

More Classic Tales

Supplemental Reader

Core Knowledge Language Arts® • Skills Strand



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GRADE 3





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Core Knowledge Language Arts®



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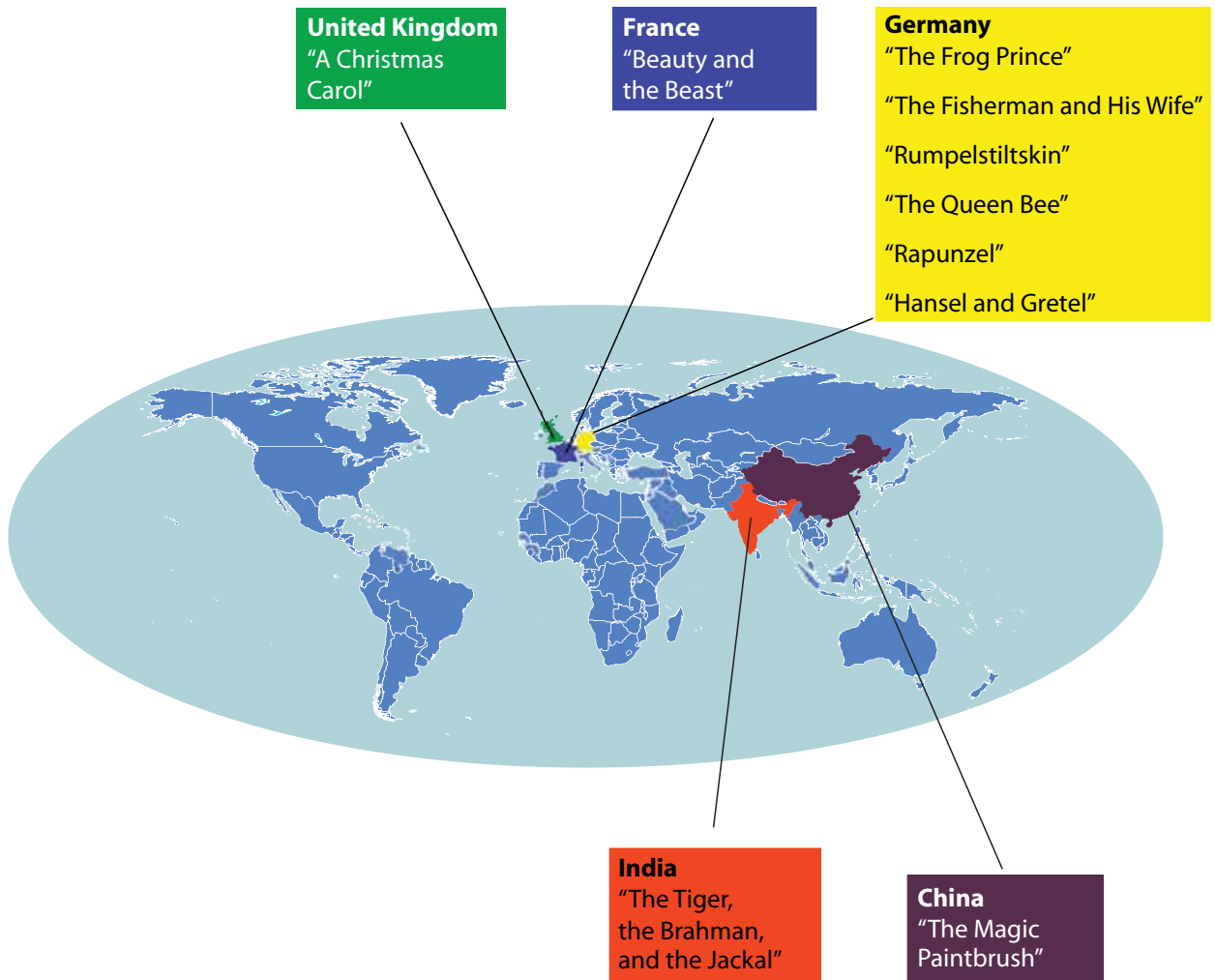
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Supplemental Reader

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Where in the World Do These Tales Come From?

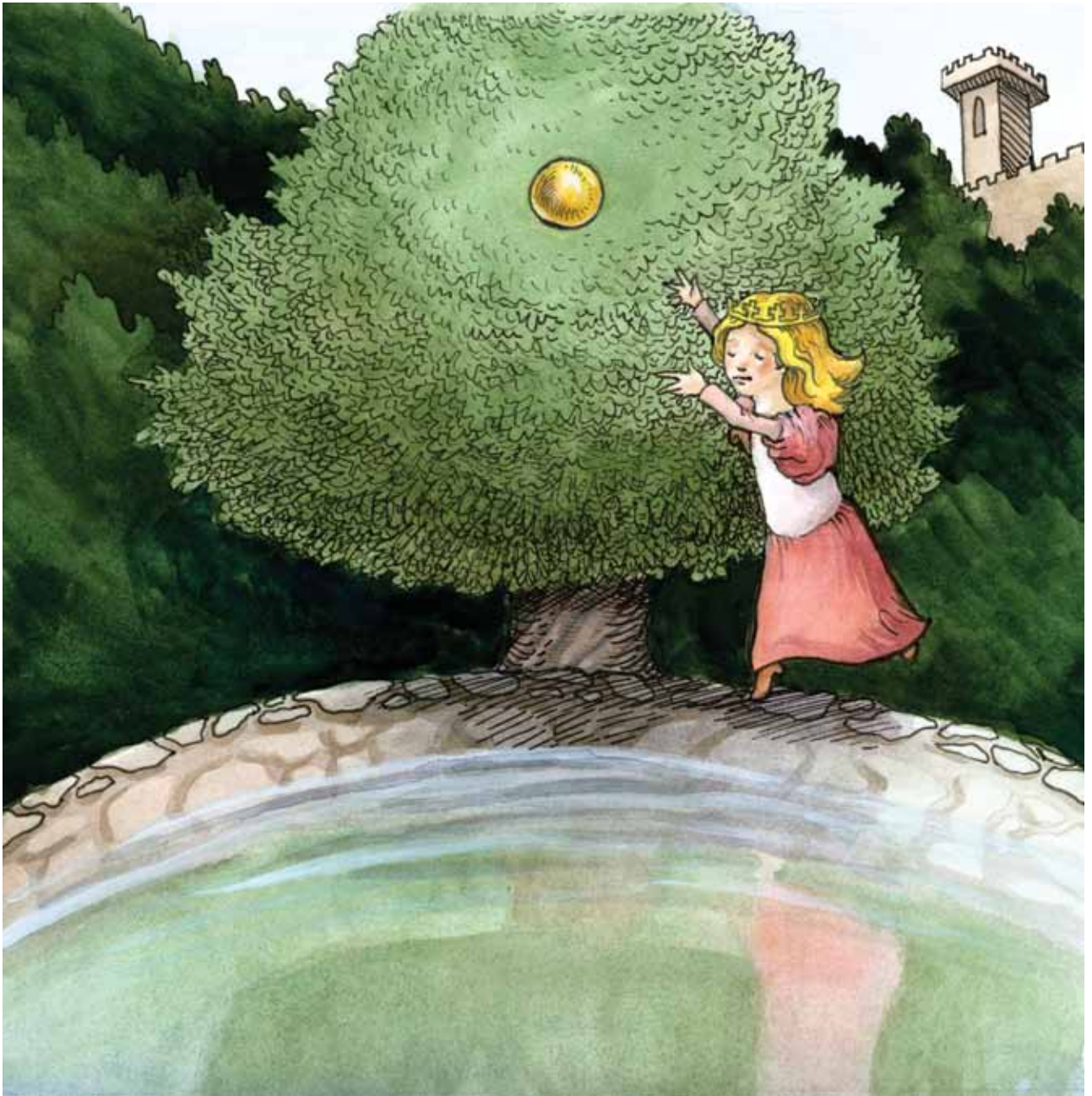


Chapter 1 The Frog Prince, Part I

Once there was a princess who liked to sit under an old tree next to a well. She had a small golden ball that she loved to play with. She would toss the ball in the air. Then, she would catch it in her hands.

One day she dropped the ball. It rolled into the well and sank.

The princess looked down into the well. The water was so deep that she could not see the bottom. She began to weep for her lost ball.



A princess tossed her golden ball.

While she was weeping, a voice called out, “What is wrong, fair princess? Why are you crying?”

The princess looked up and saw a frog sitting next to the well. She was surprised that the frog could talk, but she said, “I am crying for my ball. It fell into the well.”

“Don’t be sad,” said the frog. “I can get your ball, but what will you give me as a reward if I help you?”

“Oh, I will give you whatever you wish!” said the princess. “You may have my dresses, my gems—even my golden crown!”

The frog replied, “I do not care for those things. But, if you will love me and be my playmate, if you will let me sit at your little table, eat from your little plate, and sleep in your little bed—if you will do these things—then I will fetch your ball from the bottom of the well.”

“Oh, yes, yes!” said the princess. “I will do what you say! I swear I will!” But even as she spoke these words, she was thinking to herself: “What nonsense this silly frog babbles! He sits in the water with the other frogs and croaks. He cannot be my playmate!”



The frog agreed to get the ball.

The frog jumped into the well. He swam down to the bottom. Then, he came back up with the ball. He plopped it on the grass.

The princess was thrilled. She picked up the ball and skipped away with it.

“Wait! Wait!” cried the frog, as he hopped after the princess. “Take me with you! I can’t run as quickly as you!”

It was no use. The princess ran away.

The princess soon forgot about the promise she had made to the frog, but the frog did not forget.



The frog got the golden ball.

The next day, while the princess was sitting at dinner with the king, there was the sound of something wet creeping up the marble staircase. It went plop, plop, plop. When it got to the top, it called out, “Princess! Do not forget me!”

The princess ran to see who it was. When she saw that it was the frog, she shivered with disgust and ran back to the table.

The king saw that the princess was upset. “What is the matter?” he asked. “Has some giant come to carry you off?”

“Oh, no!” she said. “It is no giant. It is only a nasty frog. Yesterday my ball fell into the well. The frog went and got it for me. I told him if he did, he could be my playmate. I did not think he could come out of his well, but he is here. He wants to come and sit with me.”

The king spoke with a stern voice. “My child,” he said, “you must keep your word. Go and let the frog in.”



The king told the princess to keep her word.

Chapter 2 The Frog Prince, Part II

The princess let the frog in. The frog hopped over to her and cried out, “Lift me up next to you!”

The princess did not want to touch the frog, but the king looked at her sternly. So she leaned over and picked the frog up with two fingers.

When the frog was on the table, he spoke to the princess. “Slide your plate over here so that we can eat side by side, like real playmates.”

The princess shuddered, but she slid the plate over. She was so sad that she could not swallow a bite of her dinner. The food seemed to stick in her throat.



The frog on the table eating with the princess

After a bit, the frog said, “I am tired. Carry me to your bedroom, and I will sleep in your bed.”

The princess began to weep. She had found it hard to touch the frog and harder still to eat with him. The prospect of sharing her bed with the frog was just too much.

“I want to go to bed,” said the frog. “Carry me there and tuck me in!”

The princess looked at her father. The king did not speak, but his face said, “You must keep your word.”

The princess picked up the frog and set off for her bedroom. When she got there, she dropped the frog on the floor. Then, she jumped up onto her bed.

The frog would not sleep on the floor. He hopped over to the bed and said, “Lift me up and let me sleep with you in the bed. Lift me up, or I will tell your father!”



"Lift me up," said the frog.

The princess was angry. But she picked the frog up and set him on the far end of the bed, near her feet. There he stayed all night. In the morning, as the darkness was giving way to day, he hopped away.

The next night, the frog came back. He sat next to the princess at dinner and ate from her plate. This time, the frog would not sleep at the foot of her bed.

“Let me sleep under your pillow,” said the frog. The princess grumbled, but in the end she let the frog slip under the pillow.

In the morning the frog hopped out of the bed. This time, when his legs hit the ground, something happened to him. He was changed from an ugly frog into a handsome, young prince.



The frog changed to a handsome, young prince.

The prince spoke to the princess: “You see, I am not what I seemed to be! I am a prince. A wicked witch cast a spell on me and turned me into a frog. No one but you could undo that spell, Princess. I waited and waited by the well in the hope that you would help me.”

The princess was speechless, but her eyes sparkled.

“Will you let me be your playmate?” said the prince. “Do not forget the words you spoke at the old well!”

The princess smiled and took the prince by the hand. The two of them went out to play.

For years the prince and princess were playmates and best friends. Then, when they were grown up, they fell in love and got married.



A happy ending

Chapter 3 The Fisherman and His Wife, Part I

Once there was a poor fisherman who lived with his wife in a little, old run-down hut by the sea. Every day, the man went down to the seashore to fish.

One day, as he sat looking into the clear, blue water, the man felt a tug on his line. He pulled and pulled with all his might. At last, out flopped a great big fish.

“Let me go, I beg of you,” said the fish. “I am not an ordinary fish. I am an enchanted prince. Toss me back in the water and let me live!”

“Swim away!” said the fisherman. “I would not eat a fish that can talk!”



The fisherman caught a big fish.

The fisherman went back to his wife in the little, old run-down hut. He told her about the talking fish.

The wife said, “You fool! That was a magic fish! Go back and ask him to change this old hut into a nice, new house.”

The fisherman did not want to go, but his wife insisted. So, he walked slowly back to the seashore.

The water was no longer clear and blue. It was dull and green.

The fisherman called:

“Hear me, if you will, you magic fish.

My wife has sent me with a wish.”

The fish swam up and asked, “What do you want?”

“My wife wishes to live in a nice, new house,” said the fisherman.

“Go home,” said the fish. “She has her house.”



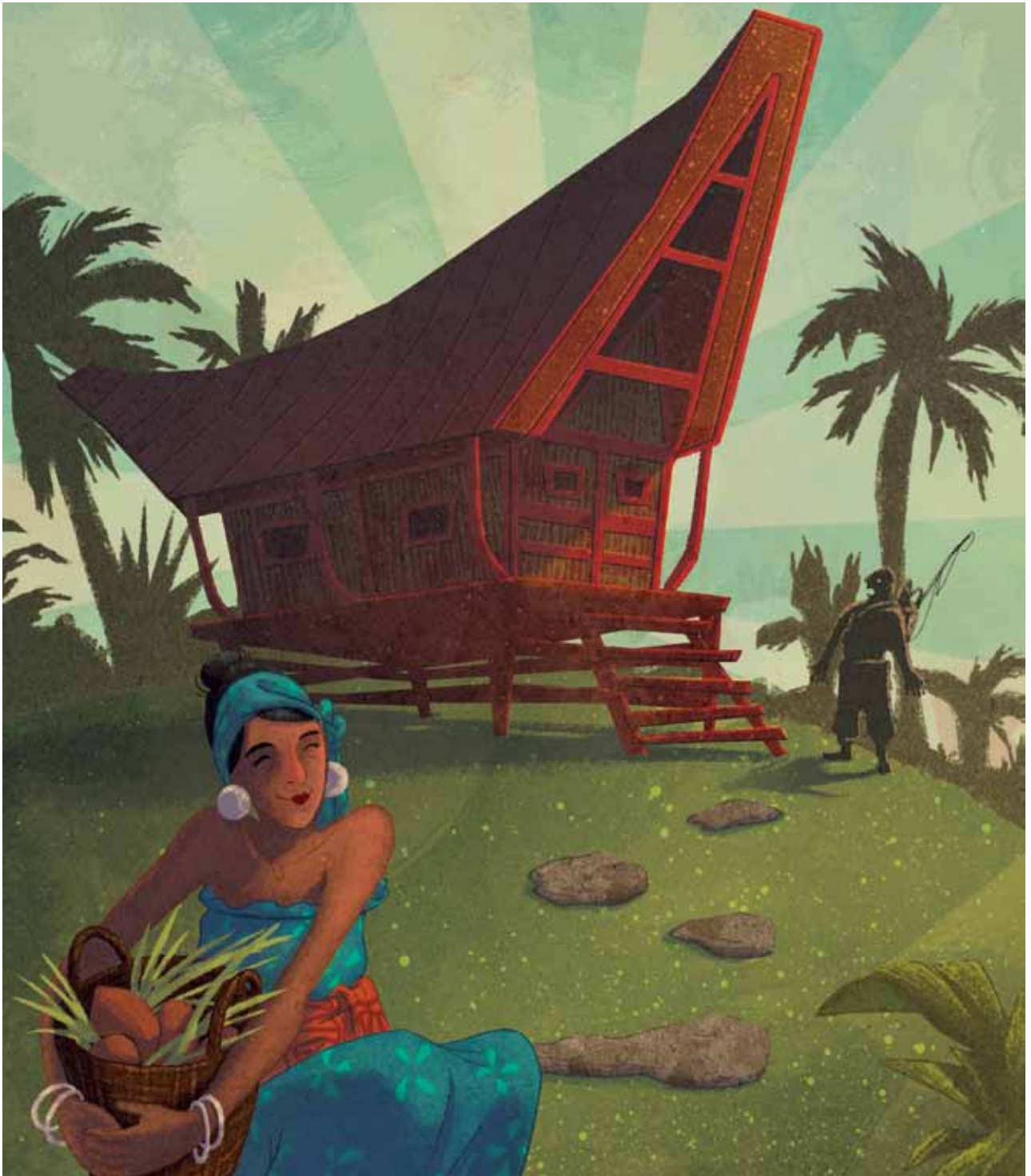
The fisherman asked the fish for a nice, new house.

The fisherman went home and found his wife standing in front of a lovely, new house.

“Now you will be happy!” said the fisherman.

She was—for about a week.

Then, she said, “Husband, I am sick and tired of this tiny, little house. I want to live in a much bigger house. Go ask the fish for a bigger house.”



The fisherman saw their lovely, new house.

The fisherman walked to the seashore. The water had changed from dull green to dark gray.

The fisherman called:

“Hear me, if you will, you magic fish.

My wife has sent me with a wish.”

The fish swam up and asked, “What do you want?”

The fisherman said, “My wife wants an even bigger house.”

“Go home,” said the fish. “You will find her in a bigger house.”



“What do you want?” asked the fish.

When the fisherman got back, he could hardly believe his eyes. There stood a much bigger house.

“Now, indeed, you will be happy,” said the fisherman to his wife.

She was—until the next morning.



The fisherman saw a much bigger house.

Chapter

4

The Fisherman and His Wife, Part II

When the sun rose the next day, the fisherman's wife poked him and said, "Husband, get up. I am so bored with life in this tiny house. I can't stand it anymore. Go to the fish at once. Tell him that I wish to be queen of all the land."

"But wife," cried the fisherman, "how much more can we ask the fish to do for us?"

"Go and ask him!" said his wife.

So, the poor fisherman walked to the seashore.



“Go and ask him!” said his wife.

The water was brown. The waves moaned and splashed on the shore.

The fisherman called:

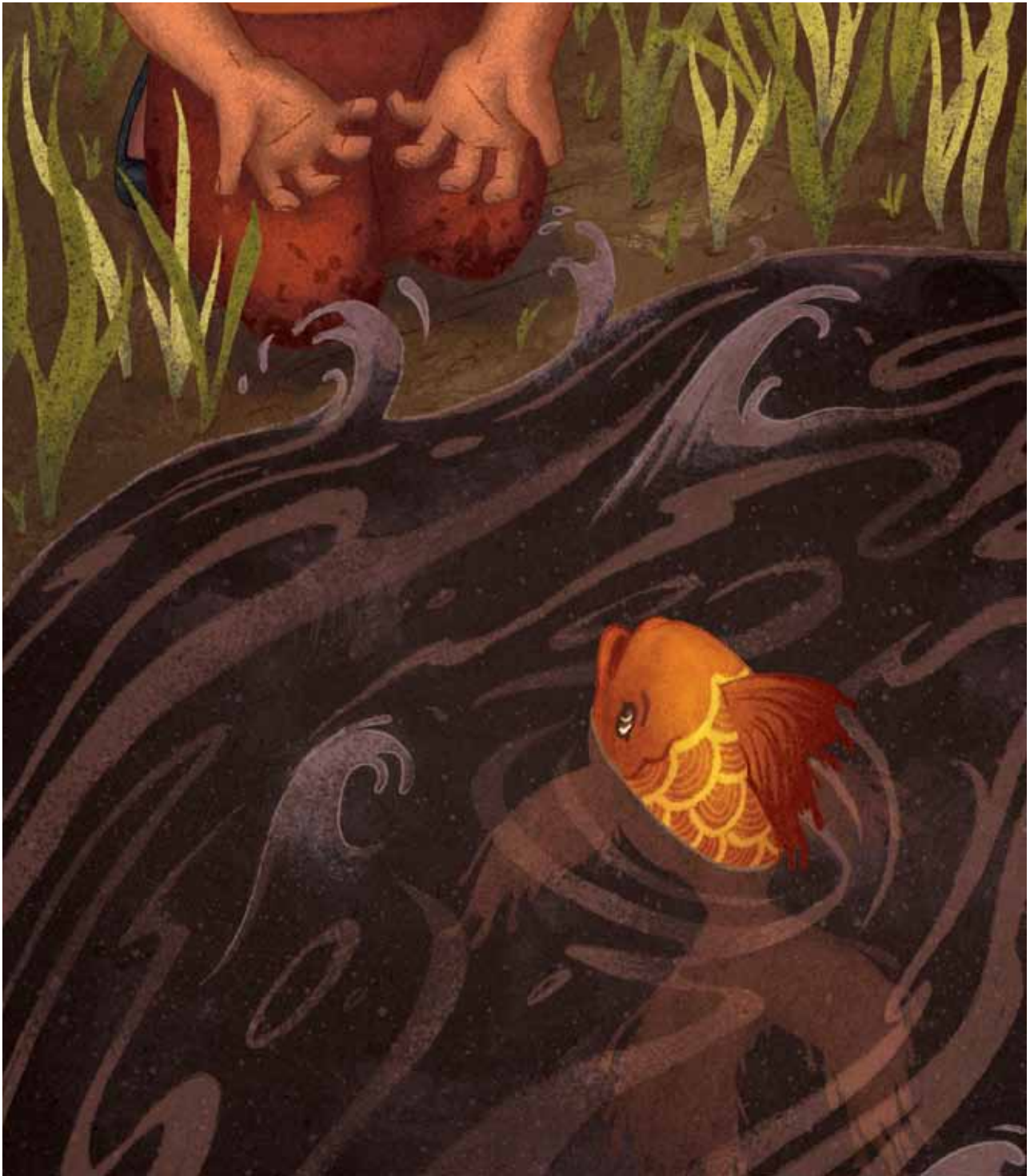
“Hear me, if you will, you magic fish.

My wife has sent me with a wish.”

The fish swam up and asked, “What does she want this time?”

With his head hung low, the fisherman said, “She wishes to be queen of all the land.”

“Go home,” said the fish. “She is already queen.”



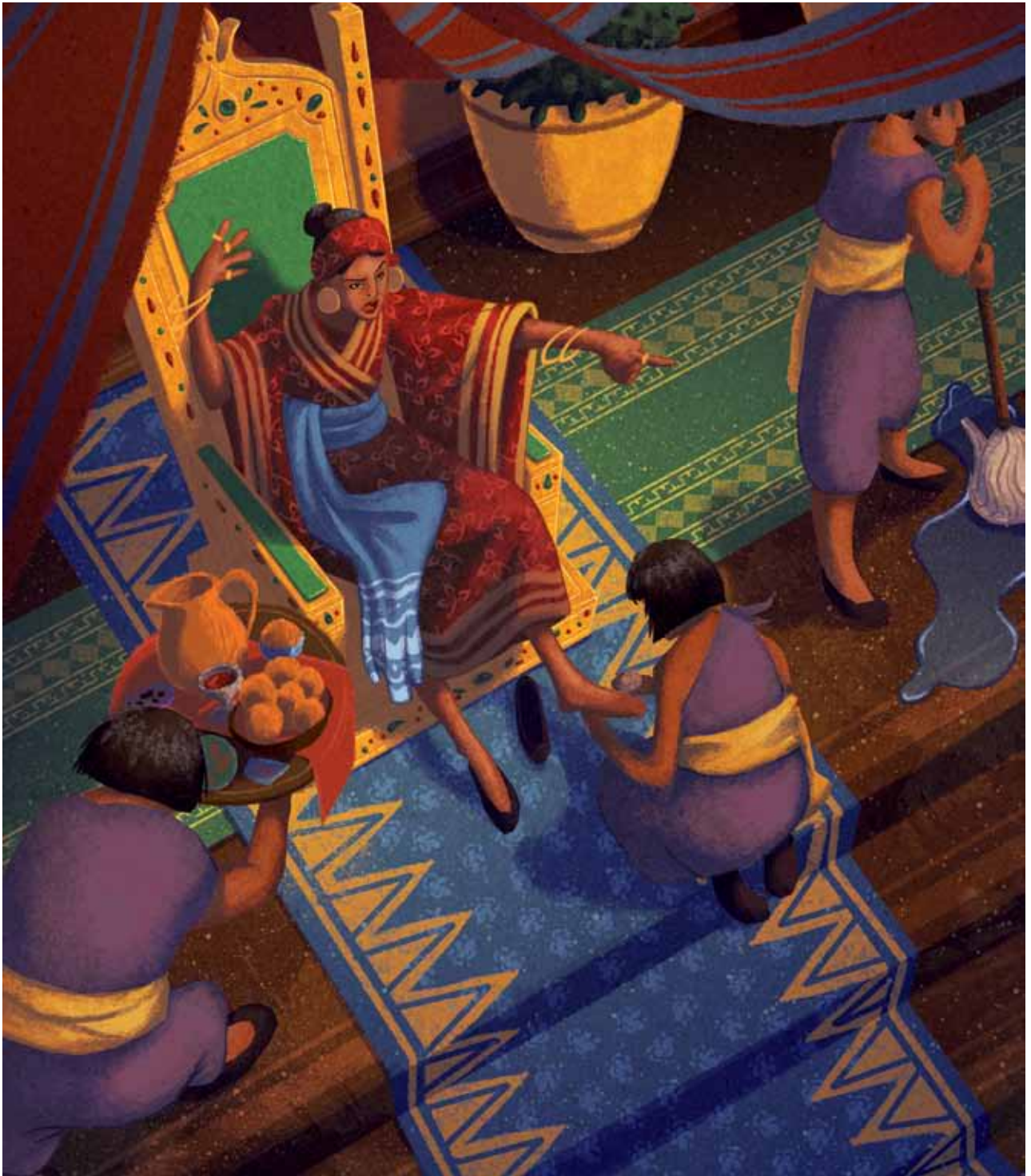
“She is already queen,” said the fish.

The fisherman went home and found that his wife was the queen. She was sitting on a high throne studded with gold and gems. She wore a long, silk dress and gold jewelry. Servants were scrubbing the floor and bringing her food. A doorman stood by the door.

“Now,” said the fisherman, “you must be truly happy.”

She was—until that evening.

As the sun began to set, the wife said, “Husband, I order you to go to the fish. Tell him he must give me the power to make the sun rise and set when I wish.”



The wife was queen of all the land.

The fisherman walked back to the seashore. The water was black. Thunder boomed and lightning flashed. Huge dark waves crashed around him.

The fisherman shouted:

“Hear me, if you will, you magic fish.

My wife has sent me with a wish.”

The fish swam up and asked, “Now, what does she want?”

The fisherman replied, “My wife wants the power to make the sun rise and set whenever she chooses.”

The fish only said, “Go home.”



“Go home,” said the fish.

The man went home. There, he found his wife standing next to the little, old run-down hut. There they live to this very day.



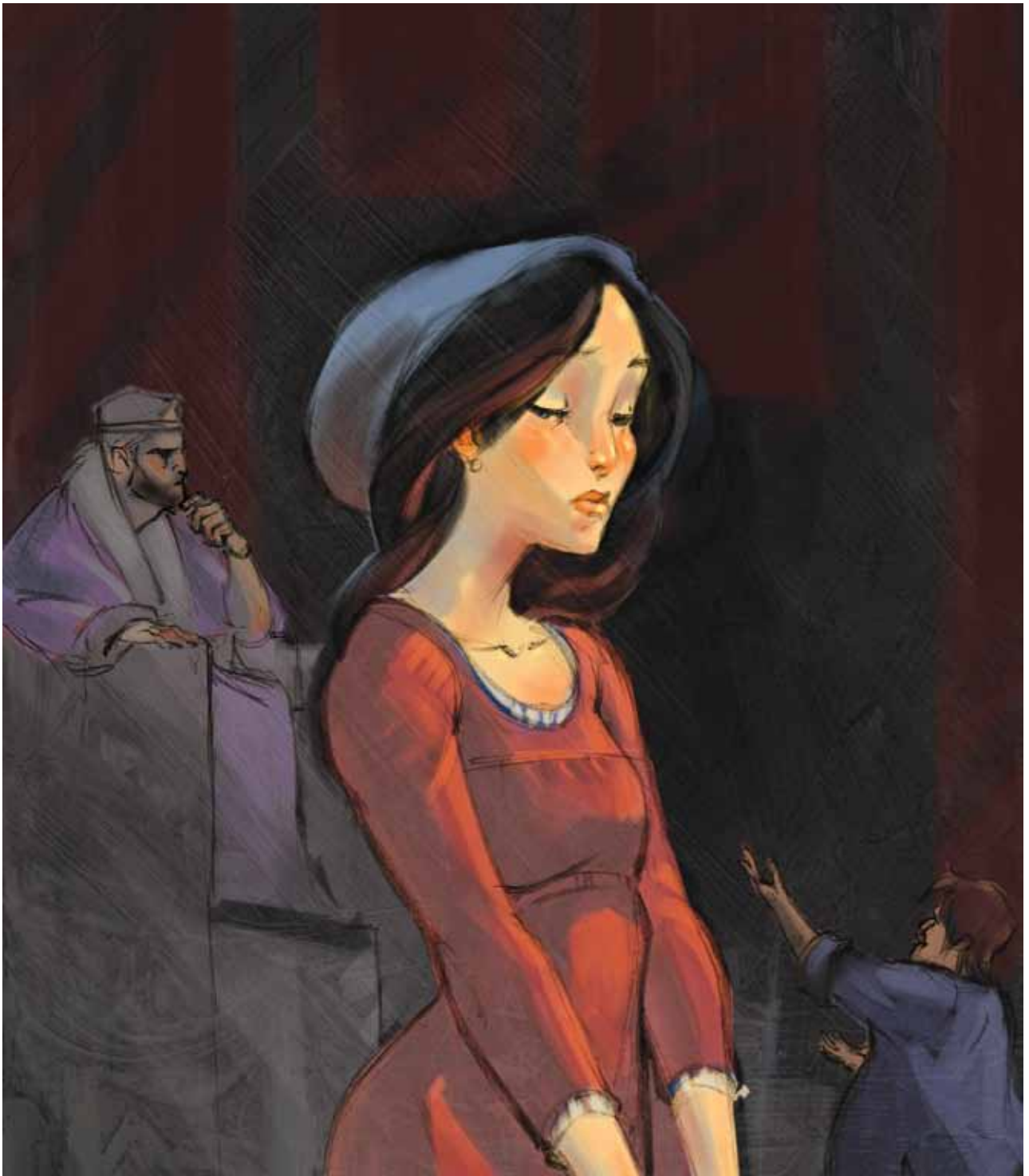
The fisherman and his wife with their little hut.

Chapter 5 Rumpelstiltskin, Part I

Once there was a miller who had a beautiful daughter. She was so beautiful and so clever that he could not help bragging about her.

One day, the miller found himself in front of the king. He began bragging about his daughter. He said that she was so clever that she could even spin straw into gold.

“Can she?” said the king. “Well, then. Leave her with us. We will see if she can do what you say.”



The miller's beautiful daughter.

That night, the king led the miller's daughter to a room filled with straw. He pointed to a spinning wheel and said, "Now, you must prove that you can do what your father claims you can do. You must spin this straw into gold. If it is not done by morning, you will be put to death."

The miller's daughter had a problem. She could not really spin straw into gold. She did not know what to do. So she sat down and began to cry.

As she sat crying, an odd-looking, little man appeared.

"Good evening, madam," said the little man. "Why are you crying?"

The young woman looked up.

"The king says that I must spin this straw into gold by morning, and I don't know how!" she said.



An odd-looking, little man appeared.

The little man came close to her and whispered in her ear, “Madam, what will you give me if I spin it for you?”

“I will give you my bracelet,” the young woman said.

The little man held out his hands. The miller’s daughter took off her bracelet and handed it to the little man.

The little man put the bracelet in his pocket. Then, he grabbed a handful of straw and sat down at the spinning wheel.



“What will you give me?” asked the little man.

The little man put his foot on the pedal and gave it a push. The wheel began to spin, and amazingly, a thin ribbon of golden thread began to emerge.

As he spun, the little man sang a little song:

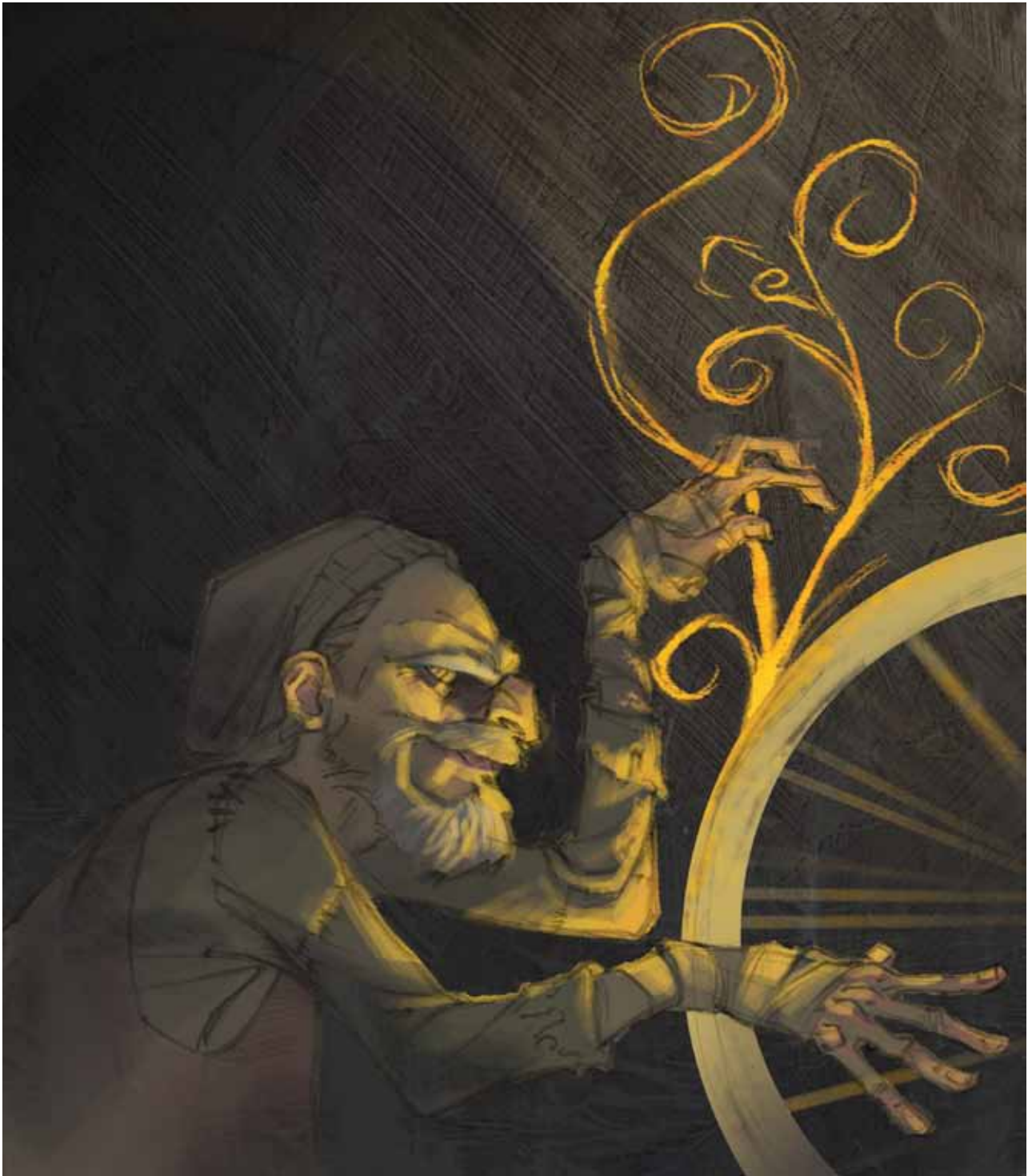
“Round about, round about,

Lo and behold!

Reel away, reel away,

Straw into gold!”

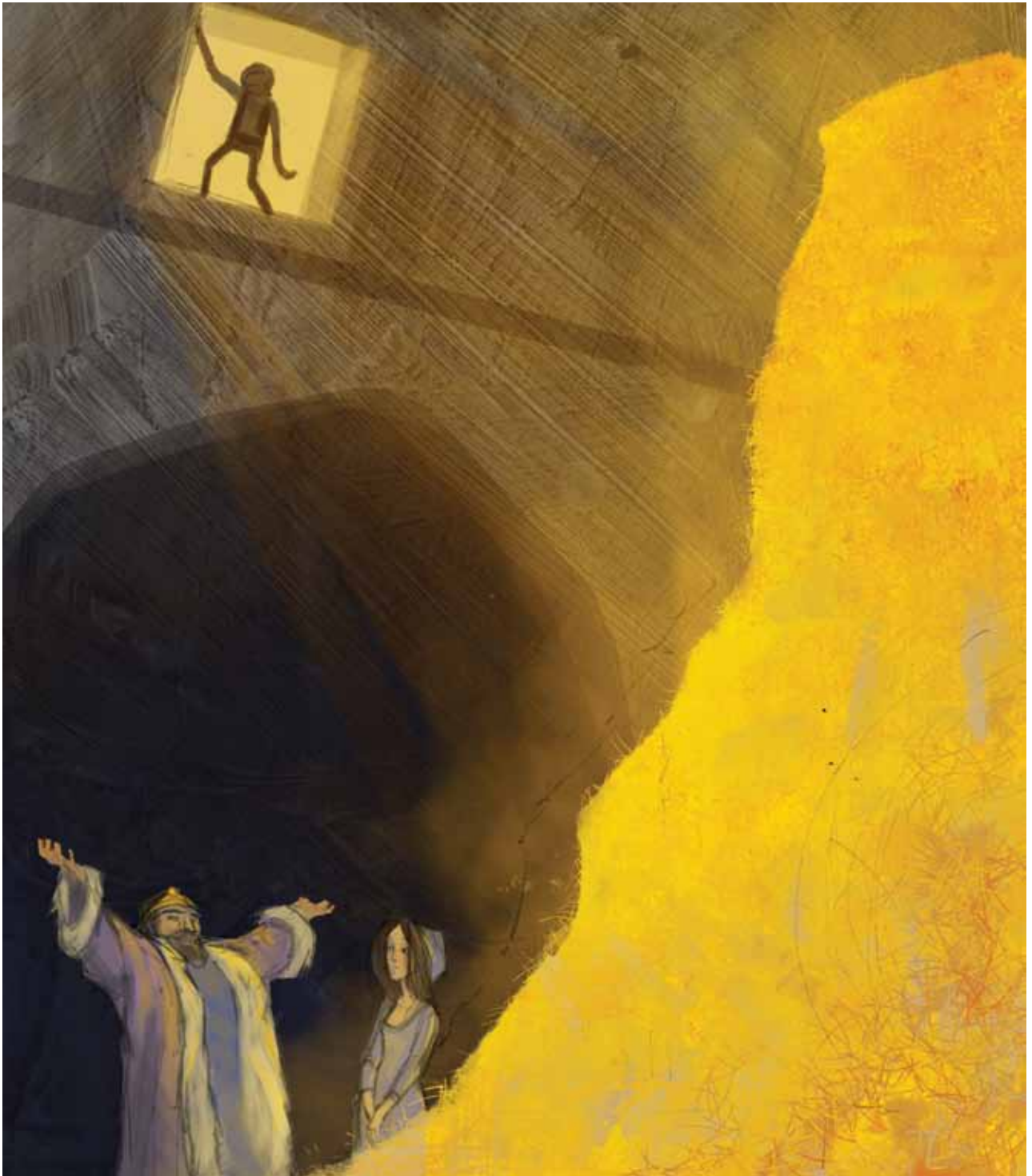
He spun and he spun, and, by sunrise, he had spun all the straw into gold.



The little man spun straw into gold.

At sunrise, the king came in. He smiled when he saw the room full of gold, but he was not finished with the miller's daughter.

The next night, he led her to an even larger room full of straw. He told her that she must spin all of the straw into gold by morning. If she failed, she would be put to death.



The king's second demand

Again, the woman did not know what to do. Once again, she sat down to cry.

Then, in walked the little man.

“Crying again?” said the little man. “I suppose you have to spin all of this into gold, too. Well, Madam, what will you give me if I spin it for you?”

“I will give you my ring,” answered the woman.

The little man held out his hands. The miller’s daughter took off her ring and gave it to the little man.

The little man put the ring on his finger. Then, he sat down and began to spin.



“What will you give me?” asked the little man.

As he spun, the little man sang his song:

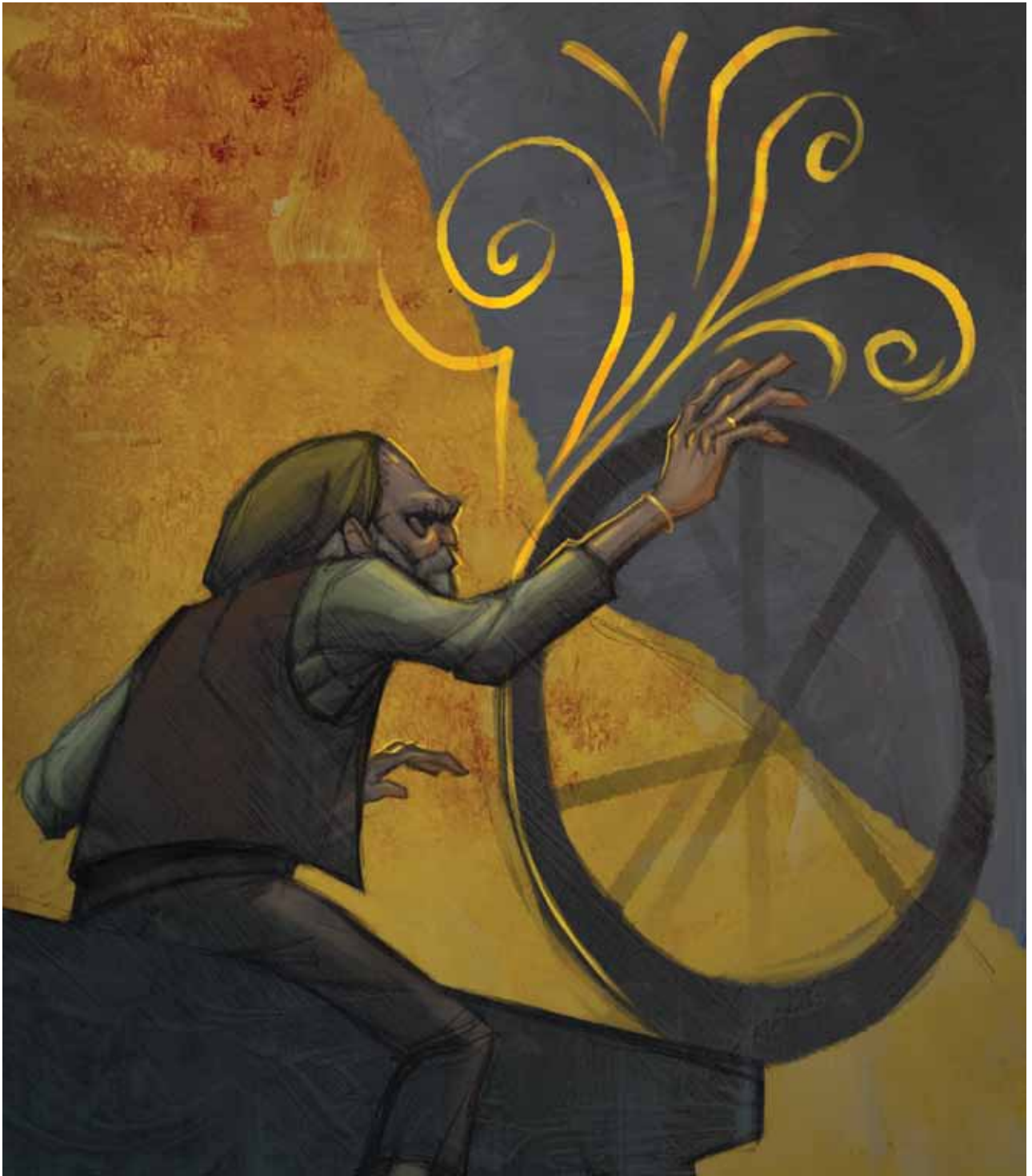
“Round about, round about,

Lo and behold!

Reel away, reel away,

Straw into gold!”

He spun and he spun, and by sunrise, he had spun all the straw into gold.

