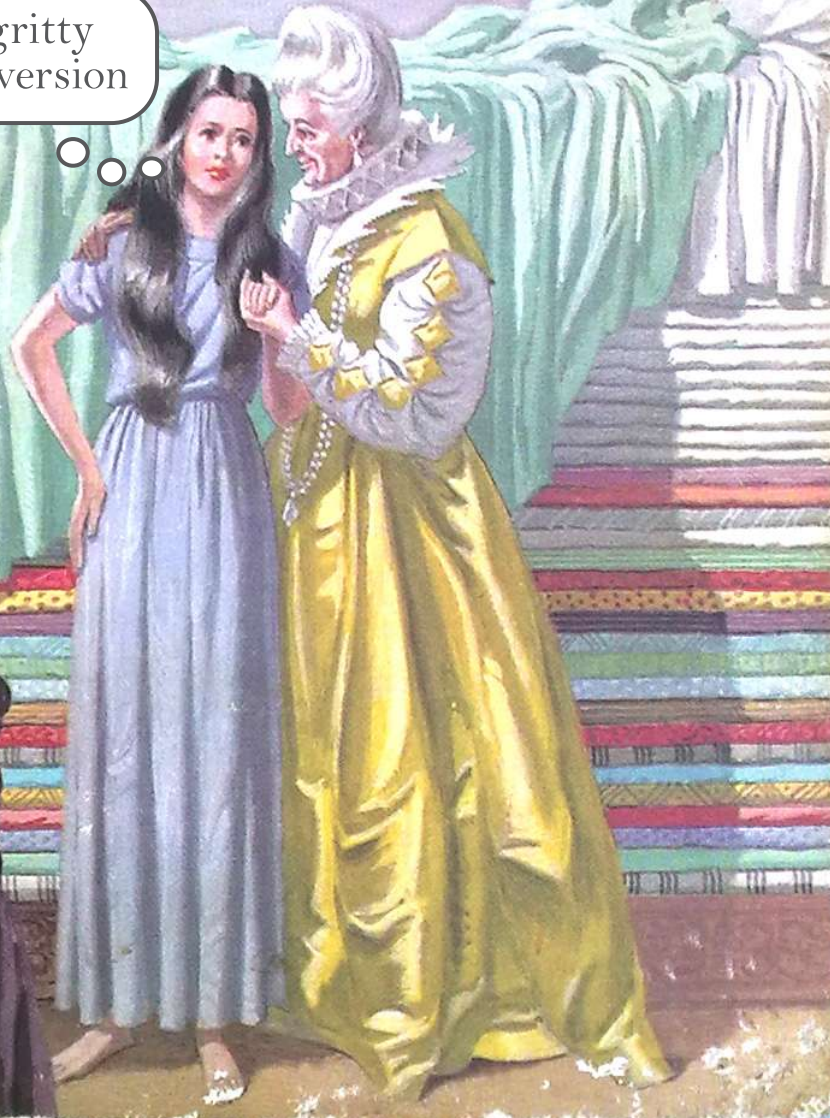


'WELL-LOVED TALES'

The Princess and the Pea



The gritty
reboot version



'WELL-LOVED TALES'

The Princess and the Pea

A LADYBIRD
'EASY-READING' BOOK

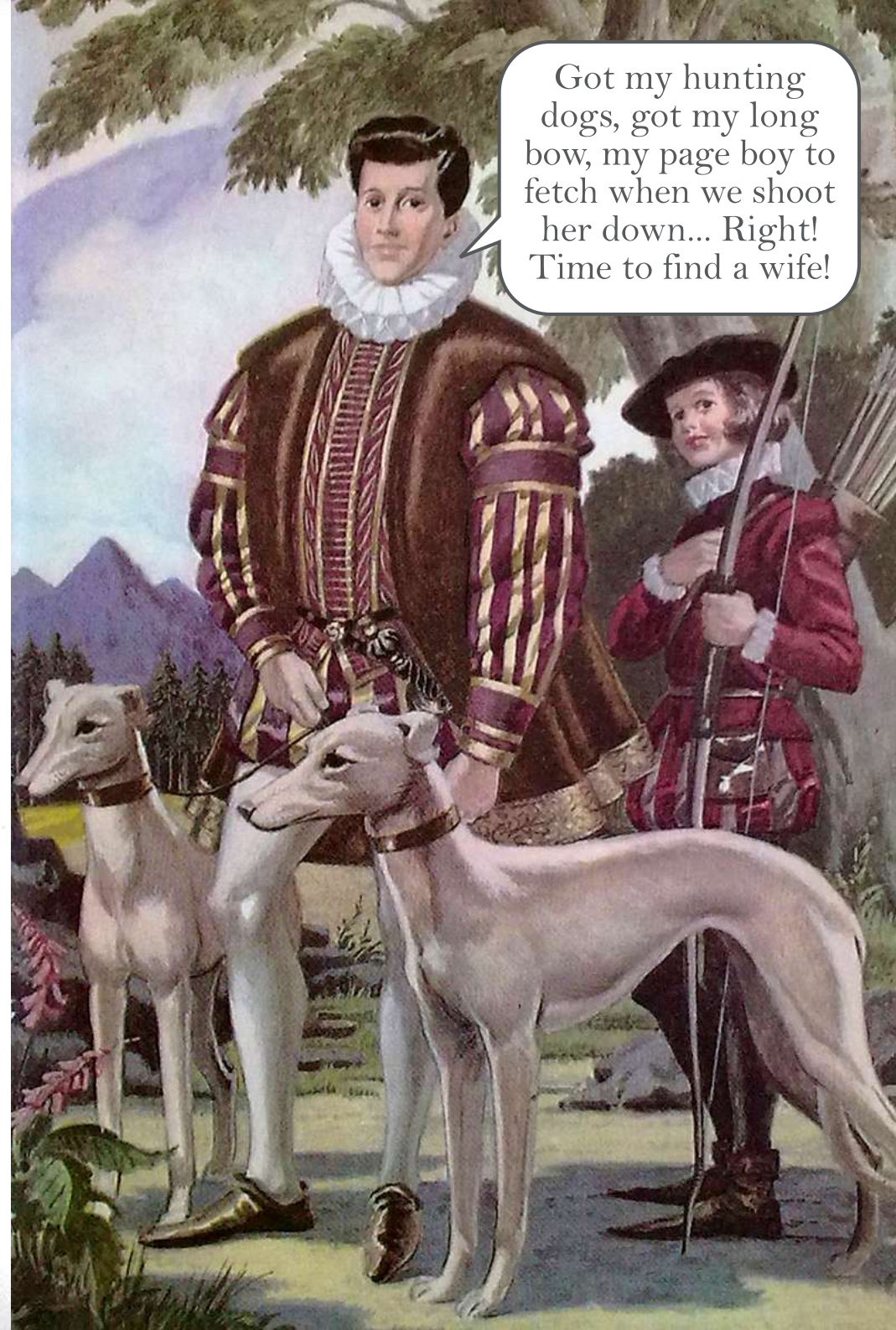
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ERIC WINTER



