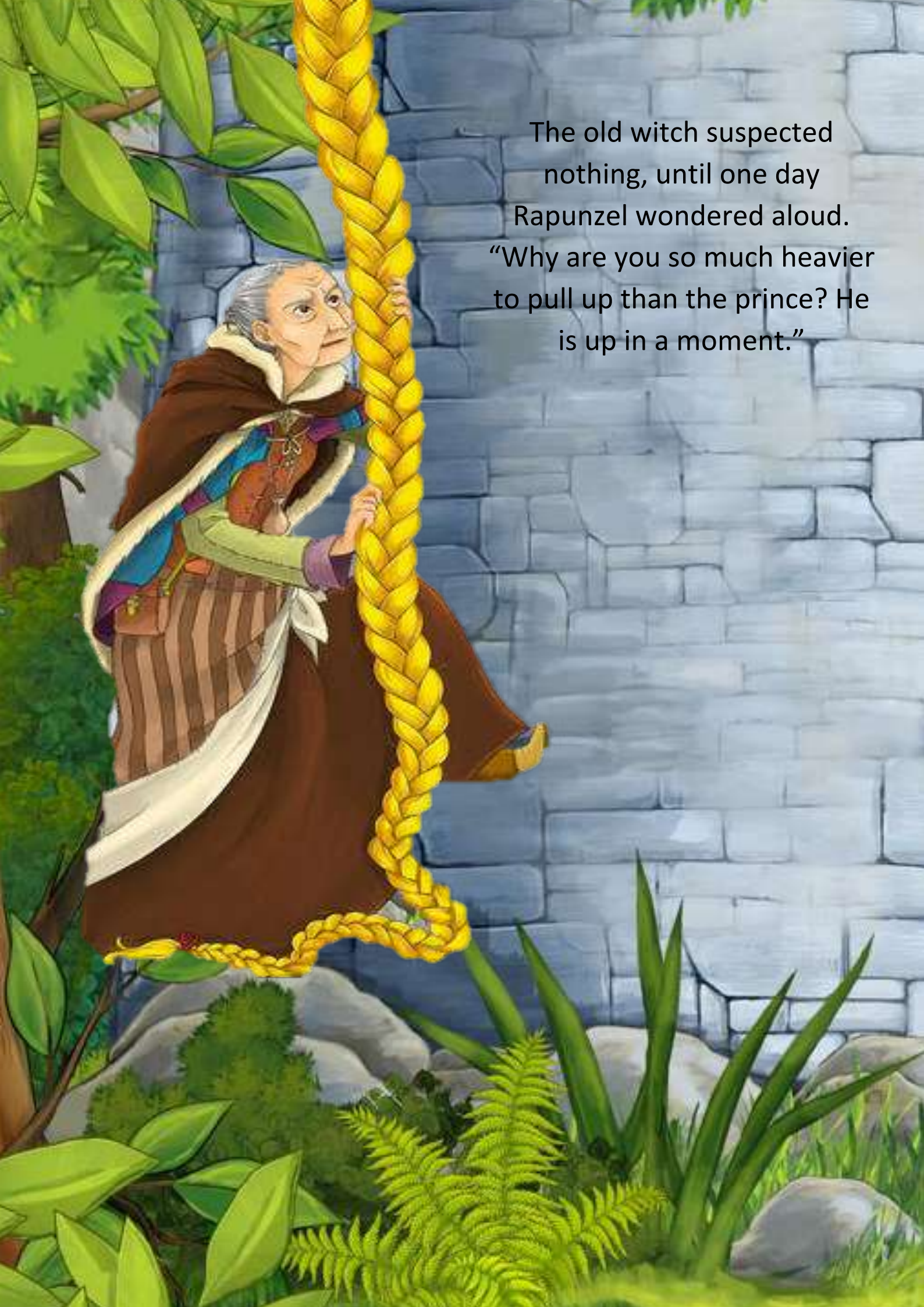


Then Rapunzel said, “But how will I ever get down? . . . I know. Every time you come, you must bring a skein of silk, and then I can make a ladder with it.

When it’s finished, I will climb down, and you can carry me off on your horse.” They agreed that until that time, he should visit her every evening, for the old witch always came in the day.





An illustration of an elderly witch with grey hair, wearing a brown robe with a white fur collar and a striped skirt. She is holding onto a thick, golden braided rope that hangs down from above. The background is a stone wall, and there are green plants and rocks at the bottom.

The old witch suspected  
nothing, until one day  
Rapunzel wondered aloud.  
“Why are you so much heavier  
to pull up than the prince? He  
is up in a moment.”



“You wicked child!” screeched the witch. “What did you say? I thought I had shut you away from the world, but you have tricked me!”