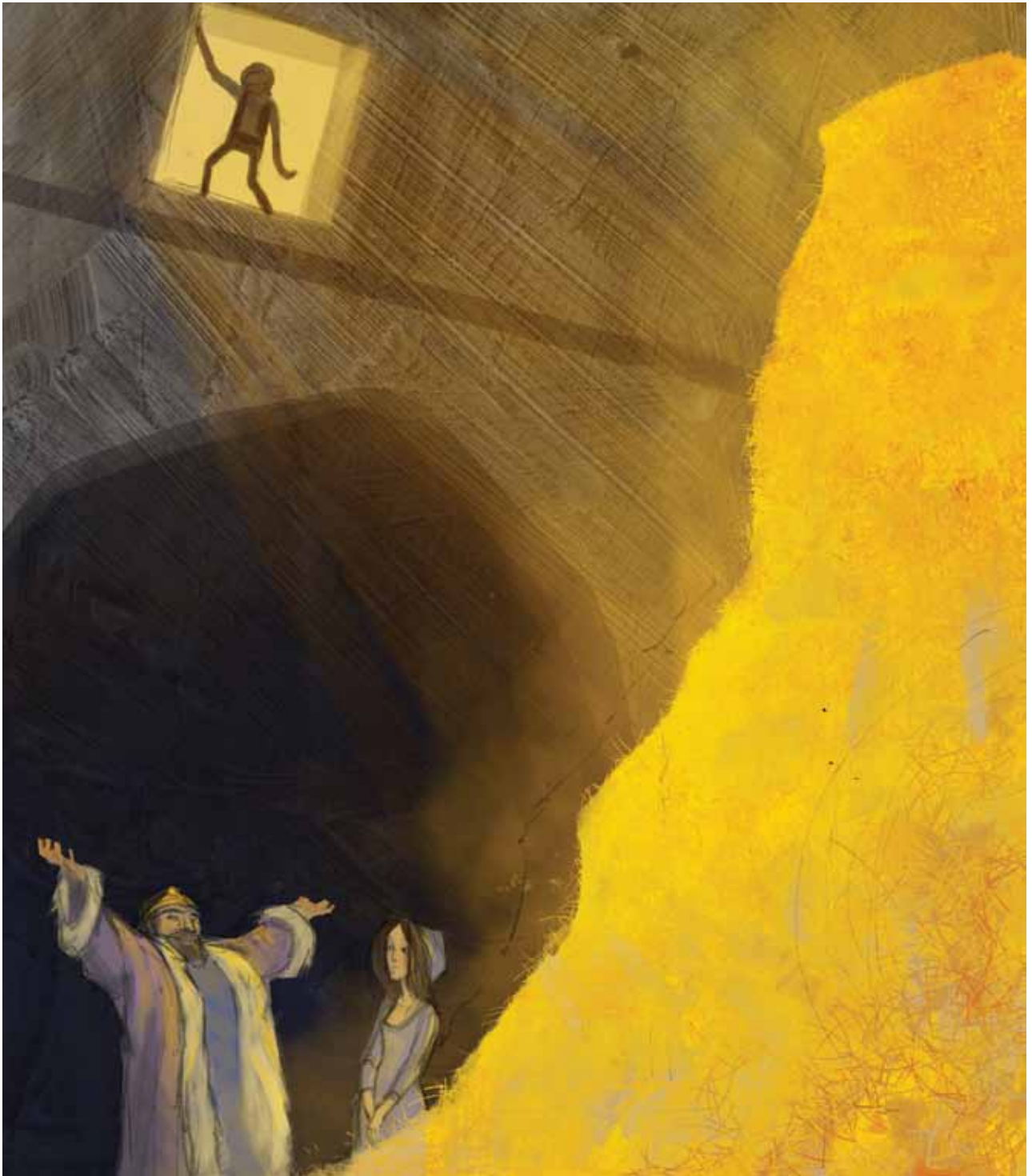


The little man sang as he spun straw into gold.

Chapter 6 Rumpelstiltskin, Part II

At sunrise, the king came again. When he saw the room filled with golden thread, he smiled. But still he refused to let the young woman go. That night, he led her to the largest room in the palace. It was filled from wall to wall with straw.

“Spin all of this into gold in one night,” said the king. “If you do this, you shall be my wife.”



The king's third demand

The king had hardly left the room when the little man appeared.

He spoke to the young woman, saying, “Madam, what will you give me if I spin it for you?” The little man held out his hands, as he had done each of the past two nights.

But this time, the miller’s daughter had nothing left to give the little man.

“I have nothing left,” she said with a sigh.

The little man stroked his chin.

“Well,” he said, “if you cannot pay me now, you will have to pay me later. When you are queen and you have a baby, you must give me the child.”

The miller’s daughter did not think that she would ever be queen. So, she agreed.



“What will you give me?” asked the little man.

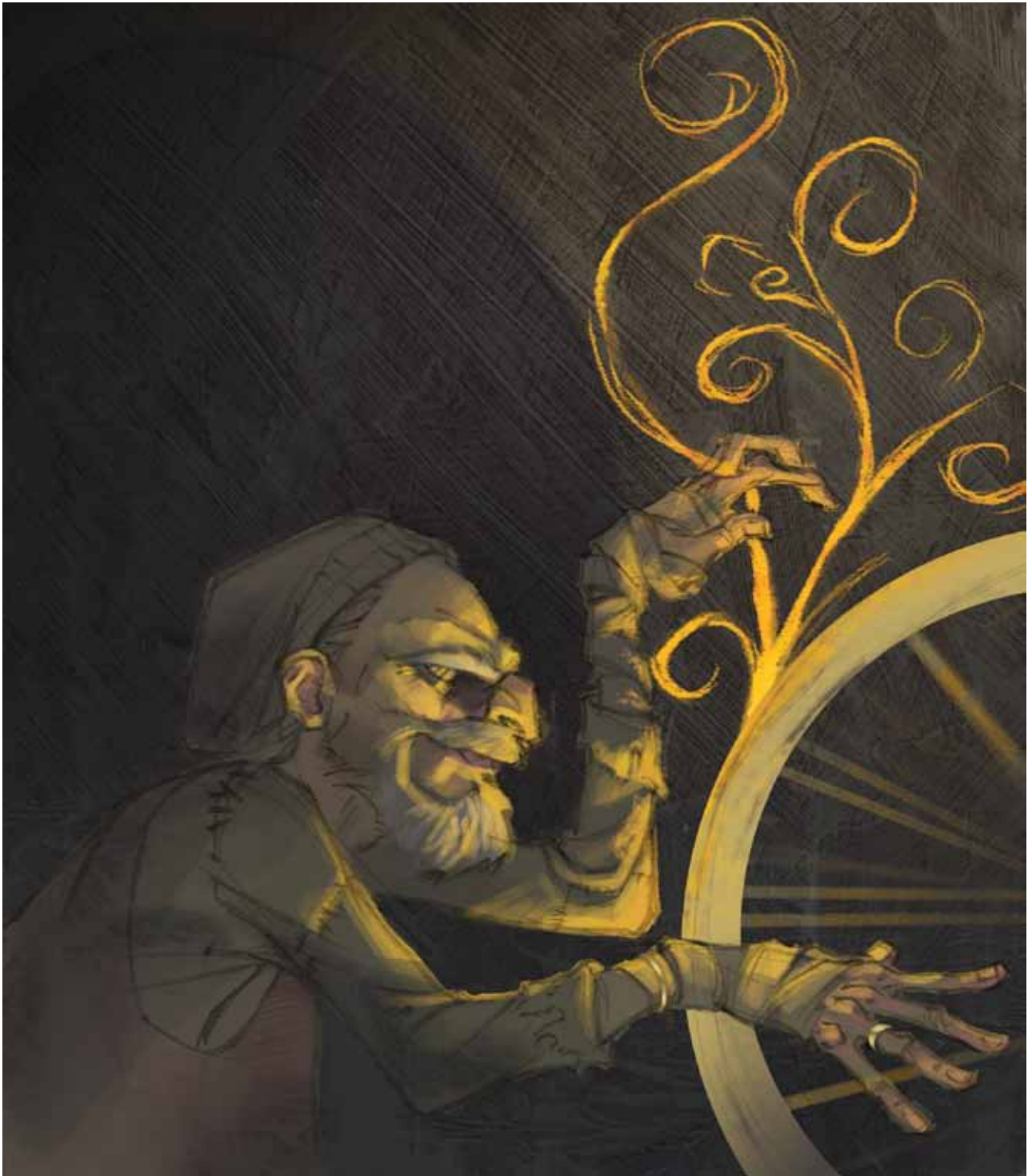
The little man sat down at once. He began spinning and singing his song:

“Round about, round about,

Lo and behold!

Reel away, reel away,

Straw into gold!”

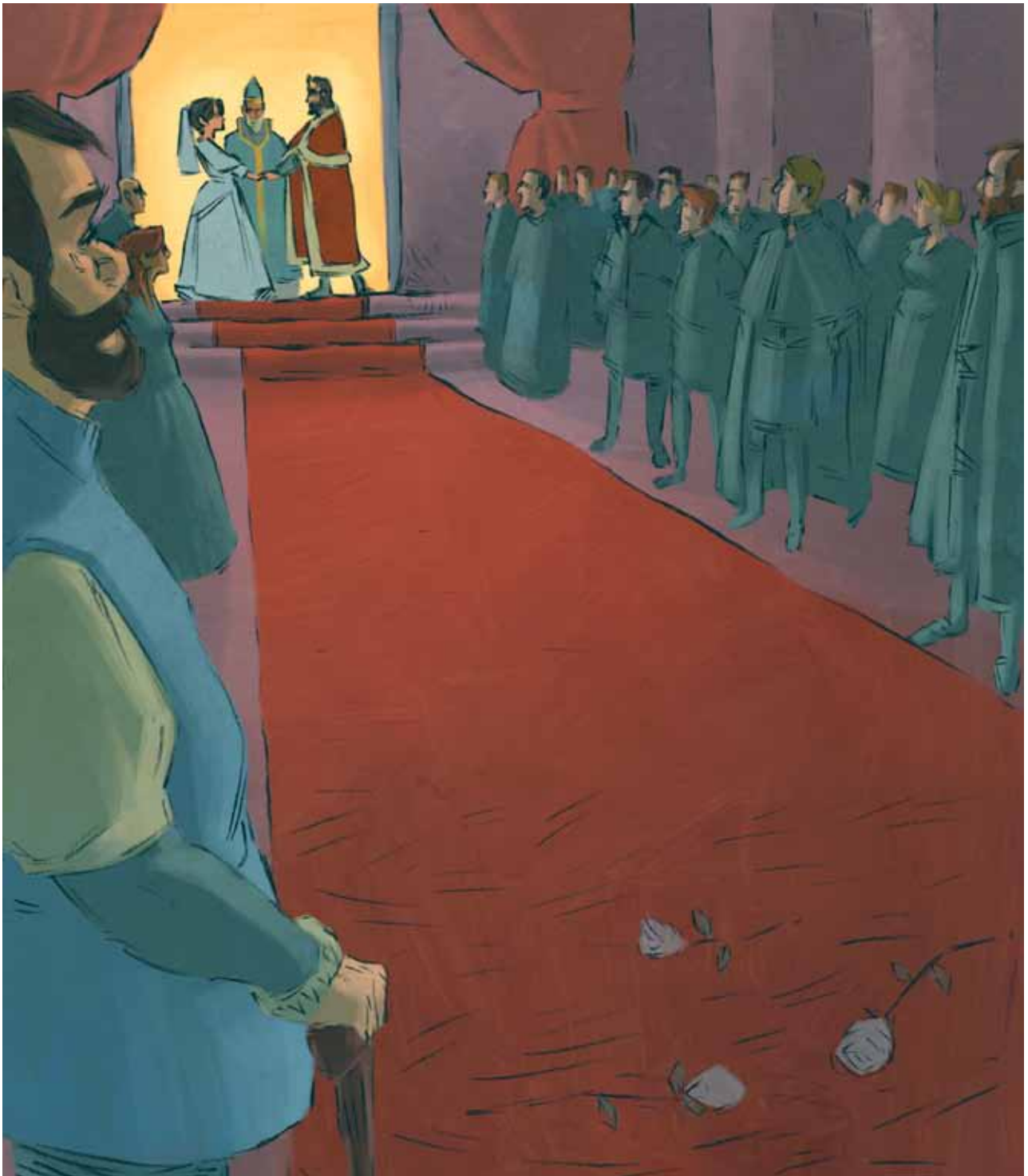


The little man sang and spun straw into gold.

By morning, the little man had spun all of the straw into gold.

When the king arrived, he was overjoyed. Now, he had all the gold he could ever want.

The king kept his word to the miller's daughter. He married her and made her his queen.



The king and the miller's daughter got married.

A year after she was crowned, the queen had a baby boy. One day, as she sat rocking the baby, the little man appeared.

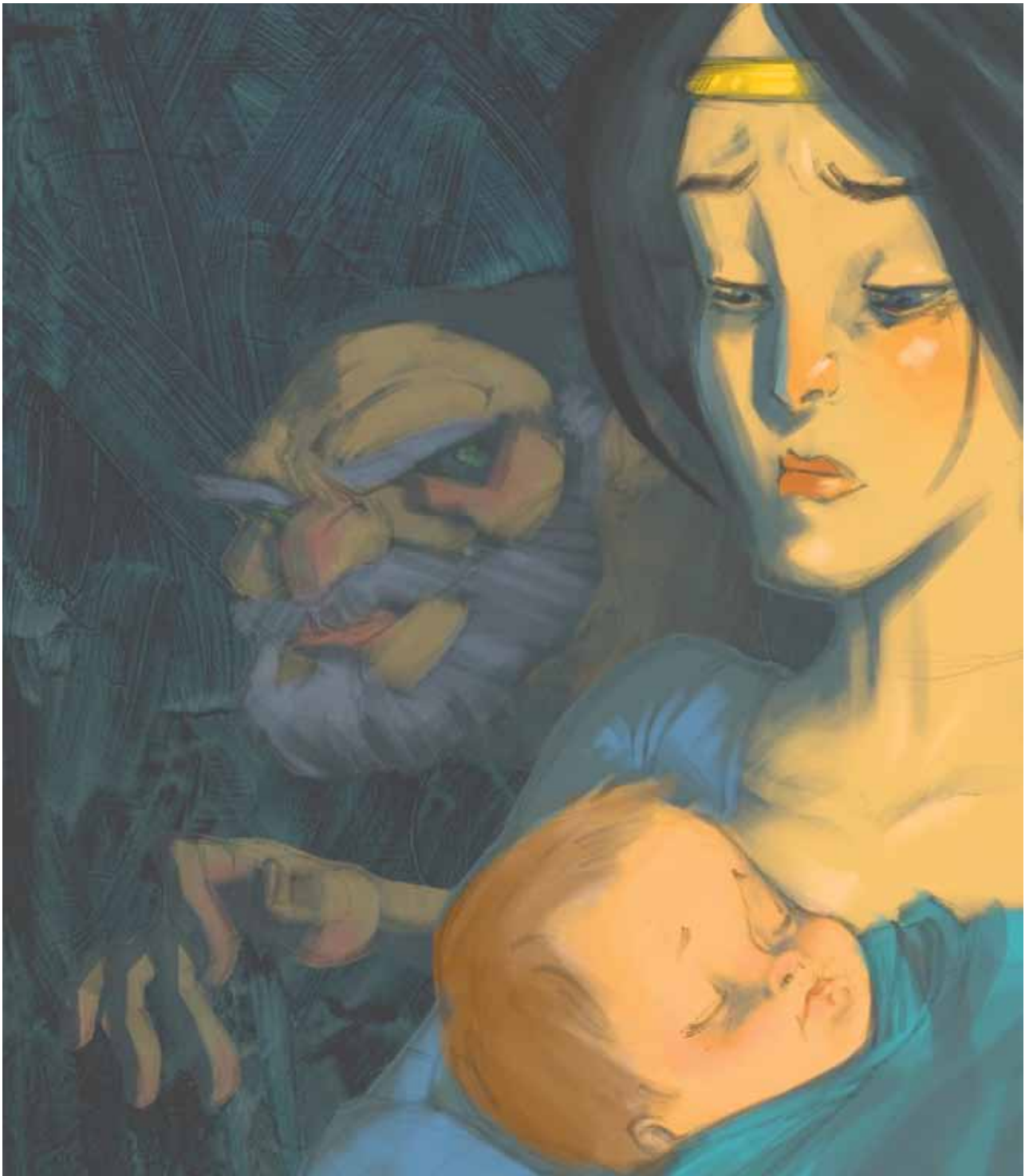
“O, Queen,” said the little man, “I have come for the newborn child. Give him to me. Keep your word!”

The queen clutched her baby to her breast. “I beg you,” she said, “do not take the child. I will give you gold and jewels. I will give you all the wealth of the kingdom. But let me keep my child.”

“No, no!” said the little man. “You must give me the child! I would rather have a living child than all the jewels and wealth in the kingdom!”

The queen began to weep.

The little man seemed to be moved by her tears. He said, “I will give you a chance. If, in the next three days, you can find out my name, you may keep the child.” Saying this, he vanished.



“You must give me the child!” said the little man.

Chapter 7 Rumpelstiltskin, Part III

To keep her child, the queen had to find out the little man's name.

She made a long list of names. When the little man came the next day, she began reading the names on her list:

“Is your name Andrew?”

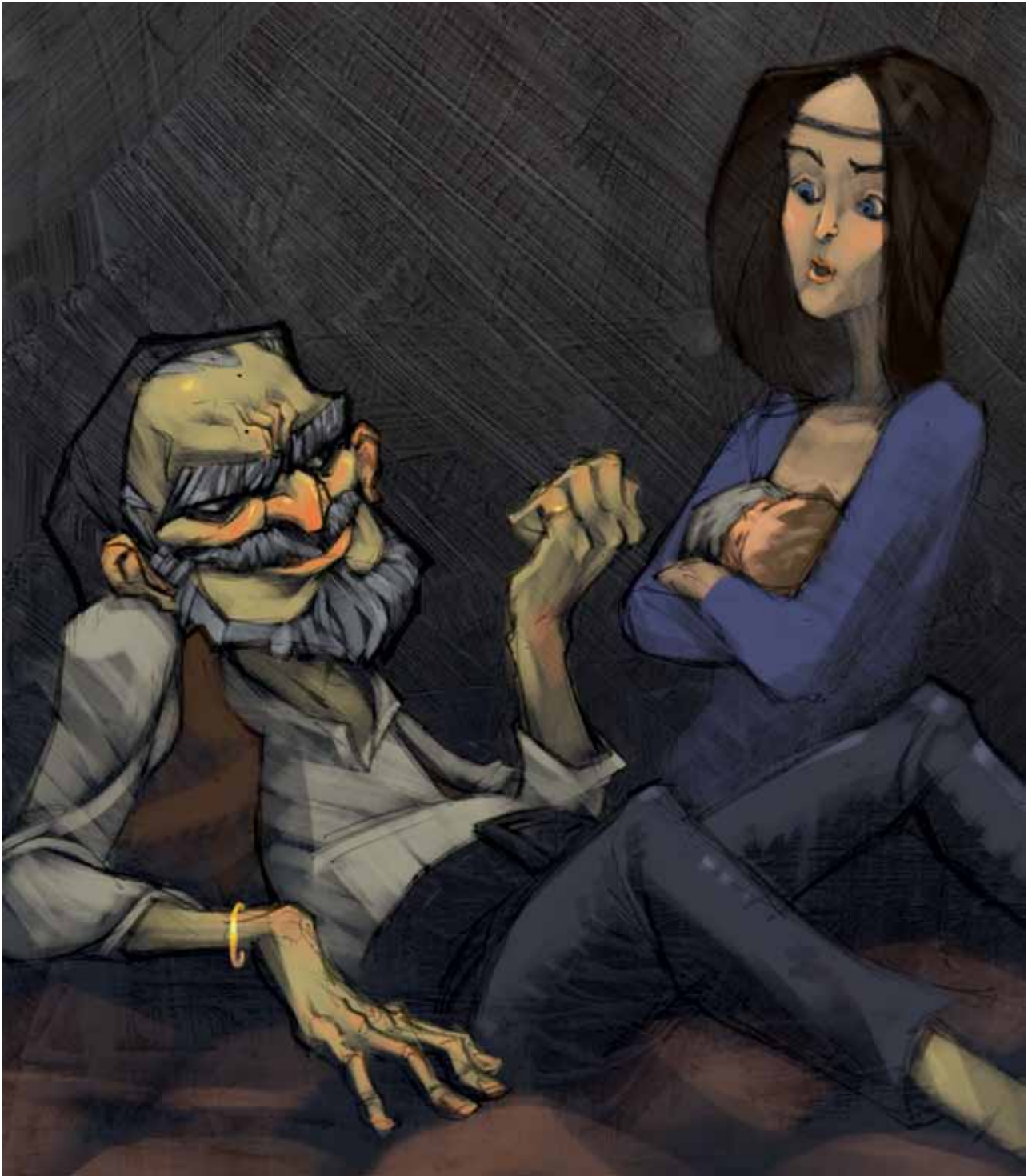
“No, madam. That is not my name.”

“Is it Boyd?”

“No, madam. That is not my name.”

“Is it Conroy?”

“No, madam. That is not my name.”



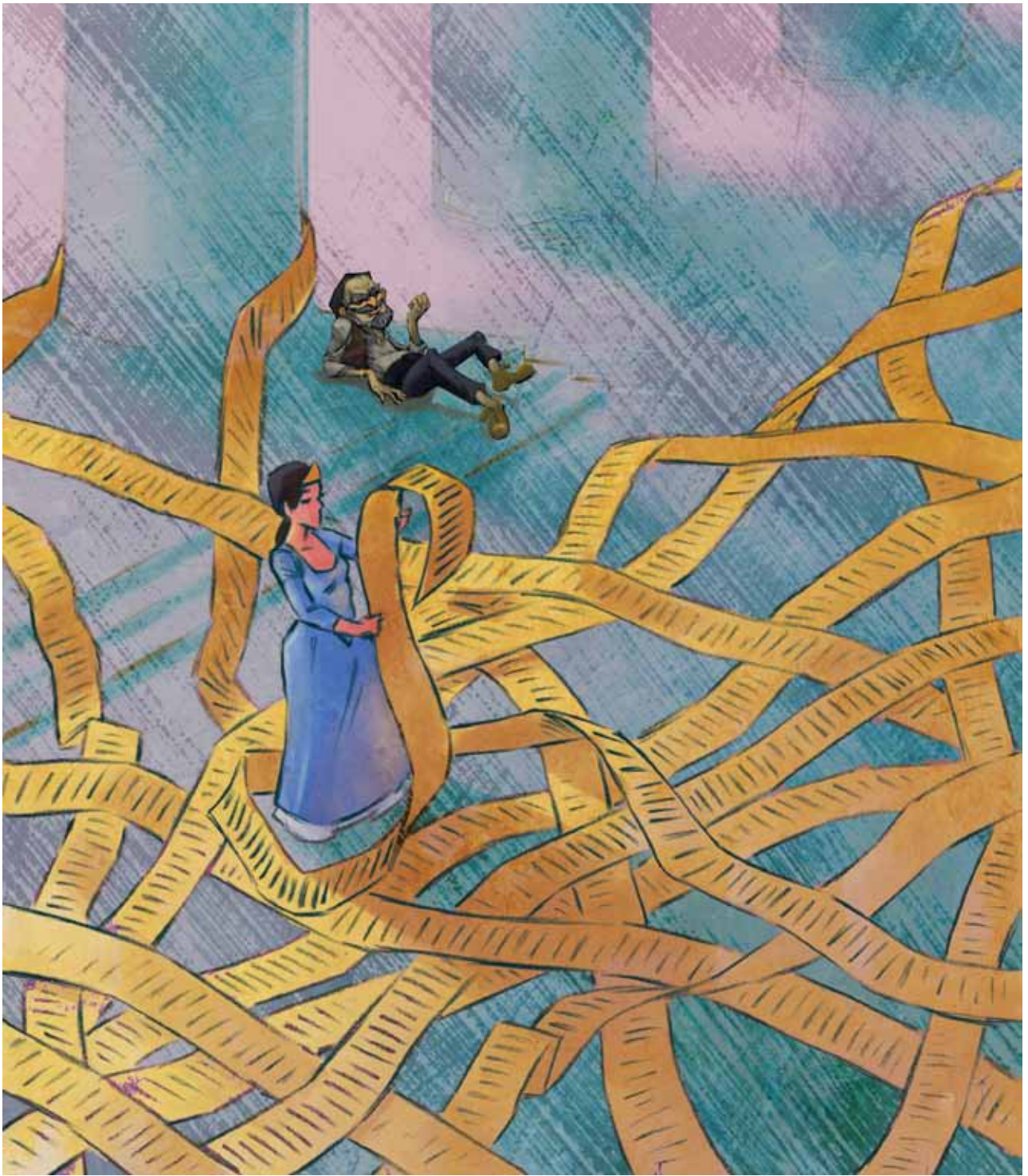
The queen asked the little man about names on her list.

The Queen tried all the names she could think of. She tried Louie and Dewey. She tried Luke and Duke. She tried Bruno and Juno—and many others. After each one, the little man said, “No, madam. That is not my name.”

When the queen had tried all the names on her list, she sighed and the little man went away.

The queen ordered the servants in the royal household to ride through the land and collect all the names they could find. They brought her a long list with hundreds of names.

When the little man came back the next day, the queen read from her list. After each one, the little man said, “No, madam. That is not my name.”



The queen and her list of names

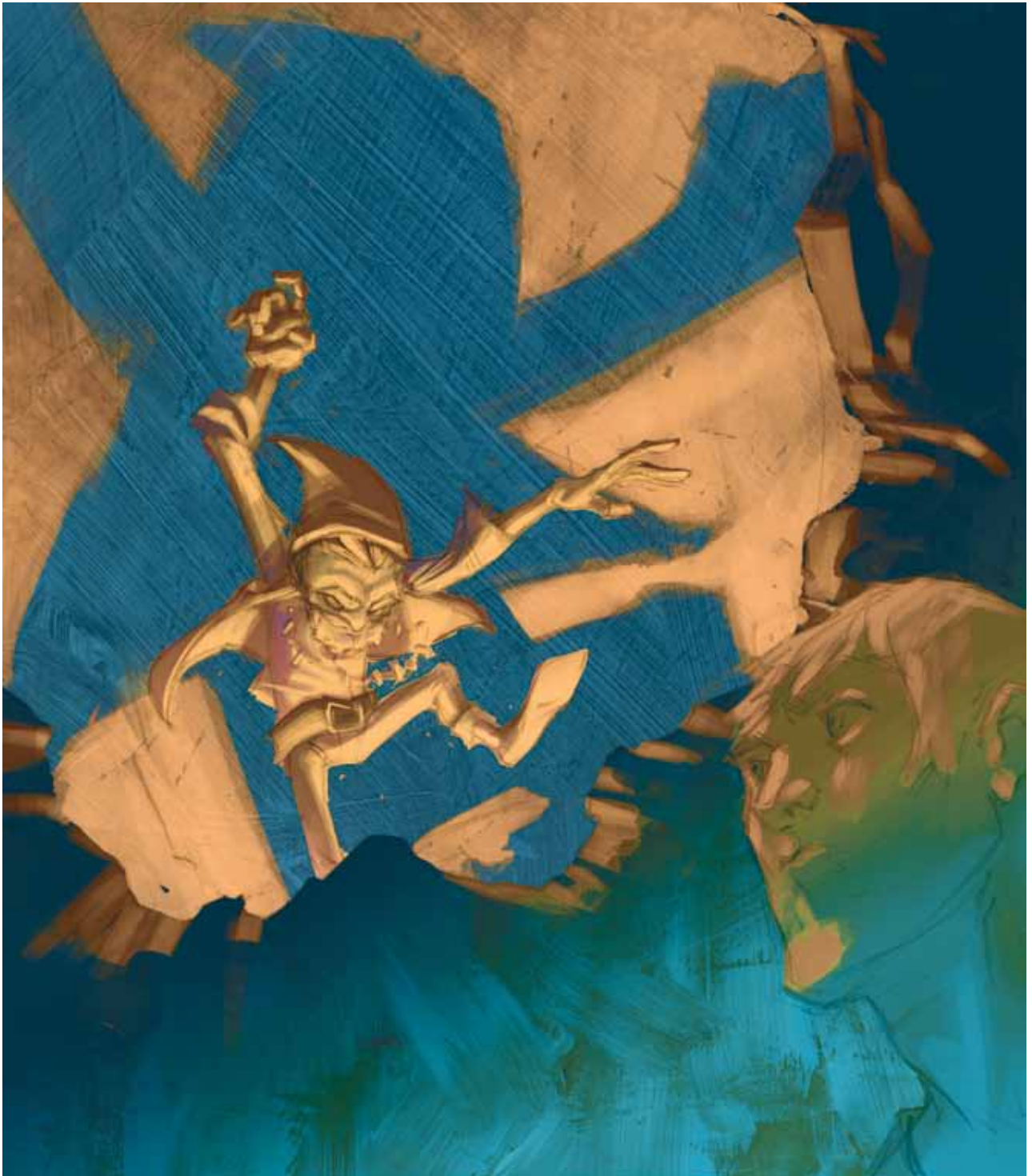
By this point, the queen was scared. She would have done anything to keep her child. But what could she do? She had tried all the names she knew—and all the names her subjects knew. She was on the verge of crying.

Then, one of her servants came to her.

“My lady,” said the man with a bow, “I have news for you. As I was riding through the forest last night, I saw a campfire. I drew near. Then, I saw a funny little man dancing around the fire. As he danced, he sang a little song:

*‘Today I brew, tomorrow I bake,
And then the fair queen’s child I’ll take,
And no one can deny my claim,
For Rumpelstiltskin is my name.’”*

The queen jumped for joy. She hugged the servant and pressed a bag of coins into his hand. Then, she put on her crown and waited for the little man to come.



The little man danced around the fire and sang.

Soon, the little man appeared.

“Now, madam,” he said, “three days have passed. You must tell me my name. If you cannot, you must give me the child!”

The little man began to chuckle at the thought of having the boy to take home with him.

The queen acted as if she did not know the little man’s name. She took off her crown and rubbed her brow as if she were deep in thought.

“Is your name Bandy-legs?” she asked.

“No, madam!” said the little man as he looked at the sleeping boy.

“Is your name Knobby-knees?” the queen asked.

“No, madam!”

“Is it Sheep-shanks?”



The queen asked the little man about more names.

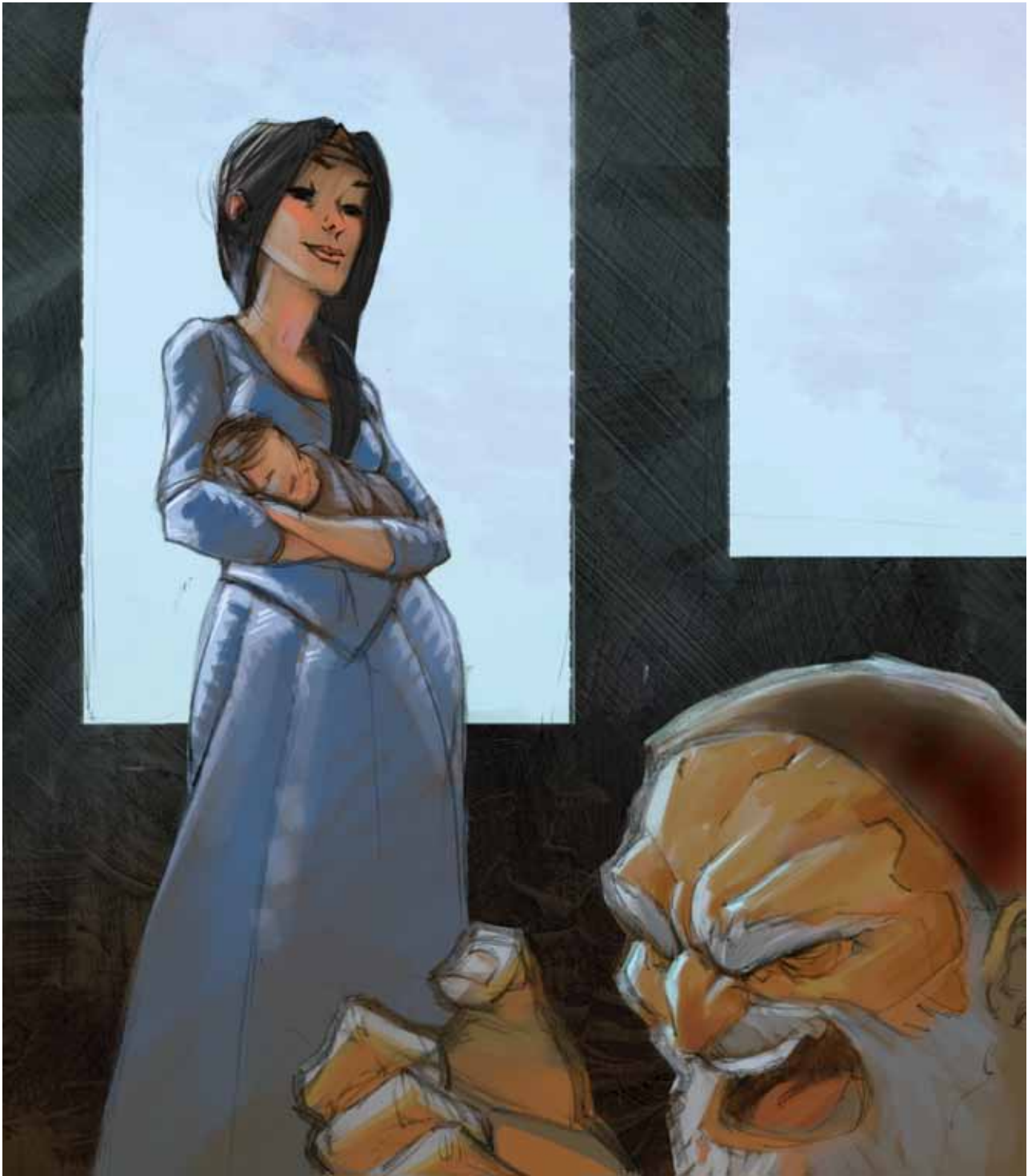
“It is not,” said the little man with a smile.

“Then perhaps,” the queen said with a shrewd look, “perhaps, your name is—Rumpelstiltskin?”

The little man howled. “How did you know that? Some witch told you that! Some witch told you that!”

The little man got red in the face. He stomped his foot so hard that it went right through one of the wooden planks. His leg got stuck in the hole. He had to pull on his leg with both hands to get himself unstuck. All of the queen’s servants smiled and giggled.

So, the little man had to go away without the child, and the queen never feared him again.

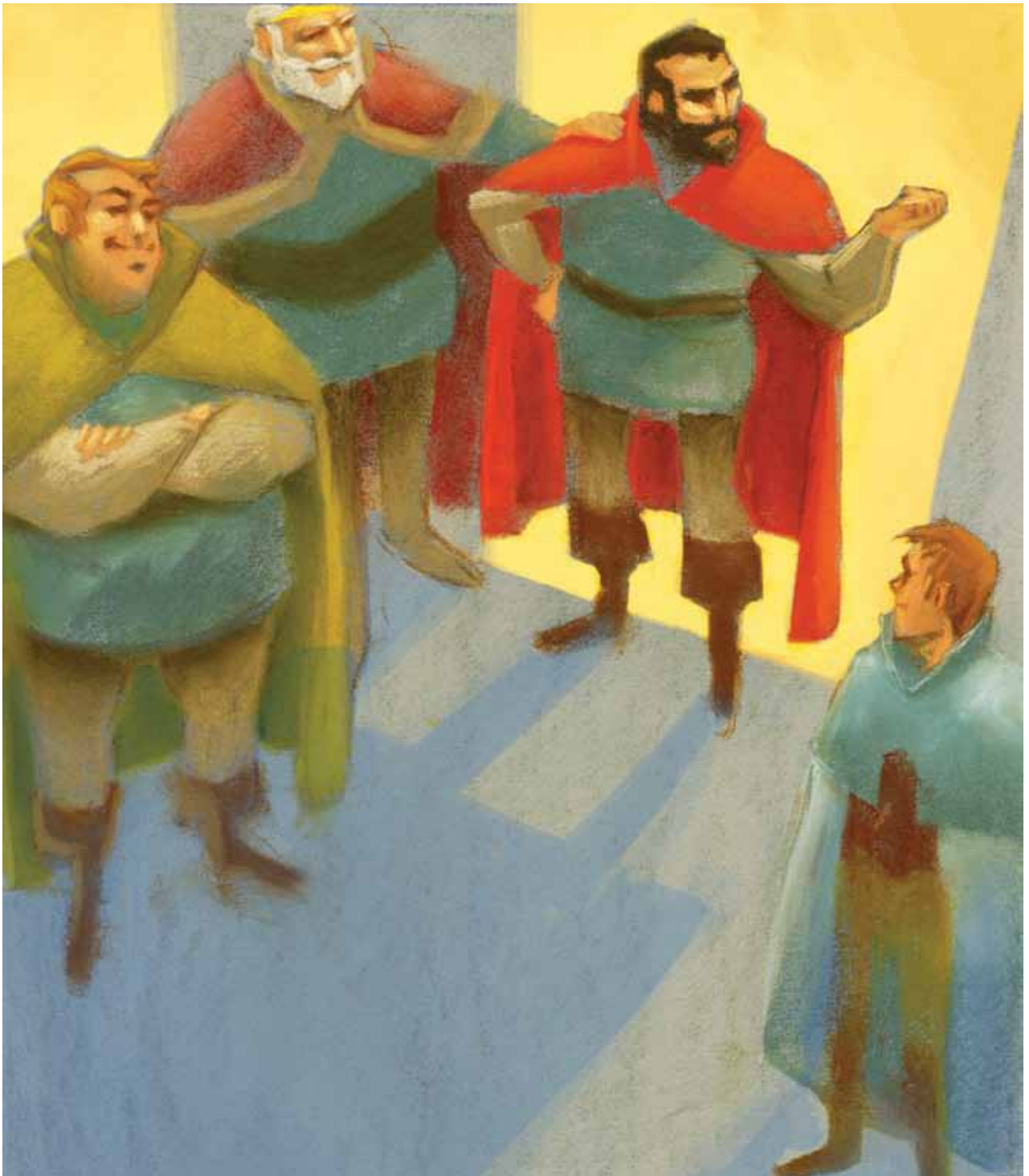


The little man howled, “How did you know that?”

Chapter 8 The Queen Bee, Part I

Once upon a time, there was a king who had three sons. The two older sons were handsome lads. But they were selfish, proud, and cruel. They made fun of the youngest son. They said he was not smart. They called him a dimwit.

When the older sons were grown up, they set off on a trip. Alas, they soon fell into a wild and reckless way of living. It was not long until they had used up all their money and had no way to get home.



The king and his three sons

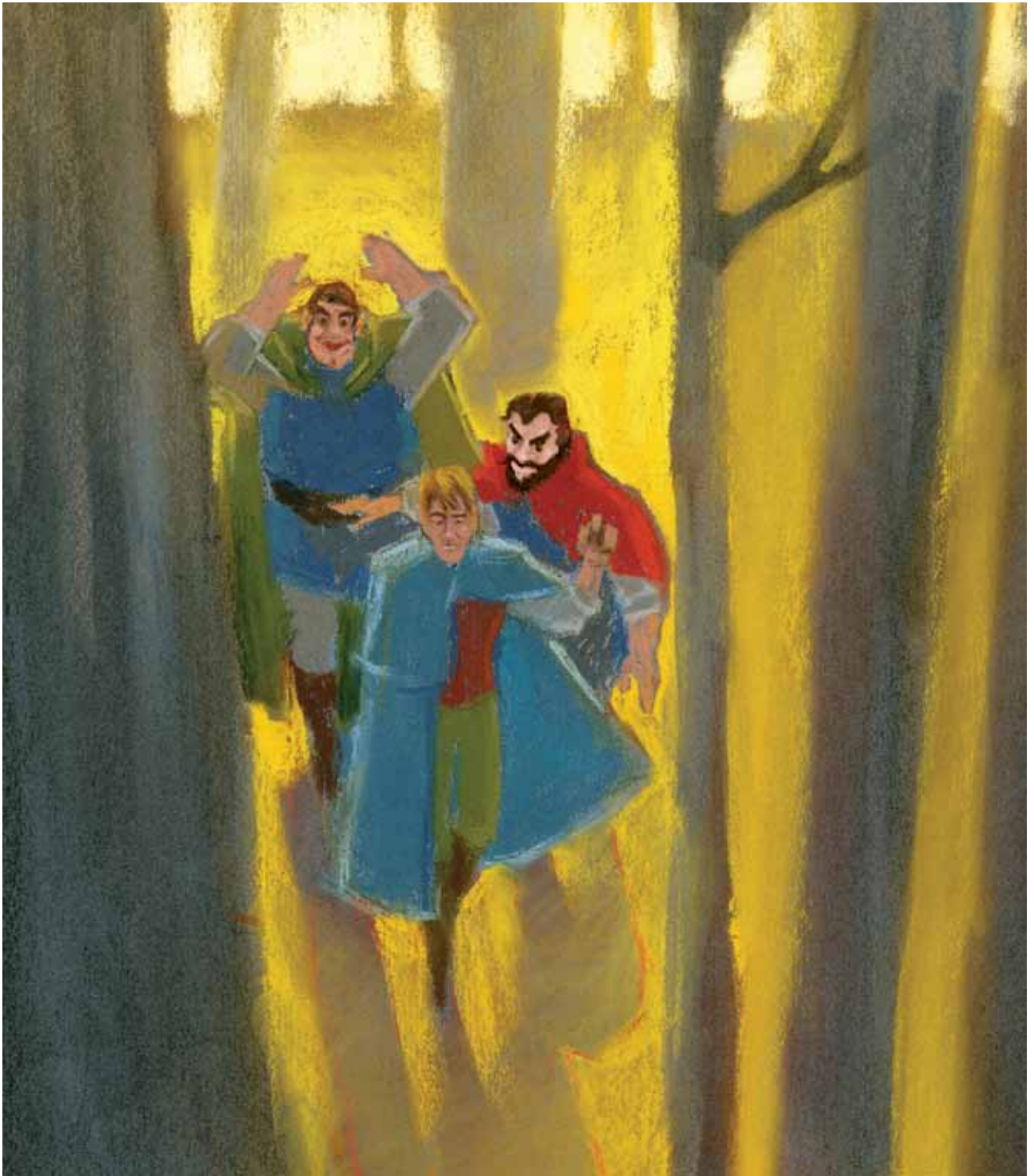
The youngest son had stayed at home. Now, he set out to find his brothers.

Find them he did, but his brothers were cruel to him. When he said he wished to join them on their travels, they jeered at him and made fun of him.

“Why would we take you with us?” asked the oldest brother. “What could a baby like you do for us, who are so much older than you?”

“Why would we take you with us?” asked the second brother. “What could a dimwit like you do for us who are so much smarter than you?”

The youngest brother answered, “I will do what I can.”



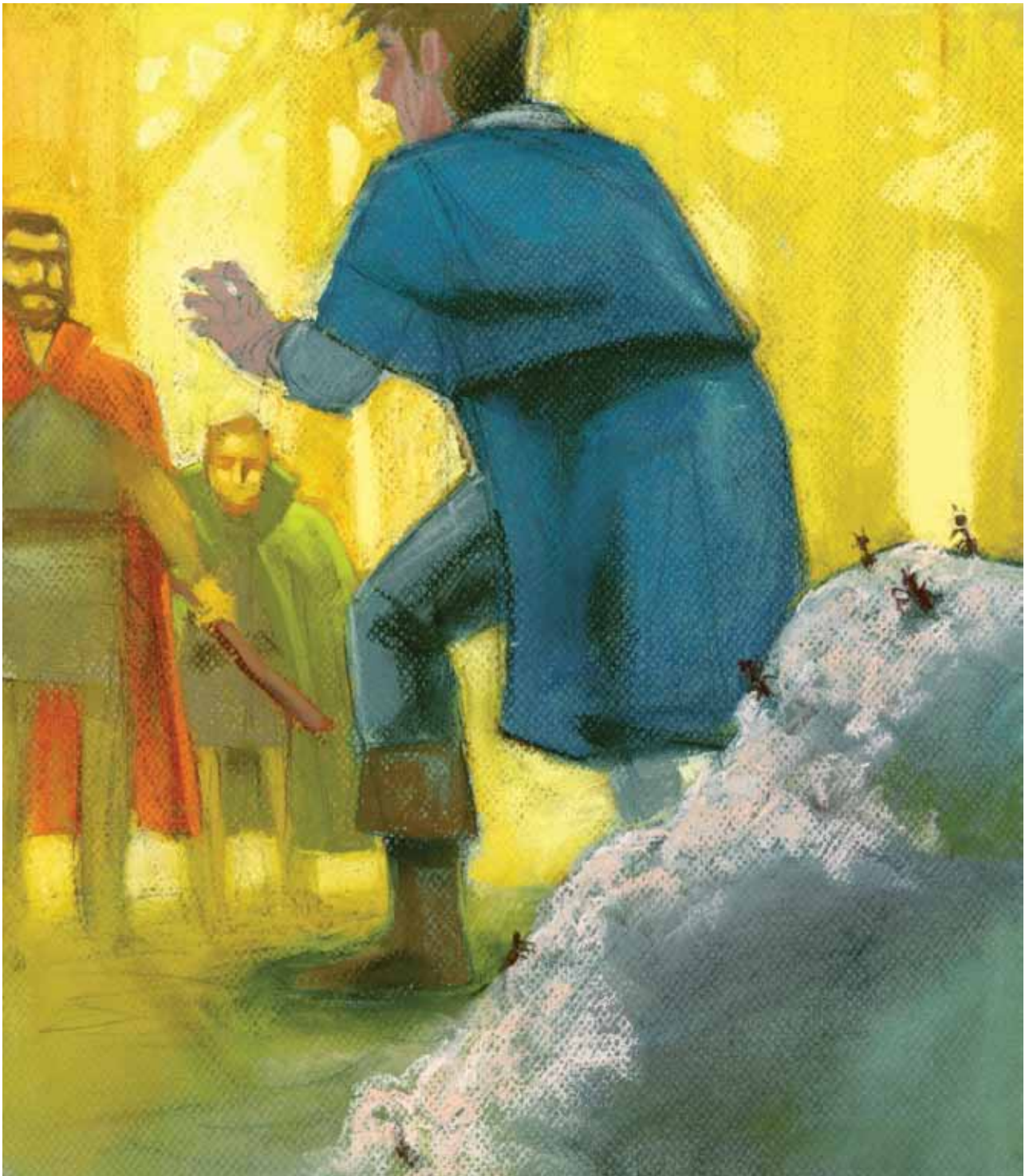
The two older brothers made fun of the youngest brother.

The next day, the two older brothers set off. The youngest brother followed a few steps behind them. They walked until they came upon a large anthill.

“Let’s get some sticks,” said the oldest brother. “We can use them to destroy that anthill!”

“Yes!” said the second brother. “It will be good sport for us to watch the ants running here and there, trying to save their eggs!”