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THE PRINCESS AND THE PEA

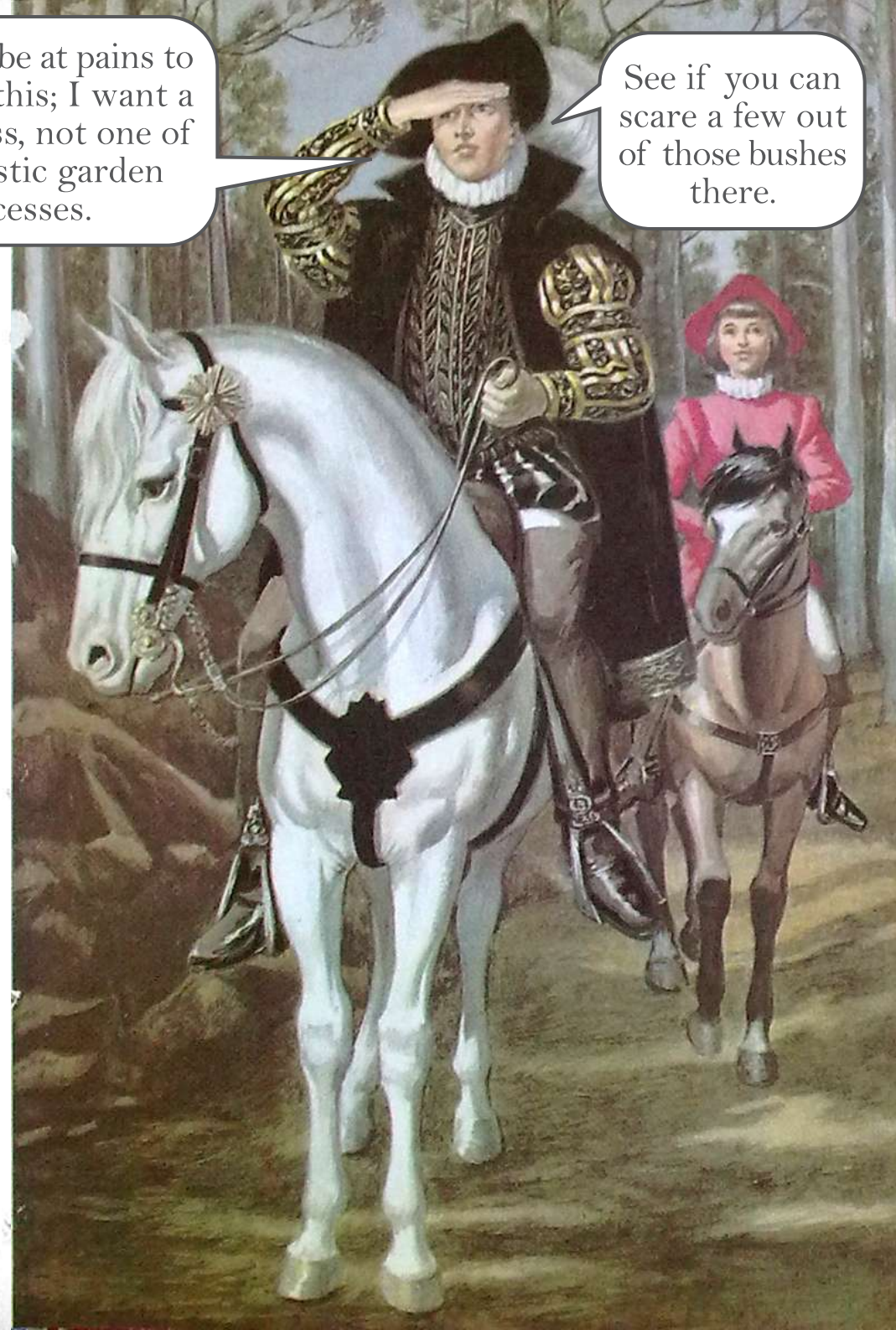
Once upon a time, there was a prince. When he grew up he wanted to marry a princess. But he wanted her to be a *real* princess.



Boy, let me be at pains to emphasise this; I want a *real* princess, not one of those plastic garden princesses.

See if you can scare a few out of those bushes there.

The prince went all over the world looking for a *real* princess whom he could marry.



The prince met many princesses but there was always something the matter with them. One was too tall and another was too small. One was too sad and another was too gay.



She just doesn't seem like a real princess to me.

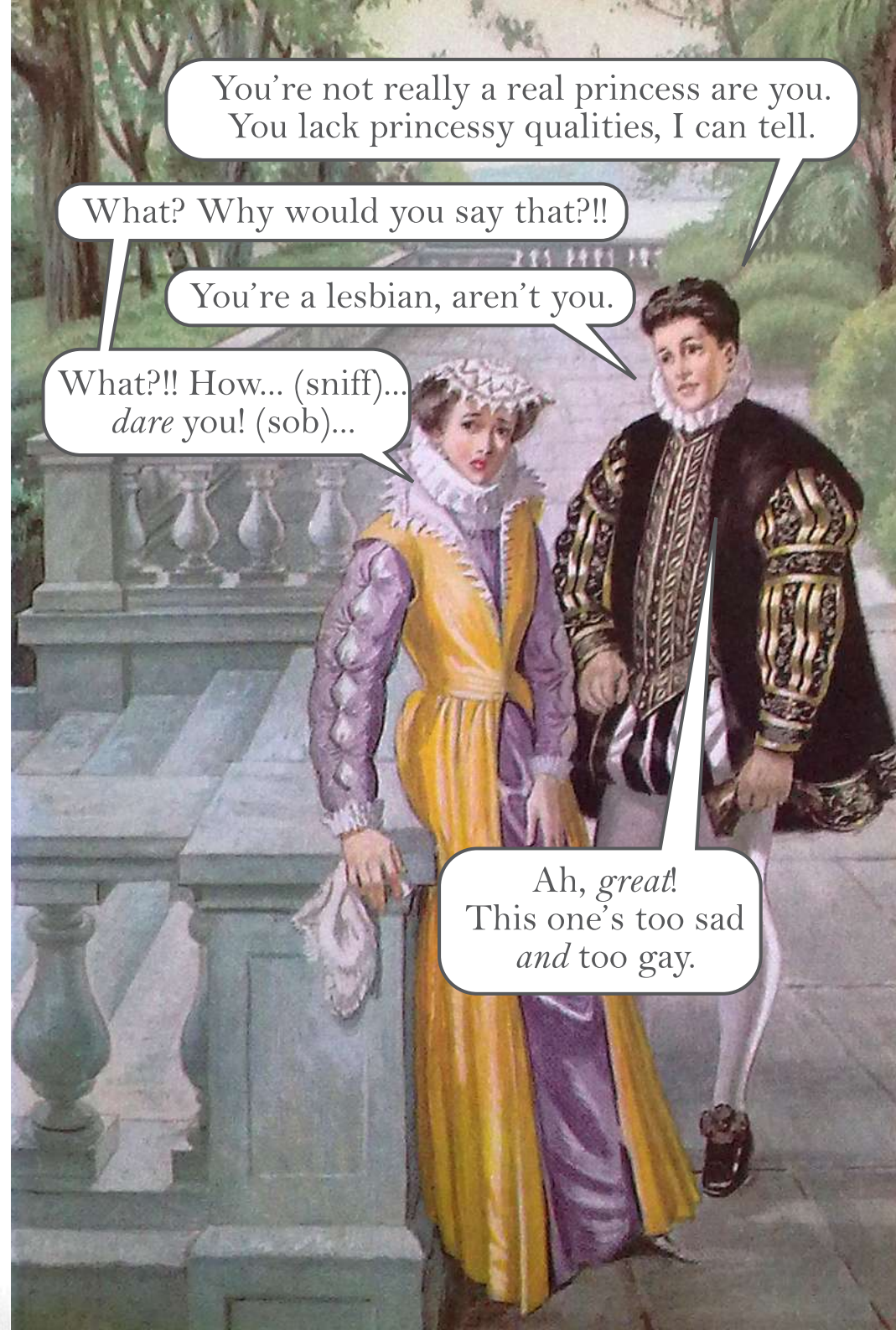
But I'm the king of this land, and she's my daughter. That makes her a princess. It's not hard.

But she's hardly even very realistic.

Is your mom also your aunt?

Alright, given her lack of pedigree, I'm willing to offer five pounds.

Somehow or other, not one of the princesses was just right. The prince was never quite sure if they were *real* princesses.



You're not really a real princess are you.
You lack princessy qualities, I can tell.

What? Why would you say that?!!