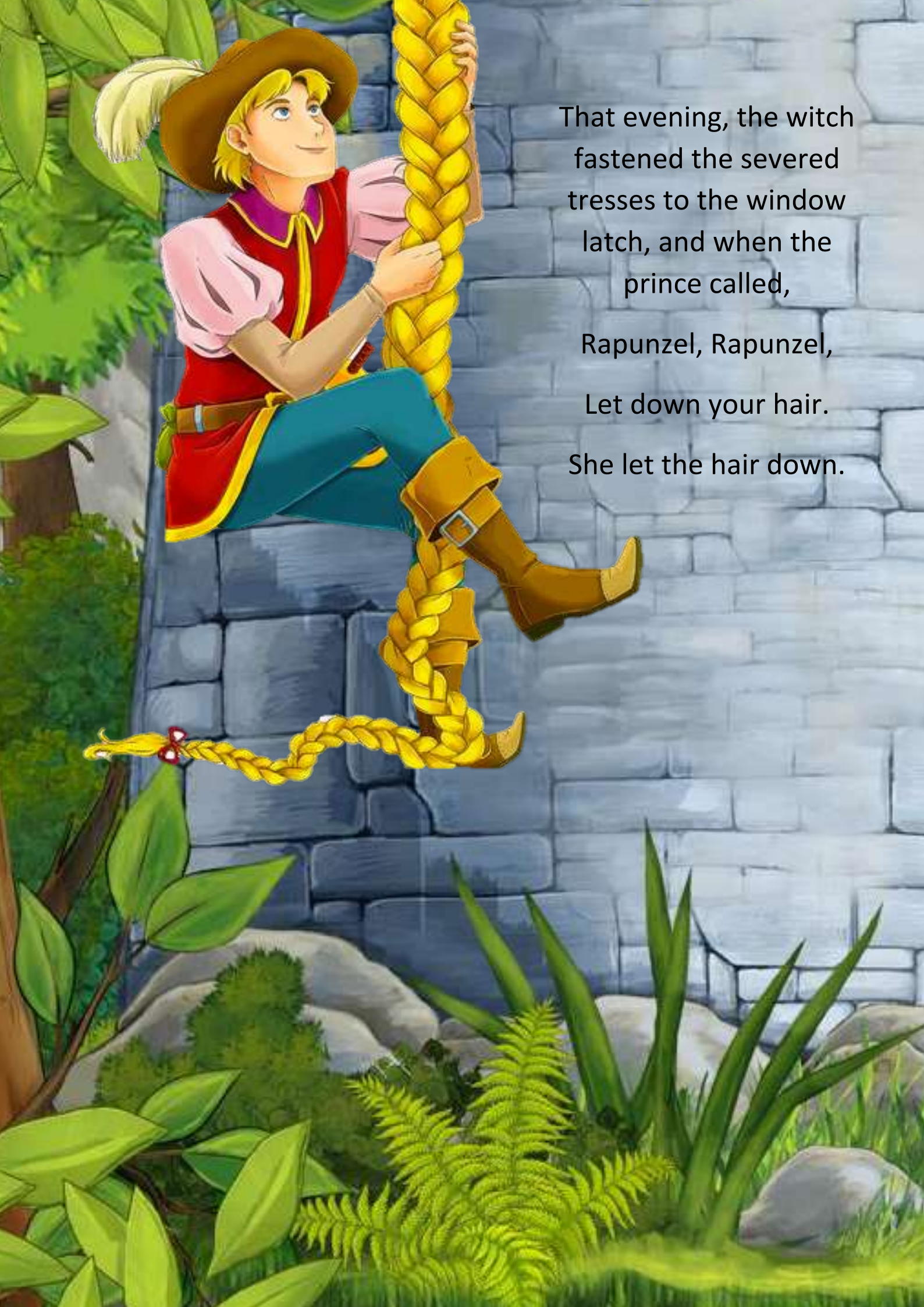




She was so angry that she took a pair of scissors and cut off all Rapunzel's beautiful hair. Snip-snap went the scissors, and the lovely tresses fell to the floor. Then the pitiless witch sent Rapunzel into the desert to live in grief and want.







That evening, the witch  
fastened the severed  
tresses to the window  
latch, and when the  
prince called,  
Rapunzel, Rapunzel,  
Let down your hair.  
She let the hair down.