The older brothers plucked branches from a tree, but the youngest brother would not allow them to destroy the anthill. “Leave the ants in peace!” he said. “I will not let you harm them.”



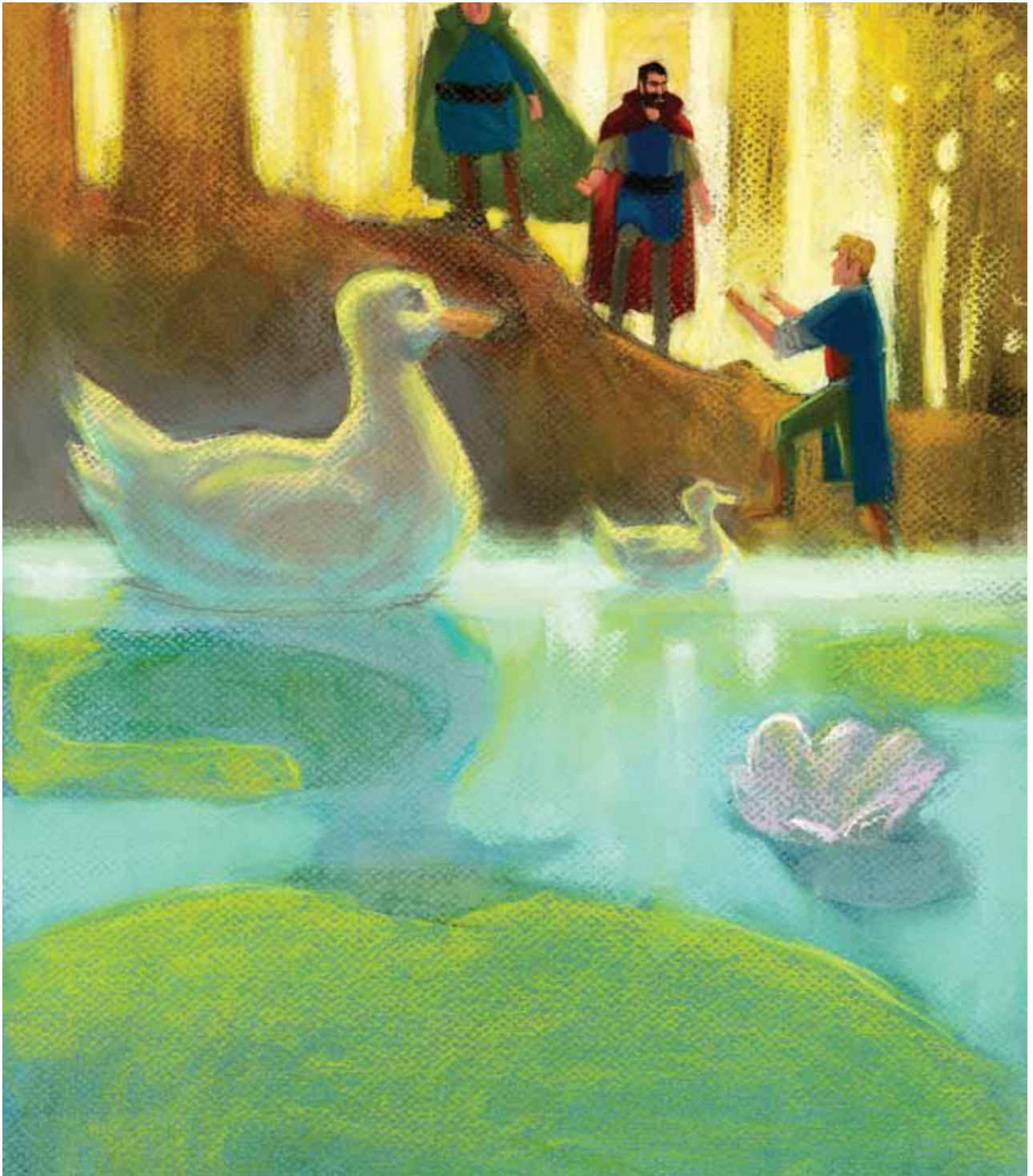
“Leave the ants in peace,” said the youngest brother.

So, the three brothers walked on. They went on until they came to a lake where two ducks were swimming.

“Let us catch those ducks and roast them!” said the oldest brother.

“Yes!” said the second brother. “They will make a tasty snack!”

But the youngest brother would not allow his brothers to kill the ducks. “Let the ducks be!” he said. “I will not let you harm them.”



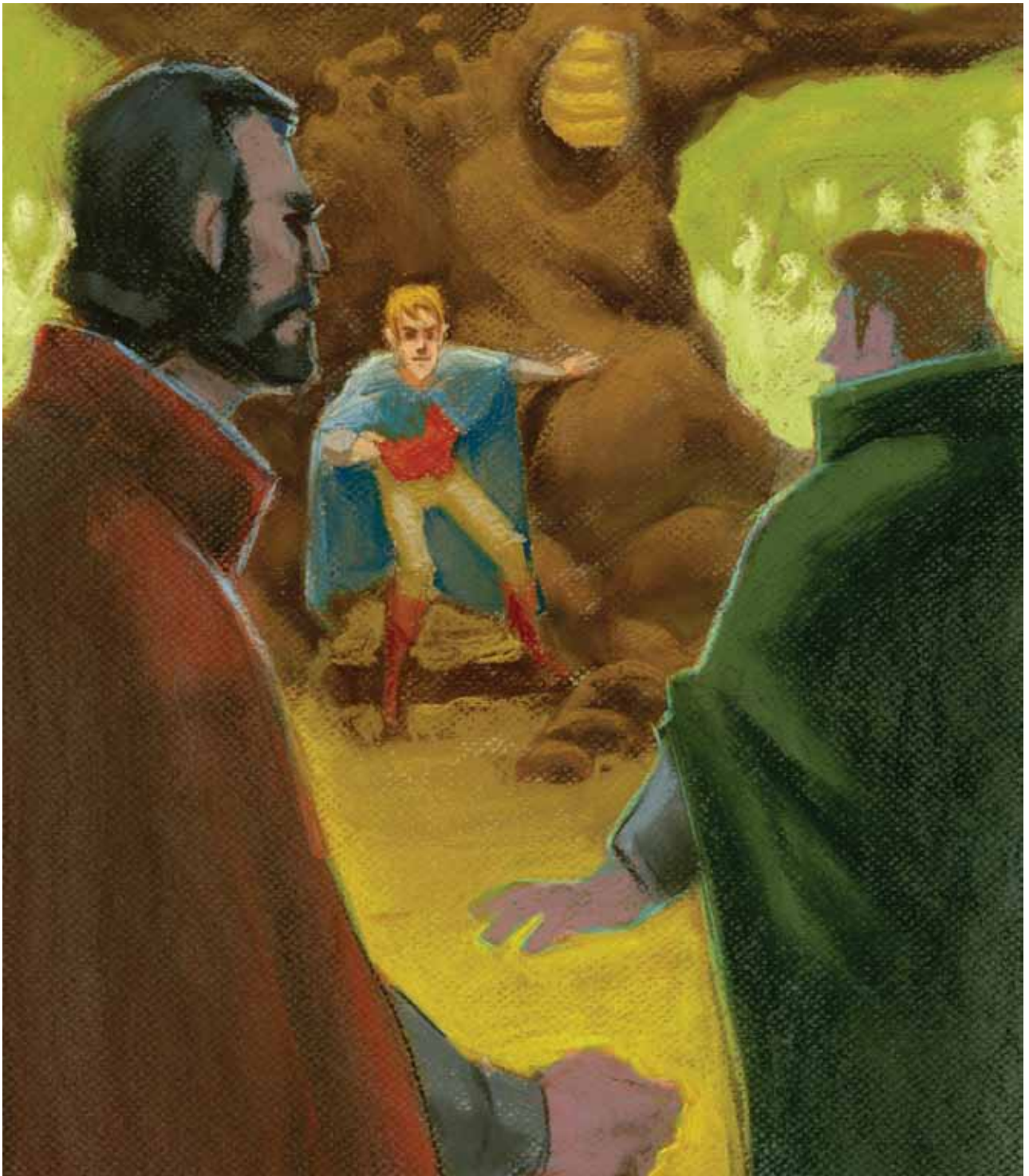
“Let the ducks be,” said the youngest brother.

So, the three brothers walked on. They went on until they came upon a beehive in an old, hollow tree. The beehive was full of honey. It was so full that the honey trickled down the trunk of the tree.

“Let us make a fire and smoke out the bees!” said the oldest brother.

“Yes!” said the second brother. “Once we have smoked them out, we will eat up their honey.”

But the youngest brother would not allow his brothers to build a fire. “Leave the bees alone!” he said. “I will not let you harm them.”

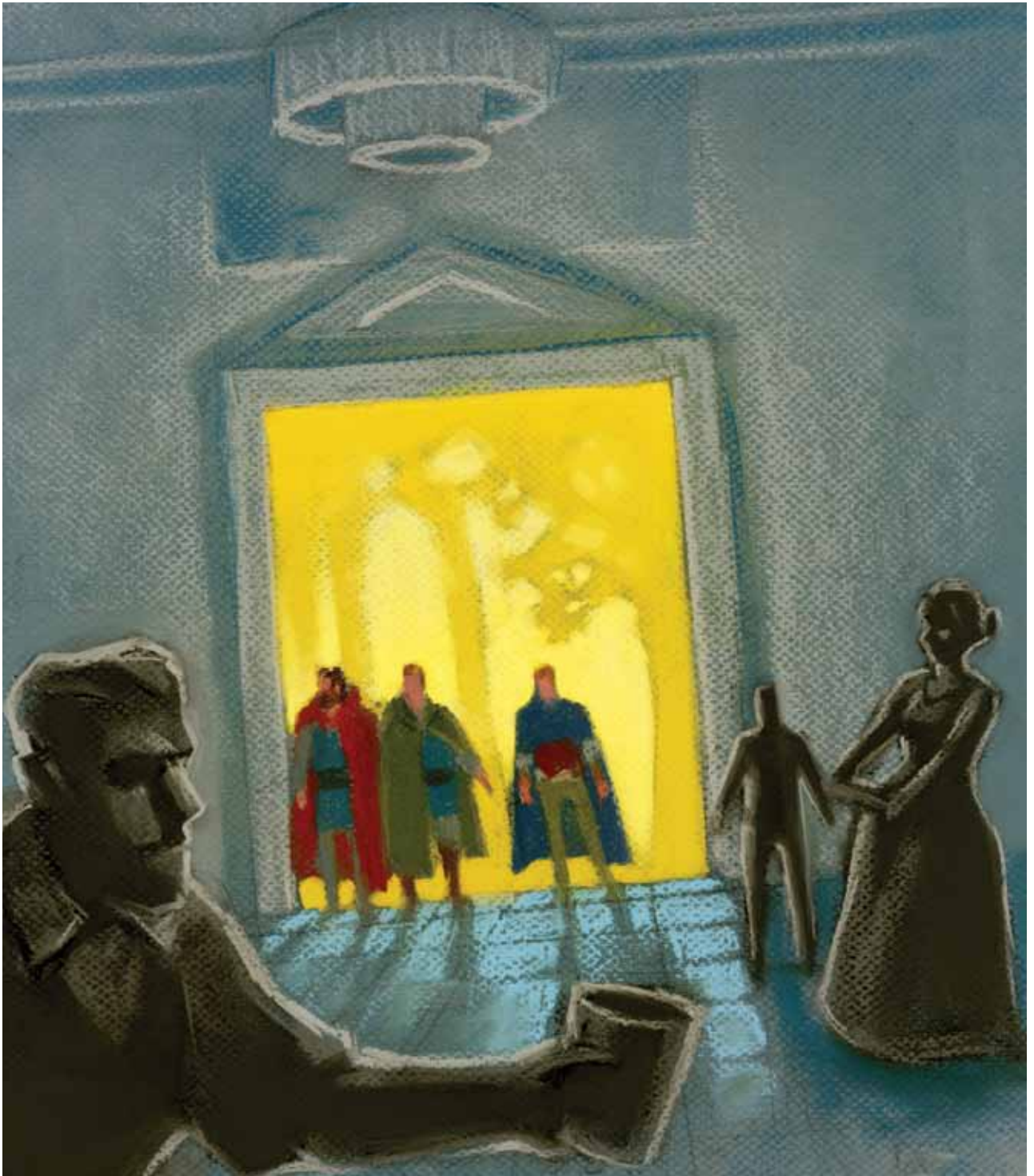


“Leave the bees alone,” said the youngest brother.

So, the three brothers walked on until they came to an enchanted palace. A witch had cast a spell on the palace. She had transformed every living thing in it into a statue. The stables were filled with stone horses. The rooms were filled with stone men.

The brothers made their way through the palace. They peeked into a few rooms. For a long time, they saw nothing but men and ladies of stone. At last, they came to a room with three locks and a small window.

The brothers peeped in the window. They saw a little old man sitting at a table. They spoke to the man. The man did not respond. The brothers spoke to the old man a second time. Still, he did not respond. They called one last time. This time, the old man seemed to hear them. He did not speak, but he stood up and walked over to them. His face was gray and stony, like a statue.

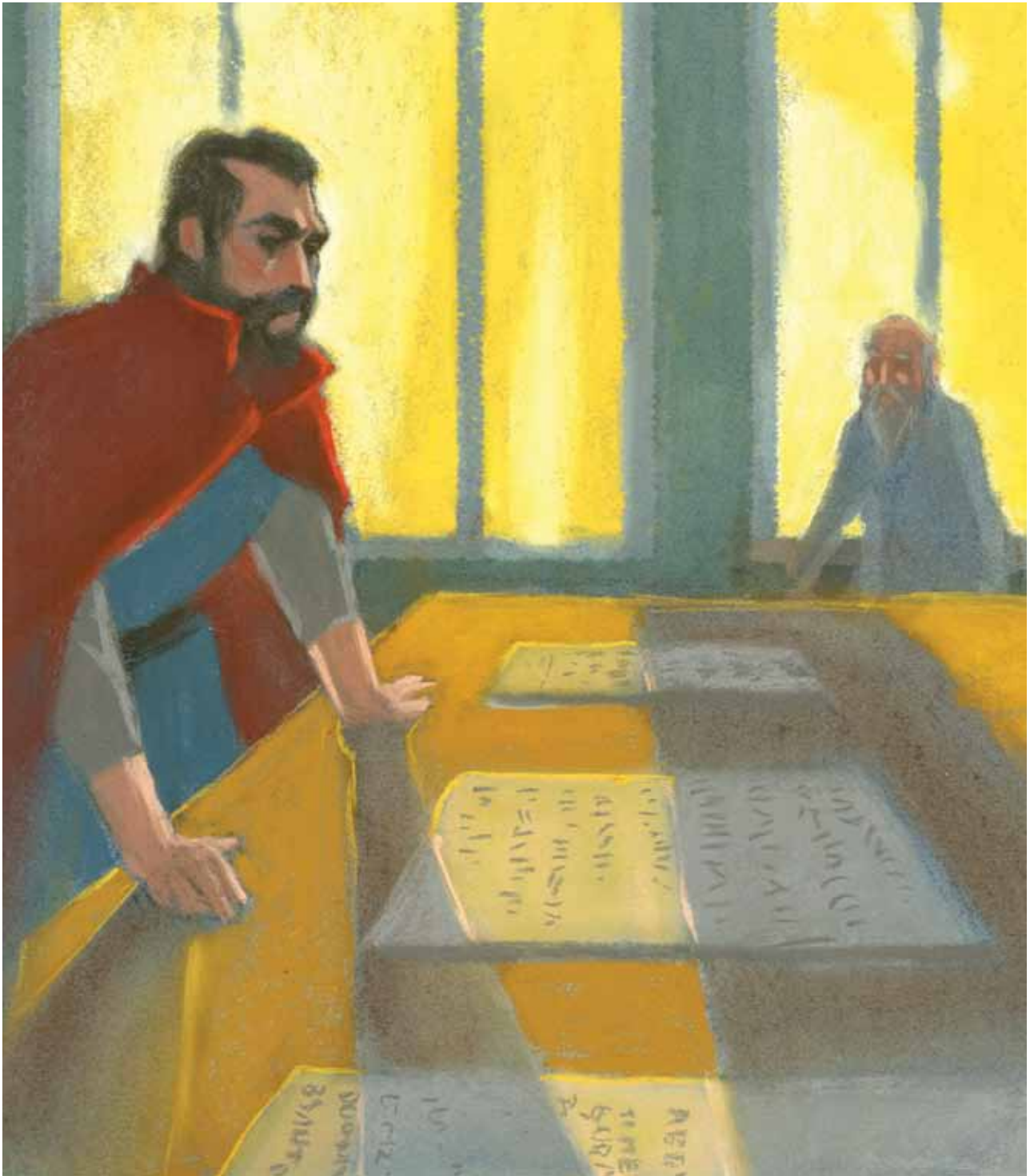


The brothers saw rooms filled with statues.

Without speaking, the old man unlocked the three locks and led the brothers to a table. The table was loaded with good things to eat. The old man motioned for the brothers to sit and eat. When they had eaten, he showed each of them to a bed chamber. The brothers soon fell asleep.

The brothers slept soundly. The next morning, the old man came and woke up the oldest brother. Without saying a word, he led him to a table. On the table were three stone tablets. The tablets listed three tasks that would have to be performed to break the spell.

The old man pointed at the tablet on the left. It said, “In the forest, under some moss, lie a thousand rubies. The rubies belong to a princess. You must find these rubies. But beware: you must find all of them. If even one of them is missing when the sun sets, you will be transformed into a statue.”



The old man showed the oldest brother the three tablets.

Chapter 9 The Queen Bee, Part II

The oldest brother set out to find the rubies. He found a mossy patch in the forest and began digging. He found a few of the rubies, but, when the sun set, he had only a hundred of the thousand rubies. So he was transformed into a statue.

The next morning, the old man woke up the second brother and showed him the tablet.

The second brother went to look for the rubies, but he fared little better than his brother. He found only two hundred rubies, and he too was transformed into a statue.

The next morning, the old man woke up the youngest brother and showed him the tablet. The youngest brother went to look for the rubies. He began to dig around under the moss. He found some rubies, but he soon saw that he would never be able to find all one thousand of them. They were just too small. He sat down and began to weep.

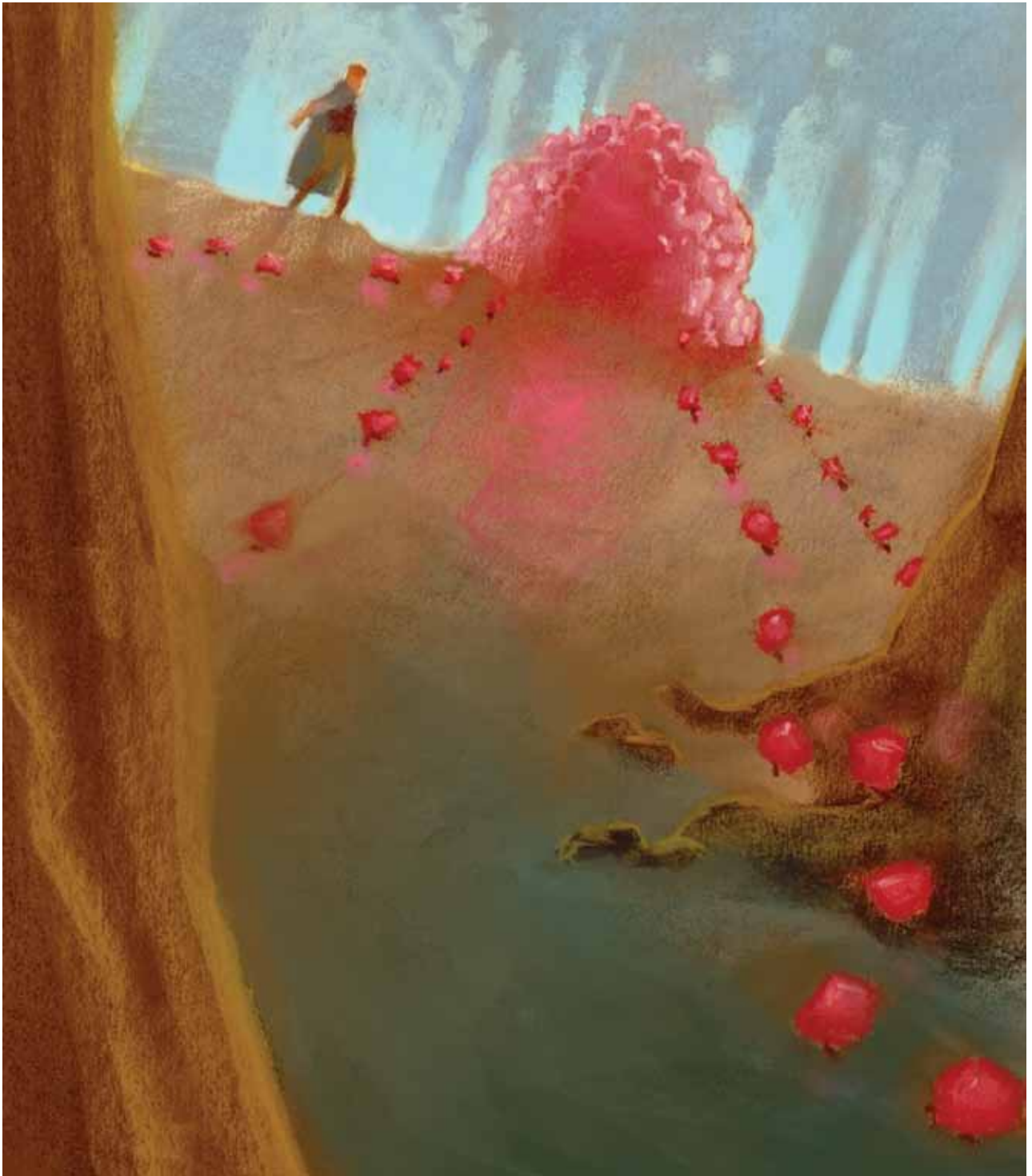


The youngest brother sat down and began to weep.

As he sat crying, he saw something small crawling on the ground near his feet. It was the Ant King, and there were five thousand ants marching behind him.

“You were kind to us,” said the Ant King. “You saved our anthill when your brothers wanted to destroy it. Since you were kind to us, we wish to help you.”

So, the five thousand ants marched under the moss and began dragging out the rubies, one by one. The ants found the rubies—all one thousand of them—and stacked them up in a neat pile.

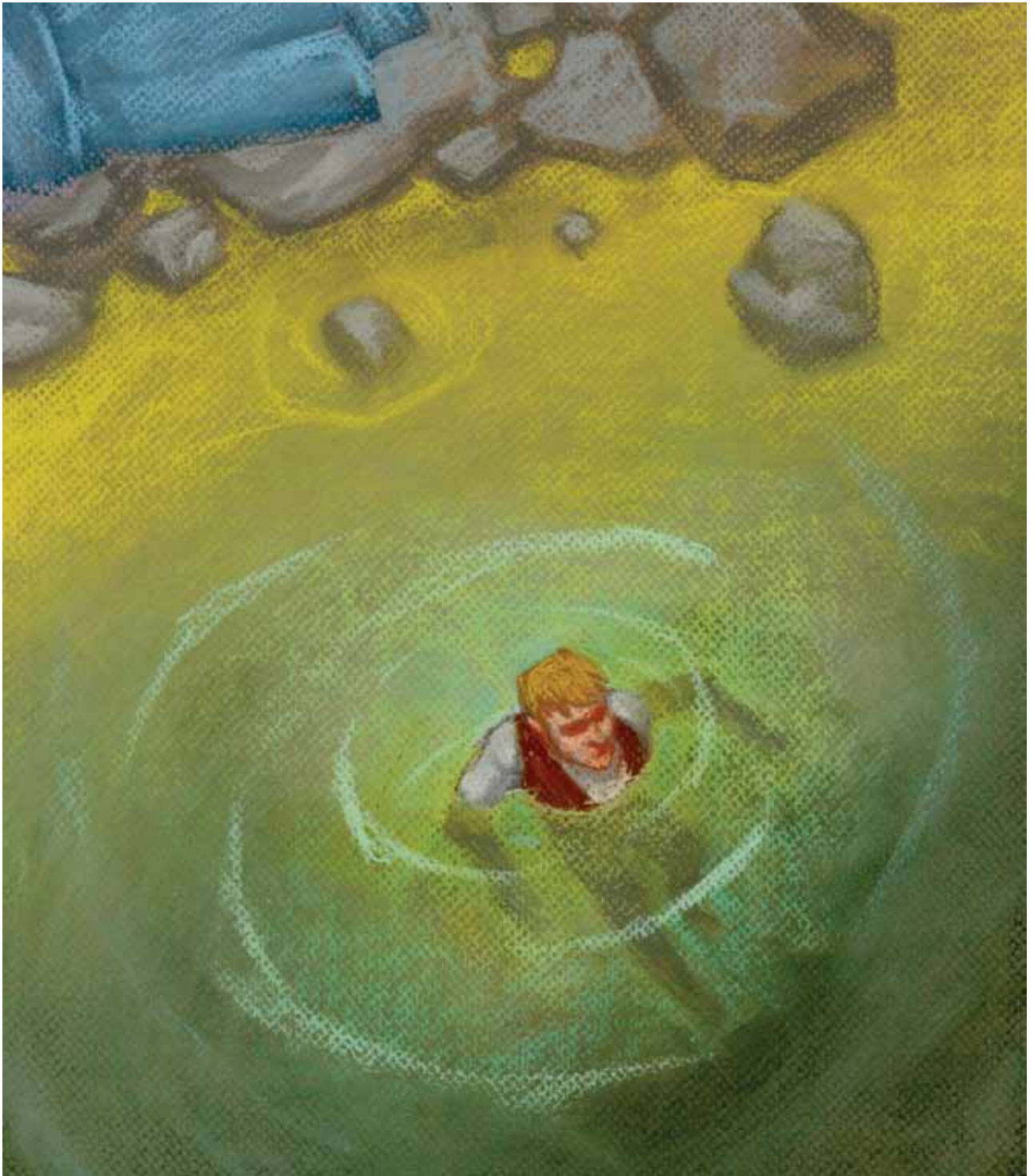


The ants found the rubies.

The youngest brother thanked the ants. Then, he took the rubies back to the palace and handed them to the old man.

The old man took the rubies. Then, he pointed at the tablet in the middle of the table. The tablet said, “At the bottom of the lake lies a key to the bedroom of the princess. You must find this key. But beware: if you fail to find the key by sunset, you will be transformed into a statue.”

The youngest brother went and stared at the lake. He could not swim. He waded into the water. He went in until the water was up to his chin. He felt around with his feet. Still, he could not find the key.



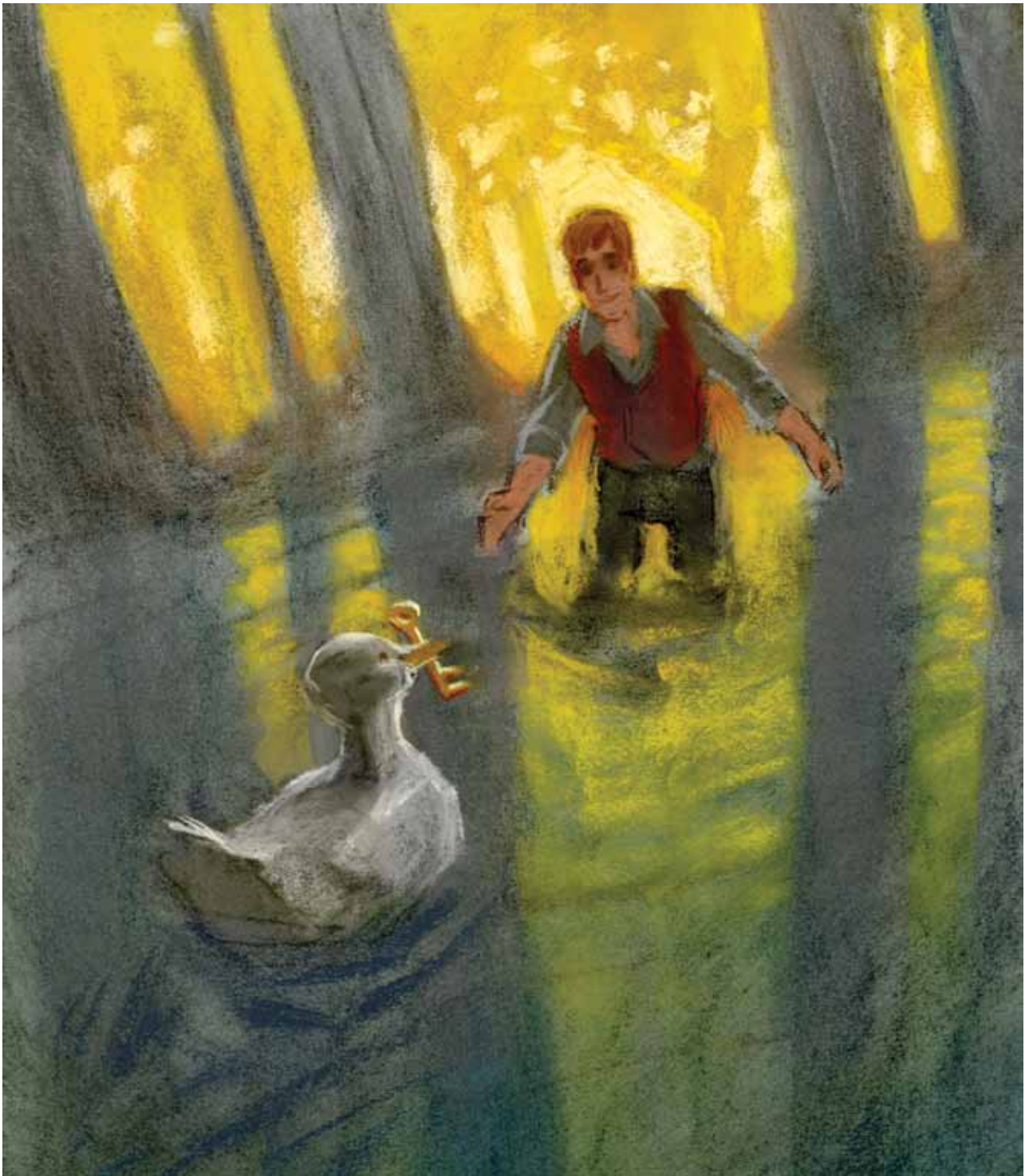
The youngest brother felt around with his feet for the key.

The youngest brother was about to give up when two ducks swam up. They were the two ducks he had saved on the way to the palace.

“You were kind to us,” said one of the ducks. “You saved us when your brothers wanted to roast us for dinner. Since you were kind to us, we wish to help you.”

Then, the ducks began diving to the bottom of the lake. They bobbed up and down. After a few minutes, one of the ducks came up with the key in its mouth.

The youngest brother thanked the ducks. Then, he went back to the palace. He tried to hand the key to the old man, but the old man would not take it.

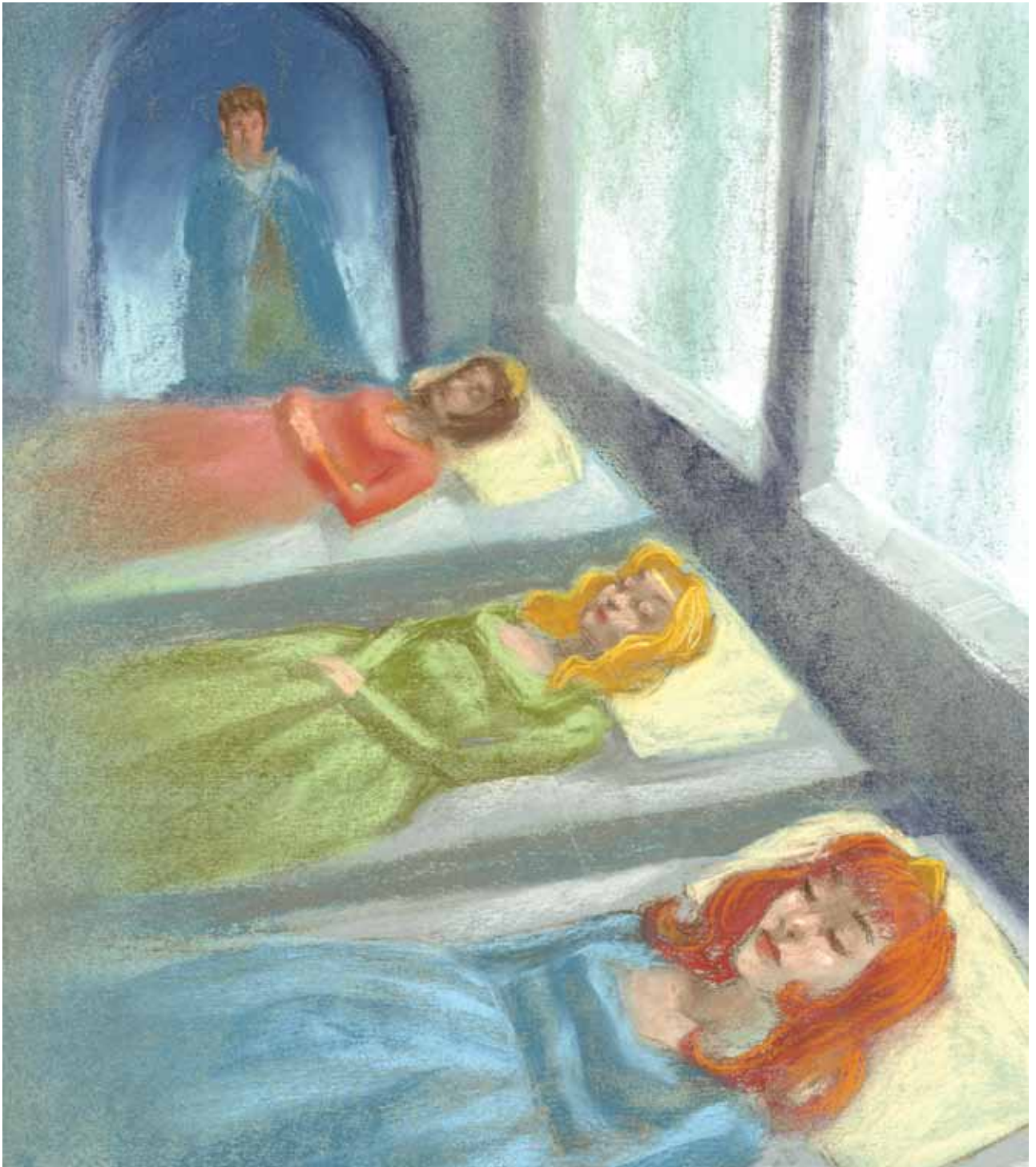


One of the ducks found the key.

The old man pointed at the tablet on the right side of the table. It said, “The key that you have found will unlock a bedroom in the palace. In the bedroom, three princesses lie fast asleep. Two of them ate candy after dinner. One of them ate honey. You must pick the one who ate honey. But beware: if you pick the wrong princess, you will be transformed into a statue.”

The youngest brother took the key and used it to open the bedroom. He saw the three sleeping princesses. All three were beautiful, and none of them had been transformed into a statue. The youngest brother could hear them breathing as they slept.

Which one had eaten honey after dinner? The youngest brother knelt by each princess and sniffed, but it was no use. One smelled as sweet as the next. There was no way to tell which one had eaten honey and which ones had eaten candy.

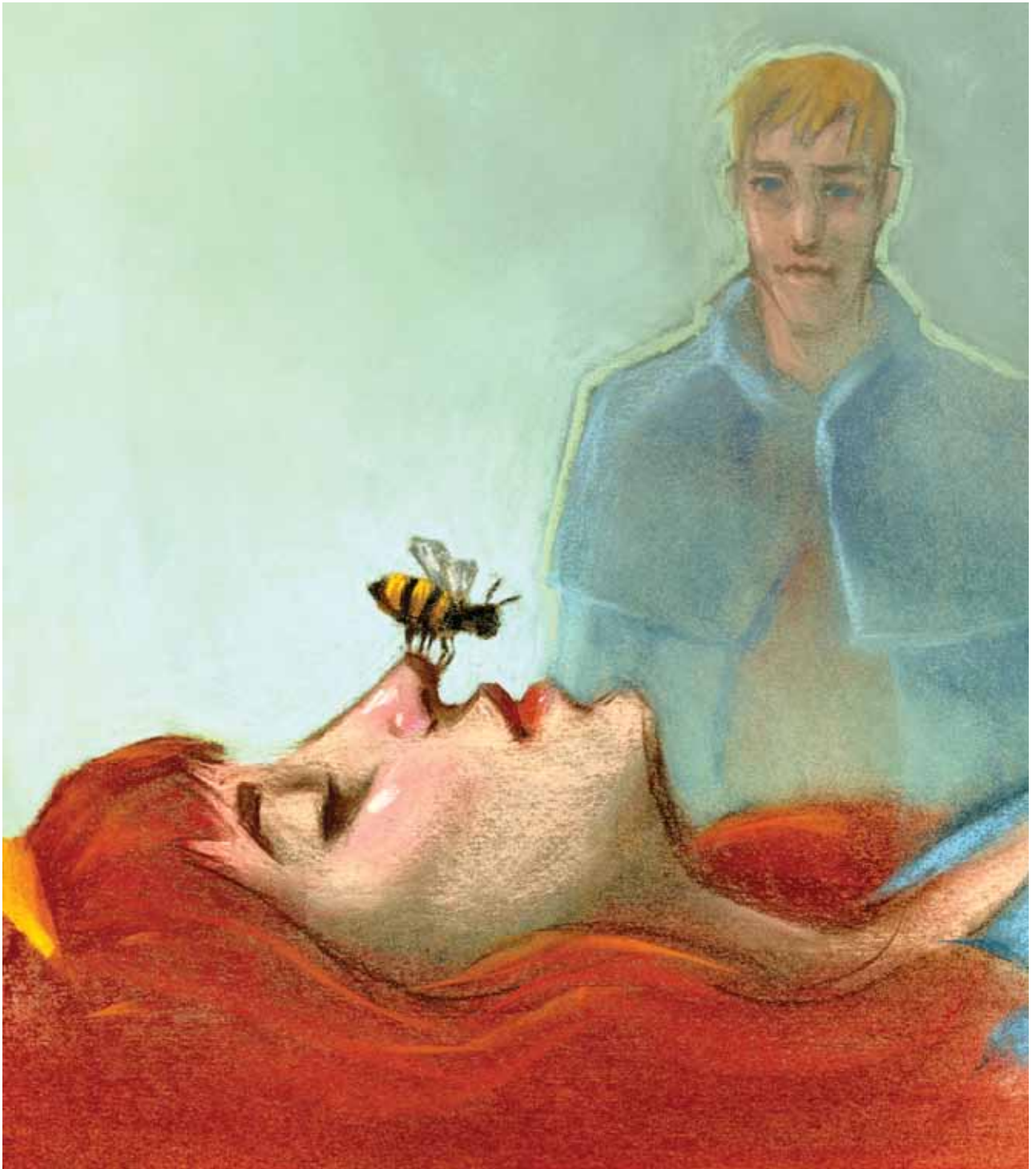


Which princess ate the honey?

As the youngest brother was trying to make up his mind, a bee appeared. It was the queen of the hive he had saved.

“You were kind to us,” said the Queen Bee. “You saved us when your brothers wanted to smoke us out. Since you were kind to us, I wish to help you.”

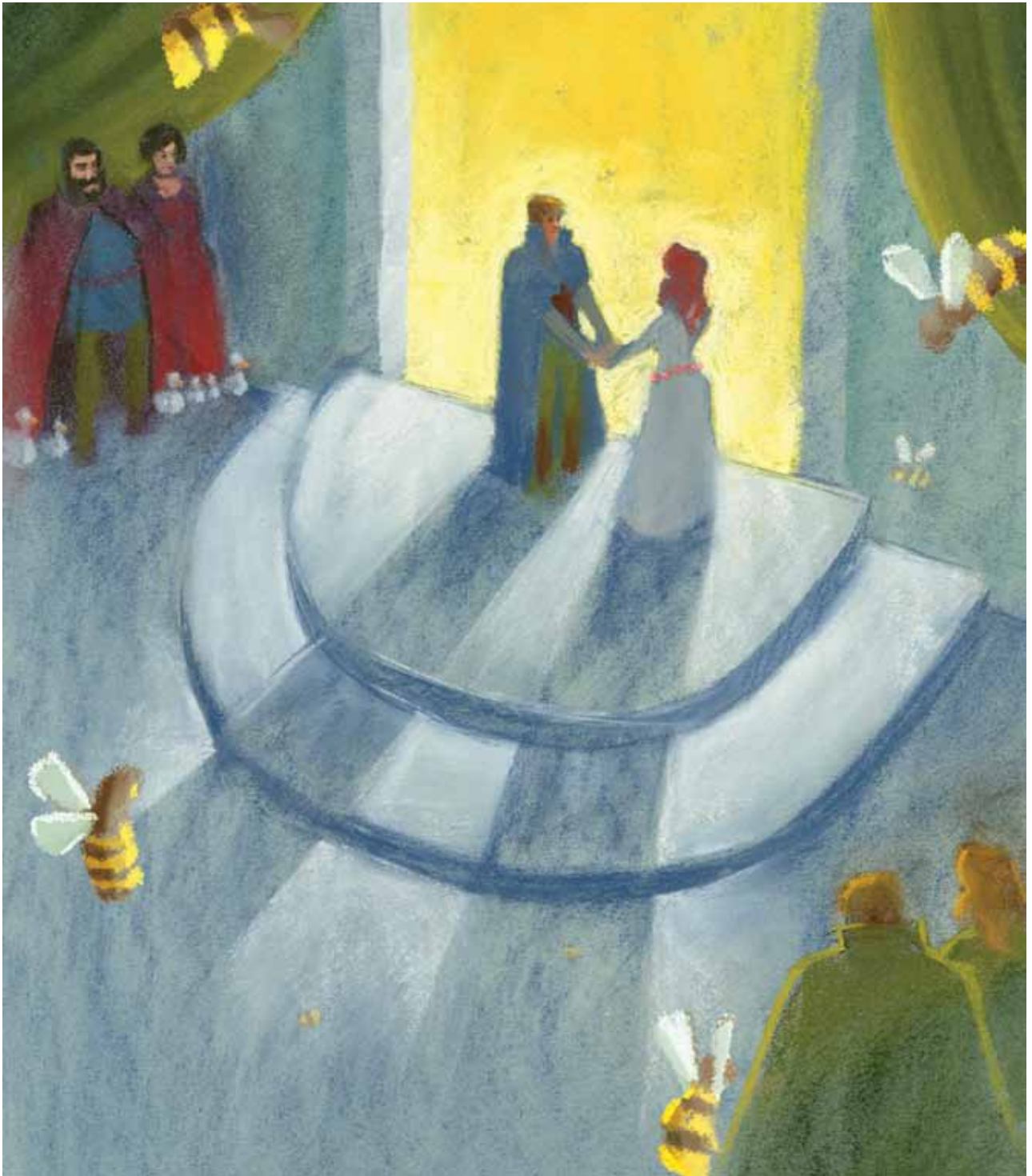
The Queen Bee buzzed from one sleeping princess to the next until she came to the one who had eaten honey. “This is the one!” she said.



“This is the one,” said the Queen Bee.

The youngest brother thanked the Queen Bee. As the bee fluttered away, the three sleeping princesses awoke. At the same time, all of the men and ladies who had been transformed into statues came back to life. The two older brothers came back to life, as well. The spell had been broken!

The youngest brother married the youngest and sweetest of the three princesses, the one who had eaten the honey. His older brothers married the other two princesses, the ones who had eaten the candy. When the old king died, the youngest brother and his princess were crowned king and queen of the land. The two of them lived happily ever after.



The youngest brother married the princess who had eaten the honey.

Chapter 10 Rapunzel, Part I

Once upon a time, there was a woman who wished to have a child. Her husband shared this wish. However, for a long time the woman could not have children. She and her husband wished and hoped and prayed for a child. But, for some reason, the child never came.



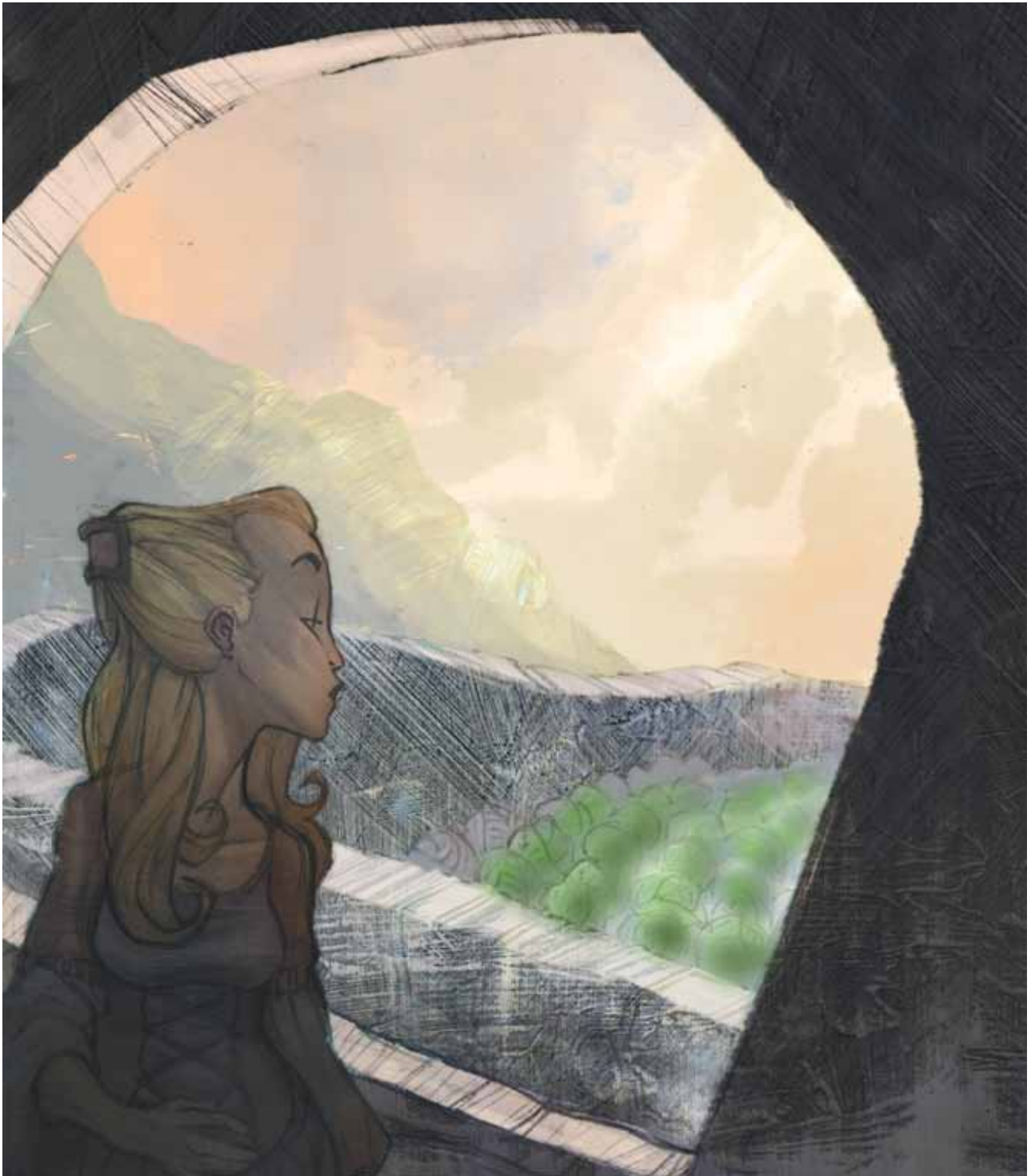
The husband and wife wished for a child.