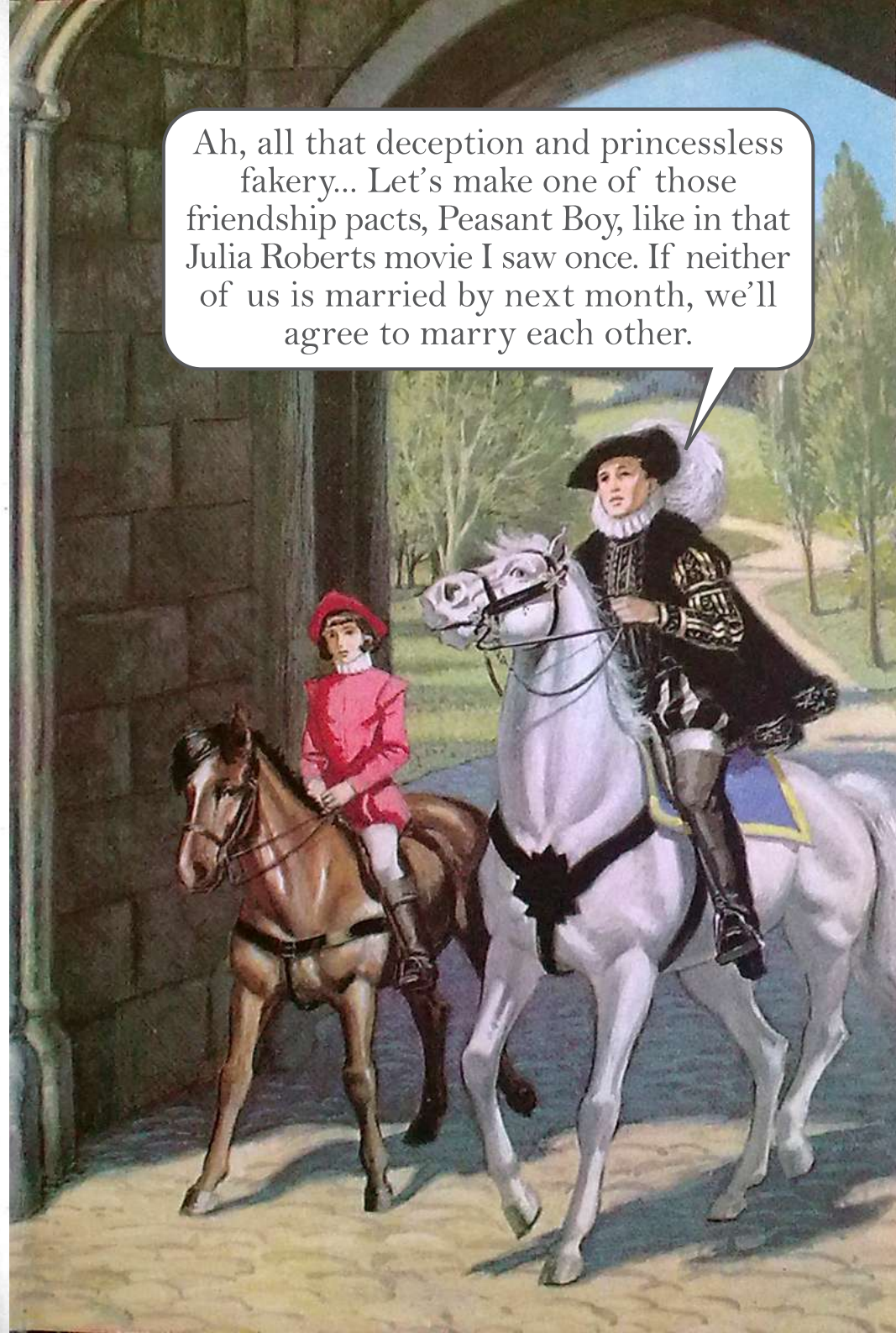
You're a lesbian, aren't you.

What?!! How... (sniff)...
dare you! (sob)...

Ah, *great!*
This one's too sad
and too gay.

At last, the prince came home again. He was very sad because he did want to marry a *real* princess.

Ah, all that deception and princessless fakery... Let's make one of those friendship pacts, Peasant Boy, like in that Julia Roberts movie I saw once. If neither of us is married by next month, we'll agree to marry each other.



Then one night there was a terrible storm. The lightning flashed, the thunder roared, the wind blew and the rain poured down.

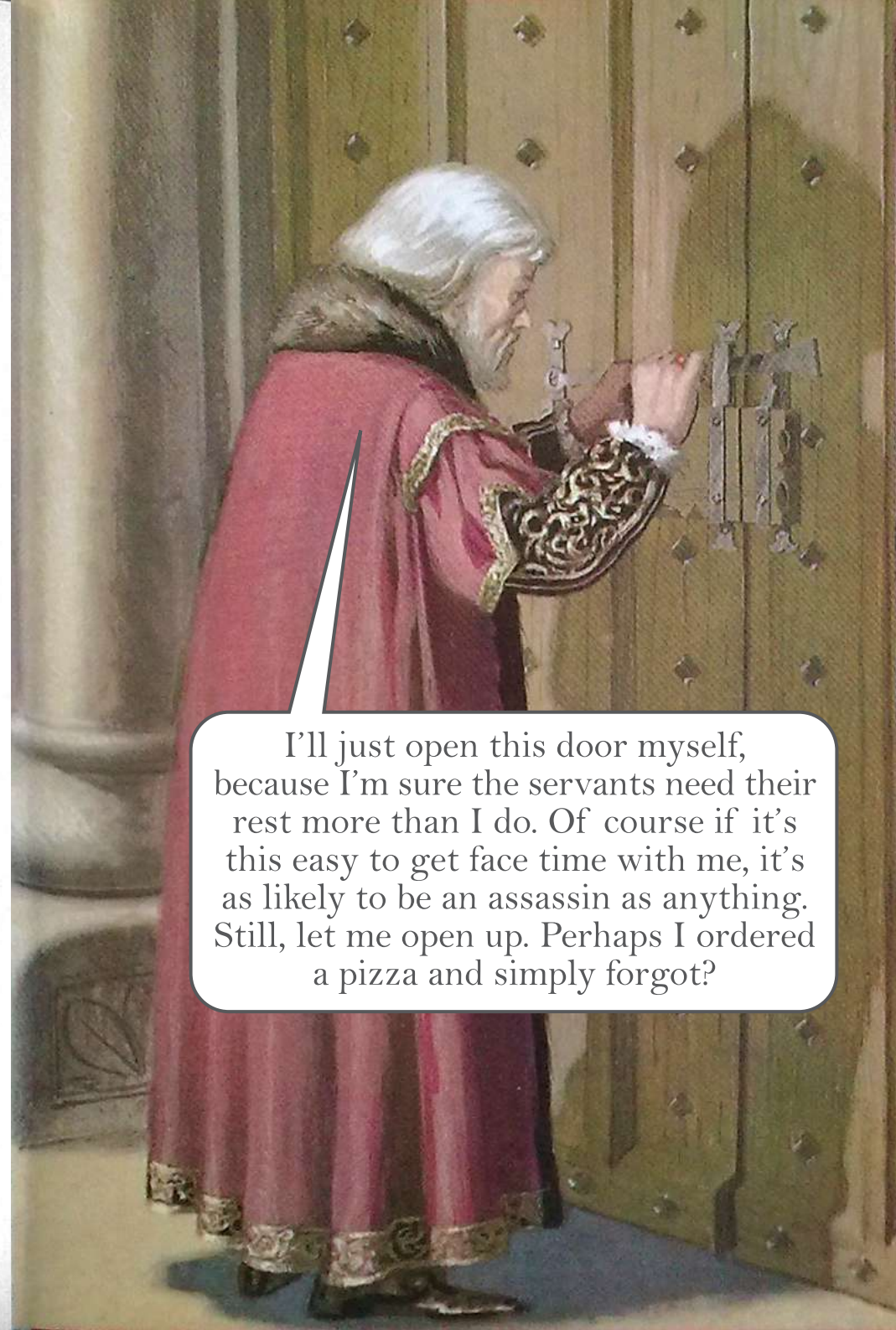


What is this? Drugs again! That's it!!
Get out of this house, young lady! I'm
sorry it's come to this, but don't come
back this time!

I'm a real princess, and this
is my fairy leprechaun pony.

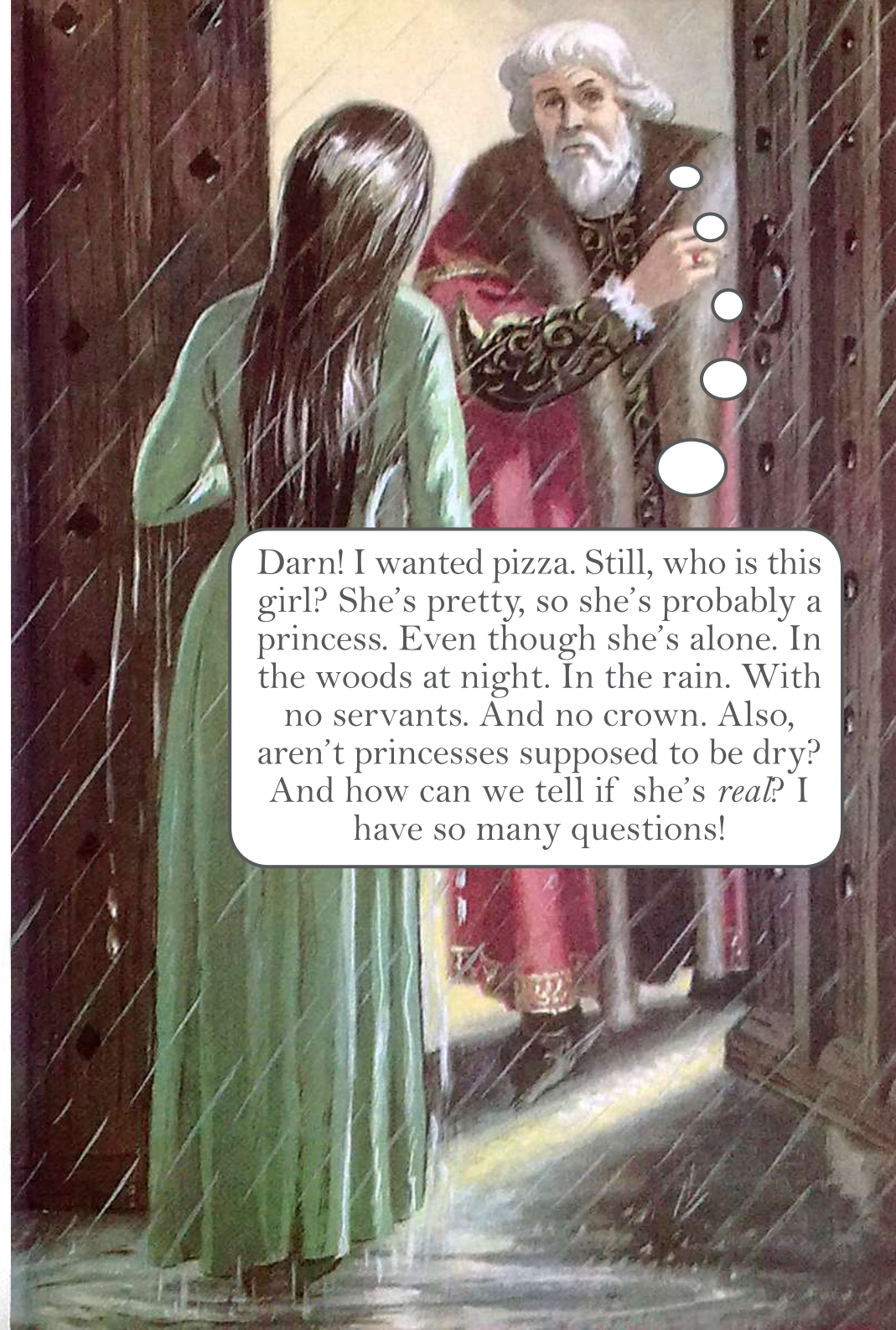
OUT!