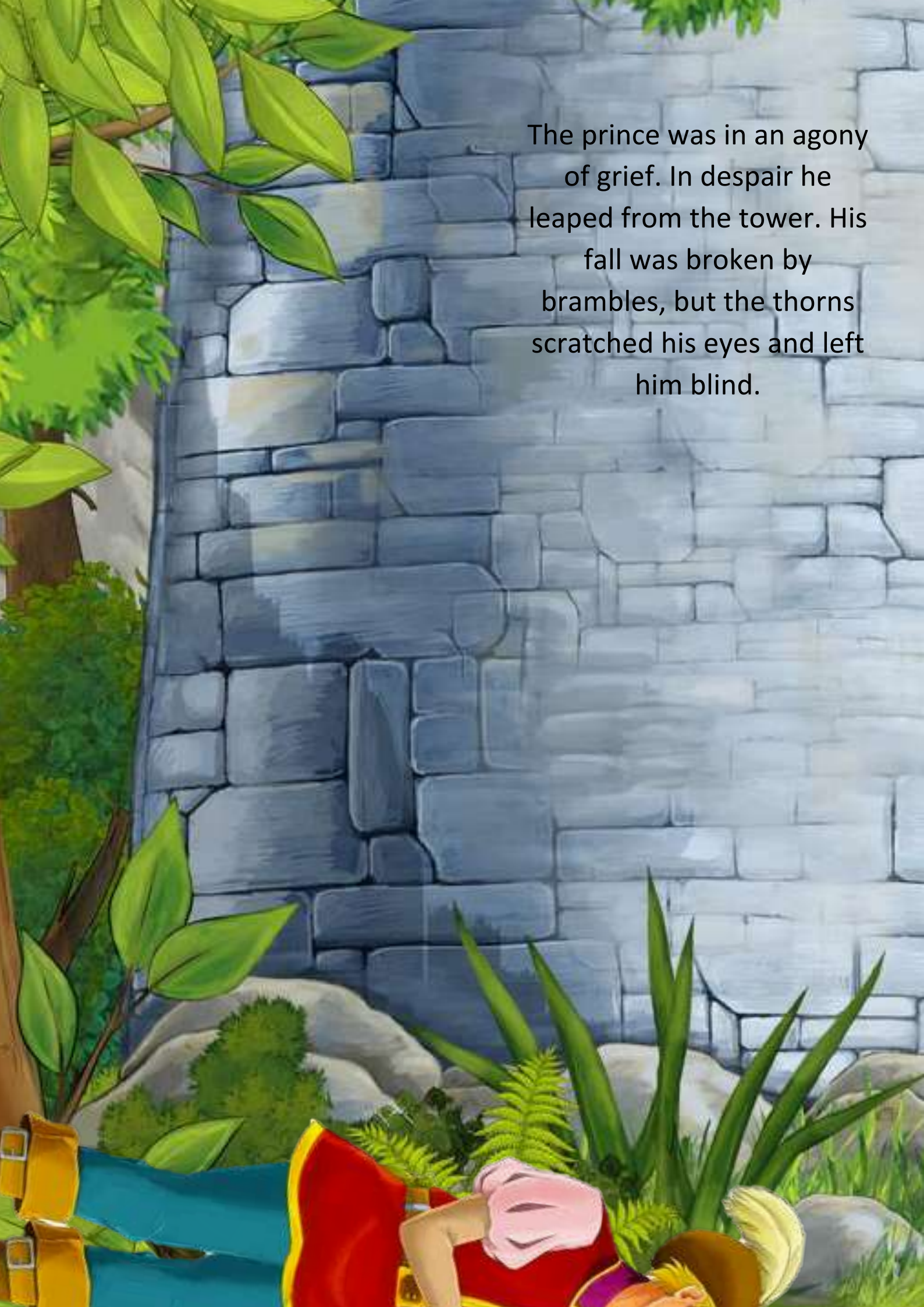
The prince climbed up, but instead of his dear Rapunzel he found the witch, who fixed him with her evil eyes.

“Ah!” she said. “Your lovebird has flown. She is no longer singing in her nest. And she won’t be singing anymore. The cat has taken her, and she’ll scratch your eyes out too. You’ve lost Rapunzel. You’ll never see her again.”





The prince was in an agony  
of grief. In despair he  
leaped from the tower. His  
fall was broken by  
brambles, but the thorns  
scratched his eyes and left  
him blind.





The prince wandered blindly through the forest, living on roots and berries, and weeping and wailing over the loss of his dear wife.





He wandered in misery like this for several years, until at last he came to the desert where Rapunzel was living in a wretched existence with the twins she had borne – a boy and a girl.





He heard a voice that seemed familiar; and approached it.  
Rapunzel recognised him at once and flung herself weeping  
around his neck.





Two of Rapunzel's tears fell on his eyes, and gave him  
back his sight.





He took her back to his kingdom. They were welcomed with great rejoicing and lived happily together for many years to come.

# *The End*