Now, in the back of their house, there was a window. From the window, the man and his wife could see a lovely garden. It was filled with beautiful flowers and lush green plants. There were tomatoes and peppers in the garden. There were clumps of lettuce and another leafy plant called rapunzel.

Around the garden was a tall stone wall, and no one dared to enter the garden, for it belonged to a wicked witch with evil powers.

One day, the wife stood at the window and looked down into the garden. She saw the rapunzel. It looked so fresh and green. She felt that she simply must have some.

Day after day, she looked out the window. She longed for the rapunzel. She became sadder and sadder.



The wife looked out her window at a garden.

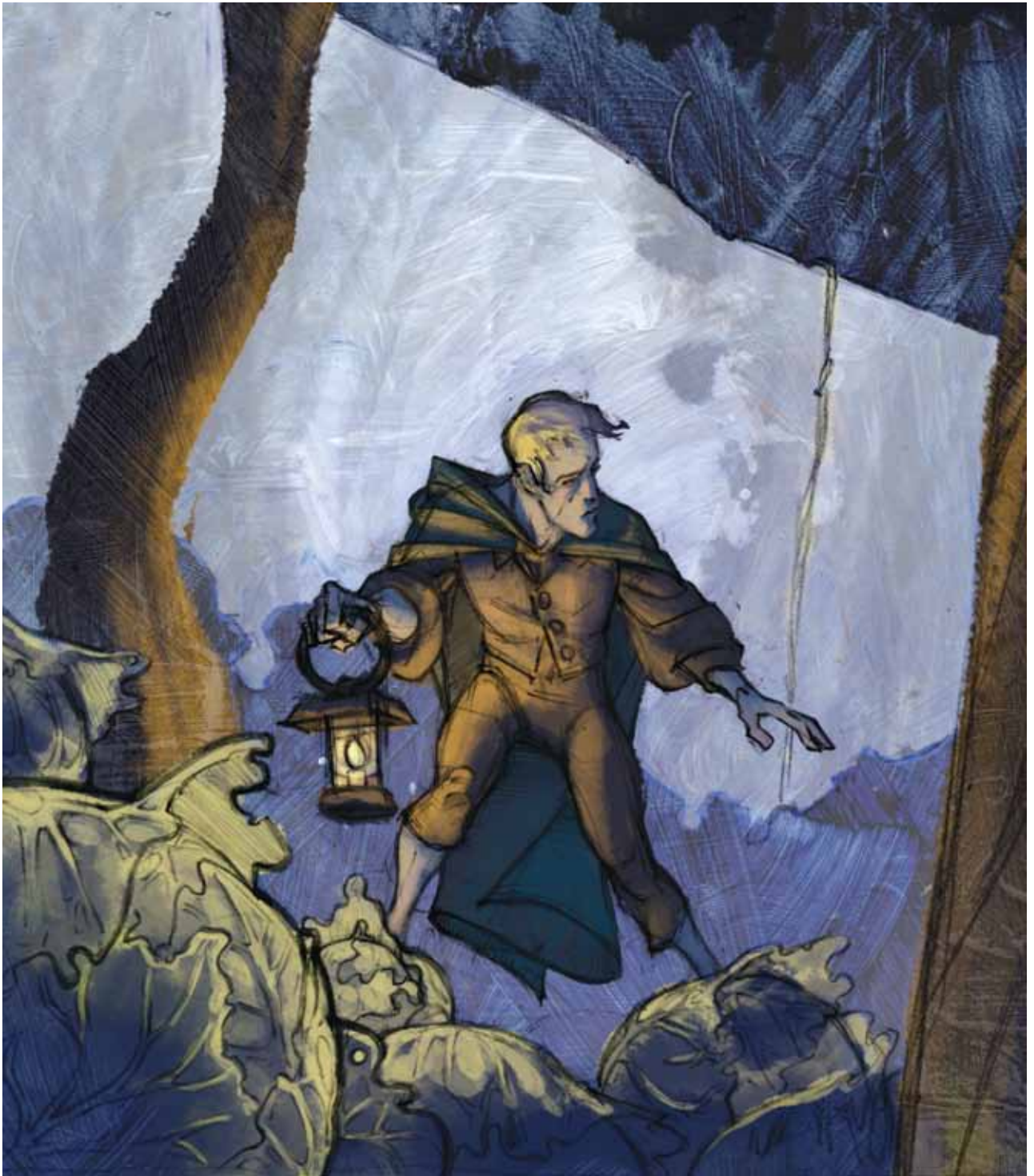
The woman's husband saw her sadness.

"Dear wife," he asked, "what is the matter?"

"O, husband," said the woman, "I simply must have some rapunzel to eat! It grows in the garden behind our house. If I can't get some, I fear I will die!"

The man frowned. He was not a thief, but he loved his wife. He thought, "I can't let her die. I will get her some rapunzel. The old witch has so much of it, she will not know if I take just a little."

That night, the man crept over the stone wall. He slid down into the garden. Then, he picked a bunch of rapunzel and took it back to his wife.

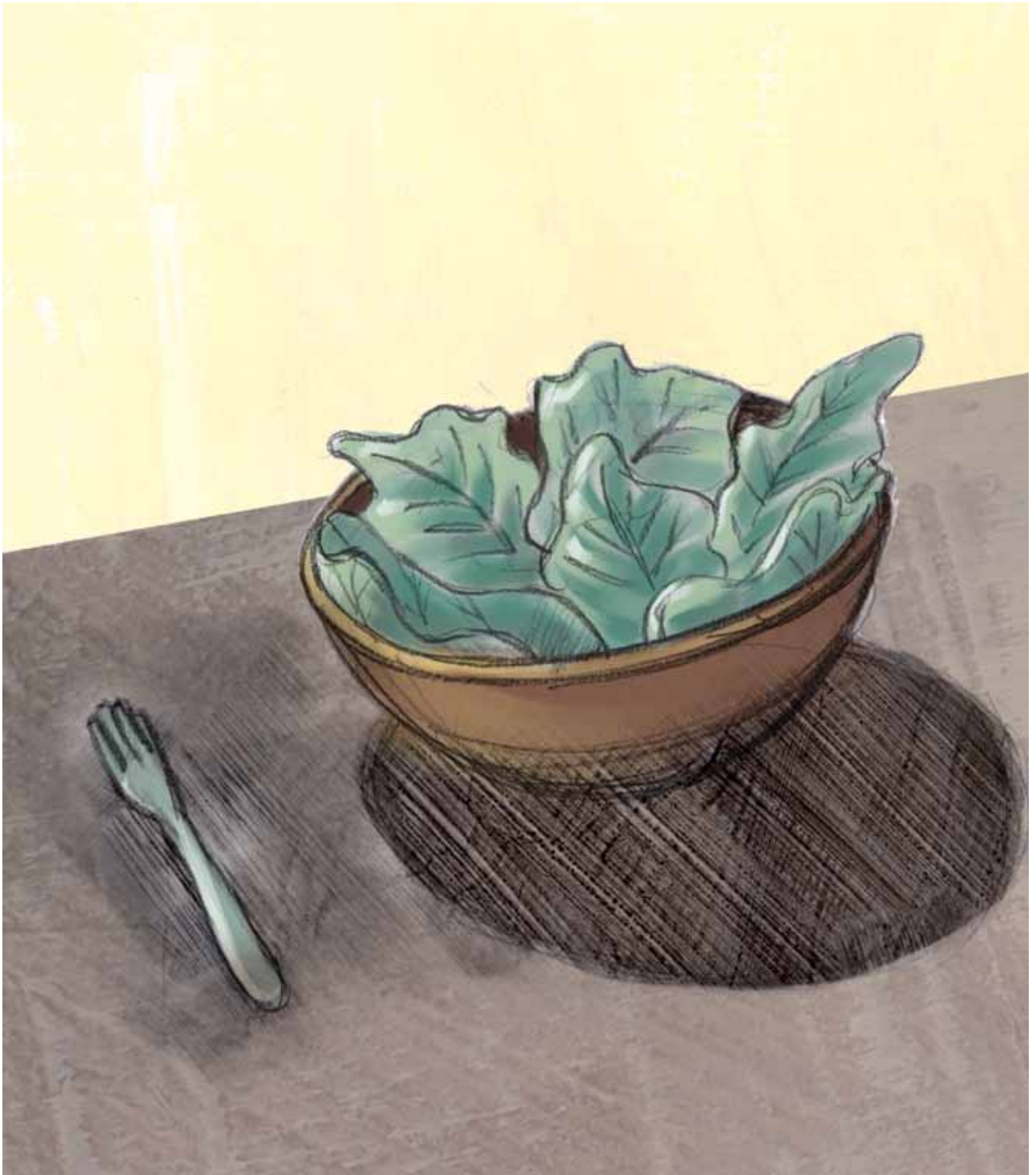


The husband crept into the garden.

The wife was delighted when she saw the rapunzel. She ate a big bowl of it. She said it was the best food she had ever eaten.

The husband was happy.

“Well,” he said, “that’s the end of that!”



A bowl of rapunzel

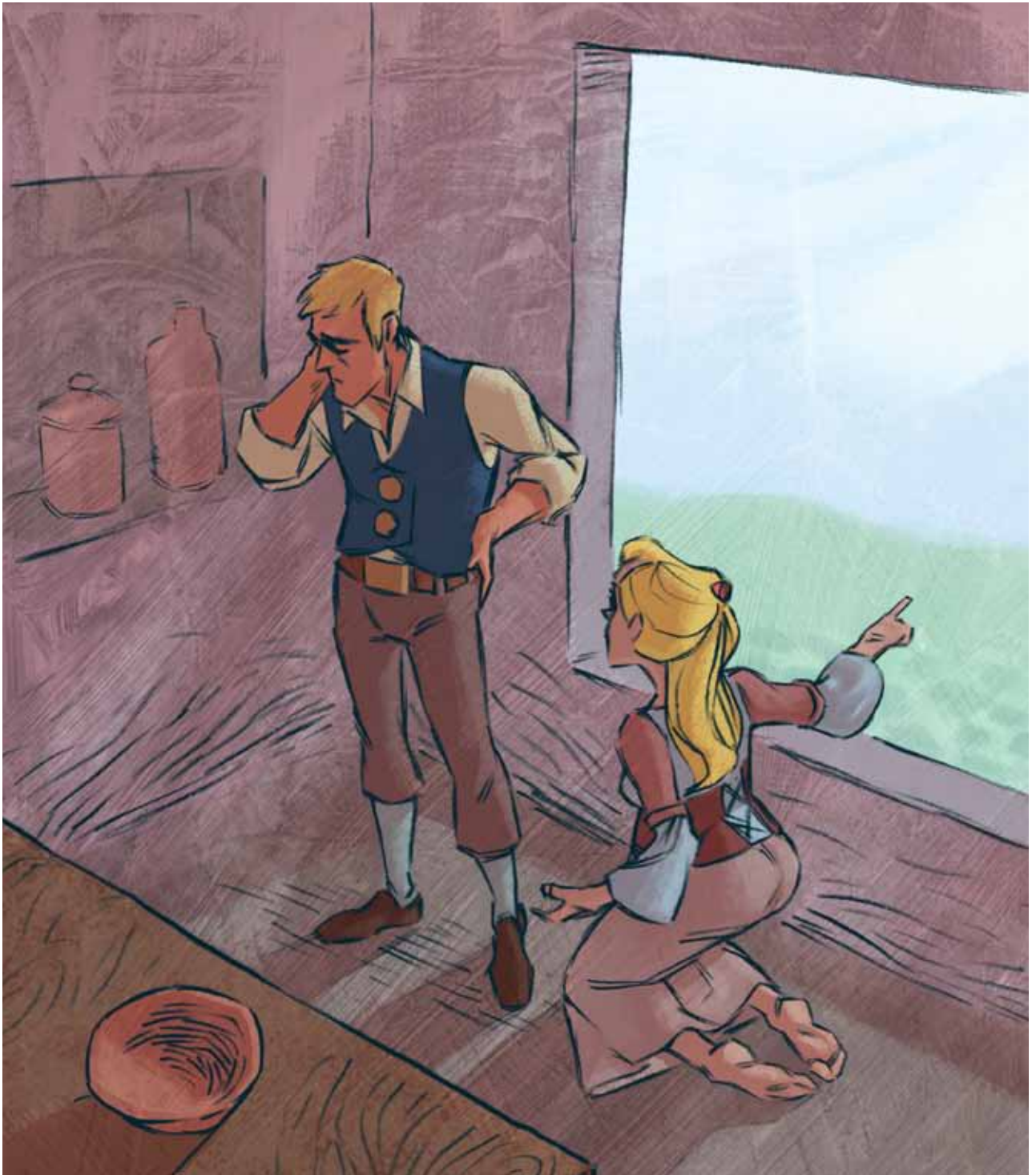
Chapter 11 Rapunzel, Part II

The next day, the wife found that she was still craving rapunzel. In fact, she was craving it three times as much.

“Husband,” she said, “I enjoyed that rapunzel so much! It was so good! Will you get some for me again?”

The husband was annoyed. He did not like stealing, but it gave him joy to make his wife happy. He stood and thought.

At last, the man said, “I am glad that the rapunzel brings you joy. I will go to the garden again, but this is the last time.”



The wife begged for more rapunzel.

So, the man sneaked into the garden again. He picked some rapunzel and started to leave. Just then, he saw the blazing eyes of the witch.

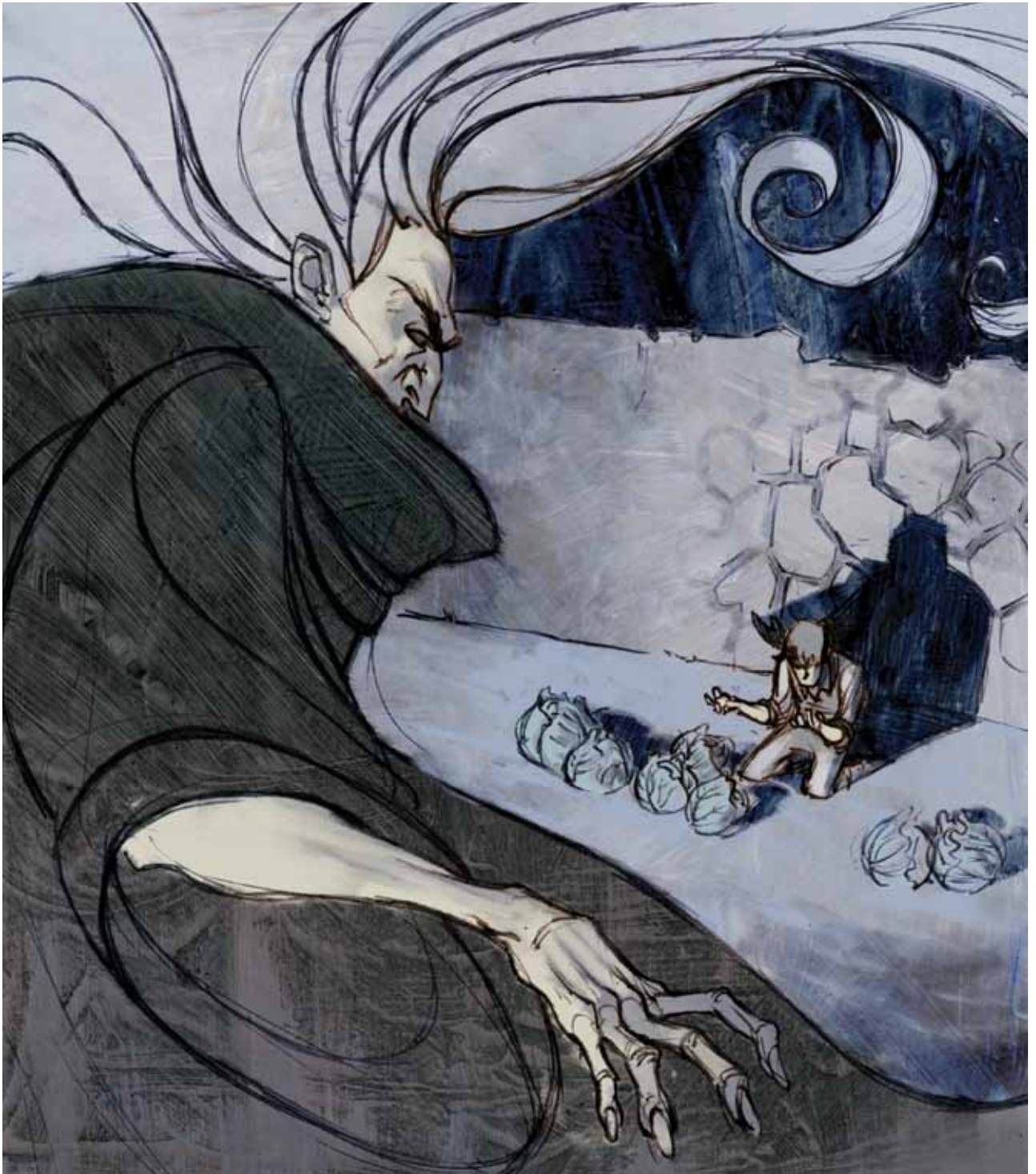
“How dare you steal my rapunzel!” the witch growled. “You will pay dearly for this, you thief!”

The man dropped the rapunzel. He fell to his knees.

“I beg you,” he called out, “have mercy on me!”

The witch just frowned.

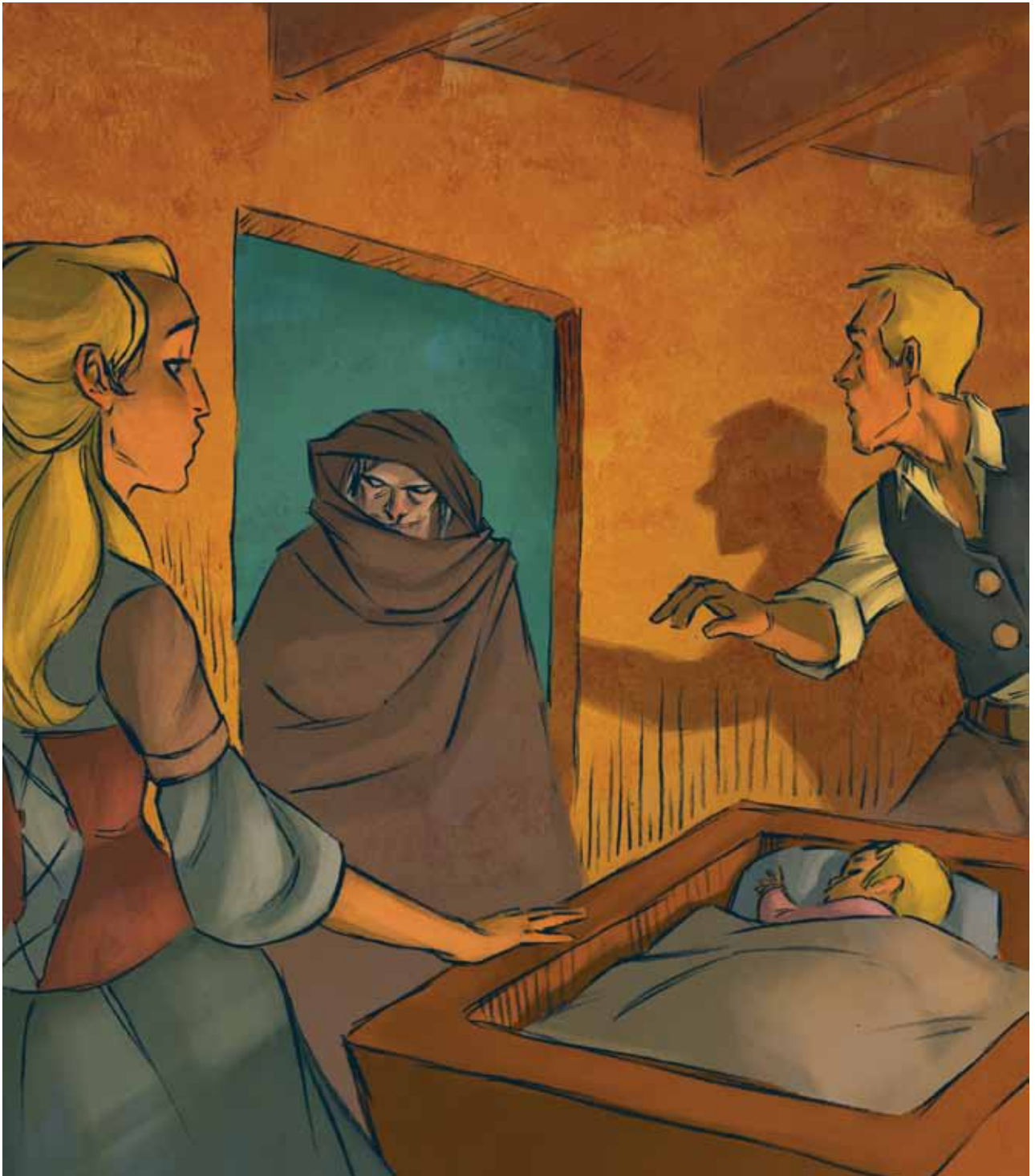
“I beg you,” the man said. “I had to do it. You see, my wife was looking out our window and saw your rapunzel. She told me that she would die unless I got her some. So, I had to get her some.”



The man begged for mercy.

“Well then,” the witch said, “I will make a deal with you. I will allow you to pick as much rapunzel as you want—on one condition! When your wife has a child, you must give the child to me. I will take care of the child like its very own mother.”

The man was scared. Also, he was starting to think his wife might never have a child. So, he said yes. After that, he tried not to think about it. However, some months later, his wife had a lovely baby. Not long after, the witch appeared and took the child away.

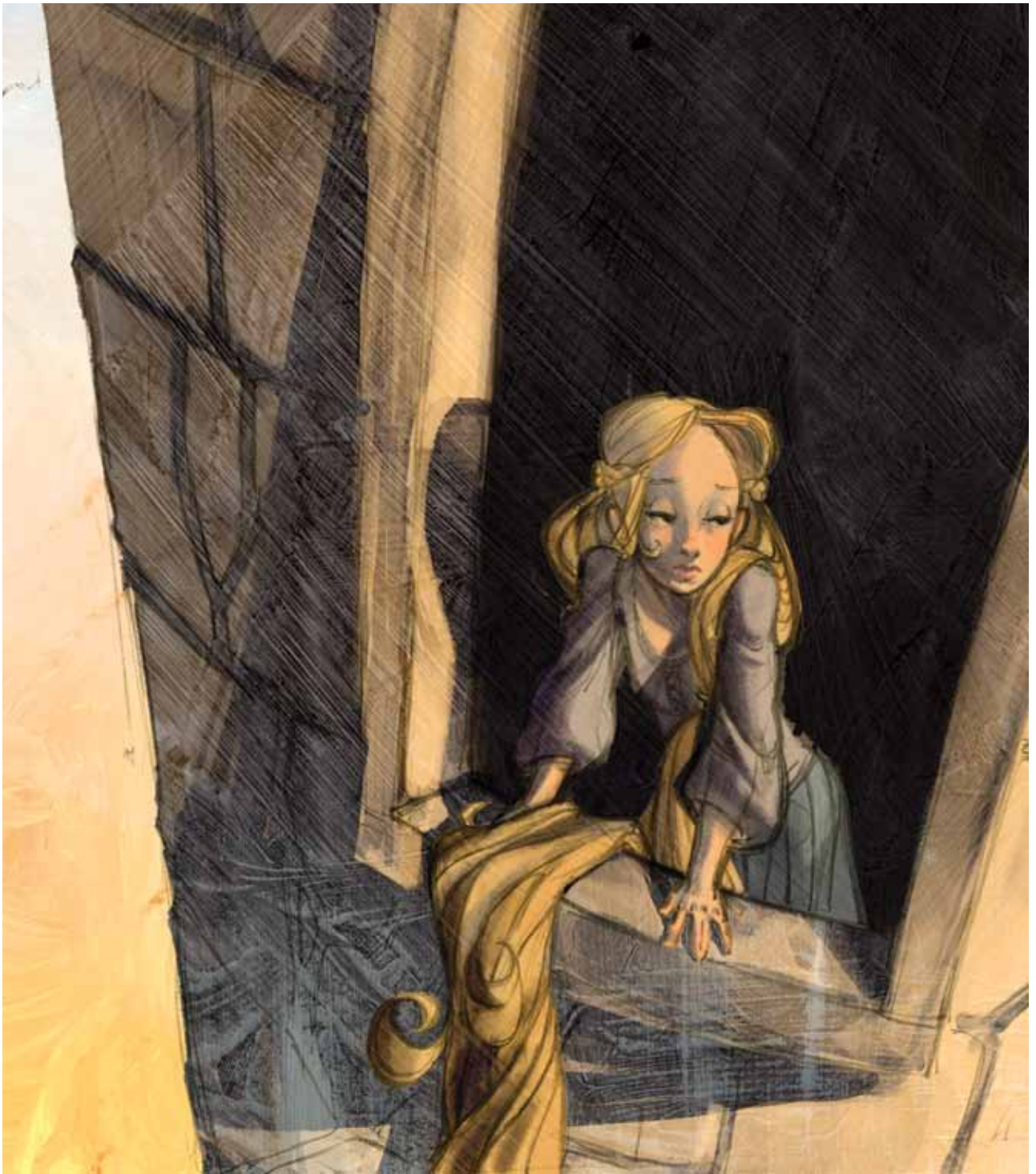


The witch arrived to take the child away.

The witch named the child Rapunzel. When Rapunzel was twelve years old, she was very beautiful. The witch took her deep into a forest and locked her in a tall tower. The tower had no steps and no gate. The only way to get in was a small window near the top of the tower.

When the witch wanted to be let in, she would call out, “Rapunzel! Rapunzel! Let down your hair!”

Rapunzel had long, beautiful hair that shone like gold. When the witch called up to her, she would open the window. She would let her hair fall down, down, down to the ground far below. Then, the witch would take hold of the hair and lift herself up to the window.



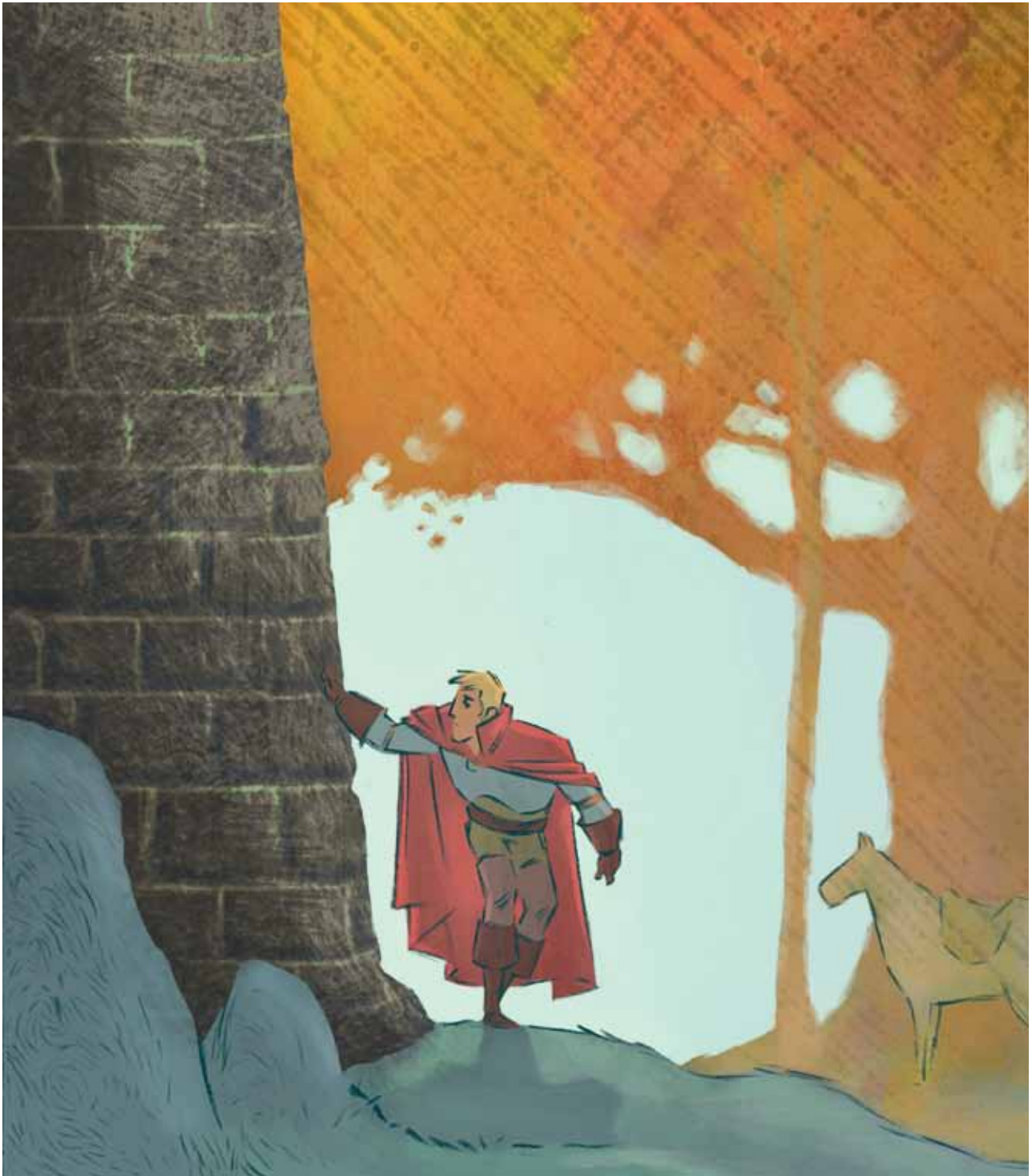
Rapunzel let down her hair.

Chapter 12 Rapunzel, Part III

Rapunzel spent years locked away in the tower. In all that time, no one came to see her—no one except the witch.

Then one day, a prince was riding through the forest. As he rode, he could hear a voice singing. It sang so sweetly that he stopped his horse so he could hear it better. It was Rapunzel up in her tower. She was trying to drive away her loneliness with sweet songs.

The prince wanted to see who sang so well. He rode to the tower. He looked for a way to get in, but he could find none.

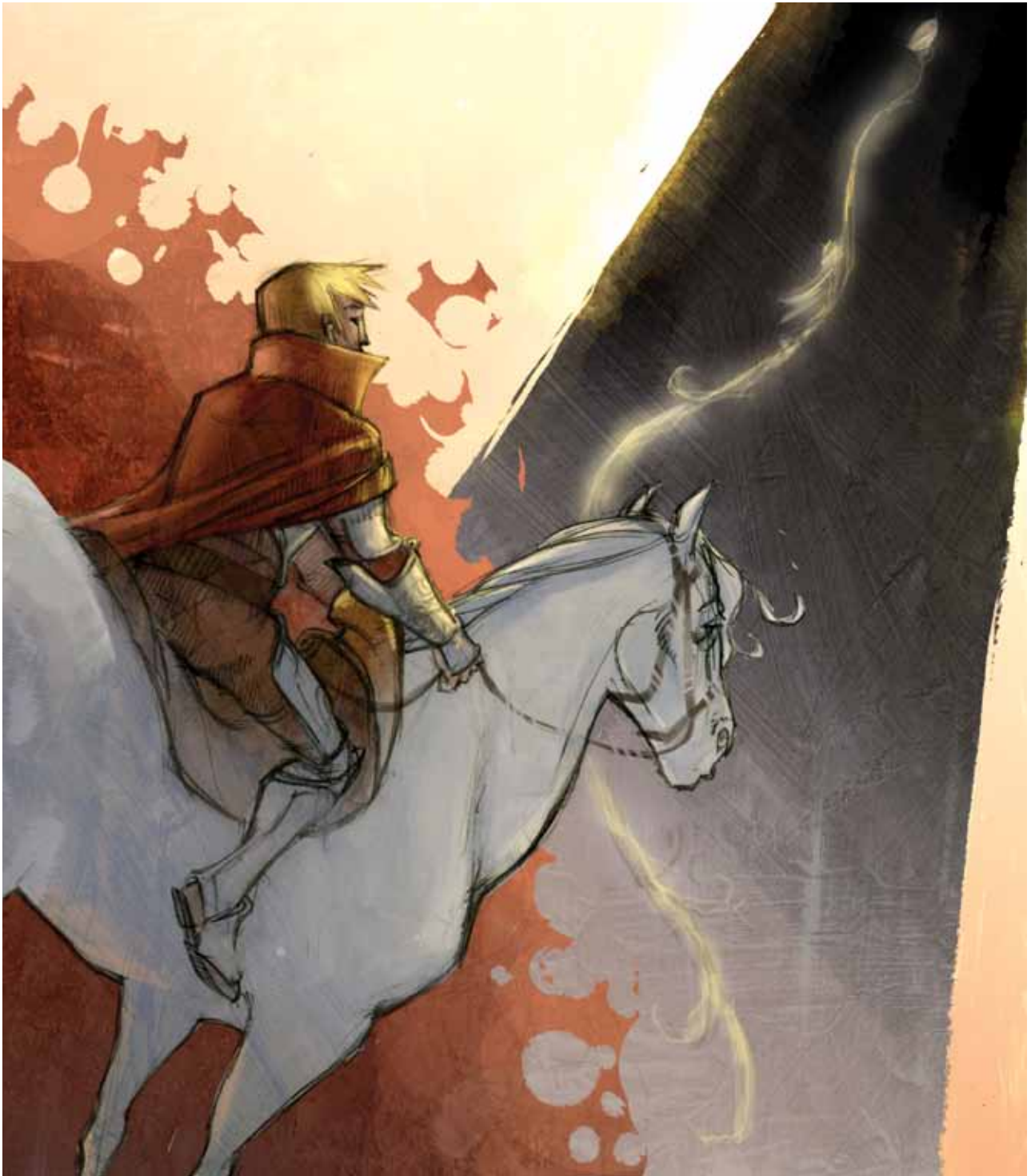


The prince looked for a way to get in the tower.

The prince rode home, but he was never quite the same after that day. Rapunzel's song had entered his heart. He was haunted by it. He could not stop thinking about it. Day after day, week after week, he went back to the tower to hear Rapunzel singing.

Once, the prince was standing behind some trees when the witch appeared. The prince watched as the witch called out, "Rapunzel! Rapunzel! Let down your hair!" He saw how the maiden in the tower let down her long, golden hair and how the witch lifted herself up and went into the tower.

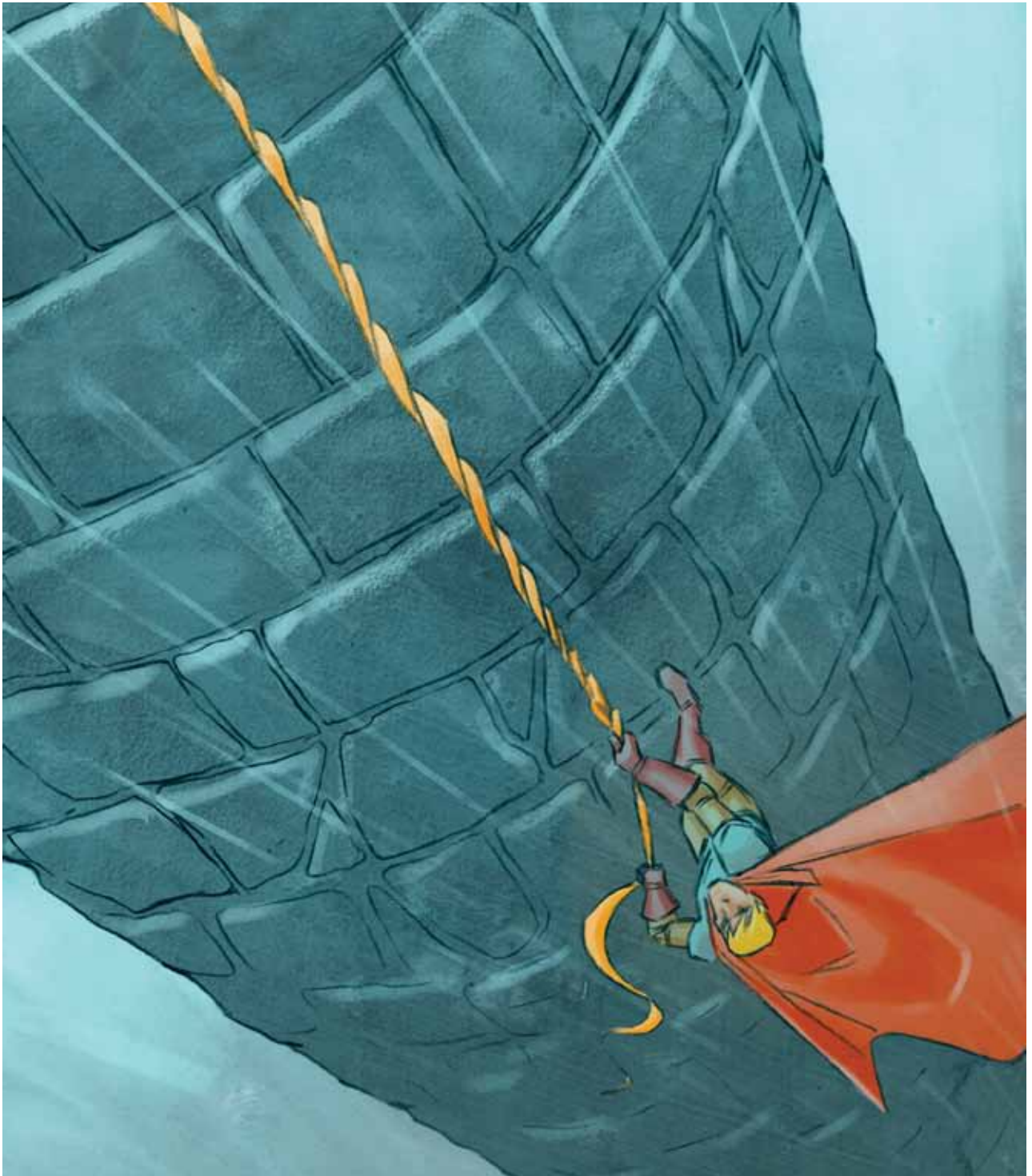
"So that is the ladder!" the prince said to himself. "Well, then, I will go up the ladder, too!"



The prince watched the witch lift herself up into the tower.

The next day, the prince came back. He called out, “Rapunzel! Rapunzel! Let down your hair!” The maiden let down her hair. The prince took hold of it with both hands and made his way up the tower.

Rapunzel was frightened when she saw the prince. She had never seen a man, or even a boy. But the prince was kind to her. He told her how her singing had entered his heart and brought him such joy. He told her that he felt he could have no peace until he had seen her. Then, Rapunzel was not afraid.



The prince made his way up the tower.

The prince asked if he could visit Rapunzel again. Rapunzel agreed. The prince came again and again. He and Rapunzel fell in love.

One day, the prince got down on one knee. He asked Rapunzel to run away with him and be his wife.

Rapunzel took his hand in hers and spoke to him.

“I will gladly go with you,” she said, “but I must get out of this tower. Do this for me: each time you come, bring a bundle of silk. I will make a ladder of the silk. When the ladder is finished, I will use it to get down from this tower. Then, you can carry me away from here on your horse!”



The prince asked Rapunzel to be his wife.

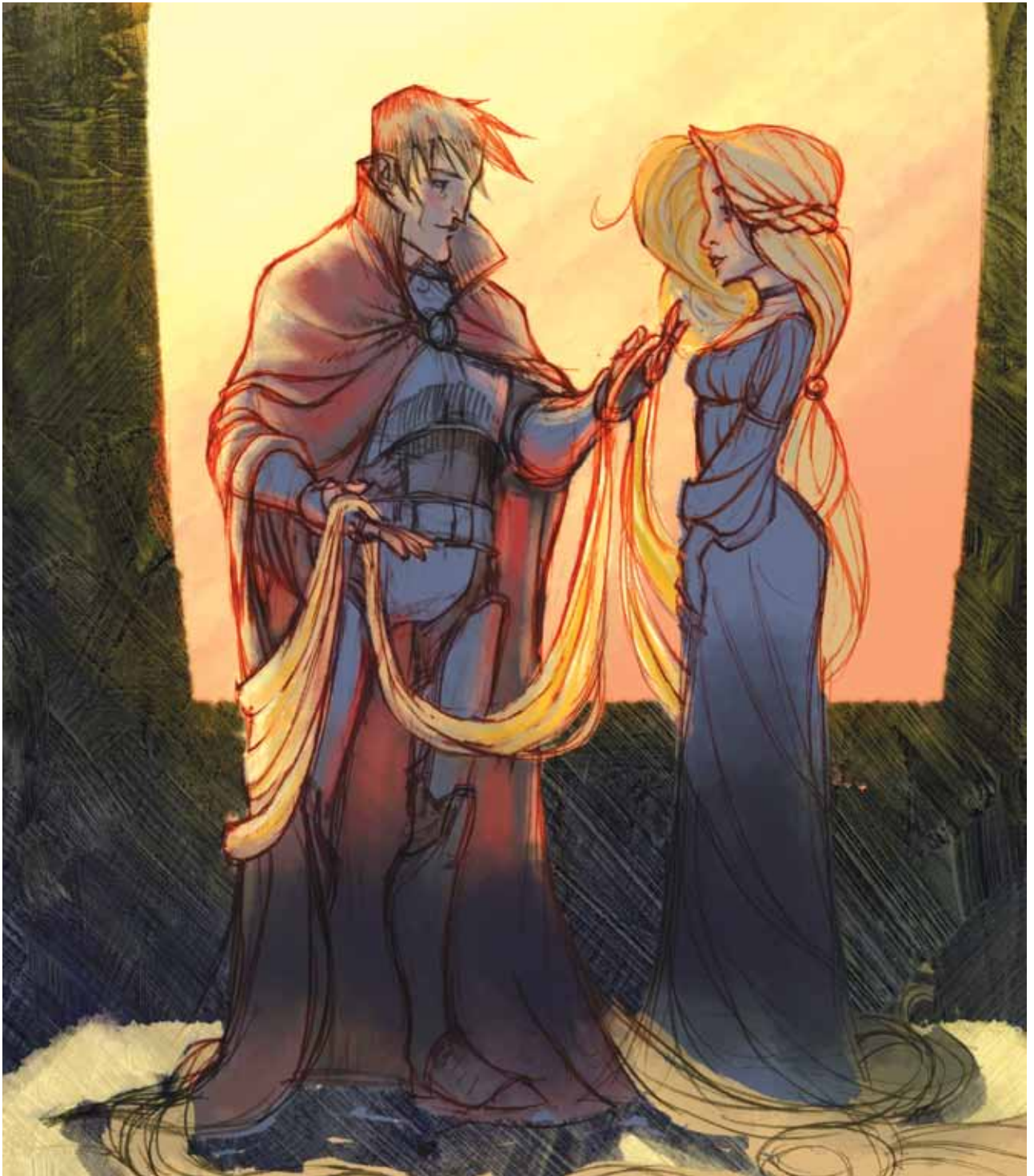
Chapter 13 Rapunzel, Part IV

The prince came to visit Rapunzel again and again. Each time he came, he brought a bundle of silk. Rapunzel began to weave a ladder.

Things went on this way for two weeks. Then, Rapunzel made a mistake.

One day, the witch was tugging on Rapunzel's hair and making her way up the side of the tower. Without thinking about what she was saying, Rapunzel called out, "Why do you come up so slowly? The prince takes only a moment!"

"The prince?" howled the witch. "O, you wicked, disloyal child! I thought I had hidden you away in this tower. Now, I see that you have betrayed me for a man!"