In the middle of the storm there was a knock on the door of the castle. The old king went to open the door.



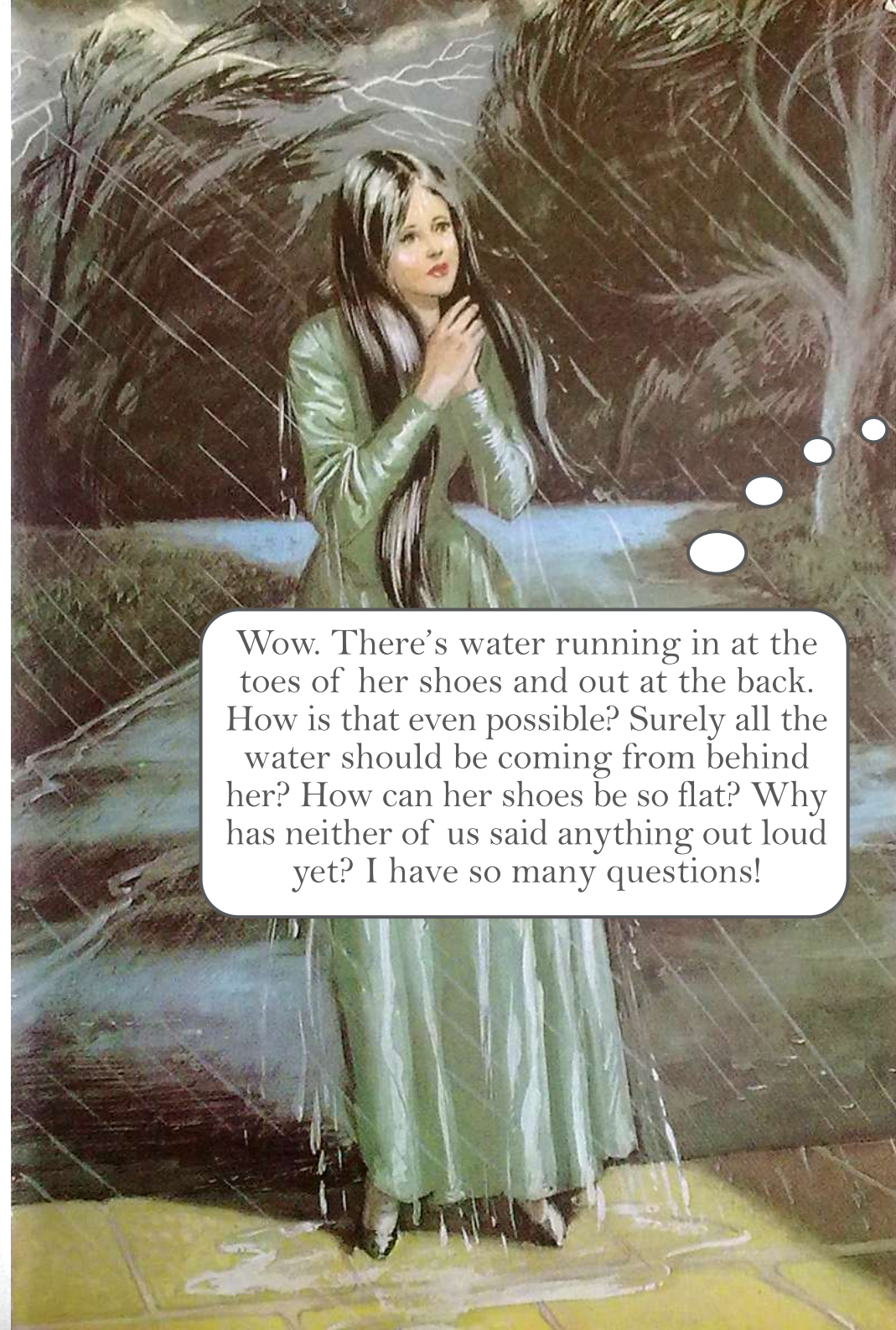
I'll just open this door myself, because I'm sure the servants need their rest more than I do. Of course if it's this easy to get face time with me, it's as likely to be an assassin as anything. Still, let me open up. Perhaps I ordered a pizza and simply forgot?

There, standing outside in the pouring rain, was a lovely lady. She might have been a princess, but she was so wet that it was difficult to tell.



Darn! I wanted pizza. Still, who is this girl? She's pretty, so she's probably a princess. Even though she's alone. In the woods at night. In the rain. With no servants. And no crown. Also, aren't princesses supposed to be dry? And how can we tell if she's *real*? I have so many questions!

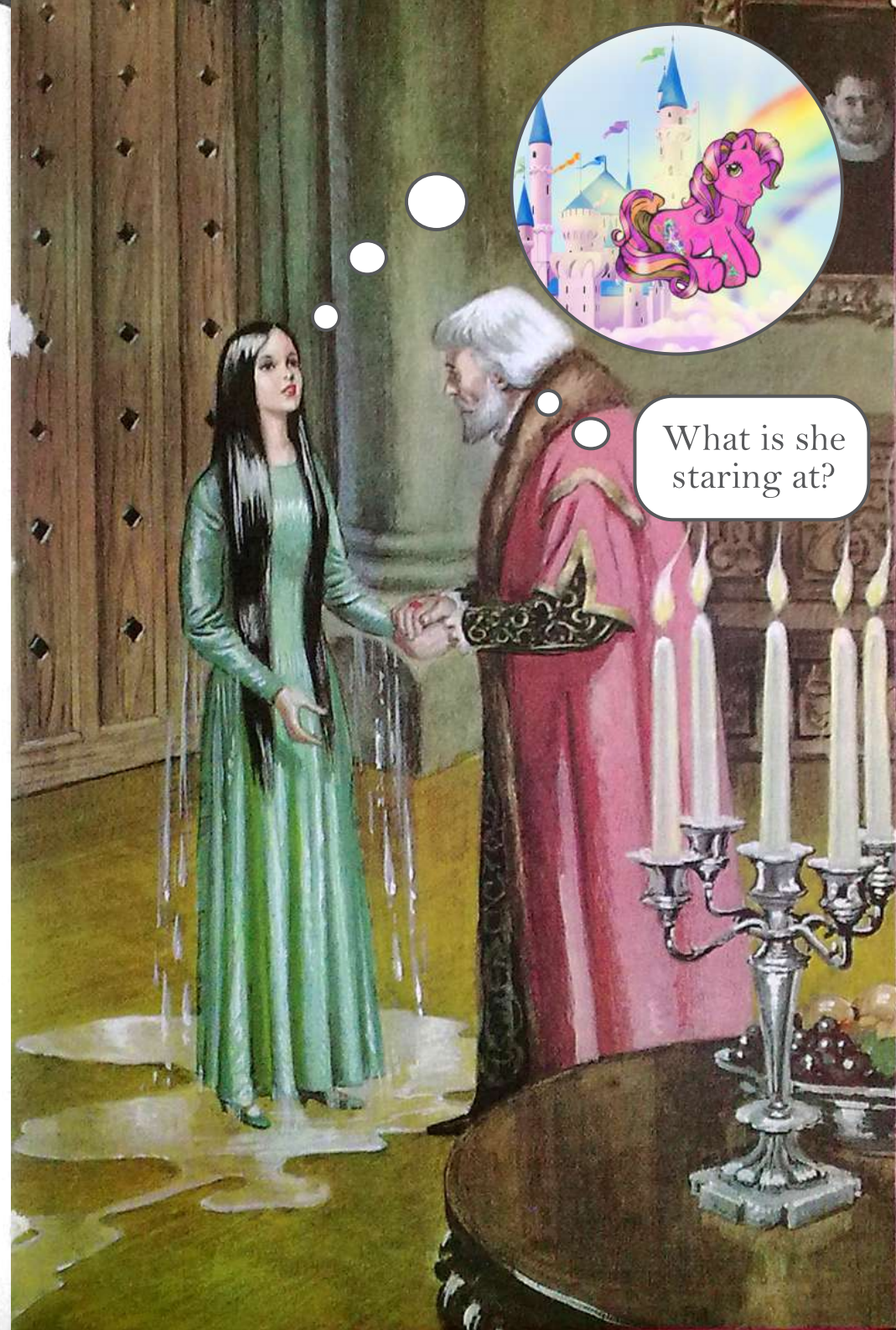
Her hair was so wet that the water from it was running down her face. Her clothes were so wet that the water was pouring out of them. Her shoes were so wet that the water was running in at the toes and out at the heels.