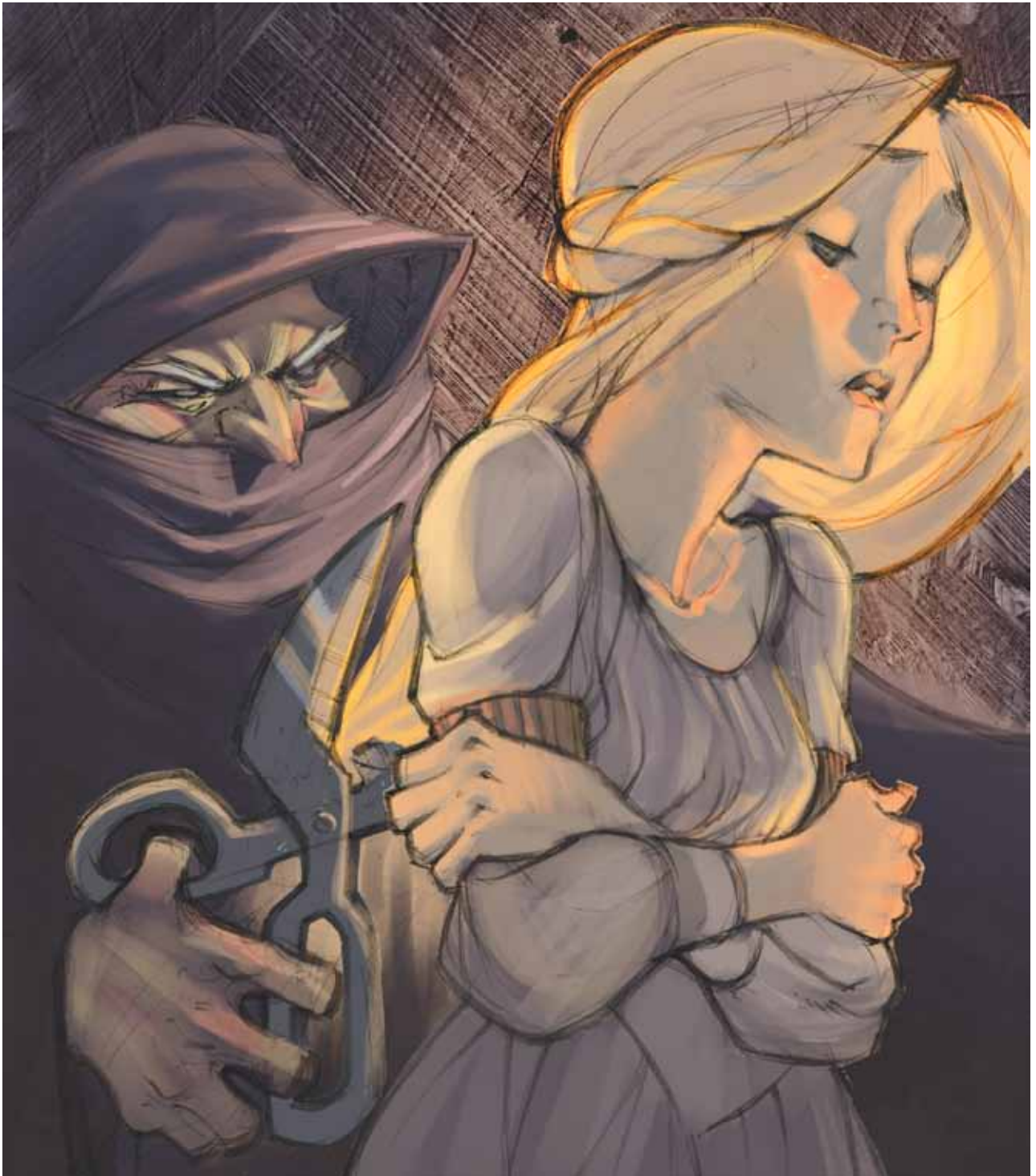


The prince visited Rapunzel again and again.

The witch grabbed Rapunzel and cut off her hair. Then, she drove Rapunzel out of the tower. She left her to wander in the forest, sad and alone.

Later that day, the prince came. He called out, “Rapunzel! Rapunzel! Let down your hair!”

The witch let down the hair she had cut off. The prince went up. But at the top, he did not see his dear Rapunzel. Instead, he saw the frowning witch.



The witch cut off Rapunzel's hair.

“A-ha!” the witch cackled. “You came to see your darling, but the sweet maiden is no longer in her tower. You will never see her again!”

Then, the witch let go of the hair. The prince fell and crashed into a patch of thorns below. The fall did not kill him, but it left him wounded. The sharp thorns cut his eyes and left him blind.

The prince wandered for years, blind and alone. He ate only roots and berries, and he wept over the loss of his dear Rapunzel.



The prince fell from the tower.

At last, after years of wandering, the prince came to a meadow where Rapunzel herself was wandering. He could not see her, but he could hear her singing. He let his ears lead him to her. He followed her voice.

At last, Rapunzel saw the prince. She ran to him. She fell on his neck and wept. When her tears touched his eyes, his wounds were healed. He found that he could see as well as ever.

The prince took Rapunzel to his kingdom. There, she was welcomed with great joy, and there, the two of them lived happily ever after.

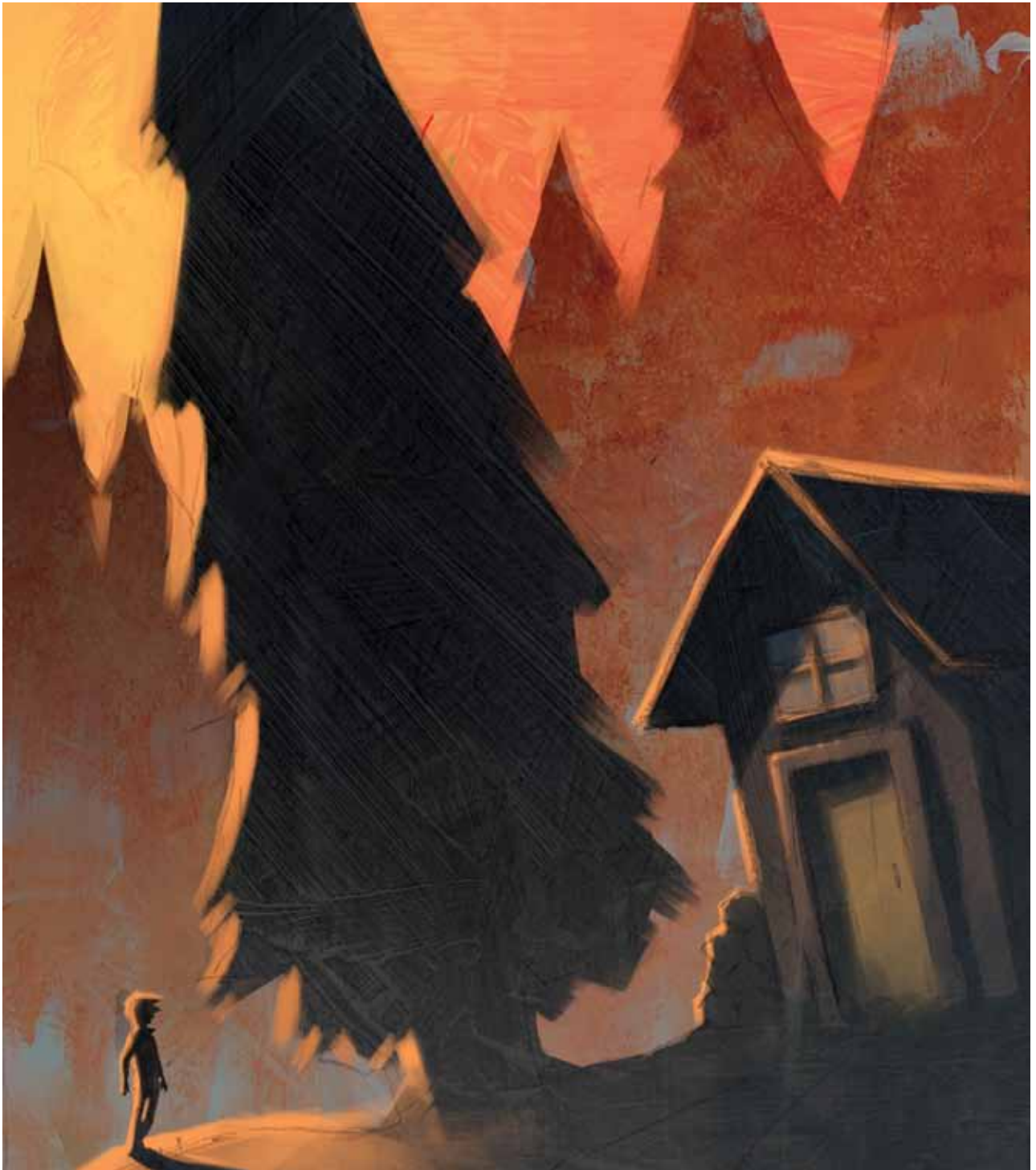


The prince and Rapunzel found each other.

Chapter 14 Hansel and Gretel, Part I

Once upon a time, there was a woodcutter. He lived in a tiny house in a vast forest. He had a wife and two children. The older child was a boy named Hansel. Hansel's little sister was named Gretel.

The family never had much to eat. Then, one year the crops failed. There was so little food that even the rats were starving.



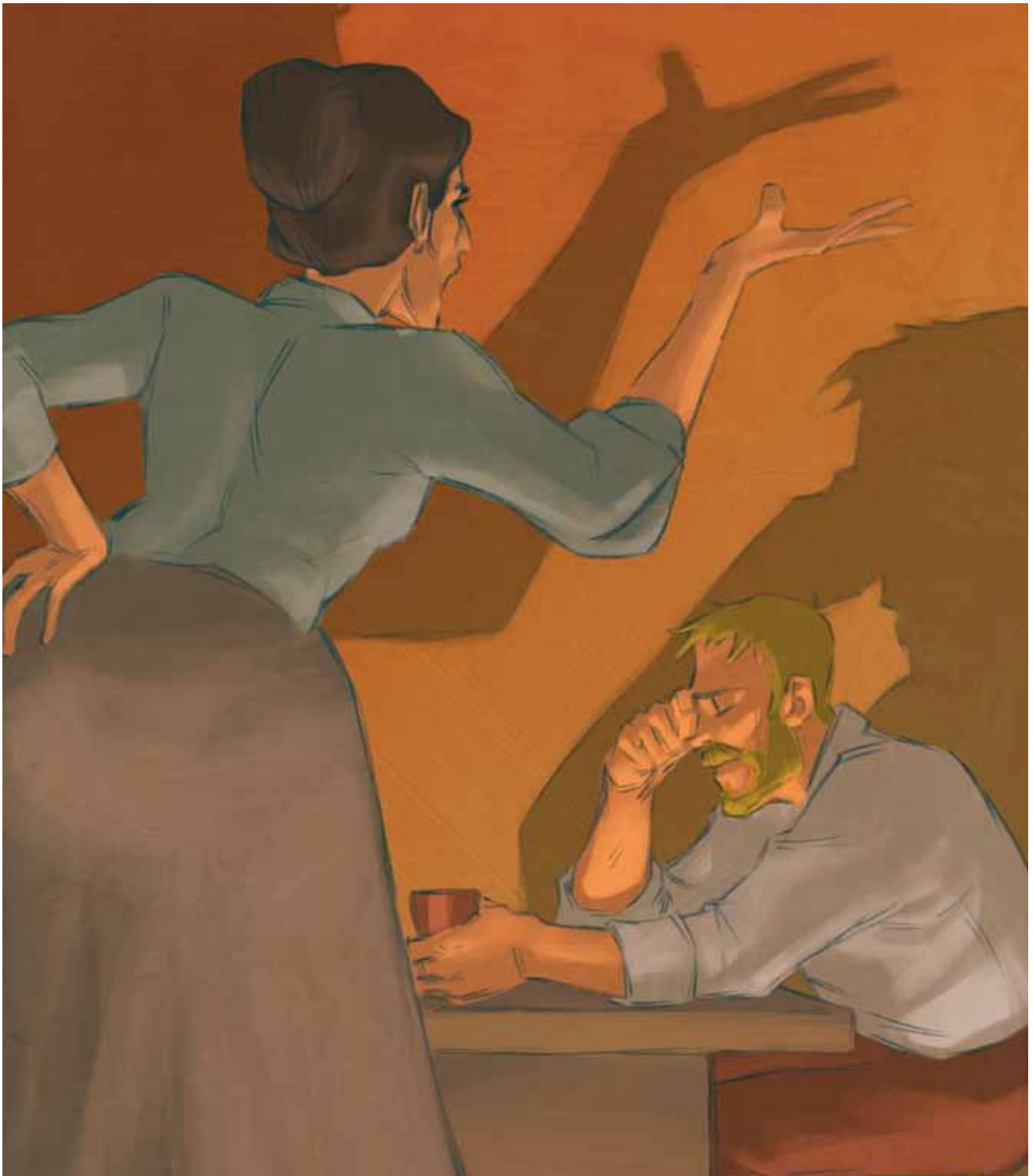
The woodcutter and his tiny house

One night, the man said to his wife, “We sold the cow. We ate up the pig. Now, the wheat is almost used up. What is going to happen to us? How will we live? Where will we get food to feed the children when we have none for ourselves?”

The man’s wife was not the children’s real mother. She was their stepmother. She had never cared much for children or wanted any of her own. She found them annoying.

“There is only one solution,” said the stepmother. “In the morning, we will take the children deep into the woods. We will make a fire. We will give each of them a crust of bread. Then, we will leave them there to fend for themselves. They will never find their way home, and we will be rid of them.”

“No!” said the man. “I can’t do that. I can’t leave my children alone in the woods! The wild beasts might gobble them up!”



The stepmother told the woodcutter her plan.

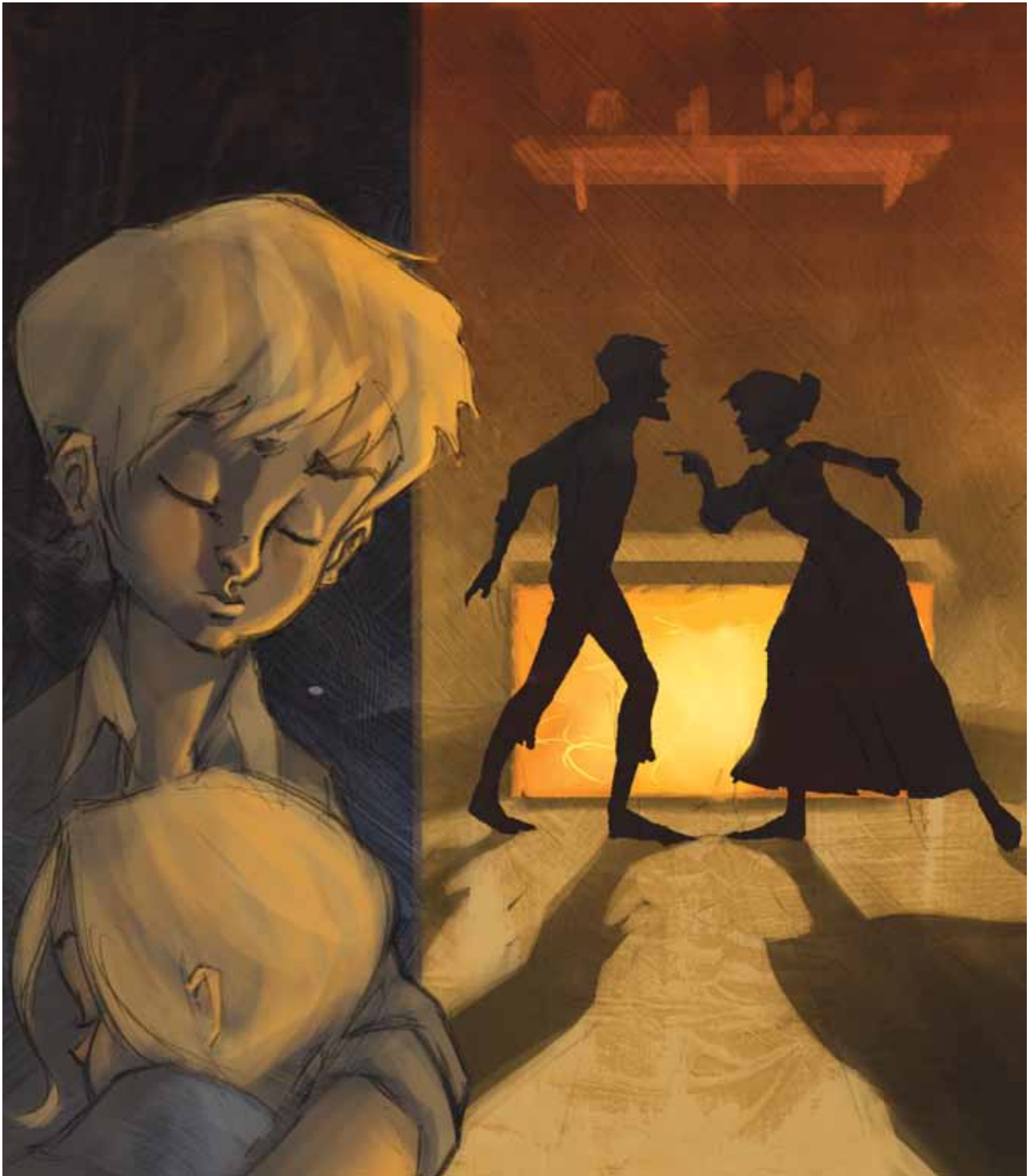
“Then, you are a fool!” the cruel woman said. “You might as well make coffins for all of us, including yourself, for we shall all starve.”

The cold-hearted woman kept nagging at her husband. She scolded him. She growled at him. She jabbed him with her finger. She told him he was foolish. She was rude to him in a dozen ways.

At last, he gave in. “I will do it,” he mumbled. “But truly, it breaks my heart.”

Hansel and Gretel were so hungry that they could not sleep. They were awake most of the night, and they could hear the things their stepmother said.

Gretel began to cry, but Hansel hugged her. “Don’t be afraid,” he whispered. “I will think of something.”



The stepmother nagged her husband, while the children listened.

Hansel waited until his father and stepmother were both asleep. Then he got up, grabbed his little coat, and sneaked outside.

The moon was shining brightly. The white pebbles that lay in front of the house glittered like silver coins. Hansel bent over and filled his pockets with pebbles. Then, he tiptoed back inside.

“Go to sleep, little sister,” Hansel said. “All will be well.”



Hansel showed Gretel the white pebbles.

Chapter 15 Hansel and Gretel, Part II

At sunrise, the stepmother came and woke Hansel and Gretel.

“Get up, you lazy bones!” she shouted. “We are going to the forest to get some wood.”

She gave them each a crust of bread. “This is for lunch,” she said. “And you had better not lose it, for that is all you are going to get!”

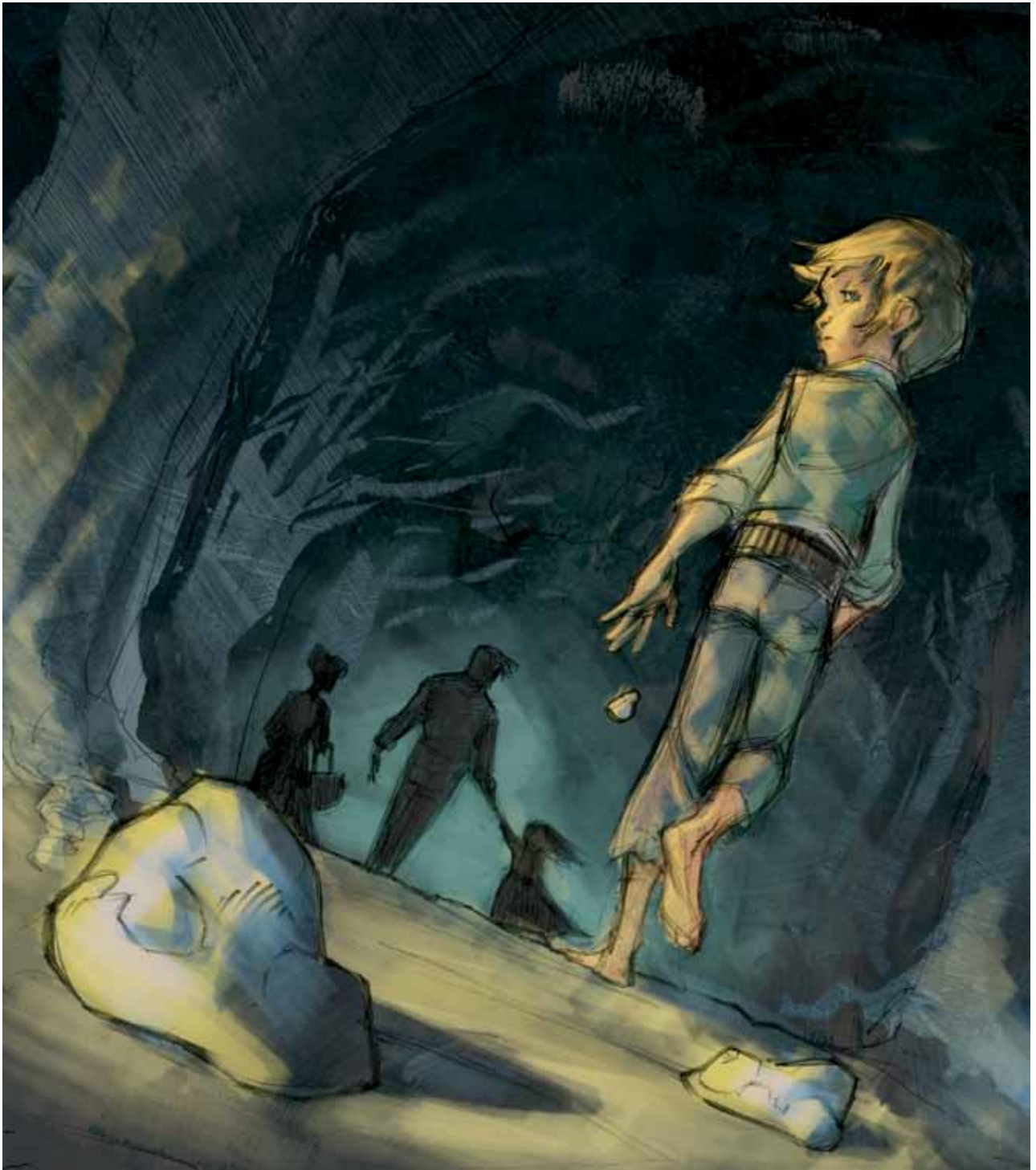


The stepmother gave bread to the children.

They set off. Gretel carried both crusts of bread in her apron since Hansel's pockets were stuffed with pebbles.

Hansel knew what his parents were planning to do, but he had a plan.

As they walked, Hansel stayed a few steps behind. He took a pebble from his pocket and dropped it on the ground. As they went on, he dropped pebbles behind him to mark the path back home.



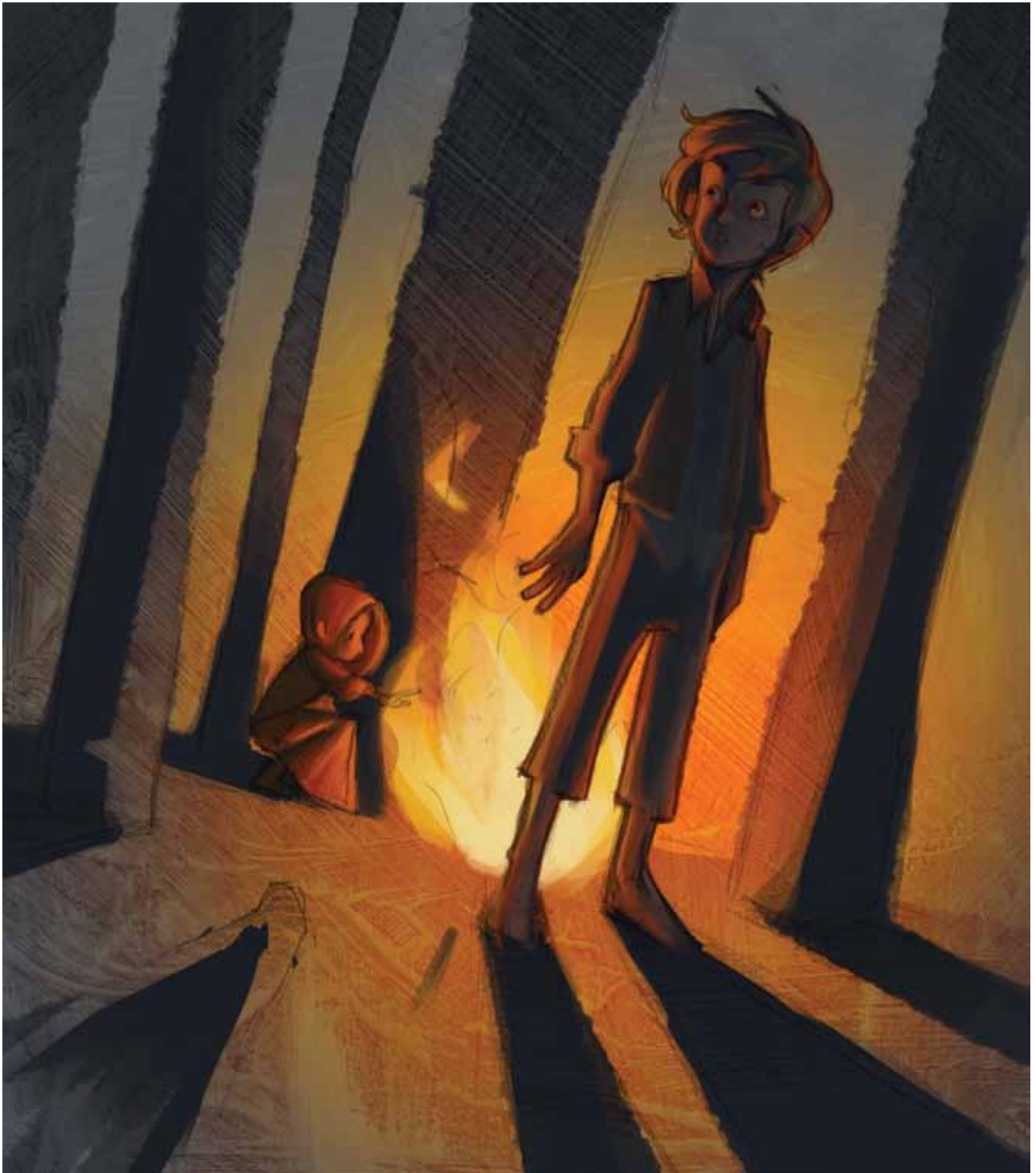
Hansel dropped pebbles to mark the path.

When they were deep in the forest, the father said, “Gather some firewood, children. I will start a fire so you won’t get cold.”

Hansel and Gretel gathered a few twigs and sticks. Their father started a fire.

When the fire was lit, the stepmother said, “Stay by the fire, you two, and don’t move. Your father and I have to go and cut wood. When we are finished, we will come back to get you.” Then, she grabbed her husband by his arm and led him away.

Hansel and Gretel sat by the fire. They chewed on their stale bread. After a while, they got drowsy. They closed their eyes and fell asleep.



The children stayed by the fire.

When they awoke, it was dark, and they were all alone. The fire had died down. A cold wind blew through the forest. The trees creaked in the wind. An owl hooted.

Gretel was scared. She began to cry. Hansel hugged her.

“Wait a few minutes until the moon rises,” he said.



It was dark when the children awoke.

When the moon had risen, Hansel took his little sister by the hand. Then, they set off. As they walked, they looked for the pebbles Hansel had dropped. The pebbles glittered like silver coins and showed them the way. They walked on through the night. At last, just at the break of day, they came to their father's house.

When the stepmother saw them, she was shocked. She frowned, for they had ruined her plan. But all she said was, "You naughty children! Why did you stay so long in the forest? We had begun to think you were never coming back."

Their father was glad to see them, for it had broken his heart to leave them alone in the forest.



Father hugged Gretel.

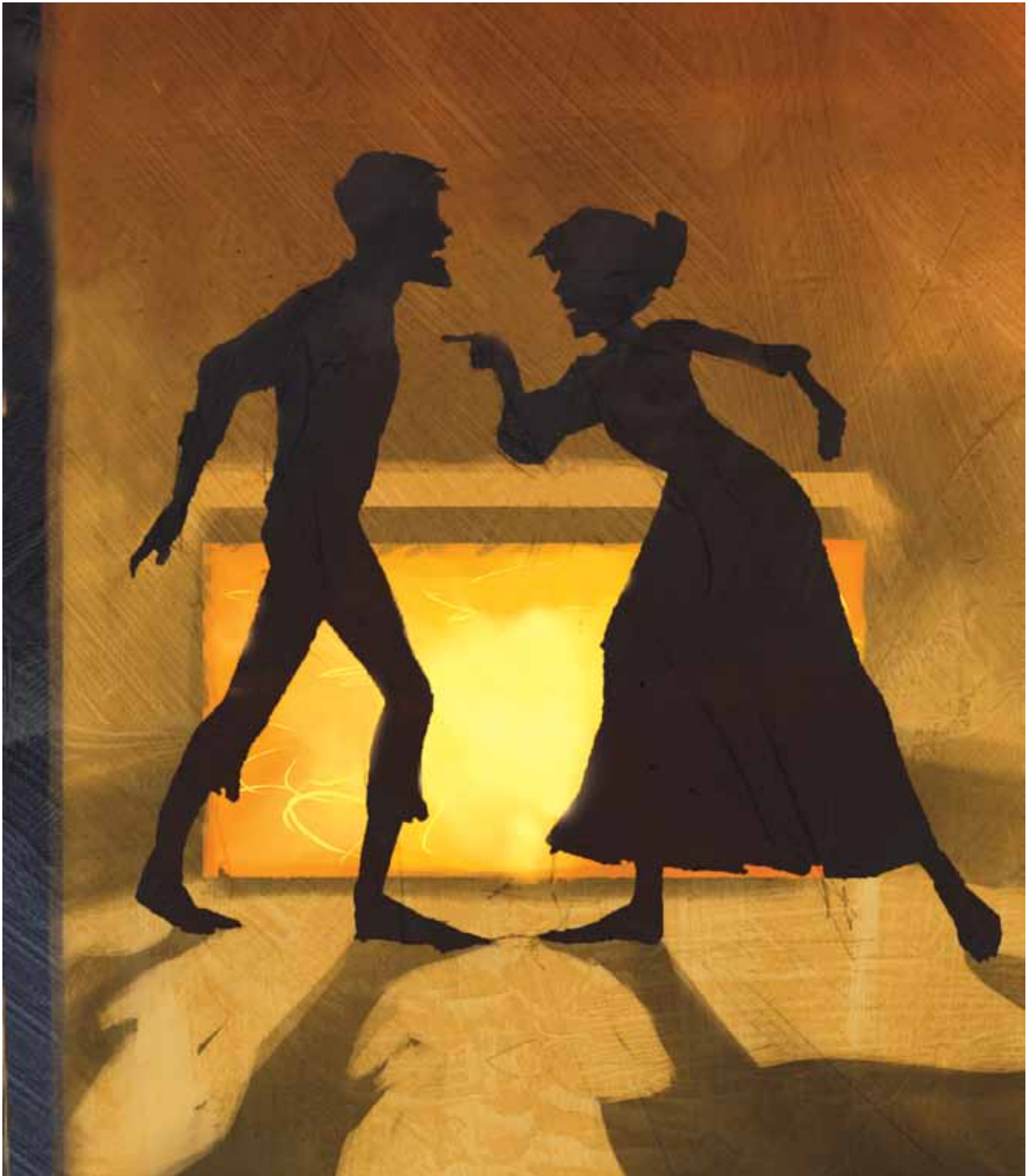
Chapter 16 Hansel and Gretel, Part III

After Hansel and Gretel found their way back, things got a little better. But it was not long until hard times came again. As the children lay awake in bed one night, the stepmother spoke to their father.

“There is nothing left to eat but a few bits of bread,” she said. “After that is finished, we are done for! We must get rid of the children. This time, we will take them so deep in the forest that they will never find their way back.”

“But wife,” he said, “it would be better to share our last few bites of food with the children.”

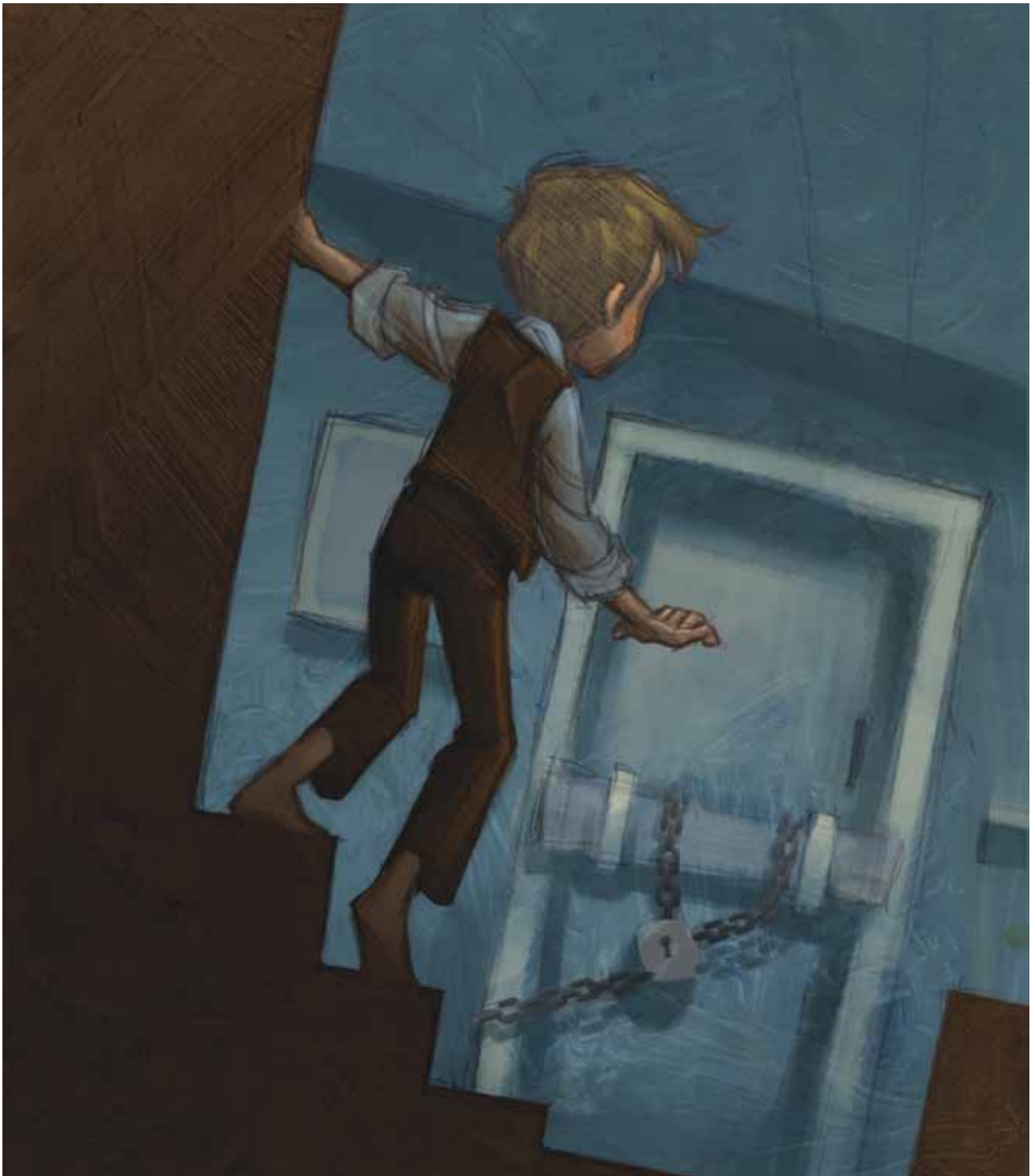
The man and his wife fought again. He tried to hold out, but when you have said *yes* once, it is hard to say *no* the next time. In the end, he gave in.



The parents fought.

Hansel and Gretel were able to hear all of this. When their parents were asleep, Hansel got up to collect pebbles, but he could not get out of the house. The stepmother had locked the house up tight!

Hansel got back in bed and tried to think of a new plan.



Hansel got up to collect pebbles.

The next morning, the stepmother yanked the children out of bed. She gave each of them a little crust of bread. Then, they all set off for the woods.

As they walked into the woods, Hansel stayed a few steps behind. He broke up the bread in his pocket. From time to time, he threw a bit of it on the ground to mark the path.



Hansel dropped bits of bread to mark the path.

The cruel stepmother led the children deep into the forest. Hansel and Gretel gathered sticks for a fire. The father lit the fire.

The stepmother said, “Stay here, children, and don’t move. When you are tired, go to sleep. Your father and I are going to cut wood. When we are finished, we will come and get you.”

Gretel shared her bread with Hansel, since he had left his in little bits along the road. Night came, but no one came to get them. At last, the children fell asleep. When they awoke, it was dark and they were alone.

When the moon rose, they started for home. Hansel looked for the bits of bread he had dropped, but they were nowhere to be seen. The crows had eaten them all up!

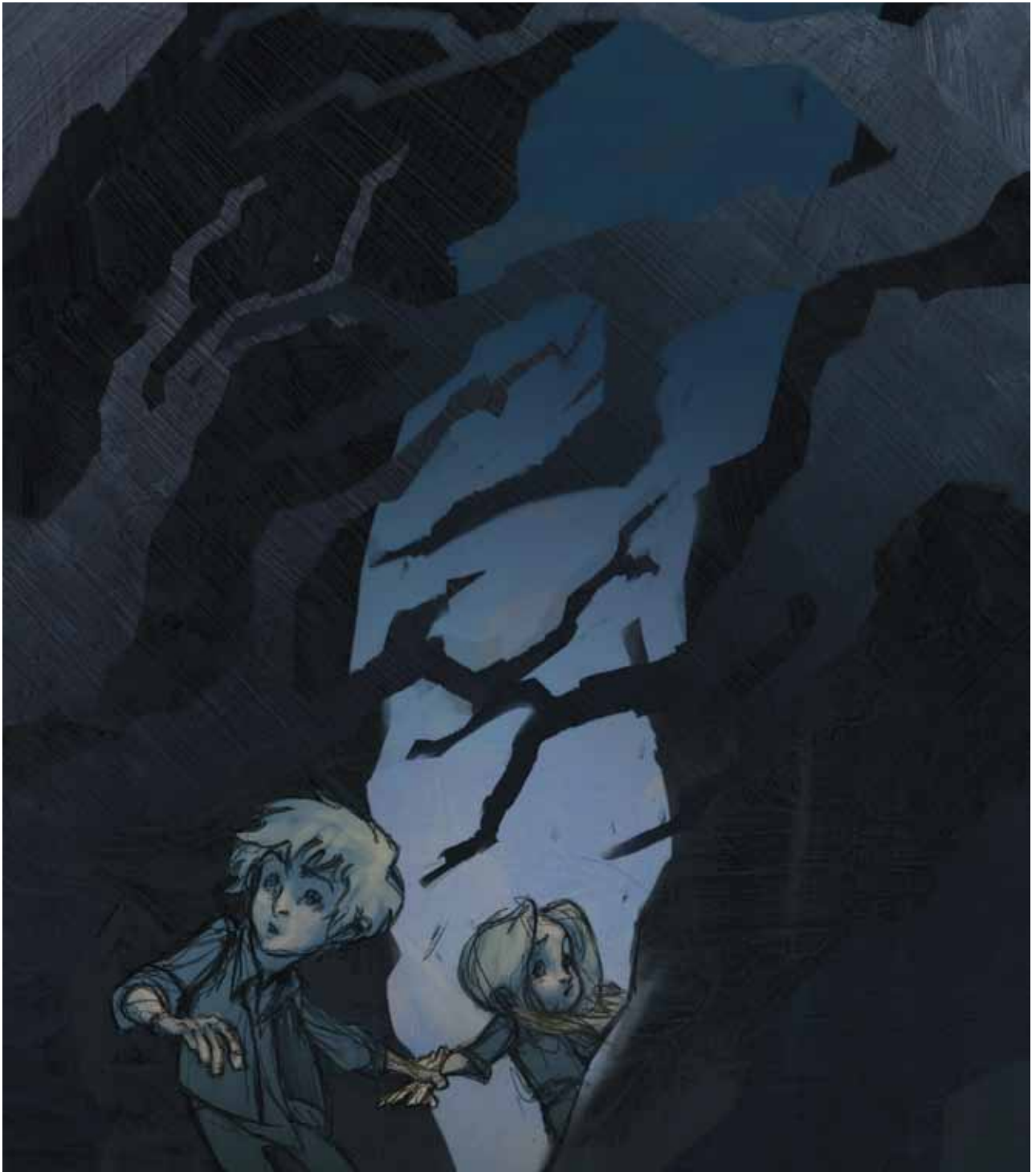


Hansel looked for the bits of bread he had dropped.

“Come, Gretel,” said Hansel. “I know we can find our way.”

The children set off, looking for the way back. They walked all night. The next day, they walked from morning until the sun went down. But they could not find their way out of the dark woods.

They were terribly hungry, for they had eaten nothing but a few blueberries. At last, they were so tired that they could drag themselves no farther. They lay down under a tree and fell asleep.



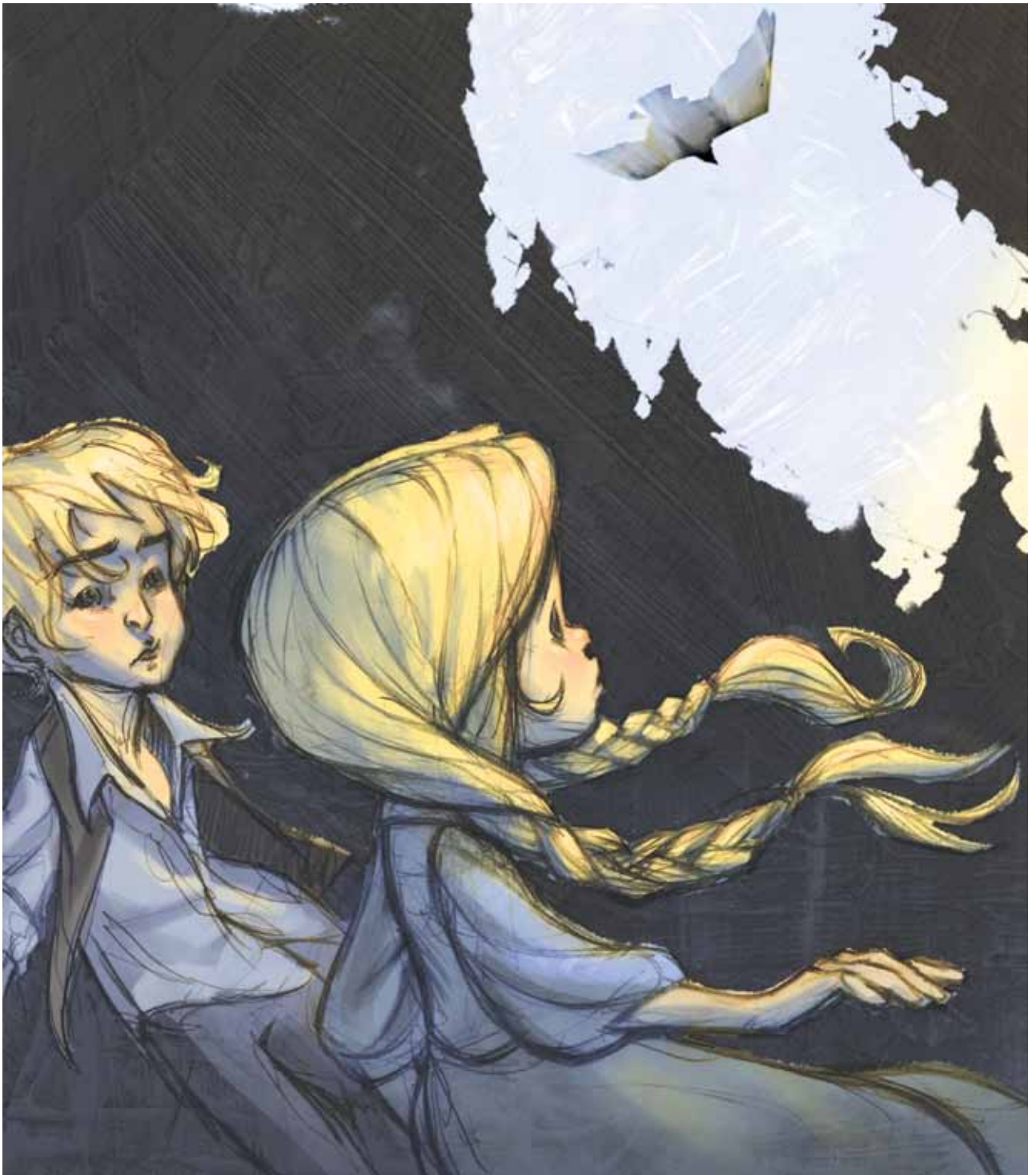
Hansel and Gretel looked for a way out of the forest.

Chapter 17 Hansel and Gretel, Part IV

Hansel and Gretel awoke in the woods. They were scared and hungry, but they kept moving, always looking for the way home. As they went along, they looked for fruit and nuts and other things to eat, but they found little.

About noon, they saw a cuckoo sitting on a branch and singing. The cuckoo sang a beautiful song. Then, it flapped its wings in front of the children as if to say, “Follow me!”

The cuckoo flew up into the air. The children followed it.



The children followed the cuckoo.

Hansel and Gretel followed the cuckoo until they came to a wonderful little house. This was no ordinary house. It was a gingerbread house! The walls were made of gingerbread cookies and brownies. The windows were made of candy. All of the parts were glued together with icing.

The children were so hungry that they began to eat at once. Hansel broke off a piece of the house and began chewing on it. Gretel grabbed one of the lollipop flowers that grew beside the house.



The gingerbread house

The children sat down to enjoy their food. But while they were eating, a thin, scratchy voice called out from inside the house:

*“Nibble, nibble, like a mouse,
Who is munching on my house?”*

Hansel answered:

*“It is only the air heaving a sigh.
It is only the wind passing by.”*

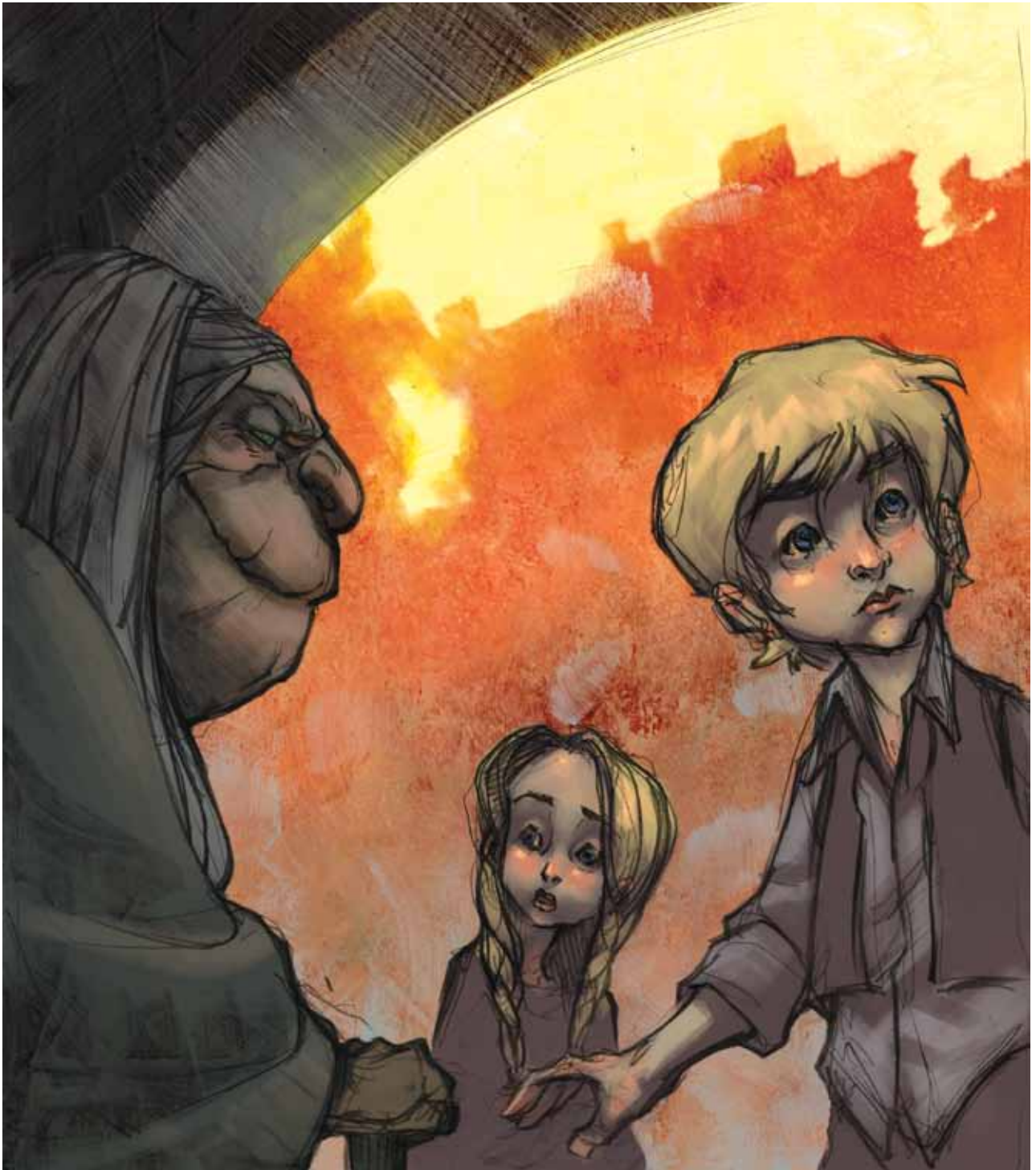


The children enjoyed their food.

Then, an old woman hobbled out of the house. She was leaning on a crutch. Her hair was gray. Her face was all folds and wrinkles. There were only three teeth in her mouth, all of them yellow and stained.

Hansel and Gretel were so frightened by the old woman that they dropped their food. But the old woman smiled and said, “My dear little children, what brings you here? Are you lost in the forest? Well, never mind. You are safe now. Come inside! I will take good care of you.”

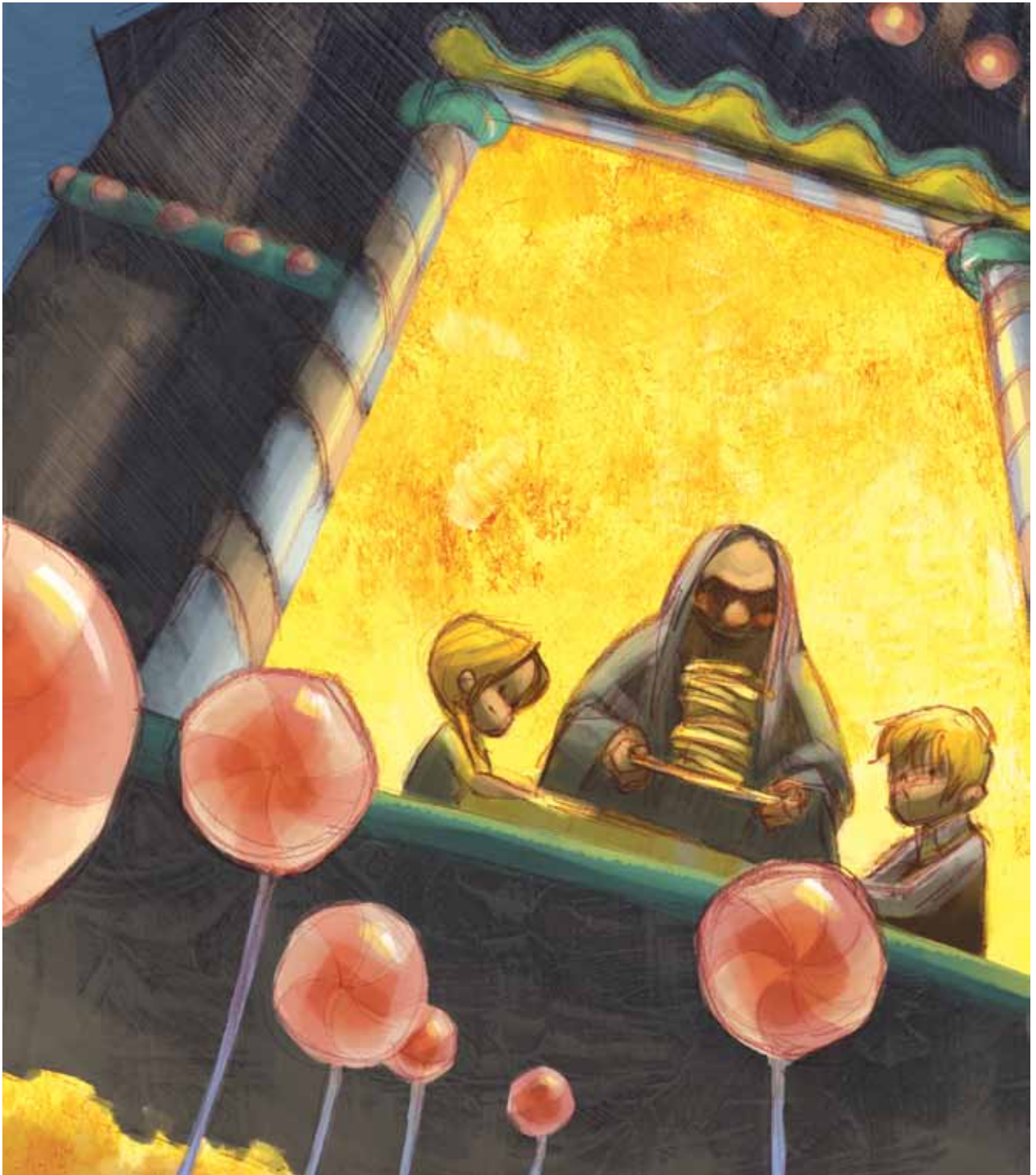
The old woman took Hansel and Gretel by the hand and led them into her house.



The old woman led Hansel and Gretel into her house.

The old woman served Hansel and Gretel a wonderful meal. She brought out a tall stack of pancakes. She gave them crisp apples, fresh blueberries, and juicy plums. The children ate all that was set in front of them.

After the meal, Hansel and Gretel were drowsy. The old woman showed them two little, white beds. The children lay down to sleep, feeling as happy as could be.



The old woman fed Hansel and Gretel.

Chapter 18 Hansel and Gretel, Part V

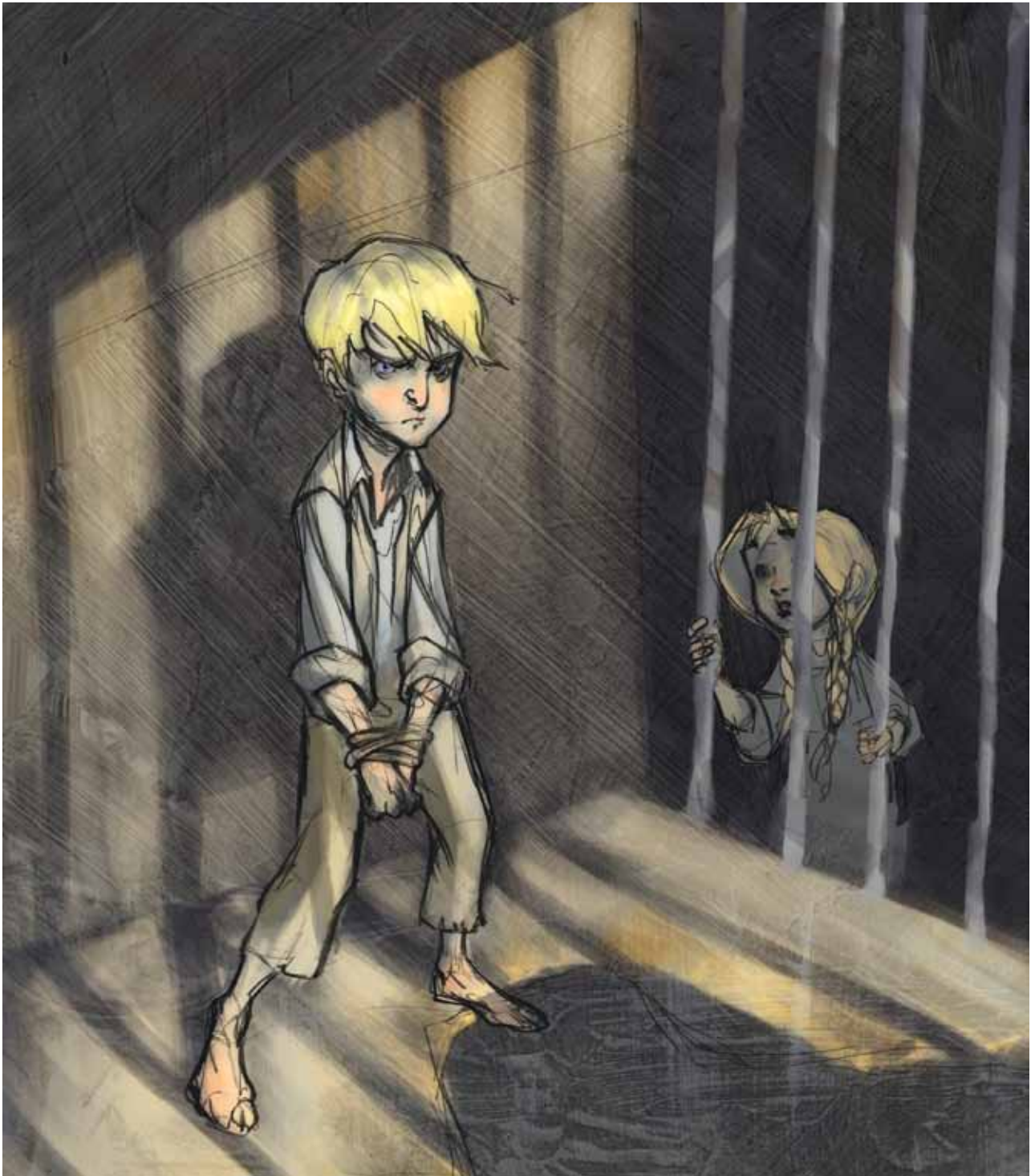
As soon as Hansel and Gretel fell asleep, the old woman came over and looked at them.

“Mmmmm!” she said. “They are mine!”

You see, the old woman seemed kind, but in truth she was a wicked witch. She would trap little children. Then, she would cook them and eat them!

The next morning, the witch dragged Hansel out of bed and locked him in a cage. Then, she went back and woke Gretel.

“Get up, lazy bones!” she shouted. “Get up and cook something nice for your brother. He is just skin and bones, but we will feed him well. Then, when he is nice and fat, I shall eat him!”



The witch locked Hansel in a cage.

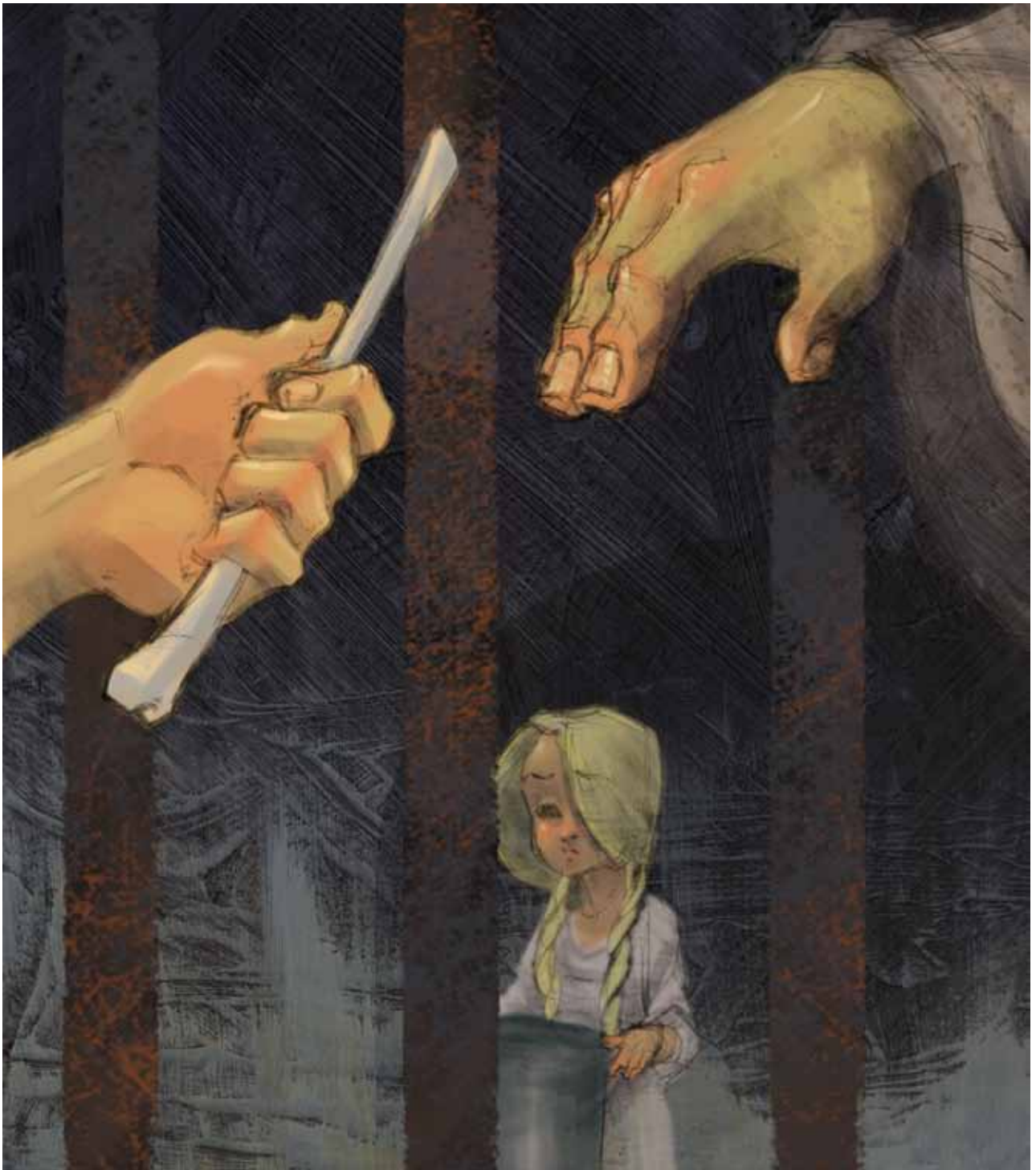
Gretel screamed and cried, but it was no use. She had to do what the cruel witch said. Day after day, she cooked pots of rich food for Hansel, while she herself ate nothing but scraps.

Each morning, the wicked witch would creep to the cage to check on Hansel.

“Boy!” she cackled. “Stick out your finger so that I can tell if you are fat and good to cook.” But Hansel was clever. He held out a skinny bone instead. The old witch had bad eyes. She could not tell that it was not Hansel’s finger. She felt the bone and wondered why her little prisoner was still so thin.

“Drat!” said the witch, with a frown. “He ought to be plump and ready to eat, but he is just as puny and thin as ever!”

Five weeks passed. Each day, Gretel cooked and Hansel ate. Each day, the witch ordered Hansel to stick out his finger and each day, he stuck out the bone instead.



Hansel stuck out a skinny bone instead of his finger.

At last, the witch decided that she could wait no longer.

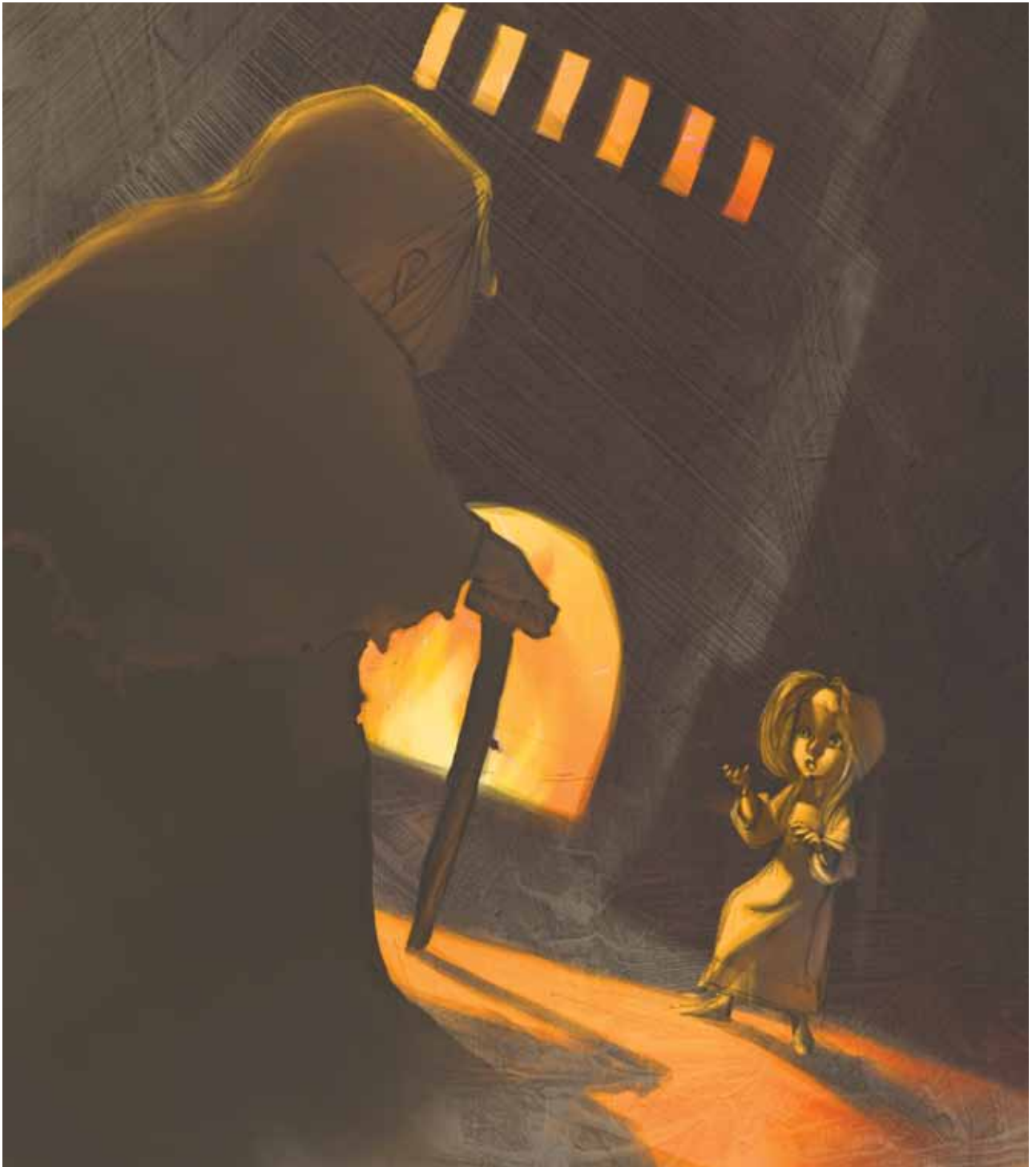
“Run and get the kettle!” she snarled at Gretel. “Be he fat or thin, I’m going to cook him and eat him.”

Gretel began to cry. The witch smacked her on the head.

“Stop your moaning,” she croaked. “It will do you no good. Fill the kettle and light the fire in the oven.”

Gretel did as she was told.

The witch made some pastry and slid it into the oven. After a few minutes, she called to Gretel. “Stick your head in the oven and see if the pastry for my Hansel-pie is nice and brown!”



“Stop your moaning,” the witch croaked.

But Gretel was too clever for that. She knew the witch was planning to shut her in the oven and bake her. So she said, “The hole is too small. I can’t fit my head in.”

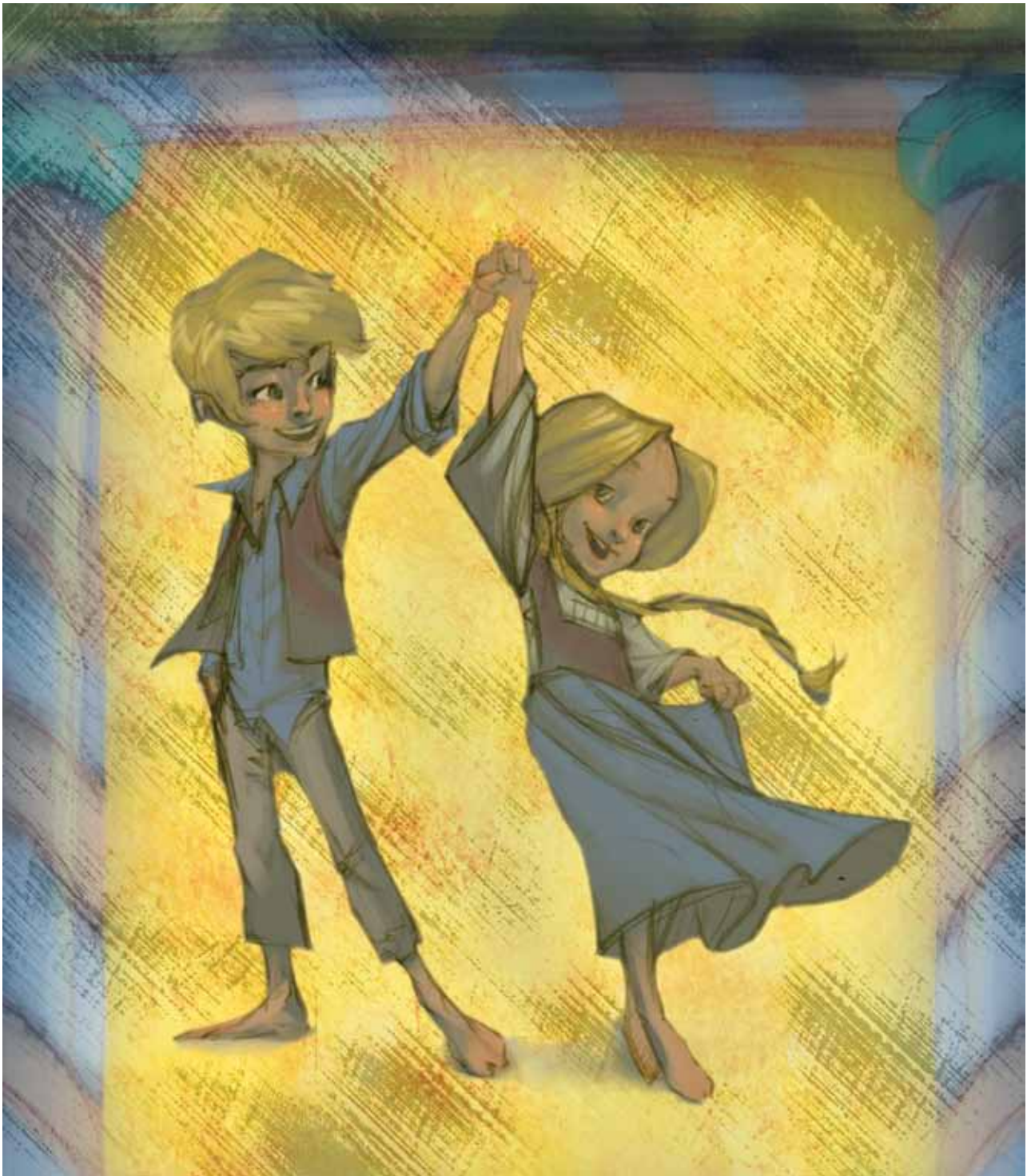
“You foolish child!” cried the old witch. “The hole is not too small. Why, I could fit in myself. Look, I will show you!”

To prove that the hole was not too small, the witch bent over and stuck her head in the oven. Then, Gretel rushed at her and shoved her as hard as she could. She stuffed the witch in the oven and locked it tight.

Gretel ran to Hansel and let him out of his cage.

“Come, Hansel!” she cried. “We are free! The old witch is trapped in the oven!”

Hansel sprang out and hugged Gretel. Then, the two of them danced for joy.



Hansel and Gretel danced for joy.

Chapter 19 Hansel and Gretel, Part VI

When there was nothing to fear, Hansel and Gretel went back into the old woman's house. There, they found chests filled with golden coins. The witch had kept the money she had stolen from her victims.

“These are better than pebbles!” chuckled Hansel as he filled his pockets with coins. Gretel smiled and stuffed coins in her apron pocket.

When their pockets were filled, the children set off.



The children left the witch's house.

The children went on until they came to a wide river.

“There are no stepping stones,” said Hansel. “And we have no boat. How will we get across?”

Then Gretel saw something. “Look!” she said. “It’s a swan. I will ask her for help.” So she called out:

“Swan, swan, here we stand,

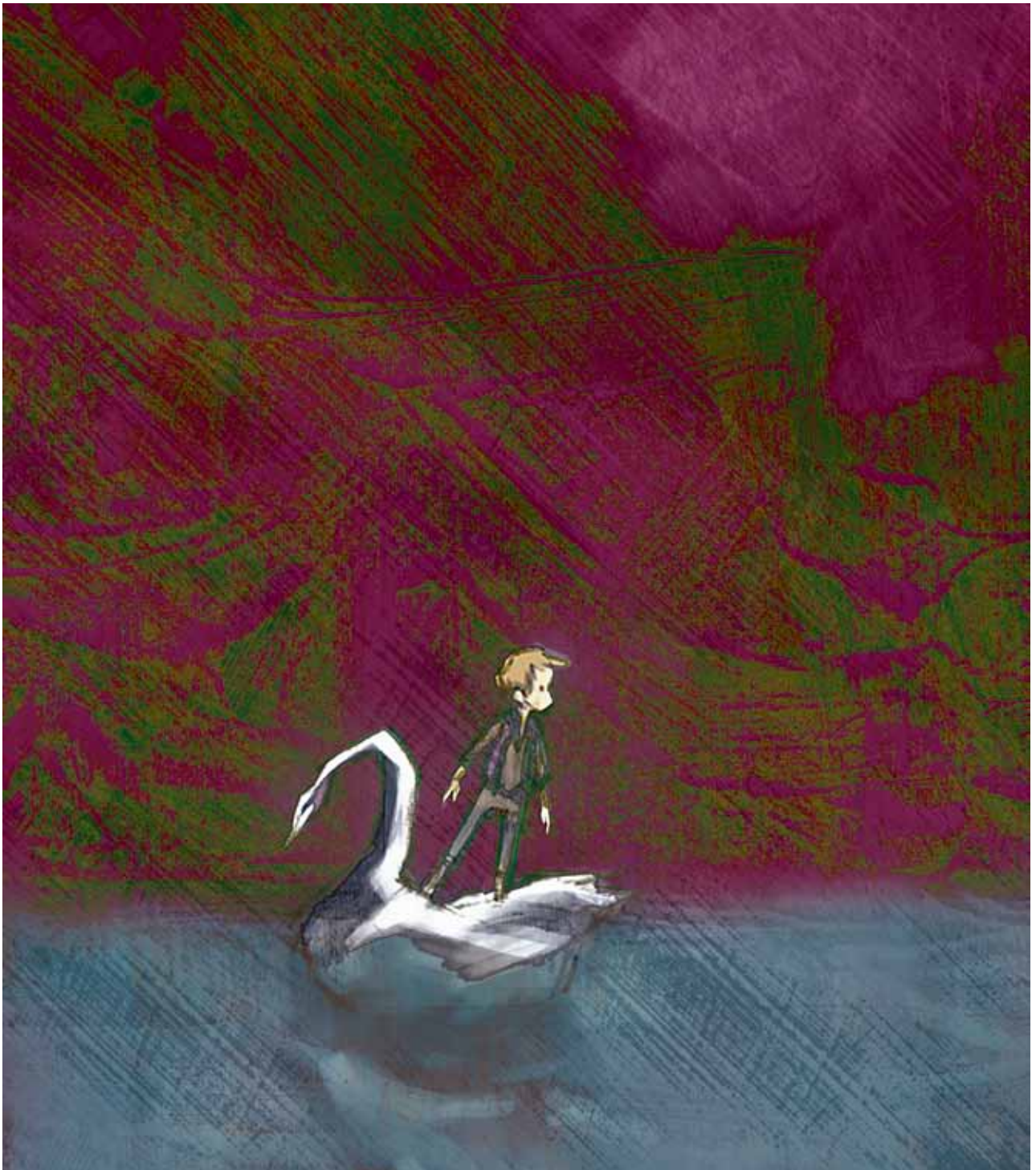
Hansel and Gretel on the land.

Stepping stones and boat we lack,

Carry us over on your nice soft back.”

Lo and behold, the swan came over. Hansel sat on the swan’s back. He told Gretel to sit behind him.

“No,” said Gretel, “that would be too hard on the swan. Let us go across one at a time.” And that is what they did. Hansel went across. Then, Gretel went across.



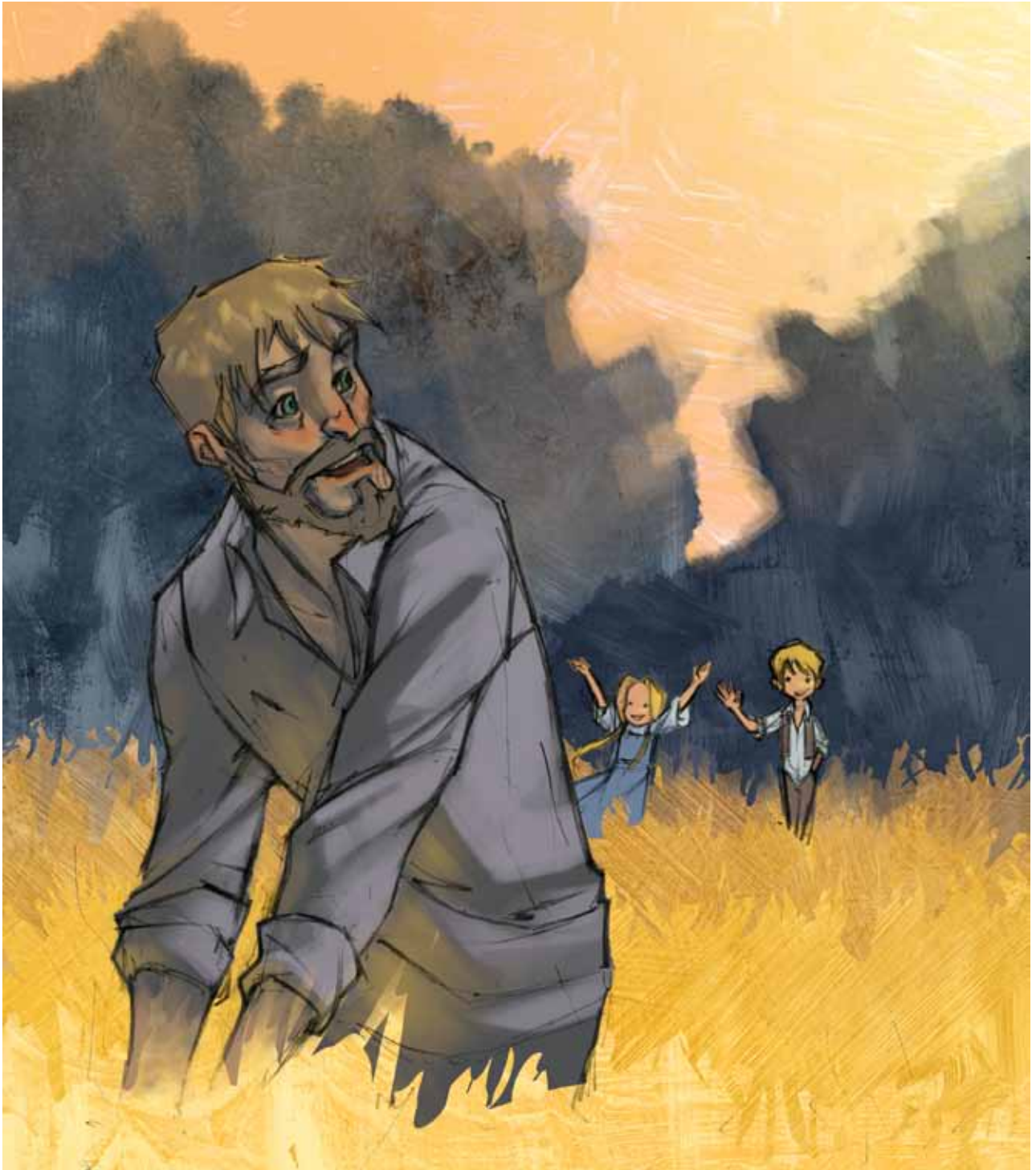
Hansel rode on the swan's back to get across the river.

After crossing the river, the children went on for a long while. They walked and walked. At last, they came upon a path they knew. They started to run.

In a few minutes, they saw their house. They ran as fast as they could. They sprinted through the clearing next to the house and cried out, “Father!”

Since he had left the children in the woods, the man had felt sick at heart. As for his wife, well, he had grown disgusted with her cruelty and had kicked her out of the house.

When he saw Hansel and Gretel, his face lit up. He ran to them and called out, “My dear children! Thank God you are alive! How I have missed you!”



The children cried out, "Father!"

Hansel and Gretel hugged their father. He hugged them back. There was something about the way he hugged them. The hug seemed to say that he would never let them go again. As he held Gretel close to him, some of the golden coins fell from her apron. Then, Hansel reached into his pockets and removed his coins, as well.

“What are these?” said the man.

“Coins!” said Hansel. “We are rich!”

So, in spite of the wicked stepmother, and in spite of the wicked witch, Hansel and Gretel made it back to their home. They lived with their father again. Their troubles were over. They lived in perfect happiness for a long, long time.

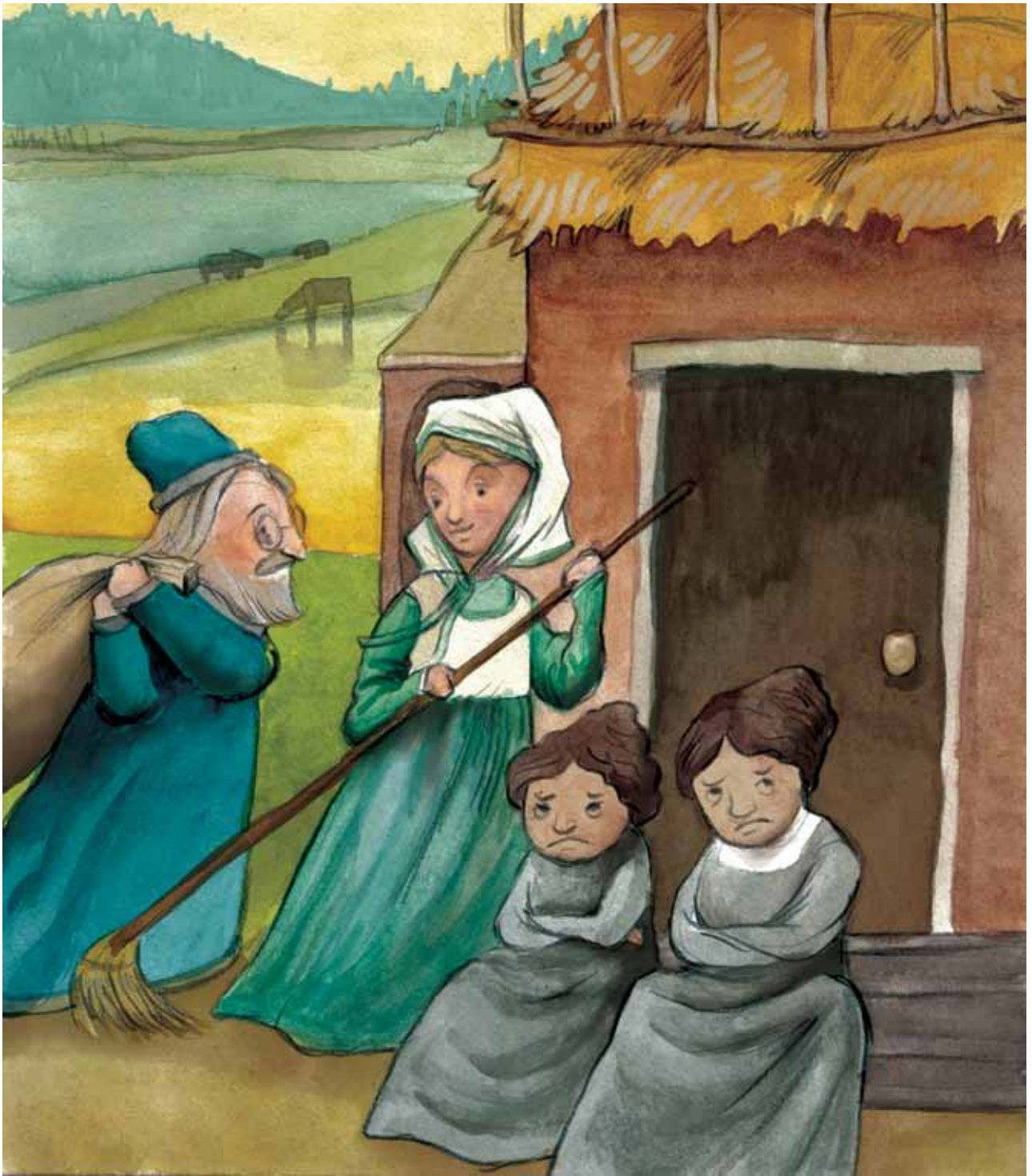


Hansel and Gretel showed the gold coins to Father.

Chapter 20 Beauty and the Beast, Part I

Once upon a time, there was a merchant who lived with his three daughters. He was rich and he lived in a big house. But, all at once, he lost his riches. He had to sell his big house and move to a little cottage in the woods, far from town. He told his girls that they would have to move there and work hard to survive. The older girls whined. But the youngest daughter, who was called Beauty, tried to make the best of things.

One day, a few months later, a man came to the cottage with a letter. The letter said that one of the merchant's ships, which he thought had been lost at sea, had landed and was full of fine things. The merchant packed his things to make the long trip to claim his goods. Before he left, he asked his girls what he might bring them as a gift.



The merchant packed his things to make the long trip.

The two older girls asked for fancy clothing and gems. But Beauty said, “Dear father, just bring me a rose. I have not seen one since we came here, and I love them so much.”

When the merchant finally reached his ship, he found that someone had stolen all his goods. So, he turned around and set off for home, as poor as when he started his trip.

On his way home, a snowstorm blew in. Snow fell faster and faster. The storm turned into a blizzard. The wind blew so hard that it almost knocked the man off his horse.

The man began looking for shelter. At last, he came upon a large house. He knocked on the door. There was no answer. He tried the doorknob and found that the door was open. He turned the knob and went in.

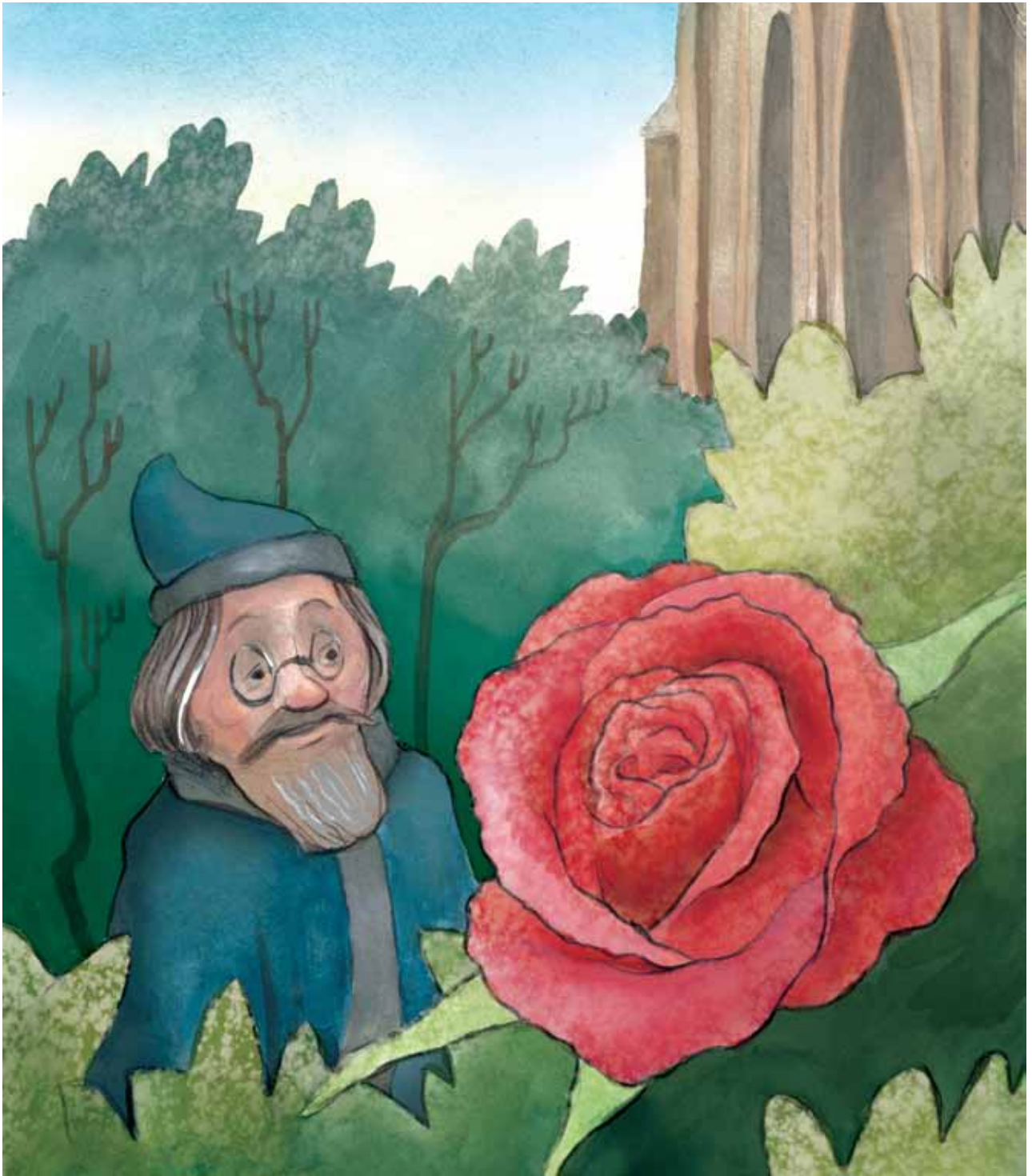


The snowstorm turned into a blizzard.

“Hello!” the man called out. “Is anyone home?”
But still there was no reply.

He went into the house. He came to a large dining hall. There was a warm fire burning in the fireplace. Next to the fireplace was a little table with a tasty meal just right for one person. The man warmed himself by the fire. He called out over and over, but still no one came. At last, he sat down and ate the food.

After eating, the merchant explored the house. He soon came upon a lush garden with an orchard and flowers. He was shocked to see that the garden was blooming even in the depths of winter. He saw a rose bush and thought of Beauty’s wish. He reached out to pluck a single rose. But just as the stem broke, he heard a loud roar behind him.