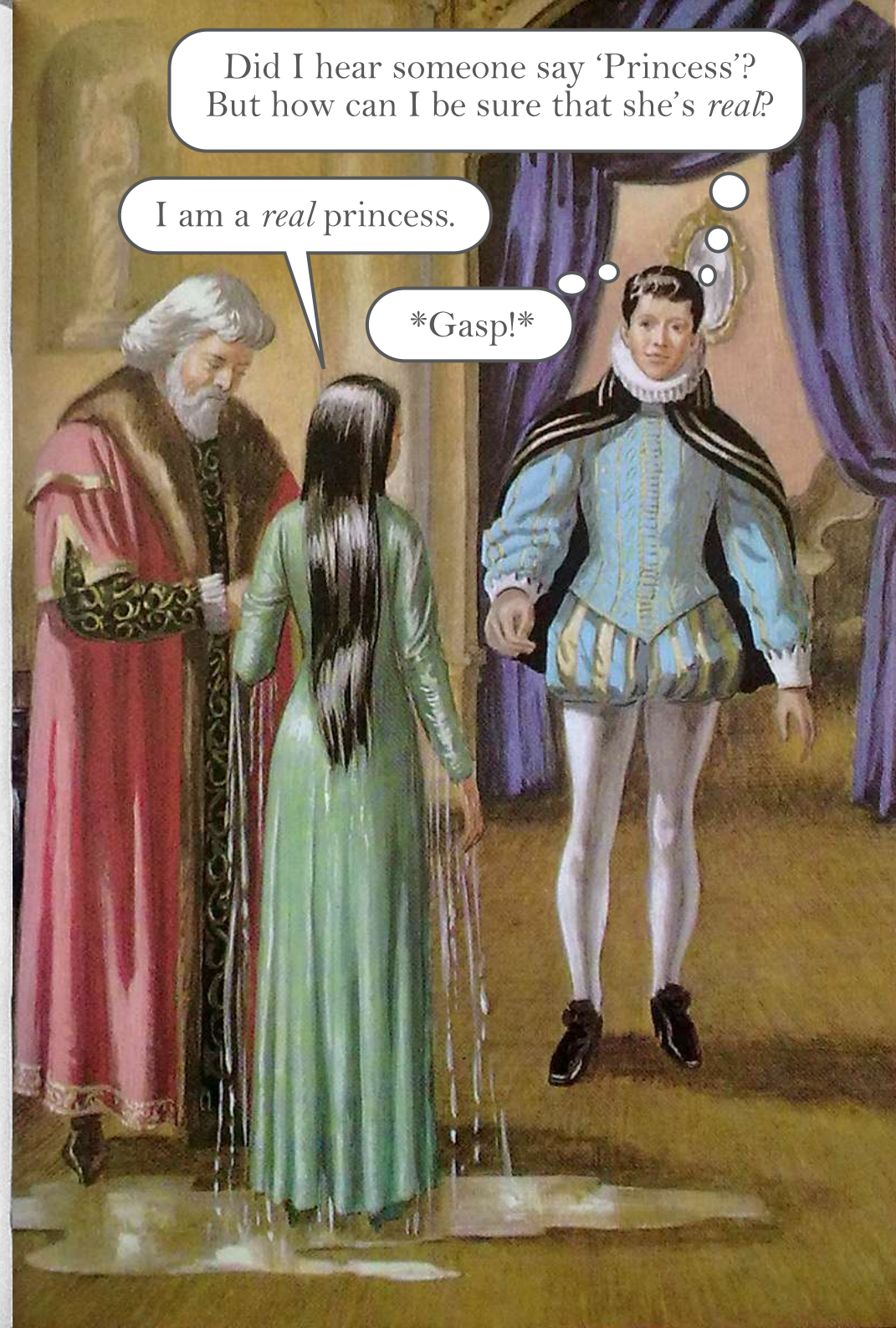
Wow. There's water running in at the toes of her shoes and out at the back. How is that even possible? Surely all the water should be coming from behind her? How can her shoes be so flat? Why has neither of us said anything out loud yet? I have so many questions!

The king led the princess into the castle, out of the wind and the rain.

There she stood, in a pool of water, and all she could say was, “I am a *real* princess.”



The prince could not believe his ears when he heard her say, “I am a *real* princess.”



The old queen heard her say,
“I am a *real* princess.”

“We’ll see about that,” thought
the old queen, but she did not say
anything.



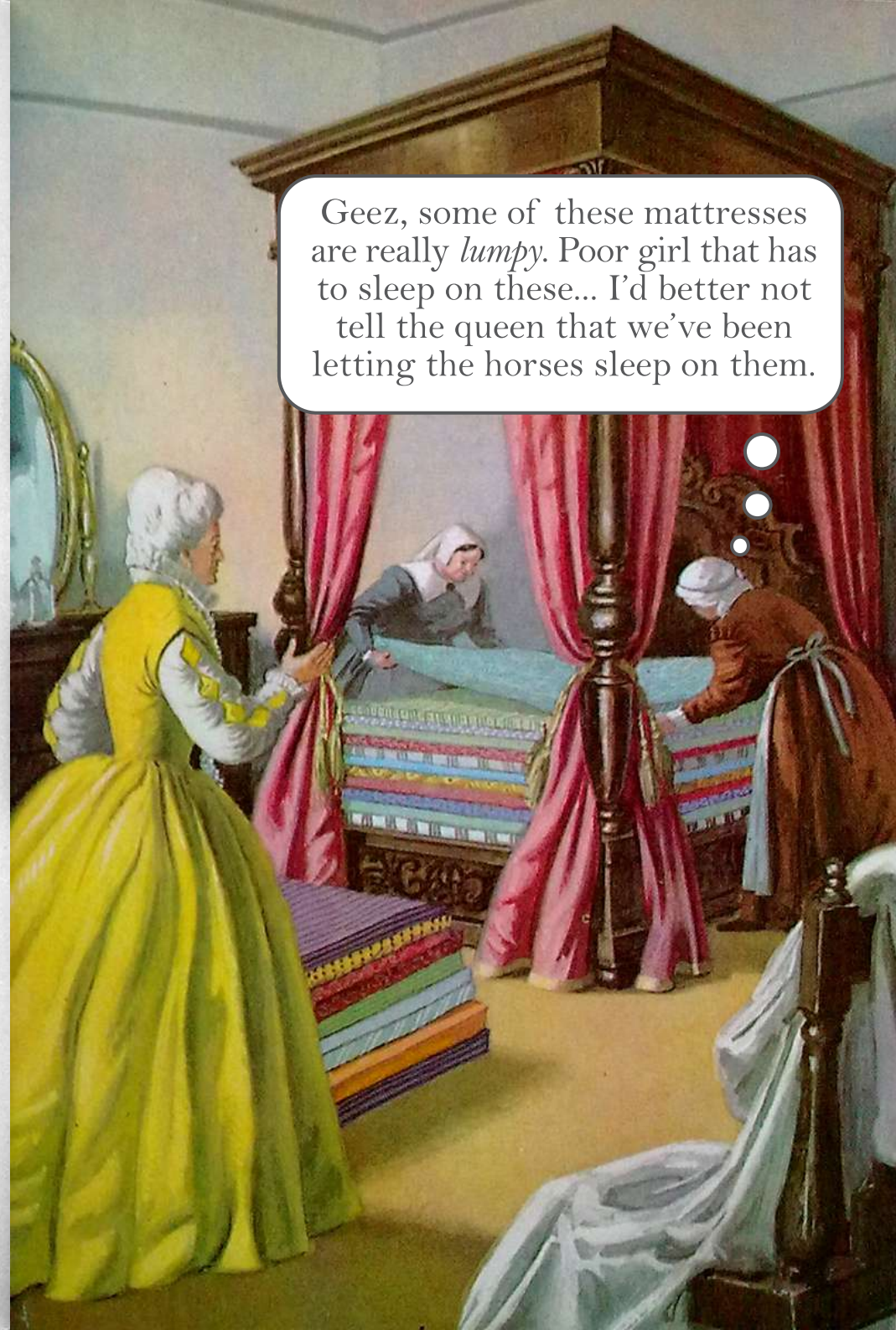
While the princess was being bathed and dried and dressed in dry clothes, the queen went to see about a bedroom for her.