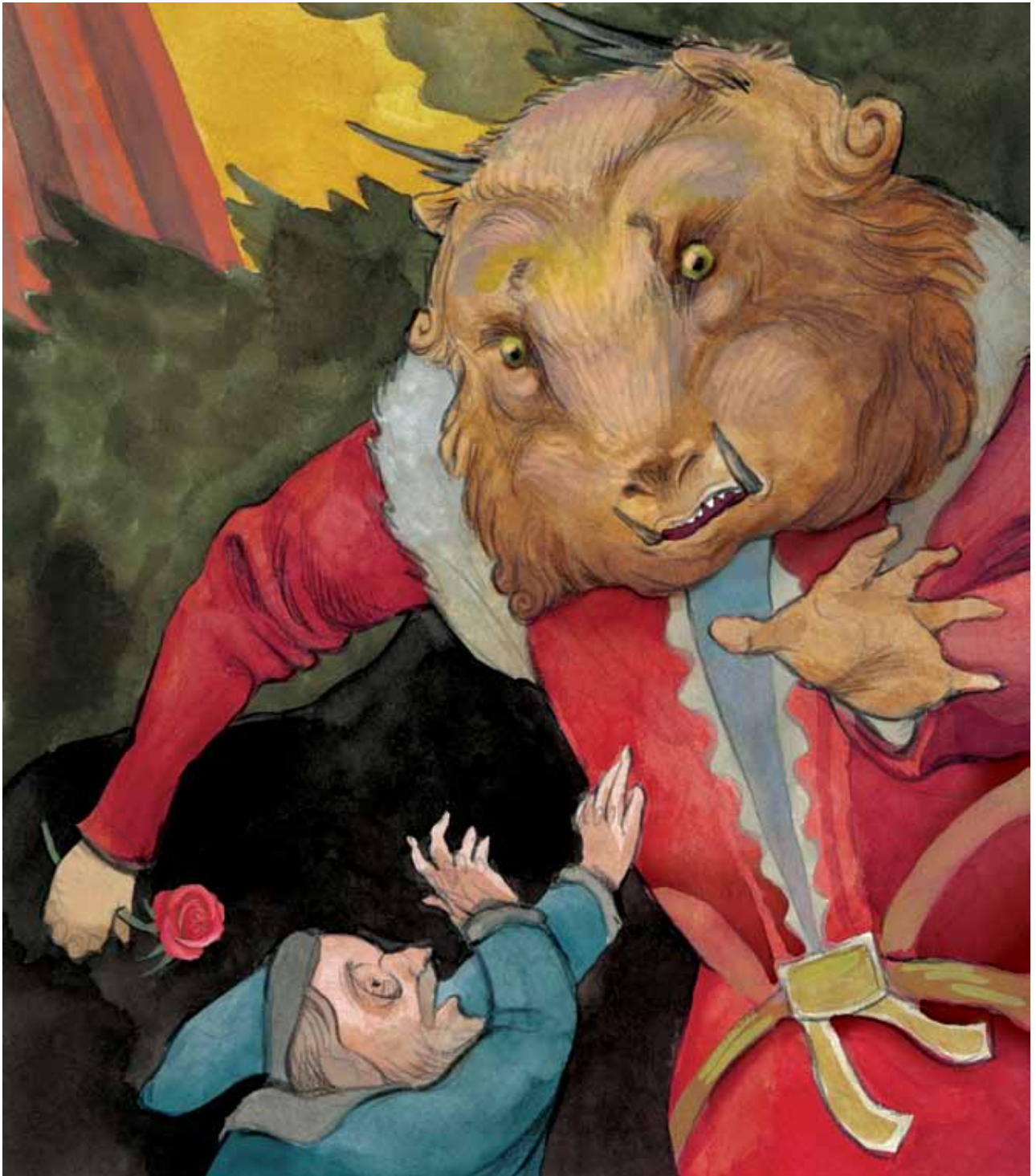
The merchant found a lush garden with roses.

The startled merchant turned around and saw a terrible monster. It was part man and part beast.

“How dare you!” snarled the Beast, charging forward and grabbing the rose.

The merchant was scared. He stumbled backward. Then, he fell to his knees. “Have mercy on me!” he said. “I only wanted a rose for one of my daughters.”

“I will have mercy on you,” said the Beast, “on one condition. You must give me one of your daughters. Go and see if any one of them loves you so much that she will give her life to save yours!”



The Beast snarled, "How dare you!"

The sad father returned home and told his daughters what had happened.

Beauty did not hesitate. “I will go,” she said quietly.

“No, Beauty,” said her father. “I am old. I have only a few years left to live. I shall go back to the Beast.”

“I will not let you return without me,” said Beauty. Her father tried to change her mind, but he could not.



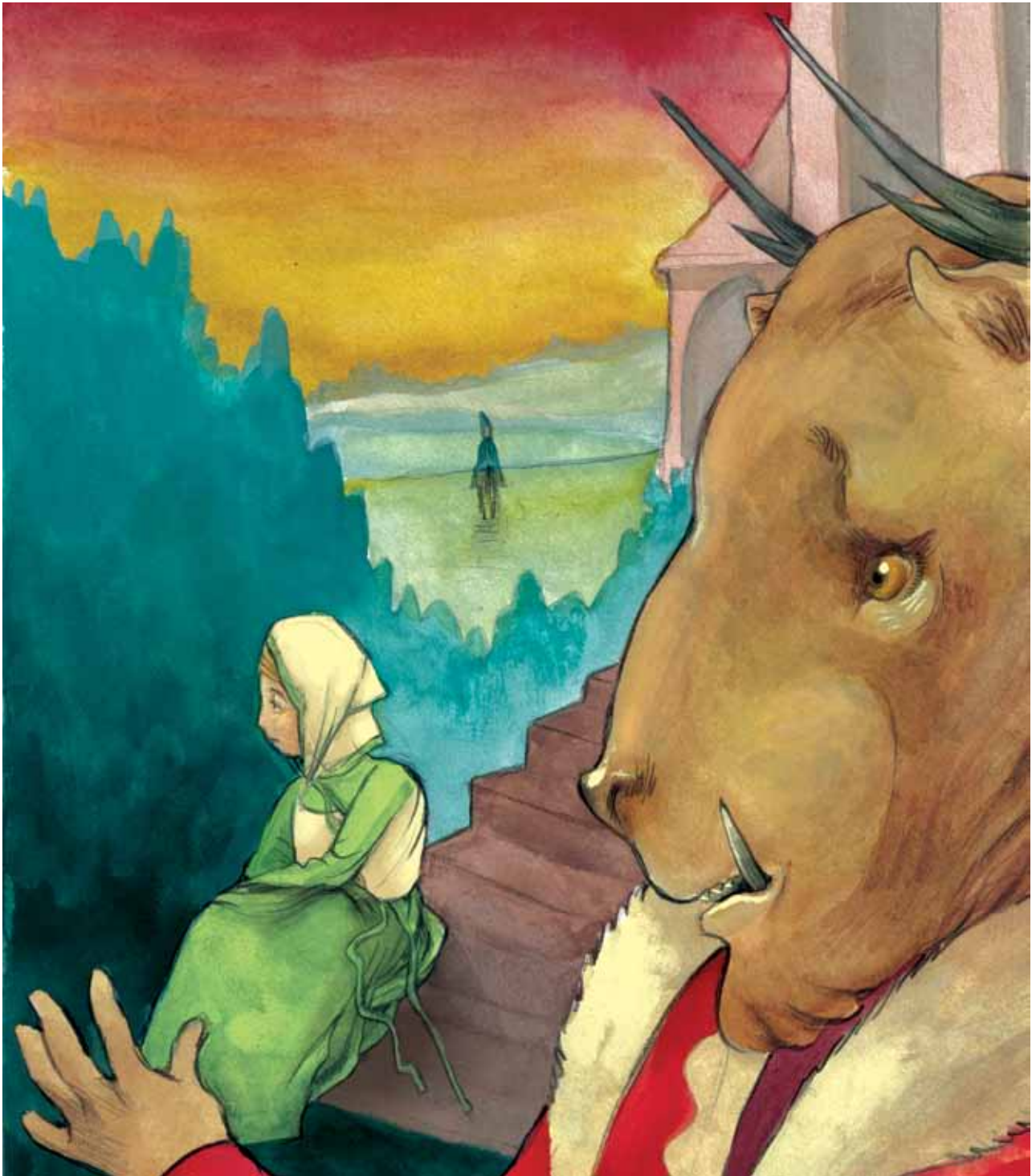
Beauty said, "I will go."

Chapter 21 Beauty and the Beast, Part II

Beauty and her father returned to the palace. When she first saw the Beast, Beauty could not help shaking, but she tried to hide her fear.

The Beast filled a trunk with gold. Then, he loaded it onto a horse and sent Beauty's father away. As Beauty watched her father ride away, she began to cry. The old man was crying, too.

“Beauty,” said the Beast, “don't cry. Things are not as bad as you think. You have given yourself for your father's sake, and your goodness will be rewarded. Only take this advice: Do not be fooled by my looks. Trust your heart, not your eyes.”



Beauty stayed with the Beast as Father left.

Days turned into weeks. Beauty strolled in the lovely garden, where the birds sang to her. She found a huge library filled with books she wanted to read.

At first, the Beast's looks scared Beauty, but she soon grew used to them. The Beast treated her with kindness. He would talk to her during dinner and keep her company. Soon, she looked forward to meals.

When the meal was over and it was time to say good night, the Beast always turned to her and asked, "Beauty, will you marry me?" While she cared for him more every day, Beauty's reply was always "no."



Beauty and the Beast enjoyed meals together.

One night, the Beast saw a sad look on Beauty's face.

"Beauty," he said, "I cannot bear to see you so sad. What is the matter?"

She told him that she missed her family, and that she longed to see her father.

"But Beauty," said the Beast, "if you leave me, I fear I will die of sadness."

"Dear Beast," said Beauty softly, "I do not want to leave you, but I long to see my father. Only let me go for four weeks. Then, I will come back and stay with you for the rest of my life."

"Very well," sighed the Beast, "but remember your promise. Take this magic ring. When you want to come back, turn the ring round upon your finger and say, 'I wish to go back to my Beast.'"



The Beast gave Beauty a magic ring.

When Beauty awoke early the next morning, she found herself in her father's home. It was not the old country cottage. It was a fine new house in town that he had bought with the riches the Beast had given him. Her father hugged her and wept for joy.

Soon, her sisters and their new husbands came to visit. They pretended to be happy, but they were not. One sister had married a very handsome man. He was so in love with his own face that he thought of nothing else. The other sister had married a clever man. He liked to make fun of other people, even his wife.



Beauty awoke to find herself in her father's home.

Day after day, Beauty enjoyed being with her father. She did all that she could to help him. When the time came for her to return to the Beast, she found that she could not bring herself to say farewell to her father. Every day she told herself, "Today I will go back." But every night, she put it off again.

Then, one night, she had a dream. She dreamed that she was wandering in the garden around the Beast's house, when suddenly she heard painful groans. She looked down and saw the Beast lying on the ground. He seemed to be dying.

Beauty awoke with a start. "Oh, how could I do this to my poor Beast?" she cried. "Is it his fault he is ugly? Why did I refuse to marry him? I would be happier with him than my sisters are with their husbands. The Beast is kind and good, and that matters more than anything else."

She turned the ring round on her finger and said firmly, "I wish to go back to my Beast."



Beauty turned the ring around on her finger.

In an instant, she found herself at the Beast's house. She ran around calling aloud for the Beast. There was no reply. Then, she remembered her dream. She ran to the garden, and there she found the Beast stretched on the ground.

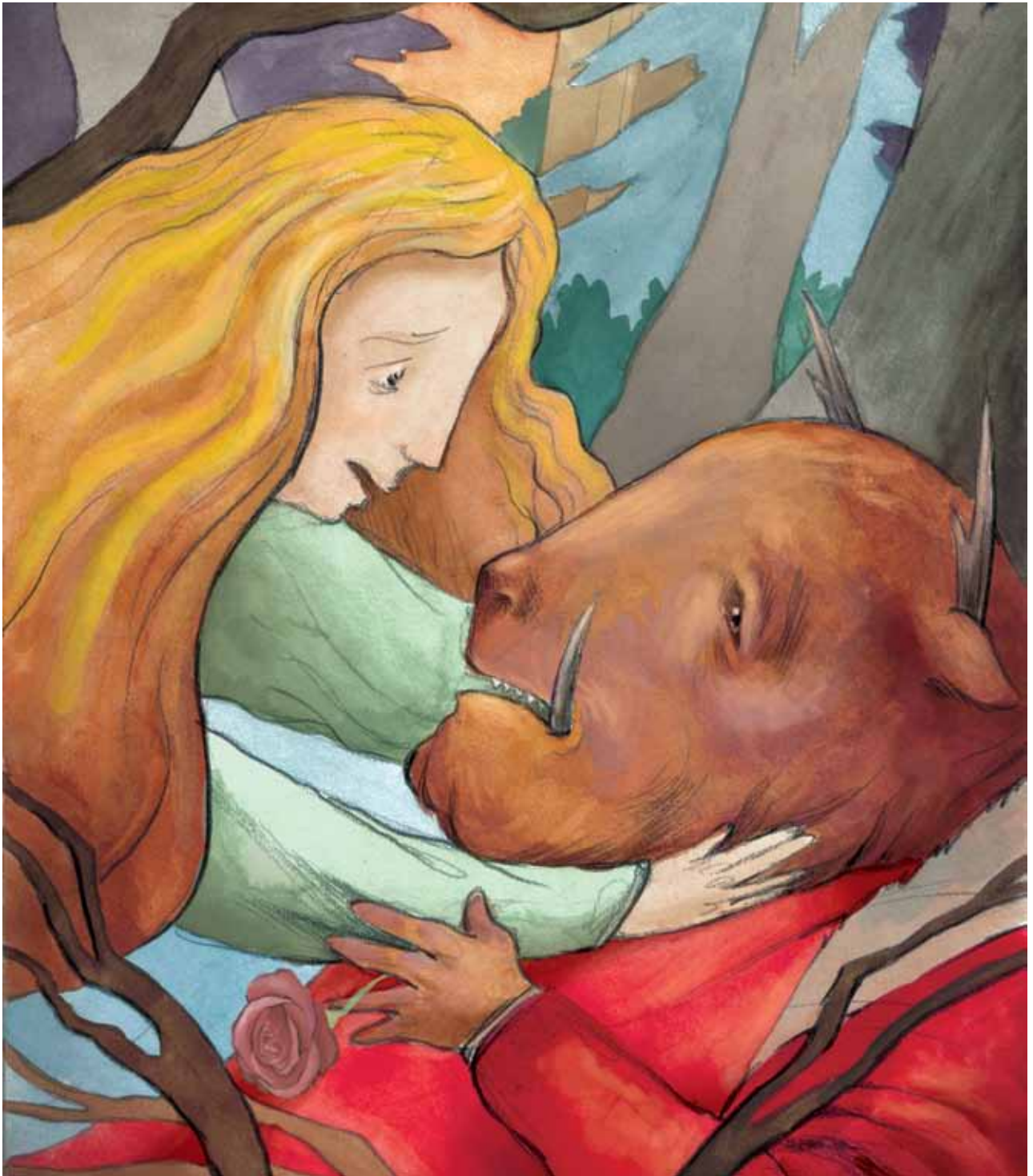
“Oh, he is dead!” she cried. “He is dead, and it is all my fault!”

She fell to the ground and took him in her arms. The Beast slowly opened his eyes.

Beauty cried, “Oh, Beast, thank goodness you are alive! How you frightened me! I never knew how much I loved you until now, when I feared it was too late.”

In a faint voice, the Beast said, “Beauty, I was dying because I thought you had forgotten your promise, but you have come back. What does this mean? Can you really love such an ugly monster as I am?”

“Yes!” said Beauty.



Beauty found the Beast in his garden.

Then once again, the Beast asked, “Beauty, will you marry me?”

She replied, “Yes, dear Beast! I will! I never want to be away from you again!”

As she spoke, a blaze of light flashed around her. Beauty gasped and covered her eyes. When she opened them again, she no longer saw the Beast. Instead, lying at her feet, was a handsome prince.

“What has happened to my Beast?” she asked.

“I was the Beast,” said the prince. “A wizard cast a spell on me and changed me into a monster. I was cursed to live as a monster until a maiden would agree to marry me. You are the only one who could see past my looks to the real me.”

Beauty gave the young prince her hand to help him rise. Side by side, they went into the house. The very next day, with Beauty’s father looking on, they went to the church and got married. And they lived happily ever after.



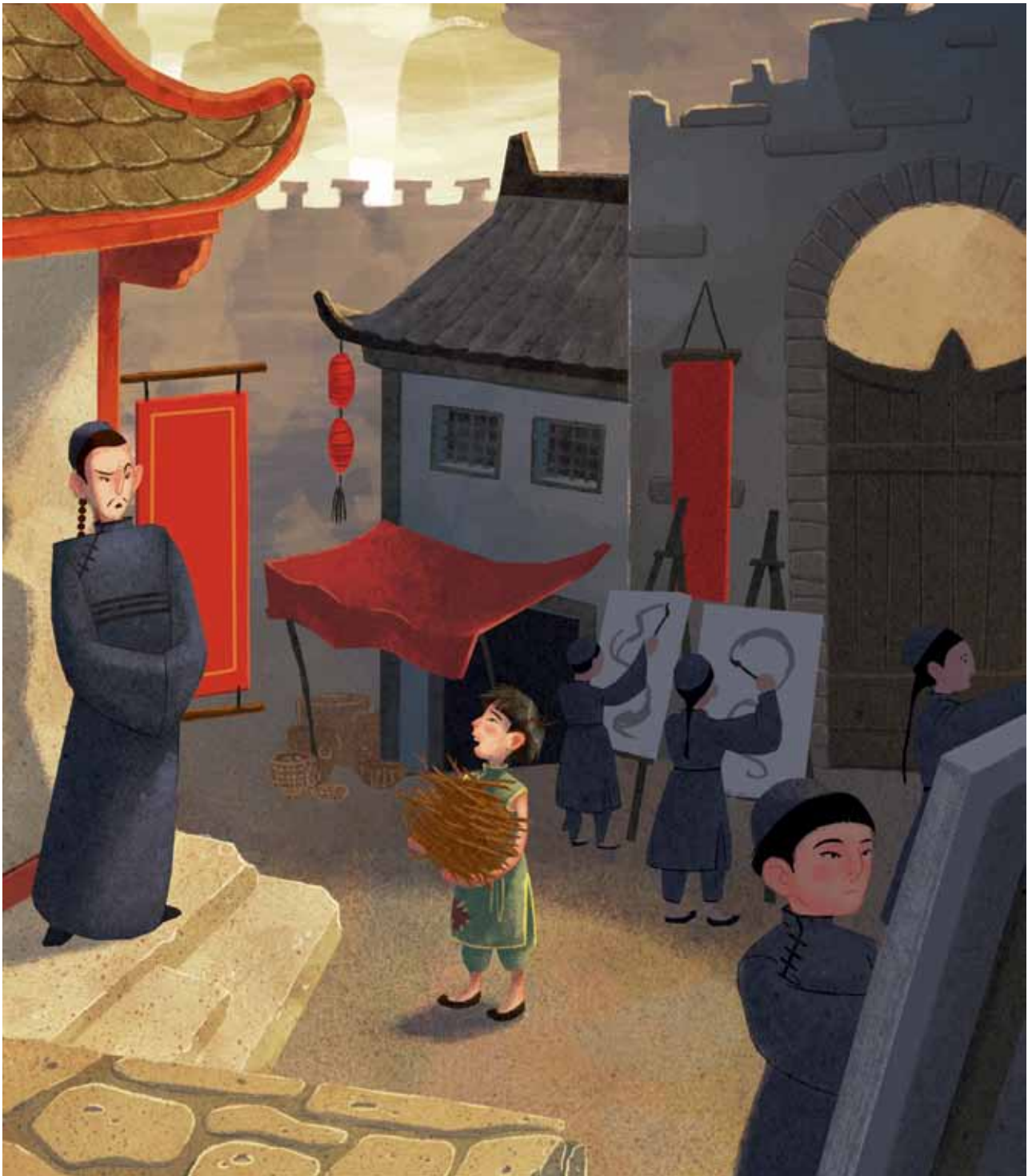
Beauty and her prince were married.

Chapter 22 The Magic Paintbrush

Once upon a time, long ago in the land of China, there was a poor boy named Ma Liang. He had no parents—no one to care for him or protect him. So, to make a living, he gathered bundles of firewood to sell. But what he really wanted to do, more than anything else in the world, was paint. Ma Liang was so poor, however, that he could not afford even a single paintbrush.

One day, as Ma Liang passed through a village, he saw a class of children standing outdoors. The children were painting. Ma Liang went to the teacher and politely said, “Will you help me, sir? I would like to learn to paint, but I have no brush. Will you loan me one?”

The teacher just laughed at him. “You are only a little beggar boy,” he said. “Go away!”



Ma Liang asked the teacher for a paintbrush.

“I may be poor,” said Ma Liang, “but I will learn to paint!”

The next time he went to gather firewood, Ma Liang used a twig to draw birds in the dirt. When he came to a stream, he dipped his hand in the water and used his wet finger to draw fish on the rocks. One night, he used a piece of burned wood to draw animals and flowers.

Every day, Ma Liang found time to draw. People began to see that he could draw well. “How real the boy’s drawings look!” they said. “Look at that bird he has drawn. It looks like it’s ready to fly away. You can almost hear it sing!”

Ma Liang enjoyed hearing these kind words, but still he thought, “If only I had a paintbrush!”



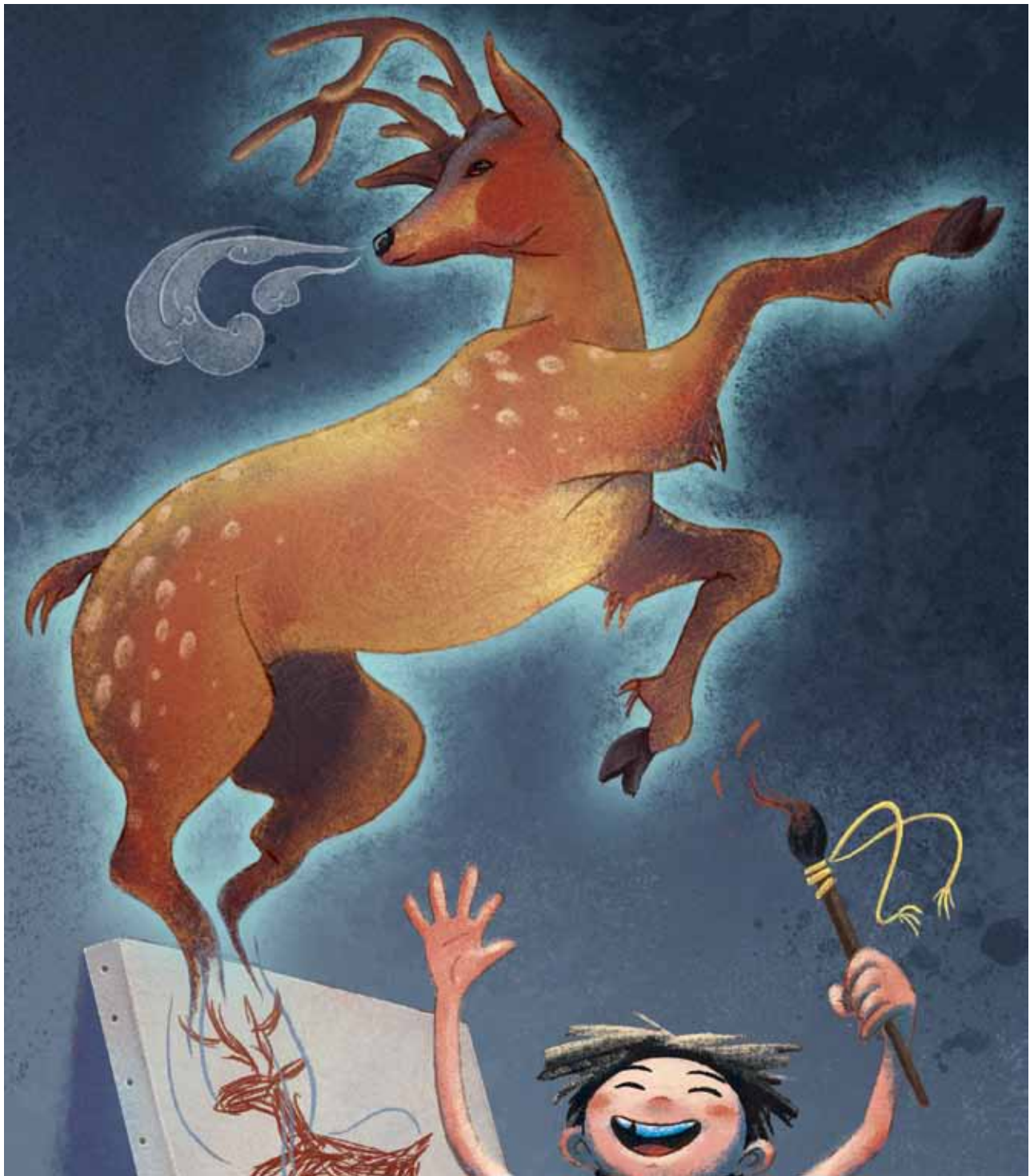
Ma Liang used his wet finger to draw fish on the rocks.

One night, after Ma Liang had worked hard all day, he fell into a deep sleep. In a dream, he saw an old man with a long white beard and a kind face. The old man held something in his hand. "Take this," he said to Ma Liang. "It is a magic paintbrush. Use it with care."

When Ma Liang awoke, he found his fingers wrapped around a paintbrush. "Am I still dreaming?" he wondered. He got up and painted a bird. The painted bird chirped. Then, it flapped its wings and flew away!

He painted a deer. As soon as he had put the last spot on the animal's coat, it brushed its nose against Ma Liang and ran into the woods.

"It truly is a magic brush!" said Ma Liang. He ran to see his poor neighbors. He painted toys for girls and boys. He painted cows and tools for the farmers. He painted bowls full of food for the hungry and wells for the thirsty.



Ma Liang painted a deer that came to life and ran into the woods.

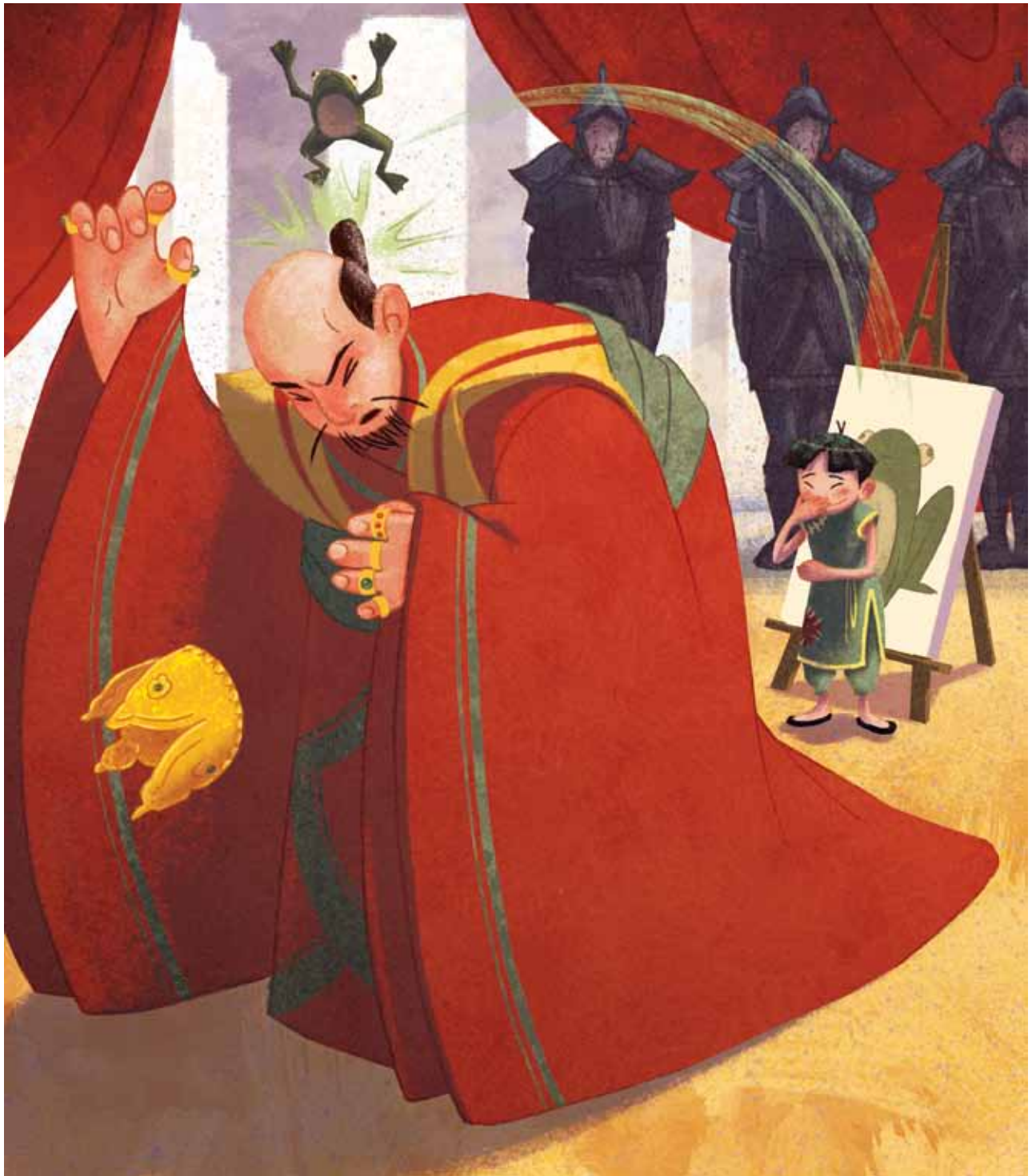
No good thing can remain a secret forever. Soon, news of Ma Liang and his magic paintbrush reached the ears of the greedy emperor.

“Bring me that boy and his brush!” the emperor yelled. His men found Ma Liang and brought him back to the palace.

With a scowl, the emperor looked at Ma Liang. “Paint me a dragon!” he yelled.

Ma Liang began to paint. But instead of painting a dragon, he painted a slimy toad. The toad hopped out of the painting and landed right on the emperor’s head!

“Foolish boy!” said the emperor. “You will regret that!” He grabbed the magic paintbrush. Then, he ordered his men to throw Ma Liang in jail.



The toad hopped out of the painting and landed right on the emperor's head.

The emperor called for his royal painter. “Take this brush and paint me a huge pile of gold and pearls,” he ordered.

The royal painter set to work. He painted gold and pearls. But when he finished, the gold and pearls turned to worthless rocks.

“So,” said the emperor, “the brush will only work for the boy. Bring him to me!”

Ma Liang was brought to the emperor.

“If you will paint for me,” said the emperor, “you may have all of this gold and all of these gems. I will also give you fine clothing, a new house, and all the food and drink you want.”

Ma Liang pretended to agree. “What do you want me to paint?” he asked.

“Paint me a tree that has gold coins for leaves!” said the emperor. Greed shone in his eyes.



The emperor offered Ma Liang gold and gems.

Ma Liang took the magic paintbrush and began to paint. He painted blue waves, and soon the emperor saw a sea before him.

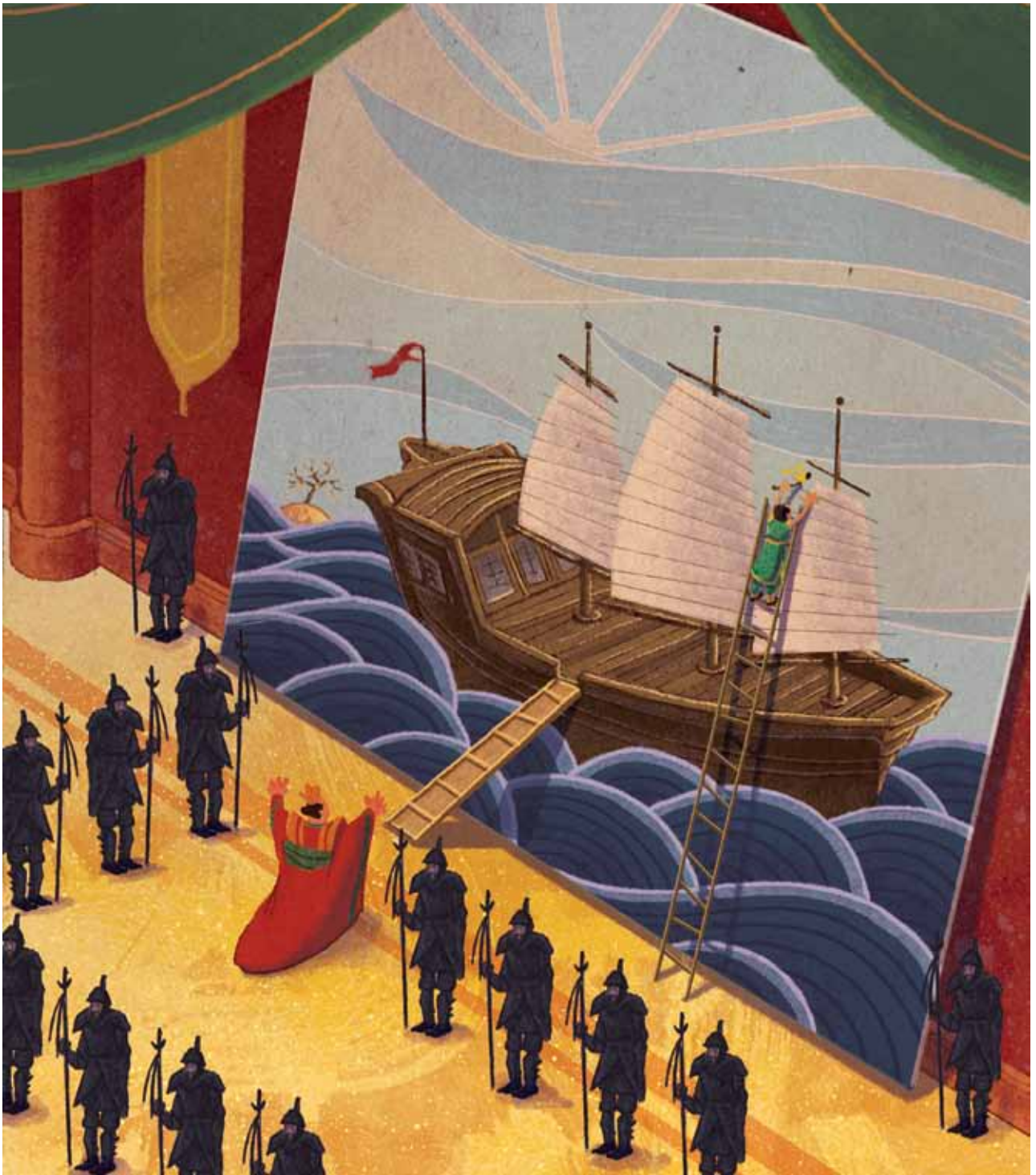
“That is not what I told you to paint!” he barked.

But Ma Liang just kept painting. In the sea he painted an island. Then, on the shore of the island, he painted a tree with gold coins for leaves.

“Yes, yes!” said the emperor. “That’s more like it! Now, paint me a boat so that I can get to the island! Quickly!”

Ma Liang painted a sailboat. The emperor went on board with his officers and advisors.

Ma Liang painted more lines and a gentle wind began to blow. The sailboat moved slowly toward the island.



Ma Liang painted a boat for the emperor.

“Faster! Faster!” shouted the emperor. Ma Liang painted a big curving stroke, and a strong wind began to blow.

“That’s plenty of wind!” shouted the emperor. But Ma Liang ignored him and went on painting. He painted more wind. He painted more waves. He painted a huge storm. The waves got higher and higher. Rain poured down. The winds howled and roared.

The sailboat was tossed like a little cork on the water. At last, the waves tore the boat to pieces. The emperor and his men had to jump overboard. They were washed up on the shore of the island, with no way to get back to the palace.

As for Ma Liang, people say that for years after that, he went from village to village using his magic paintbrush to help the poor wherever he went.



The waves tore the boat to pieces.

Chapter 23 The Tiger, the Brahman, and the Jackal

Once upon a time, a tiger was caught in a trap. He tried to get out. He rolled from side to side. He tore at the bars of the cage and bit them with his teeth. But it was all in vain. He could not get out.

By chance, a poor holy man called a Brahman came by.

“Let me out of this cage!” roared the tiger.

“Nay,” replied the Brahman mildly. “You would probably eat me if I did.”

“Not at all!” said the tiger. “On the contrary, I swear I would be forever grateful and serve you as a slave!”

The tiger sobbed and sighed. He wailed and wept. At last, the Brahman agreed to open the door of the cage.



The tiger begged the Brahman to let him out of the cage.

The tiger popped out and pounced on the Brahman. “What a fool you are!” the tiger said. “What is to keep me from eating you now?”

The poor Brahman pleaded for his life, but the tiger would not give in.

“Before you eat me,” said the Brahman, “grant me one thing. Let me ask the next four things I see what they think of my case. I would like to know whether they think it is fair that I should be eaten up after letting you out of the cage.”

“Very well,” said the tiger. “You may ask them what they think, but in the end I will eat you just the same.”

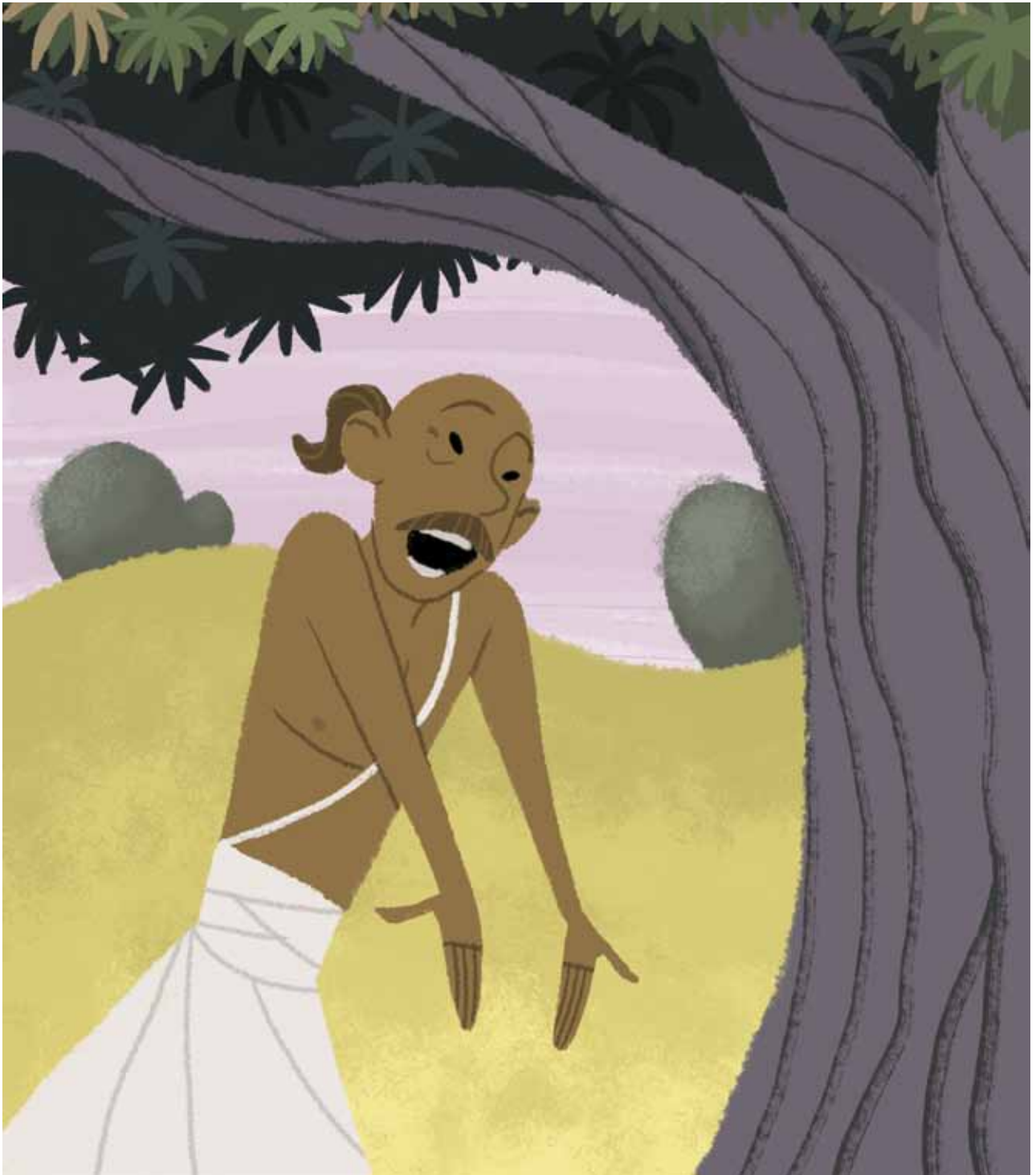


“What a fool you are!” the tiger said.

The Brahman went a few steps and spotted a tree. He spoke to the tree.

“Tree,” said the Brahman, “tell me what you think. I found a tiger in a cage. He begged me to let him out and swore he would do me no harm. Now that he is out, he swears he will eat me. I ask you, is this fair? Do I not have reason to complain?”

The tree replied coldly, “What have you got to complain about? Don’t I offer shade and shelter to everyone who passes by? How do they thank me for this? They tear off my branches and feed them to cows! Stop your whining. Accept your fate. Be a man!”



The Brahman asked a tree if it was fair for the tiger to eat him.

Next, the Brahman spotted a buffalo tied to a wheel. He spoke to the buffalo.

“Buffalo,” said the Brahman, “tell me what you think. I found a tiger in a cage. He begged me to let him out and swore he would do me no harm. Now that he is out, he swears he will eat me. I ask you, is this fair? Do I not have reason to complain?”

The buffalo answered, “You are a fool if you expect gratitude! Look at me! For years, I gave milk for my master. He used my milk to feed his children. Now that I am old and my milk has run out, what does he do? He ties me to this wheel and feeds me nothing but scraps!”

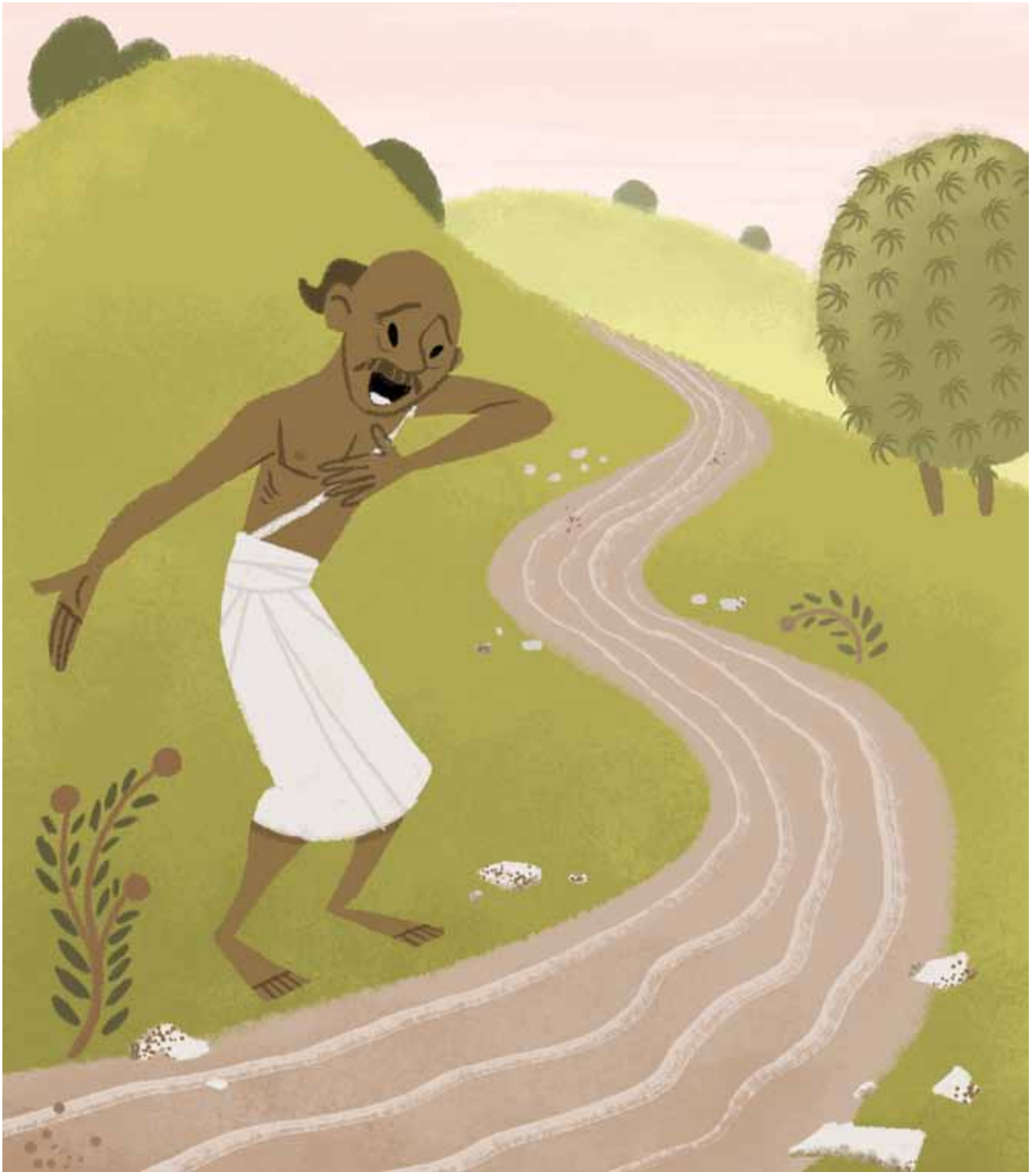


The Brahman asked the buffalo if it was fair for the tiger to eat him.

Next, the Brahman spoke to the road.

“Road,” said the Brahman, “tell me what you think. I found a tiger in a cage. He begged me to let him out and swore he would do me no harm. Now that he is out, he swears he will eat me. I ask you, is this fair? Do I not have reason to complain?”

The road replied, “You are a fool if you expect anything else. Look at me! I am a road. I am useful to all men. How do they repay me? All of them, rich and poor, great and small, trample on me and throw their trash upon me. Go away! Leave me alone!”



The Brahman asked the road if it was fair for the tiger to eat him.

The fourth thing the Brahman saw was a jackal. He spoke to the jackal.

“Jackal,” said the Brahman, “you are my last hope. Tell me what you think. I found a tiger in a cage. He begged me to let him out and swore he would do me no harm. Now that he is out, he swears he will eat me. I ask you, is this fair? Do I not have reason to complain?”

“Goodness!” said the jackal. “I am confused. Would you mind explaining what happened once more?”

So the Brahman told the story again.

The jackal shook his head. “I am still confused,” he said. “Could you take me to the cage? Perhaps if I could see it, I could understand what happened. Then, I may be able to tell you what I think.”



The Brahman asked the jackal if it was fair for the tiger to eat him.