That girl is totally *baked*.

The queen had all the bedclothes taken off the bed. Then she put a pea under the mattress.

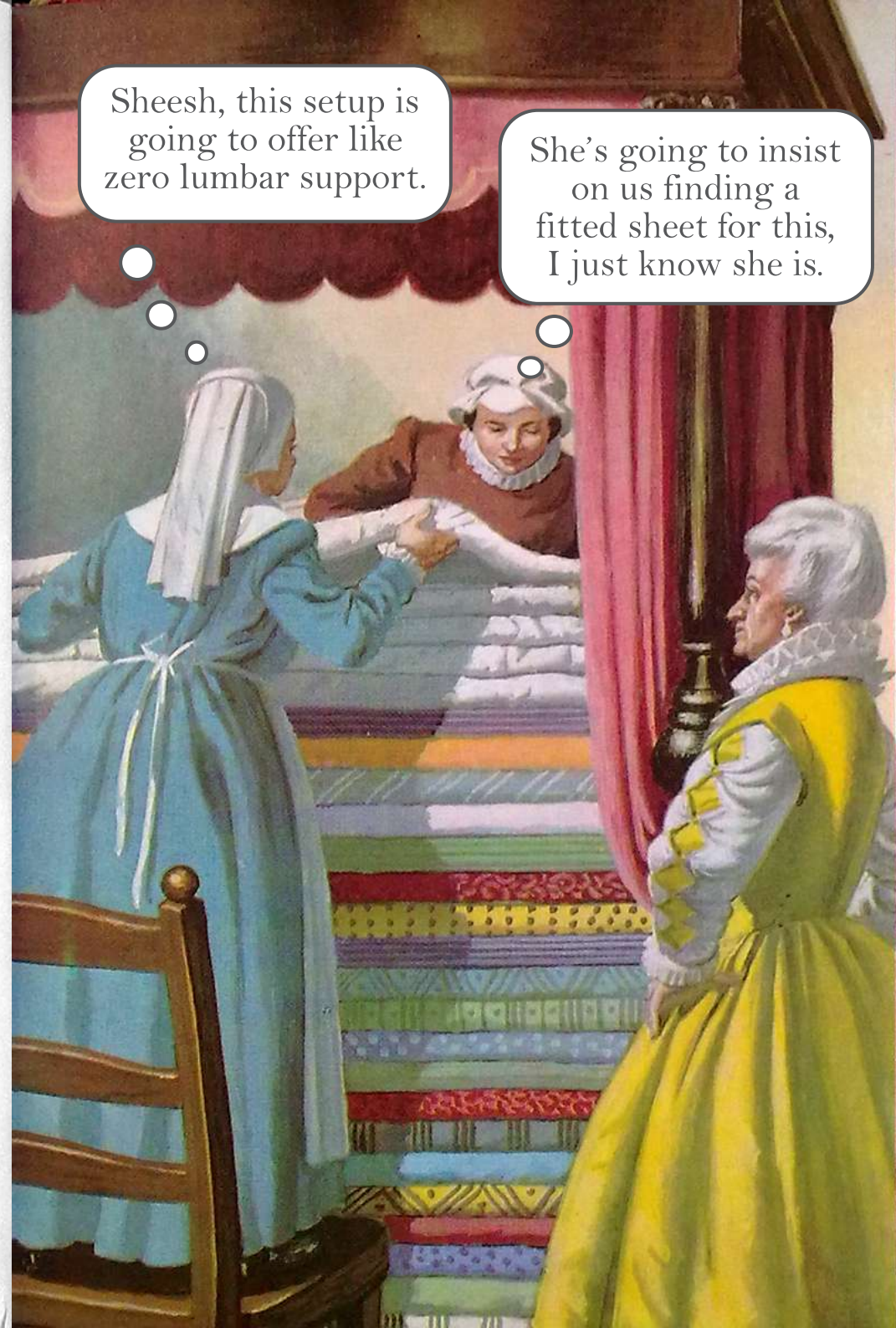
Then more mattresses were put on top, until there were twenty mattresses on top of the pea.



Geez, some of these mattresses are really *lumpy*. Poor girl that has to sleep on these... I'd better not tell the queen that we've been letting the horses sleep on them.

Then the queen had twenty feather beds piled on top of the twenty mattresses.

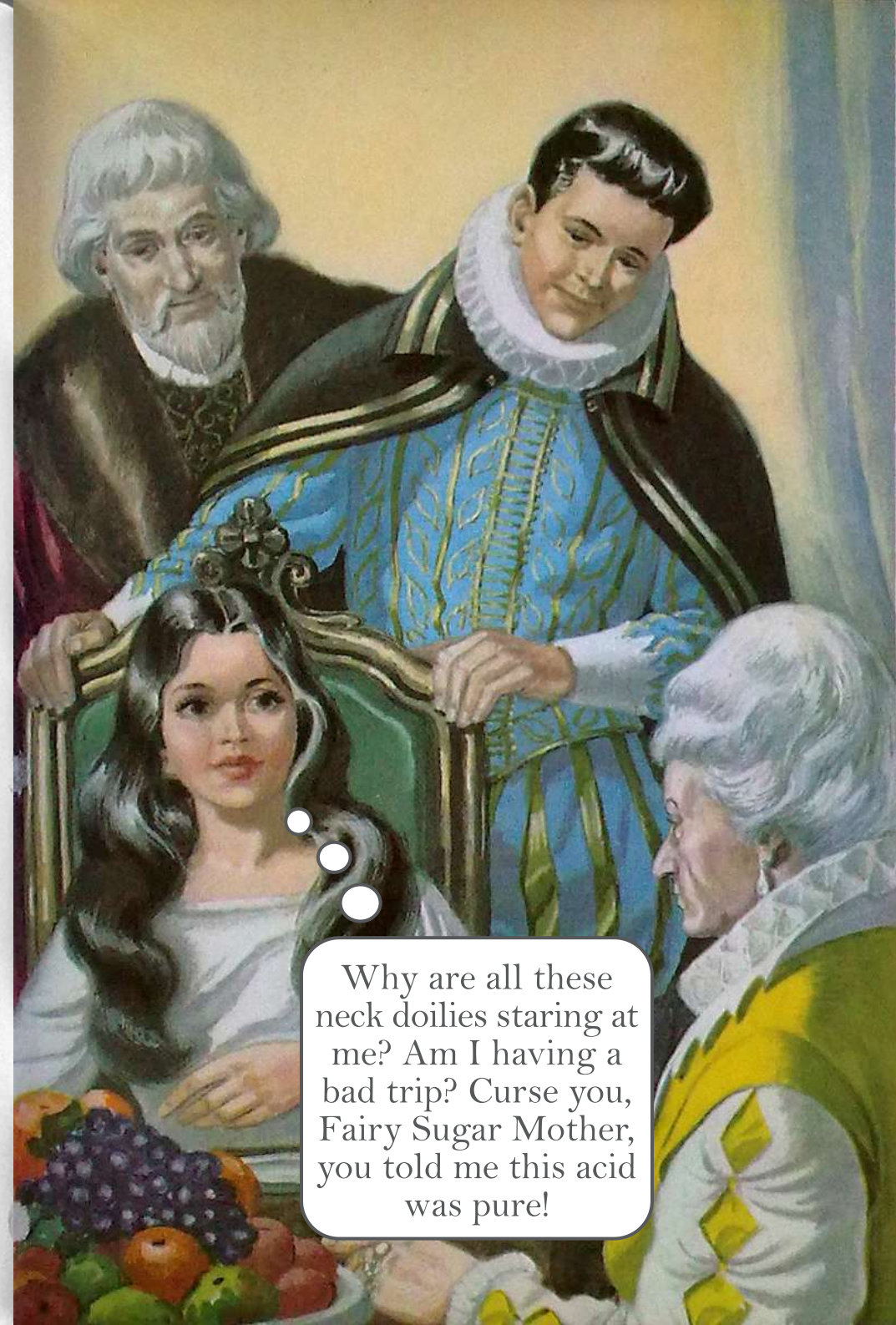
“Now we shall find out if you are a real princess,” said the queen to herself.



Sheesh, this setup is going to offer like zero lumbar support.

She's going to insist on us finding a fitted sheet for this, I just know she is.

When the princess was warmed and fed, the queen led her to the bedroom and tucked her into bed.



Why are all these neck doilies staring at me? Am I having a bad trip? Curse you, Fairy Sugar Mother, you told me this acid was pure!

During the night...

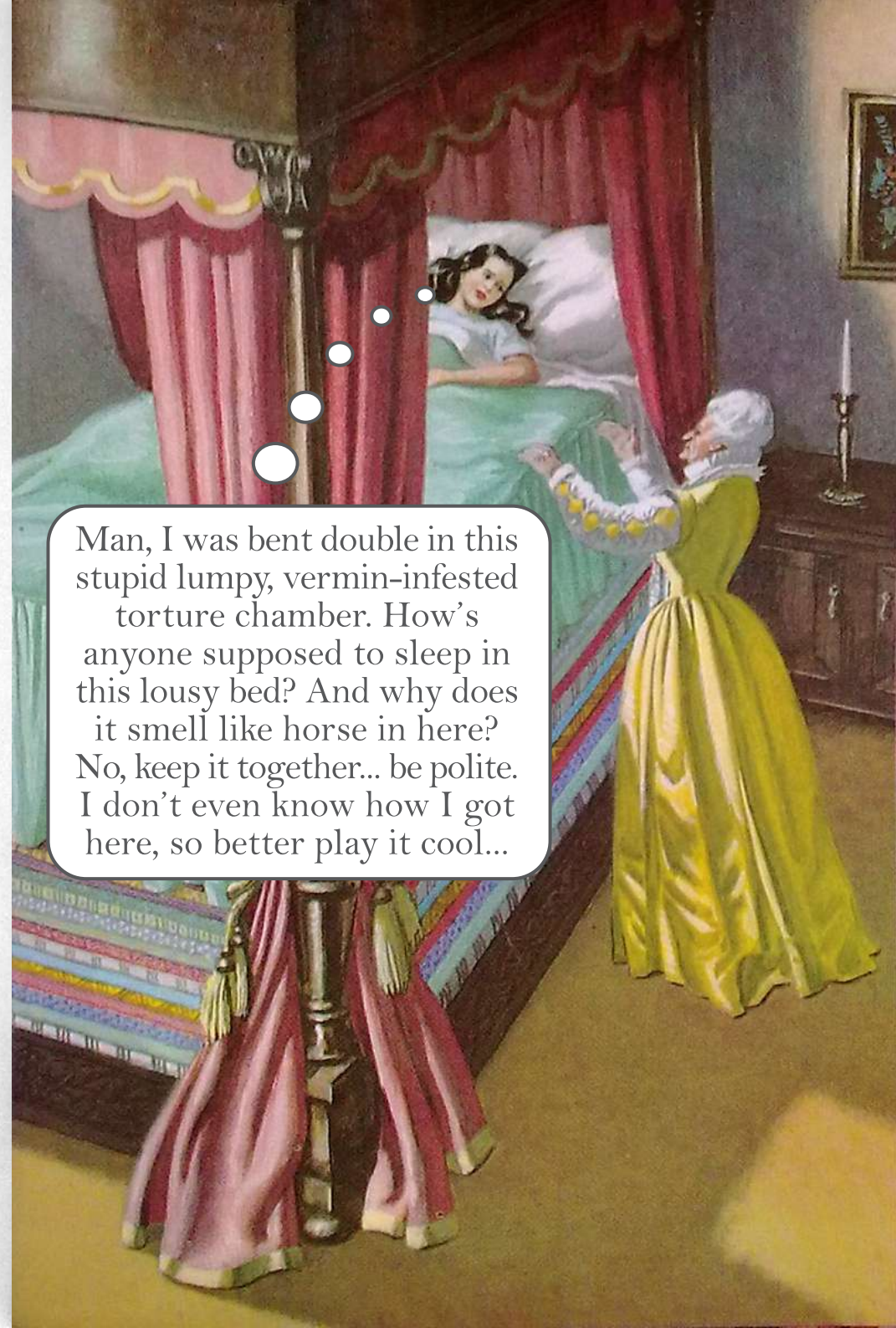


In the morning, the old queen went to see the princess. “How did you sleep, my dear?” she asked her.



“Dreadfully,” replied the princess, “I hardly slept a wink all night!”

“What was the matter?” asked the old queen.



Man, I was bent double in this stupid lumpy, vermin-infested torture chamber. How's anyone supposed to sleep in this lousy bed? And why does it smell like horse in here? No, keep it together... be polite. I don't even know how I got here, so better play it cool...

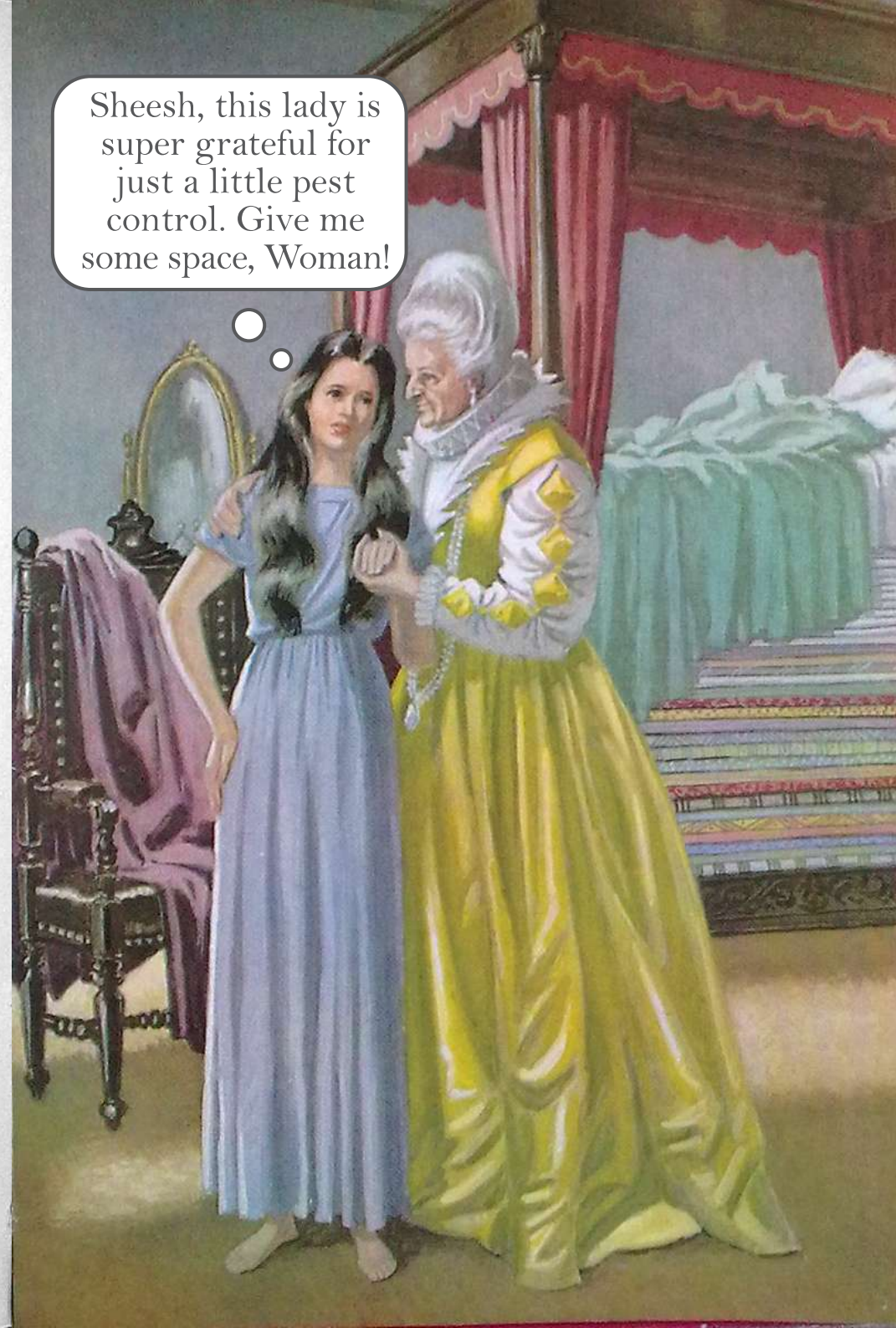
“I do not know what was in the bed,” replied the princess, “but there was something hard in it. Now I am black and blue all over.”