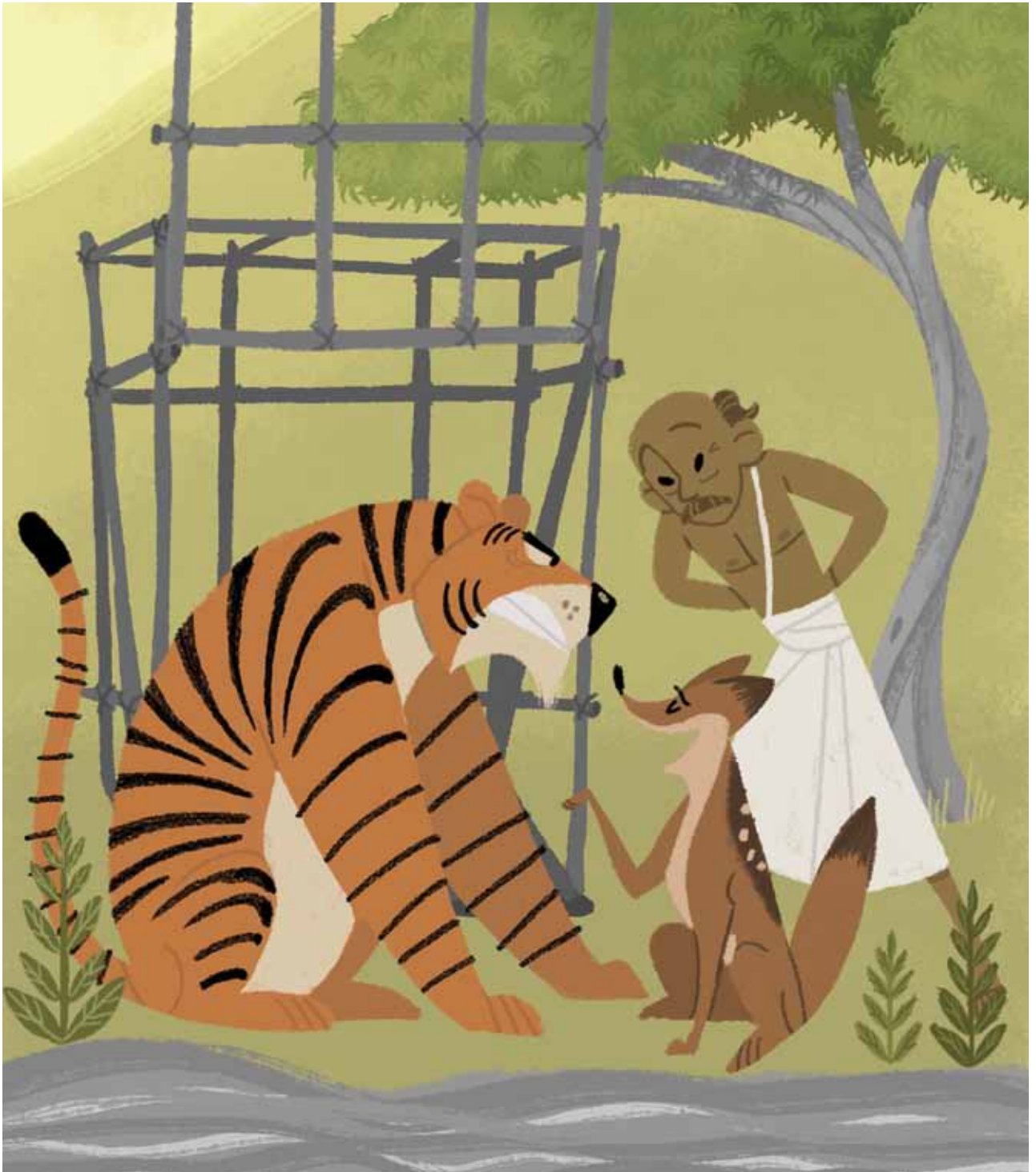
So, the Brahman led the jackal back to the cage. The tiger was waiting, and he was starting to feel hungry.

“Tiger,” said the Brahman, “I told this jackal what happened, but he can’t quite understand it. Could I just have five minutes to explain it to him again?”

“Very well,” said the tiger.

So the Brahman told the story once more, from start to finish.

“I fear my wits are slow,” said the jackal. “I still can’t make heads or tails of this thing. How did you say it all started? The Brahman was in the cage?”



The jackal was still confused.

“Poo!” said the tiger. “What a fool you are! I was the one in the cage.”

“Of course!” cried the jackal. “Now it makes sense. I was in the cage, and the tiger was in the Brahman. Then, the cage came walking by—no, wait, that’s not right.”

“Fool!” roared the tiger. “What nonsense you talk! I will make you understand. Look here! I am the tiger. See?”

“Yes, my lord.”

“That is the Brahman.”

“Yes, my lord.”

“That is the cage.”

“Yes, my lord!”

“I was in the cage. Do you understand?”

“Um, not really,” said the jackal. “How did you get in? Perhaps you could show me?”



“Perhaps you could show me,” said the jackal.

“Arg!” cried the tiger. “This is how I got in!” he added, as he ran back into the cage.

“The cage was locked?” asked the jackal.

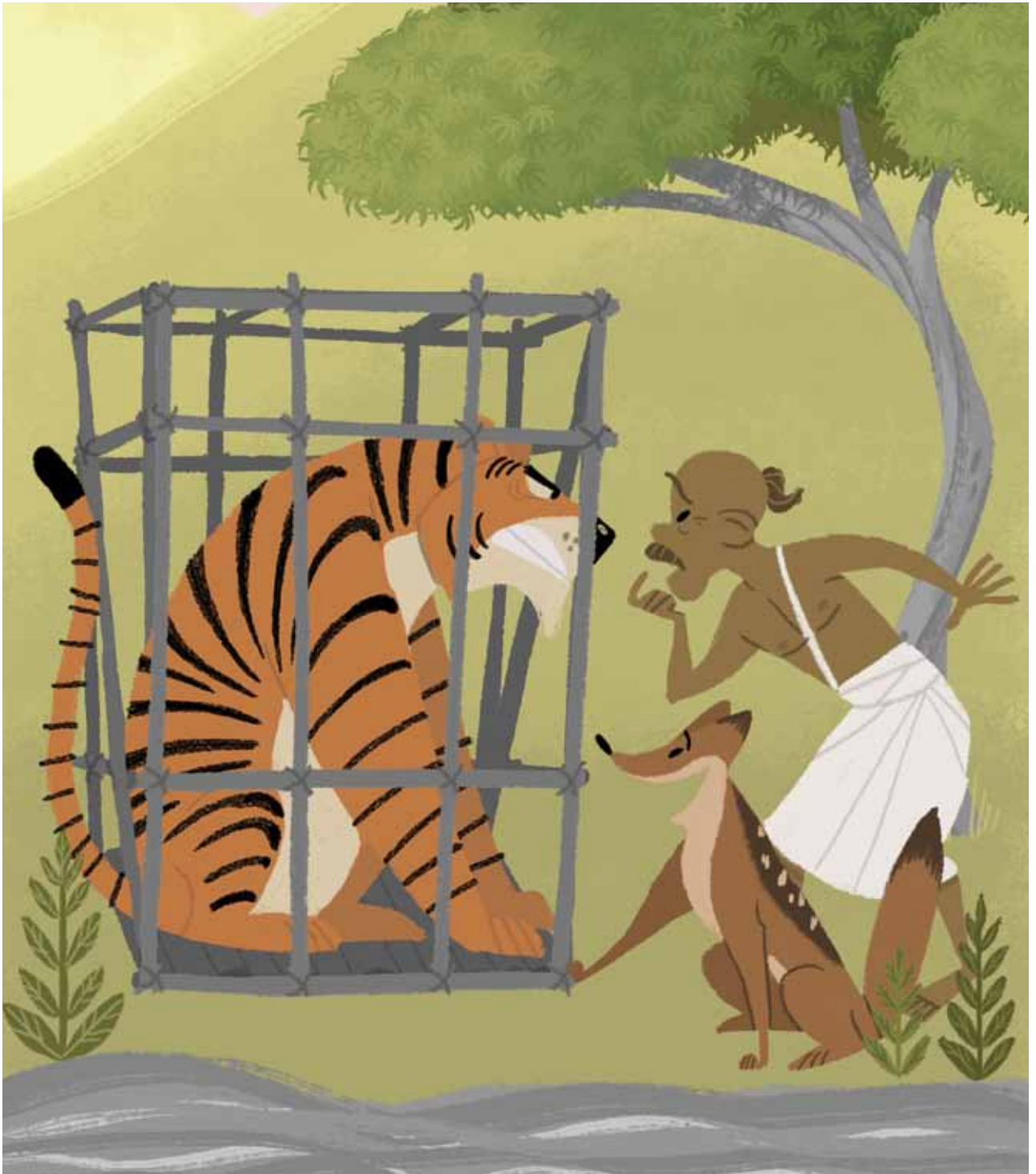
“Yes!” said the tiger.

The jackal reached over and locked the cage.

“Like this?” he asked.

“Yes,” said the tiger. “Now do you understand?”

“Indeed I do,” said the jackal. “If you will permit me to say so, I think this is how things should remain!”



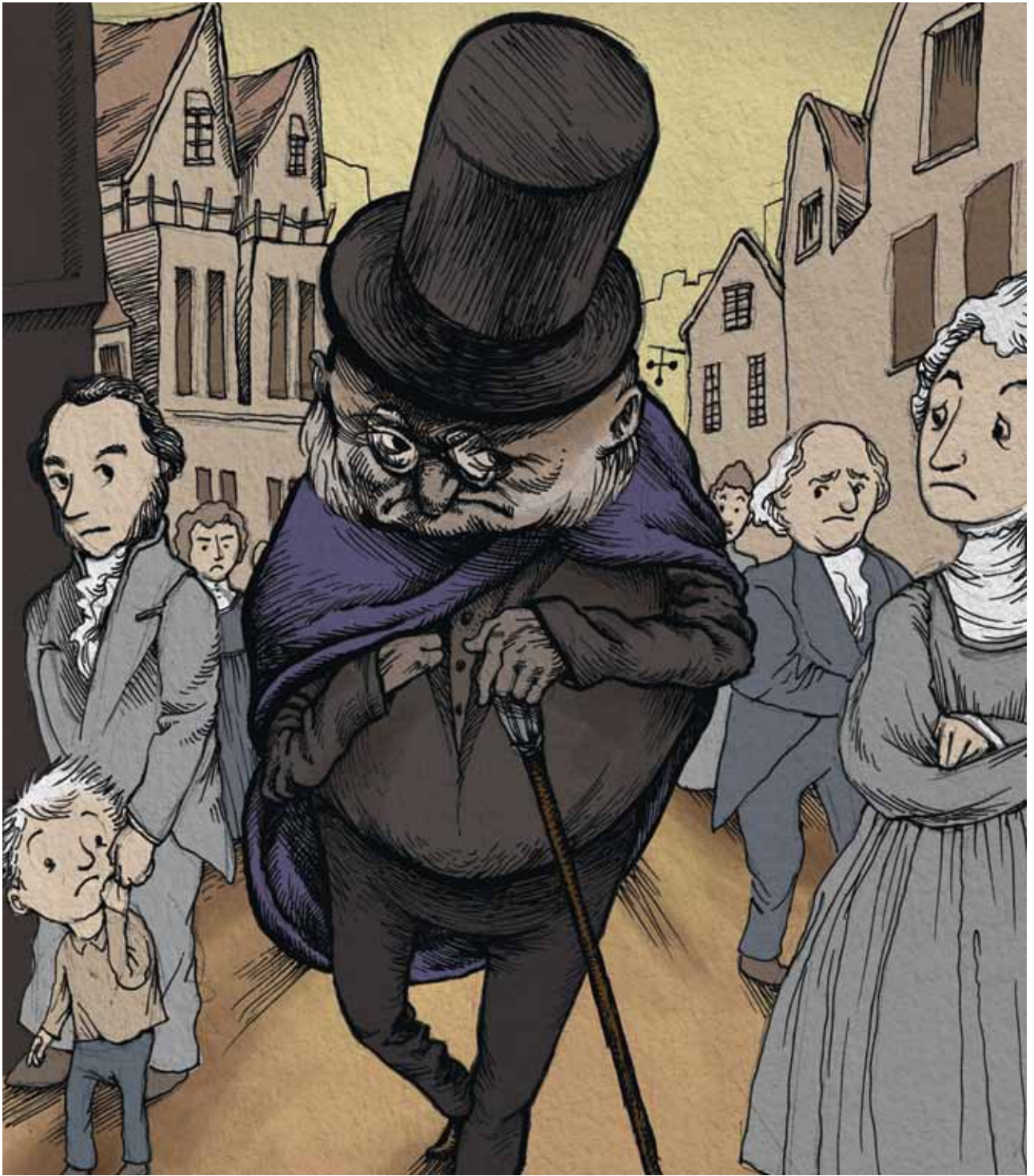
The jackal locked the cage.

Chapter 24 A Christmas Carol, Part I

Once there was a tight-fisted, grasping, greedy man named Ebenezer Scrooge. His heart was as hard as an old flint and as cold as ice.

Nobody ever stopped old Scrooge on the street to say hello. No neighbor ever called out, “My dear Scrooge, how are you? When will you come to see me?” Even the beggars steered clear of him. They knew there was no point in begging from Ebenezer Scrooge.

On a cold, bleak, foggy Christmas Eve, old Scrooge was at work, as always. His poor clerk, Bob Cratchit, shivered in the next room, for Scrooge was too cheap to pay for more coal for the fire.



No one spoke to old Scrooge.

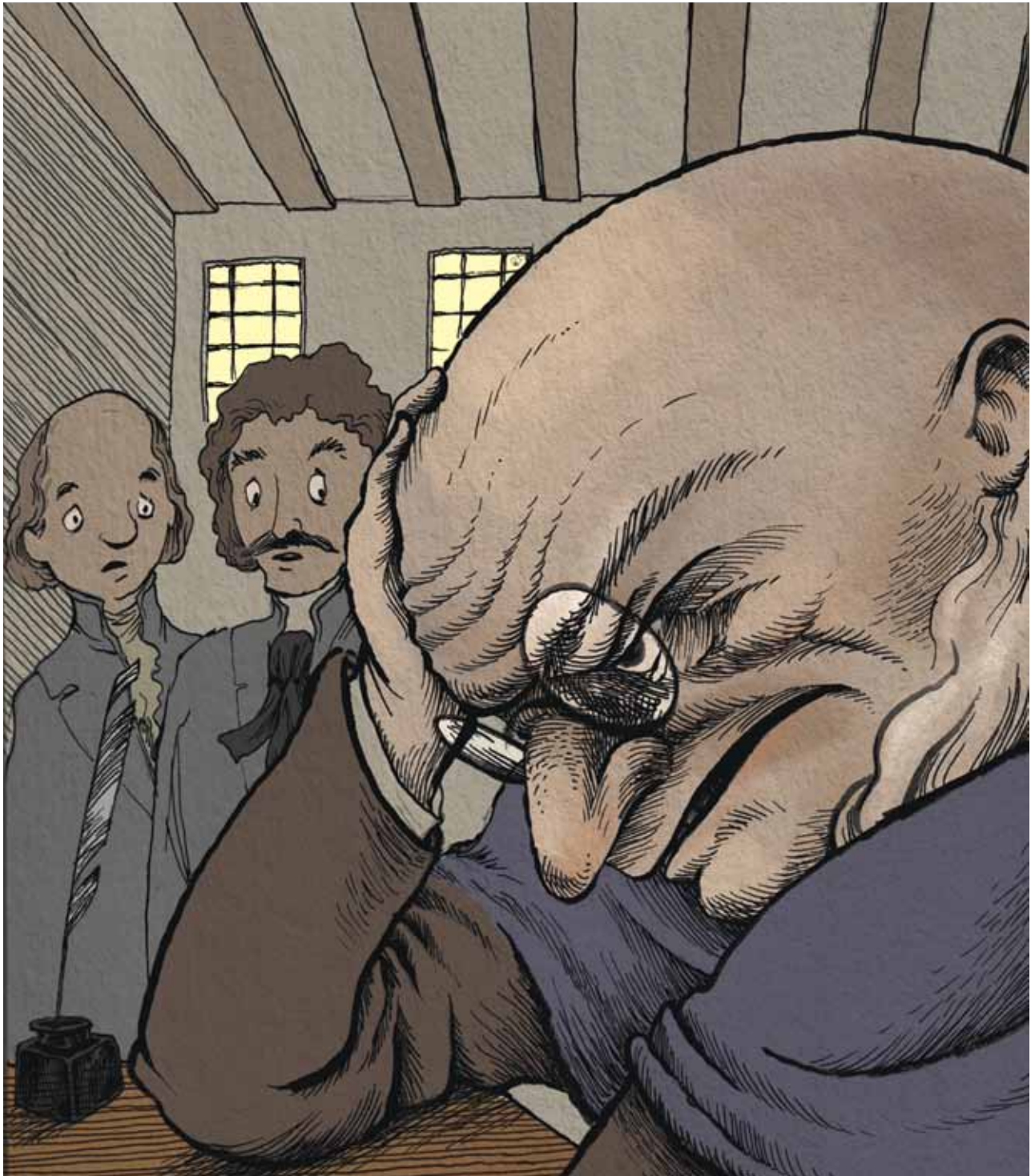
Late in the afternoon, two men came into the shop.

“Good afternoon, sir!” said one of them. “It is the holiday season! Won’t you give some money to help provide for the poor?”

“Are there no prisons for them?” asked Scrooge.

“Yes, of course,” said the man, “but, you see, sir, we are raising money so that the poor may have meat and drink. A little charity for Christmas! How much will you give, sir?”

“Not a penny!” said Scrooge. “Good afternoon, gentlemen!”



Two men asked Scrooge for money for the poor.

When closing time came, Scrooge went in and frowned at his clerk, Bob Cratchit.

“I suppose you’ll be wanting the entire day off on Christmas,” he growled.

“Yes, sir,” Cratchit replied meekly. “If it is agreeable.”

“It is not agreeable!” said Scrooge. “Why should I pay wages and get no work in return?”

“It’s only once a year,” noted the clerk.

“Very well,” said Scrooge at last. “You may have your day off. But you had better come in even earlier the next morning to make up for it!”

“I will, sir. Thank you, sir,” said Bob Cratchit. “And a merry Christmas to you, sir.”

“Christmas! Bah, humbug!” grumbled Scrooge as he left.



“Bah humbug!” grumbled Scrooge.

Through the frost and fog, Scrooge made his way home. As he approached his front door, he stopped and stared. In the middle of the door, where he expected to see a doorknob, he saw a face! It looked like the face of his old partner, Jacob Marley. But Marley had been dead for seven years!

Scrooge blinked his eyes and the face vanished.

“Bah, humbug!” said Scrooge. He unlocked the door and walked in.

Scrooge lit a candle. He changed into his robe and slippers. He was about to fix his dinner when he heard something. It was a clanking sound. It sounded like someone was dragging heavy chains over the floor.



The doorknob looked like Jacob Marley.

Then, something amazing happened. A spirit walked in. It passed right through the door! The spirit was dragging a large chain that was wrapped around his body.

“Who are you?” called Scrooge.

“Ask me who I was,” replied the ghost.

“Who were you, then?” said Scrooge.

“In life, I was your partner, Jacob Marley.”

“Jacob, is it really you?” asked Scrooge. “How can this be? Why are you in chains?”

“Hear me!” cried the ghost. “I wear the chain I forged in life. I made it link by link. I cared only about money. I did not care for my fellow man. You are making your own chain now, Ebenezer. You care too much for money and too little for your fellow man. I have come to warn you. You must change—before it is too late! There is still a chance for you to escape my fate.”

Scrooge shivered in terror.



The spirit in chains appeared to Scrooge.

“Tonight, you will be haunted by three spirits,” the ghost said. Then, it vanished.

Scrooge got into bed and waited nervously. When the clock struck one, a pale hand drew back the drapes that hung around his bed. It was the first spirit.

The spirit looked like a child, but, at the same time, it looked like an old man. It had white hair, like an old man, but there were no wrinkles on its face. It was dressed all in white.

“Who are you?” said Scrooge.

“I am the Ghost of Christmas Past,” said the spirit. “Rise and walk with me!”

The spirit took Scrooge by the hand. The two of them seemed to rise up and pass right through the wall.



“I am the ghost of Christmas Past,” said the spirit.

Suddenly, Scrooge found himself in an old classroom.

He knew the place.

“I was a boy here!” he called.

The classroom was almost empty. All of the children were at home for the holidays—all but one. One neglected child sat at his desk.

“Why, that’s me!” Scrooge blurted out. He sobbed as he recalled his sad, lonely childhood.

The spirit showed Scrooge other moments from his past. Scrooge saw himself as a young man and then as an older man. He saw things he had done that were unkind. He saw people he had known and treated poorly. Then, the spirit vanished.



Scrooge saw himself as a lonely child.

Chapter 25 A Christmas Carol, Part II

Scrooge found himself back in his bed again. He heard the clock striking. He saw a bright light. It seemed to be coming from the parlor. He got out of bed and put on his slippers. Then, he walked to the parlor door.

A voice called his name. “Come in!” said the voice, with a laugh. “Come in and know me better, man!”

Scrooge went into the parlor. He saw a large, bearded man wearing a loose, green robe and a crown of holly. This jolly giant was seated near a great heap of roasted turkeys, apples, oranges, pies, cakes, and puddings.

“I am the Ghost of Christmas Present,” said the man. “Come closer! Touch my robe!”



“I am the Ghost of Christmas Present,” said the man.

When Scrooge touched the robe, he found himself moving through the crowded city streets.

It was Christmas morning. Scrooge saw smiling faces. He heard people wishing each other a merry Christmas. Children were singing songs. Adults were hanging holly branches. As the spirit took him from house to house, Scrooge could see people making their Christmas dinners.

The spirit showed Scrooge many people. Scrooge saw miners huddled around a fire. He saw sailors on a ship. He saw sick men lying in the hospital and prisoners locked up in jail. Scrooge saw that their lives were hard, but he saw something else, as well. He saw that, somehow, the spirit of Christmas made all of these people happier. It made them cheerful. It made them smile.



Scrooge saw smiling faces of happy people.

The spirit led Scrooge to the home of his clerk, Bob Cratchit. The family was sitting down to a meager dinner, with only a tiny, roasted goose and some potatoes to eat. Yet, they seemed as happy as if they had a great feast before them. The happiest of all was the youngest child, a small, frail boy called Tiny Tim, who walked with a crutch.

Scrooge saw Bob Cratchit lift his glass and say, “A merry Christmas to us all, my dears!”

“Merry Christmas!” they all called.

“God bless us, every one!” said Tiny Tim.

Tiny Tim sat next to his father. Scrooge saw how Bob Cratchit held his little son close by his side, as if he feared he might lose him.



Scrooge saw Bob Cratchit and his family.

Scrooge felt a surge of interest in the boy.

“Spirit,” he said, “tell me if Tiny Tim will live.”

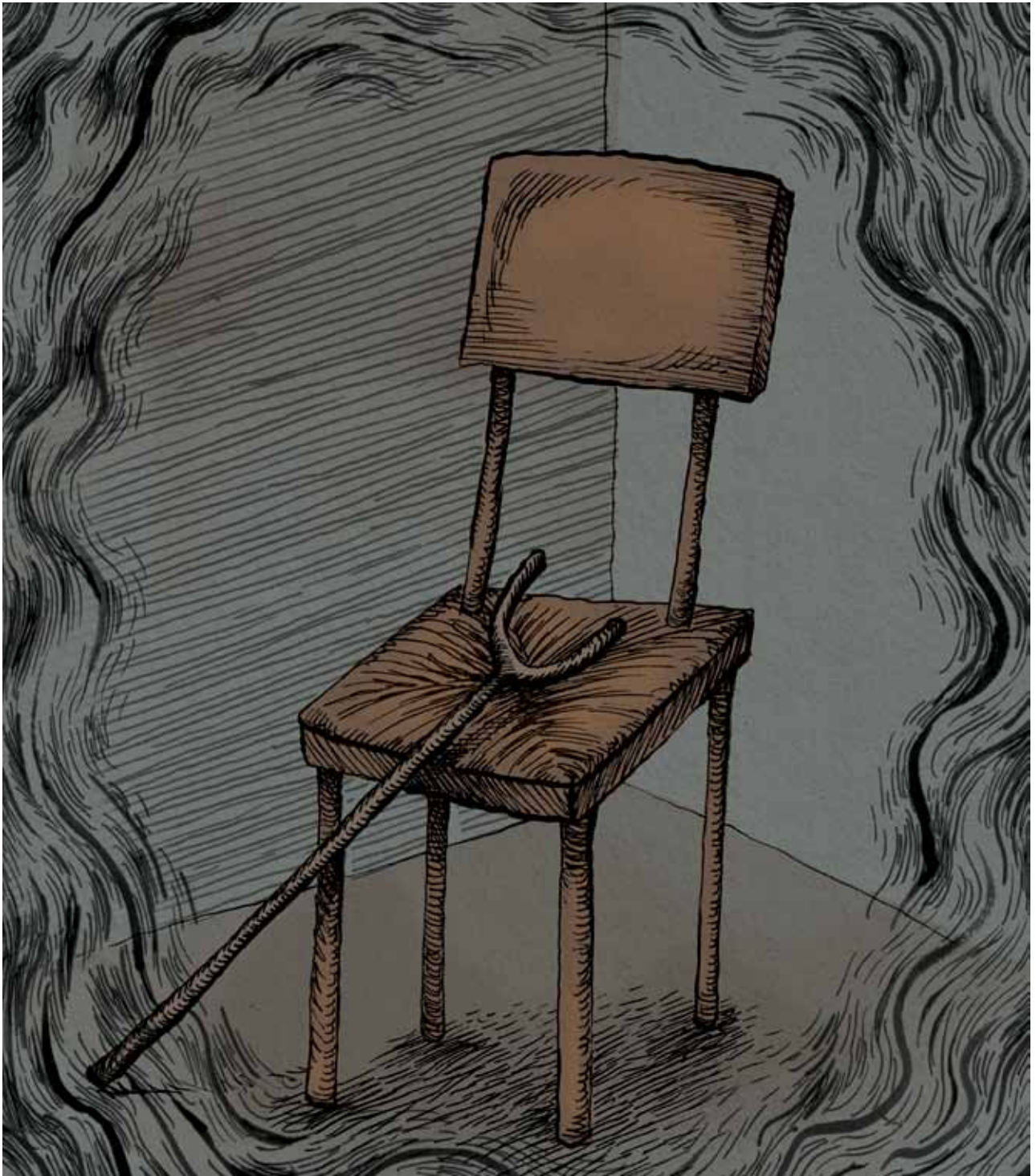
“I see an empty seat,” said the spirit, “and a crutch without an owner. If things remain as they are, the child will die.”

“No, no, kind spirit!” said Scrooge. “Say he will be spared!”

The spirit did not reply. Instead, it vanished. In its place came a tall, dark spirit, draped and hooded.

“Am I in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come?” asked Scrooge.

The spirit did not answer. It pointed onward with its hand.



“I see an empty seat,” said the spirit.

Scrooge found himself in a dark house. On the bed, beneath a sheet, lay something cold, still, and lifeless. Scrooge heard four men talking outside.

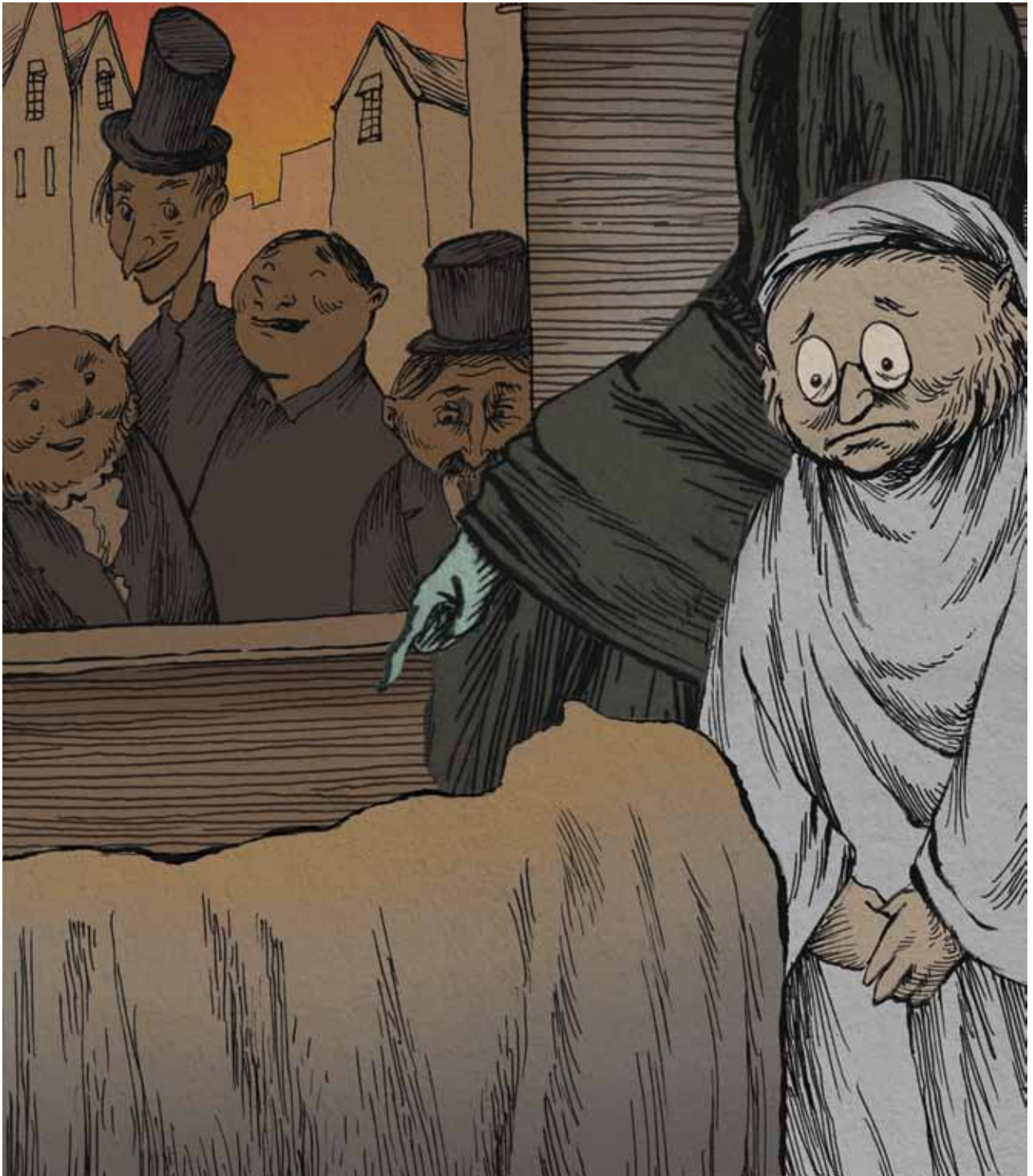
“When did he die?” asked the first man.

“Last night,” said the second.

“It’s likely to be a very cheap funeral!” said the third.

“Indeed!” added the fourth, “and not well attended. For who will mourn for that man?”

Then, all four of the men laughed.



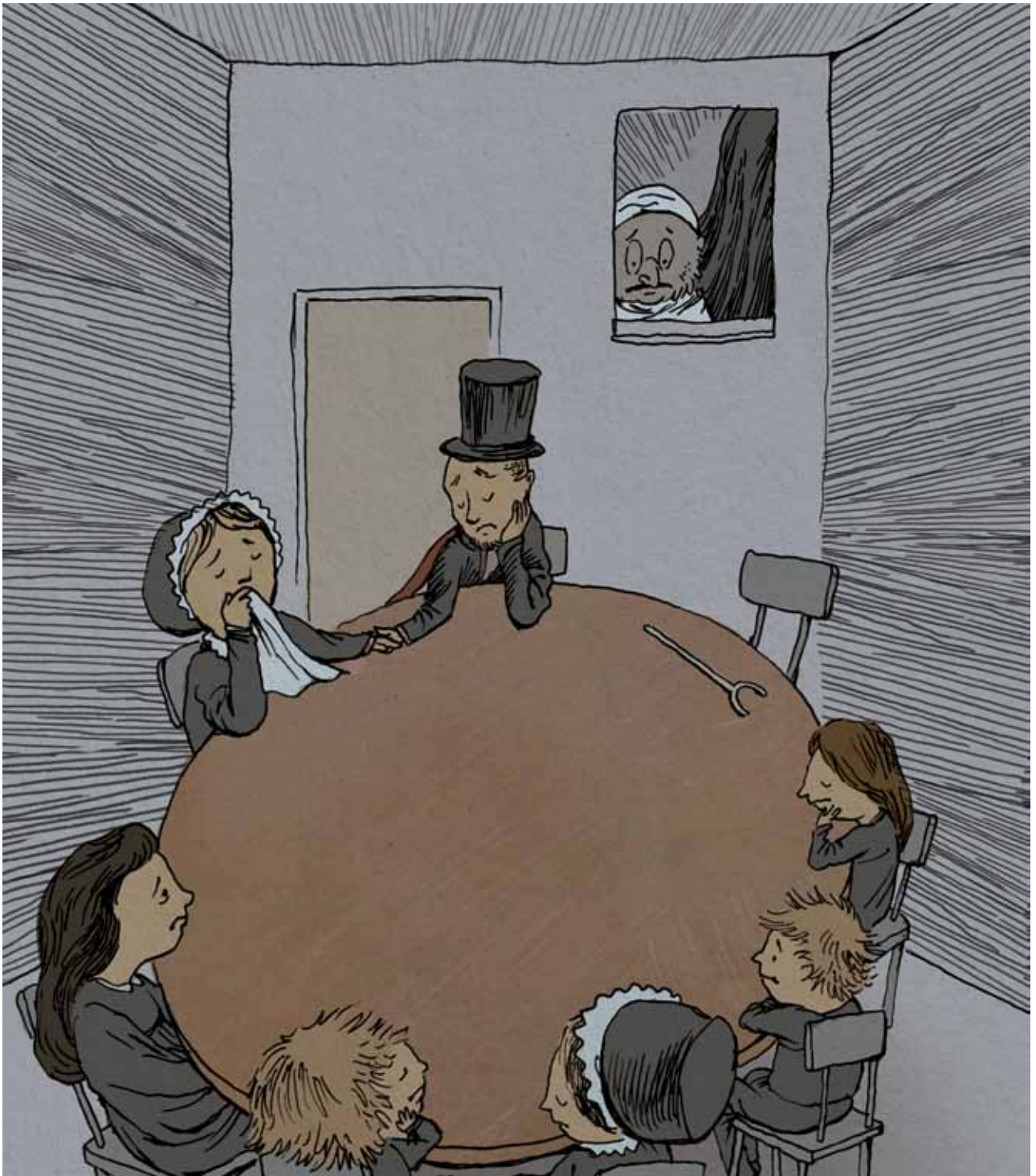
The Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come showed Scrooge a still, lifeless body.

The spirit waved its dark robe. Suddenly, Scrooge was back at Bob Cratchit's house.

It was quiet. Very quiet. No one spoke. The Cratchit children sat still as stones around the table. Tiny Tim's chair was empty. His crutch was lying on the table.

At last, Scrooge heard Bob Cratchit's voice.

"I am sure that we shall never forget poor Tiny Tim," Bob Cratchit said softly. "Oh, my dear little child!"



Scrooge was back at Bob Cratchit's house.

Chapter 26 A Christmas Carol, Part III

The spirit waved its dark robe again. Scrooge found himself in a graveyard.

The spirit pointed to one of the graves. Scrooge crept toward the grave. Then, he stopped.

“Tell me, spirit,” Scrooge said. “The things you have shown me. Are they things that will be? Or are they only things that may be?”

The ghost did not speak. He pointed at the gravestone.

Scrooge looked at the gravestone, and there he read his own name, Ebenezer Scrooge.



The spirit took Scrooge to a graveyard.

Scrooge fell to his knees.

“Am I that man who was lying on the bed, in the dark house?” he cried.

The finger pointed, first at the grave and then at Scrooge.

“No, Spirit! No!” cried Scrooge.

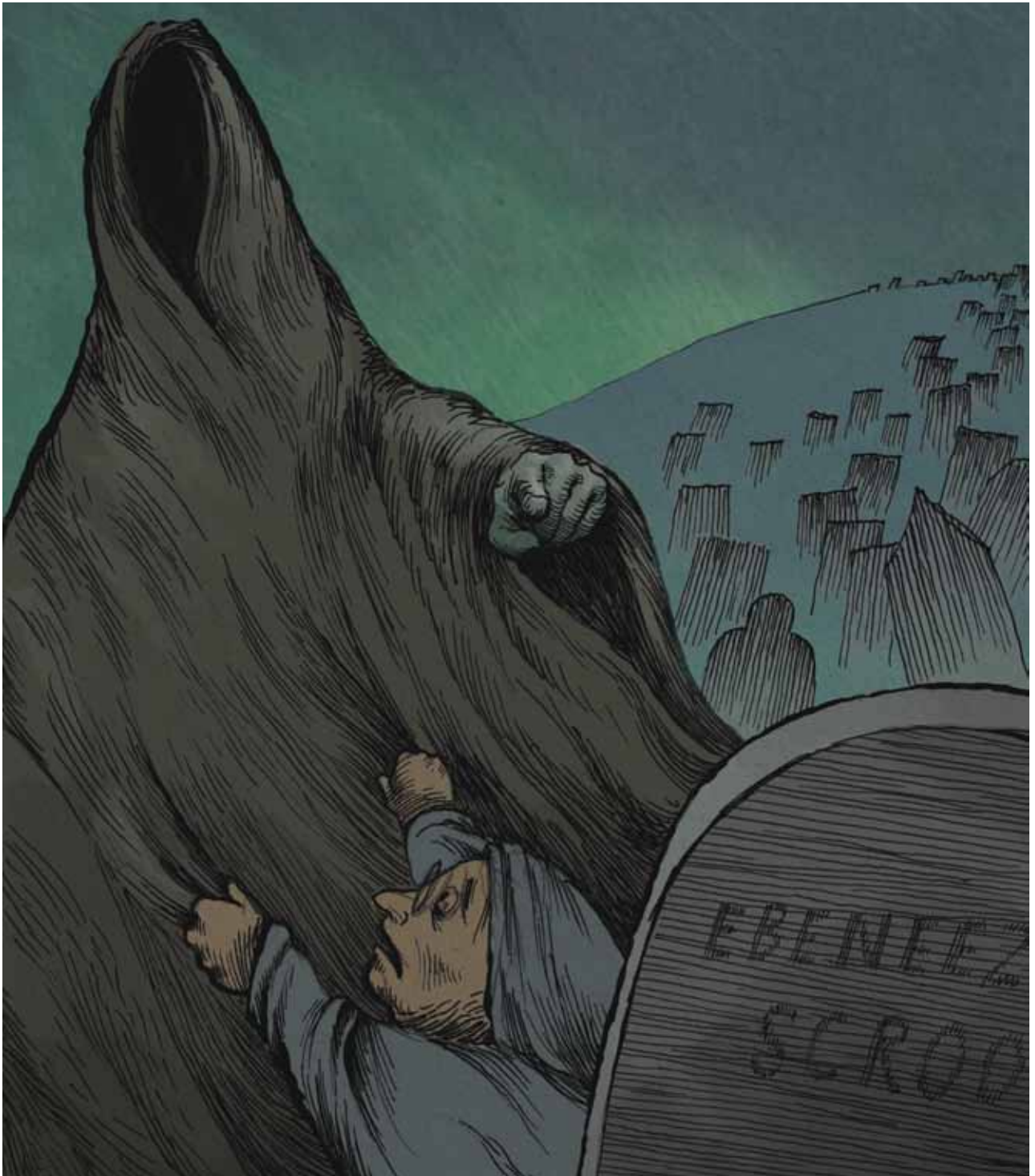
The finger was still there, pointing at Scrooge.

“Spirit!” Scrooge cried. “Hear me! I am not the man I was before. I will be better. Surely, there is still time? Surely, you would not show me these things unless there is still a chance to change my life?”

For the first time, the hand began to shake.

“Good spirit!” called Scrooge. “Have pity on me! Tell me that these things are not carved in stone. Tell me that they will change if I change my life!”

The hand trembled.



The spirit's finger pointed at the grave.

“I will honor Christmas in my heart and try to keep it all the year!” cried Scrooge. “I will heed the lessons you and the other ghosts have taught me!”

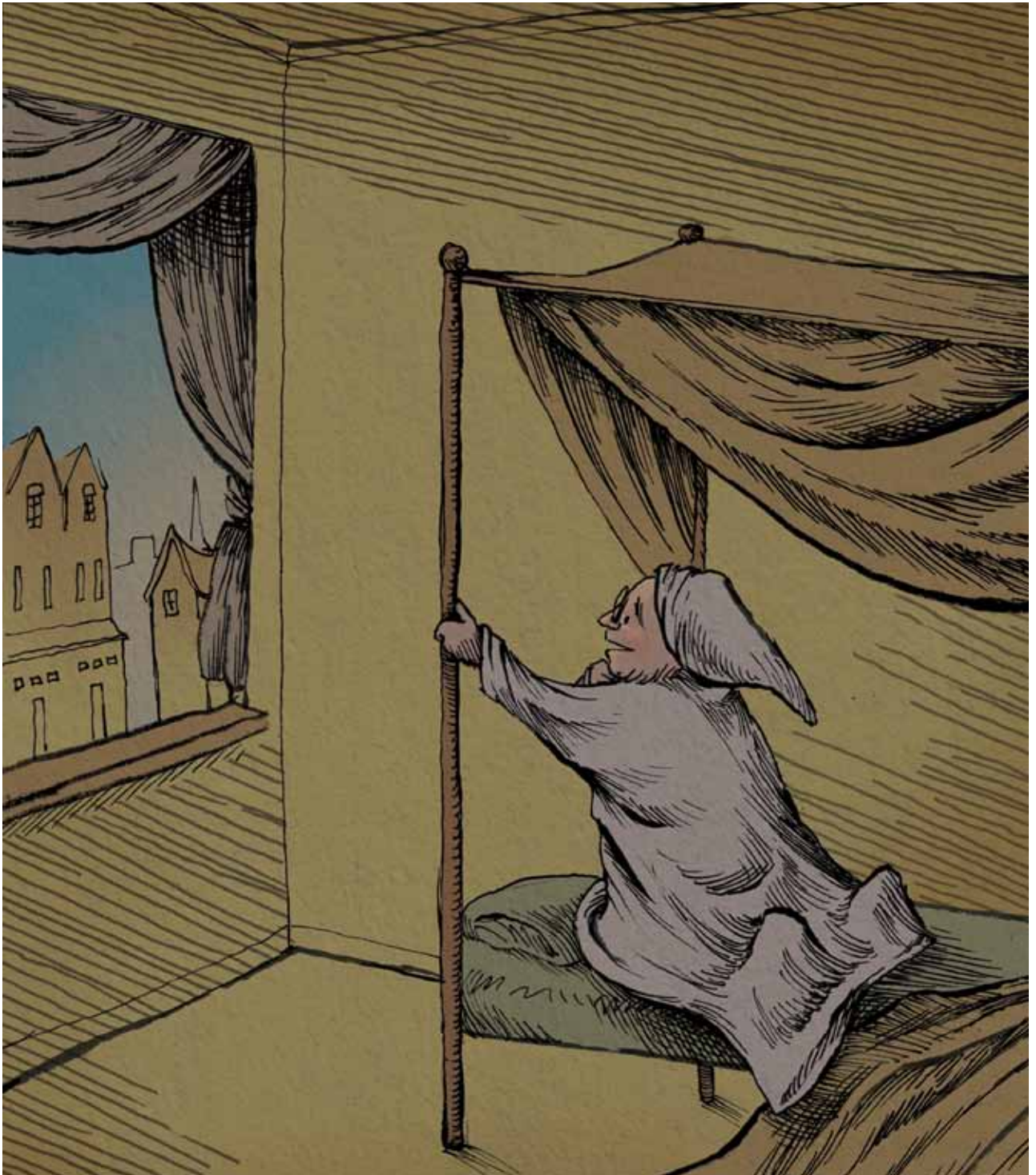
Scrooge reached out for the spirit with both hands, but the spirit vanished. Scrooge found himself sitting in his own bed with his arms around the bedpost.

Yes, the bed was his own. The room was his room, as well. Best of all, the rest of his life was his own. There was still time to make himself a better man!

Scrooge felt as giddy as a little boy and as light as a feather. He ran to the window. It was a bright, clear morning. The fog had lifted. The sun shone down.

Scrooge saw a boy passing in the street. He called out, “What’s today, my fine fellow?”

“It’s Christmas Day, of course!” said the boy.



Scrooge found himself in his own bed.

“Christmas!” said Scrooge. “Thank goodness! I haven’t missed it!”

Scrooge called down to the boy again.

“Do you know that big prize turkey they’re selling in the store on the next street?”

“You mean the one as big as me?” said the boy.

“Yes, that’s the one,” cried Scrooge. “Run to the store. Tell them to take the turkey to Bob Cratchit’s house.” He tossed the boy a coin as a reward.

Scrooge dressed quickly and rushed into the street.

“Merry Christmas!” he cried warmly to the people he met. He patted children on the head and talked with beggars. He found that everything he did gave him happiness.



“Merry Christmas!” Scrooge cried warmly.

Scrooge went on, calling out, “Merry Christmas!”

Before long, he ran into the two men who had visited him the day before, collecting for the poor.

Scrooge grabbed one of the men and whispered a few words in his ear.

“Bless me!” said the man. “Are you sure, Mr. Scrooge? Are you really willing to give such a sum of money?”

“Yes, yes!” cried Scrooge. “Not a penny less! Come and see me!”

“Indeed I will!” said the man.



“Not a penny less!” cried Scrooge.

The next morning, Scrooge arrived at work early, before Bob Cratchit. When Cratchit entered, Scrooge tried very hard to put on his old voice. He growled, “Well, what do you mean by coming in at this time of day?”

“I apologize, sir,” said Bob Cratchit.

“I am not going to stand for this sort of thing any longer!” barked Scrooge. “Therefore,” he said, “I am raising your salary! A merry Christmas to you, Bob Cratchit!”

Scrooge was as good as his word. From then on, he helped Bob Cratchit and his family. To Tiny Tim, who did not die, Scrooge became like a second father.

Scrooge shared his wealth with other people in need, as well. He became as good a man as the good, old city knew. From that day onward, it was always said of him, that he knew how to keep Christmas well. May that be truly said of all of us. And, as Tiny Tim observed, “God bless us, every one!”



“God bless us, every one!” observed Tiny Tim.

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