Don't worry, though; I kicked it and it scurried off.



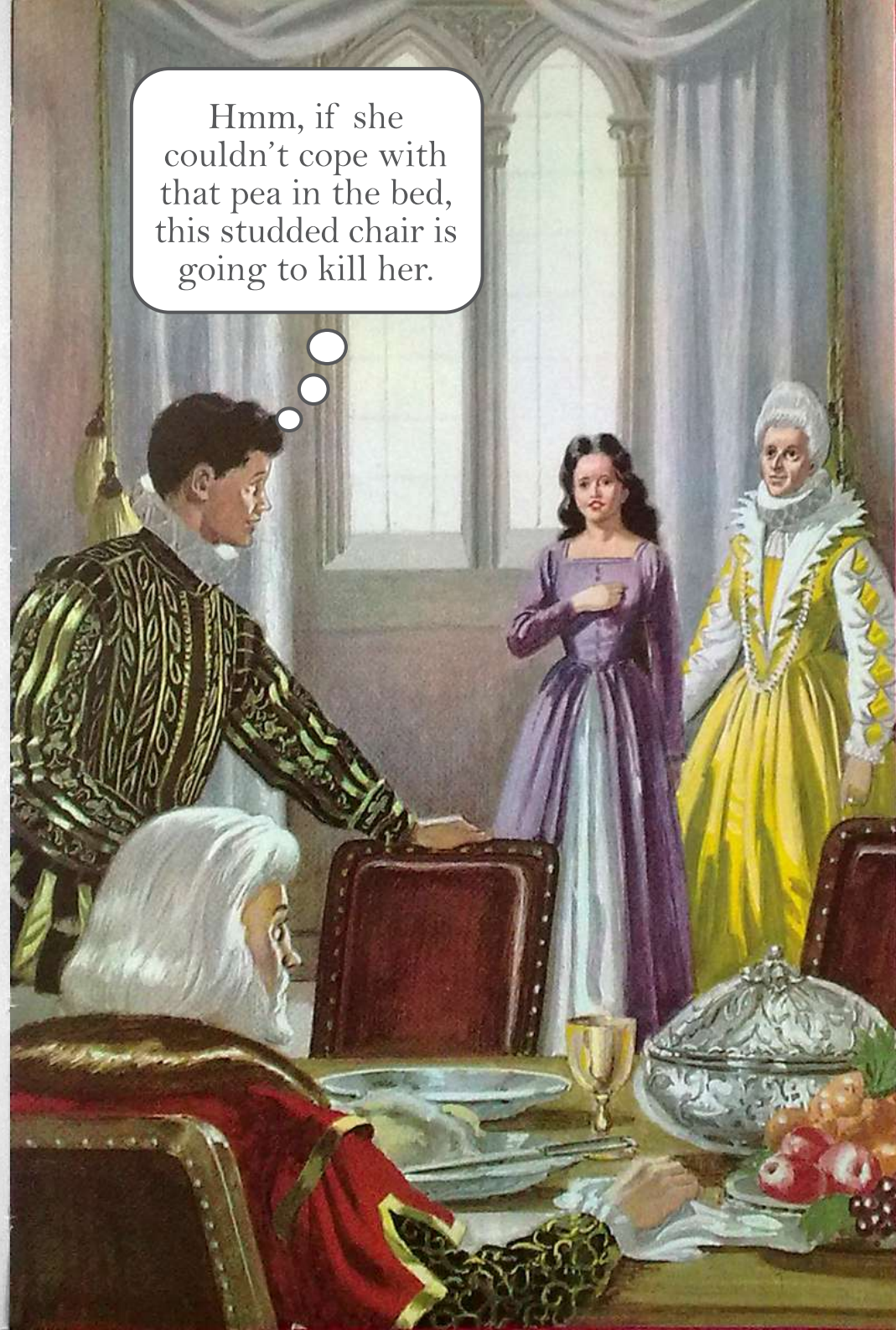
Then the queen knew that this was a *real* princess because she had felt the pea through twenty mattresses and twenty feather beds. Only a *real* princess could be as tender as that.

Sheesh, this lady is super grateful for just a little pest control. Give me some space, Woman!



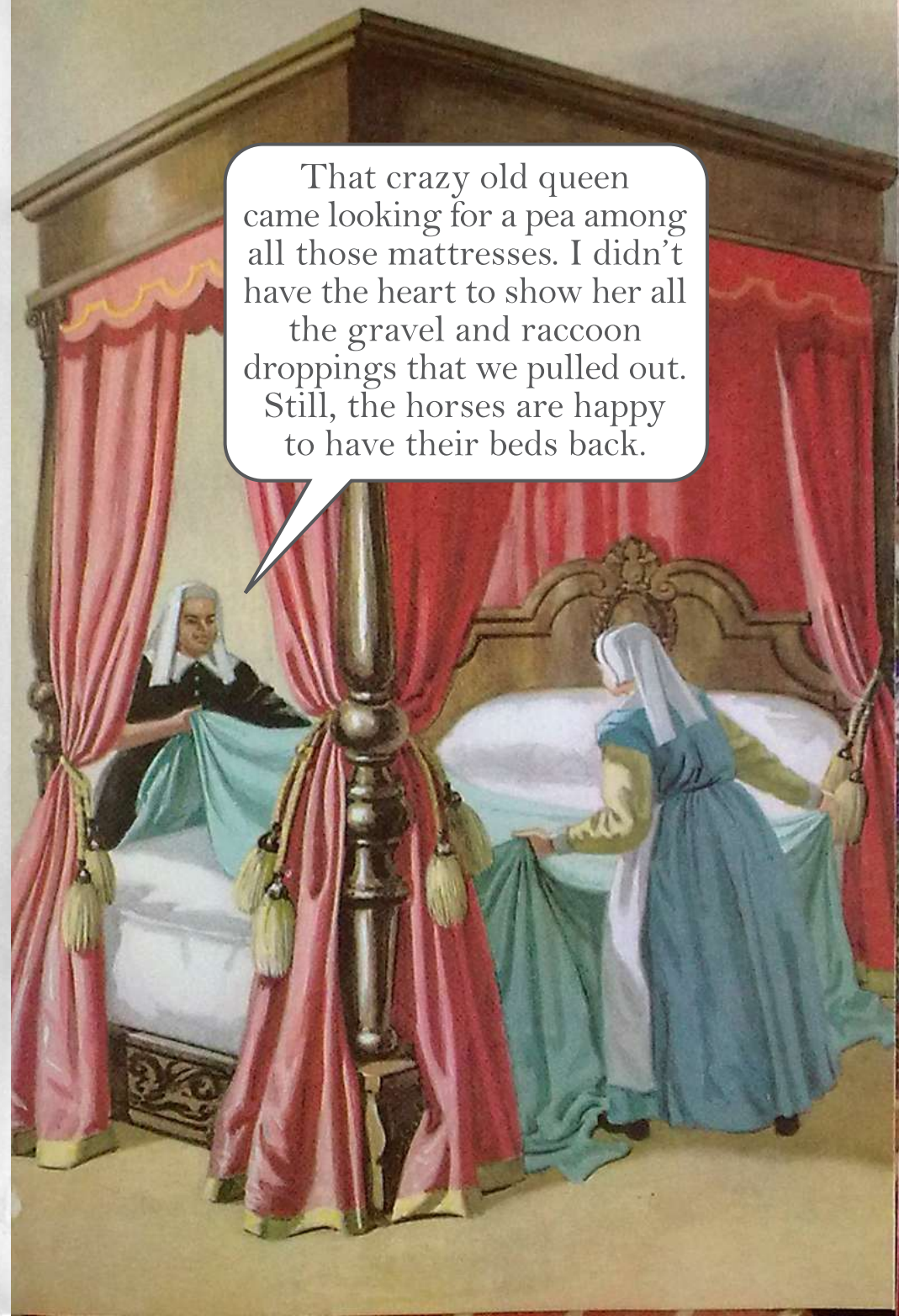
The prince was filled with joy when the old queen told him that they had indeed found a *real* princess.

Hmm, if she couldn't cope with that pea in the bed, this studded chair is going to kill her.



Now the queen had the pea taken out of the bed so that the poor princess could sleep well.

That crazy old queen came looking for a pea among all those mattresses. I didn't have the heart to show her all the gravel and raccoon droppings that we pulled out. Still, the horses are happy to have their beds back.



A wedding was arranged between the prince and the *real* princess. Then there was great joy in the castle.



As for the pea, it was placed in a museum. It may still be seen there—if no-one has taken it away!

A museum display case containing a pea on a blue cloth. The case is made of dark wood with glass panels. Inside, a small green pea sits on a round object covered with a blue cloth. A speech bubble points to the pea.

I'm a *real* pea!

