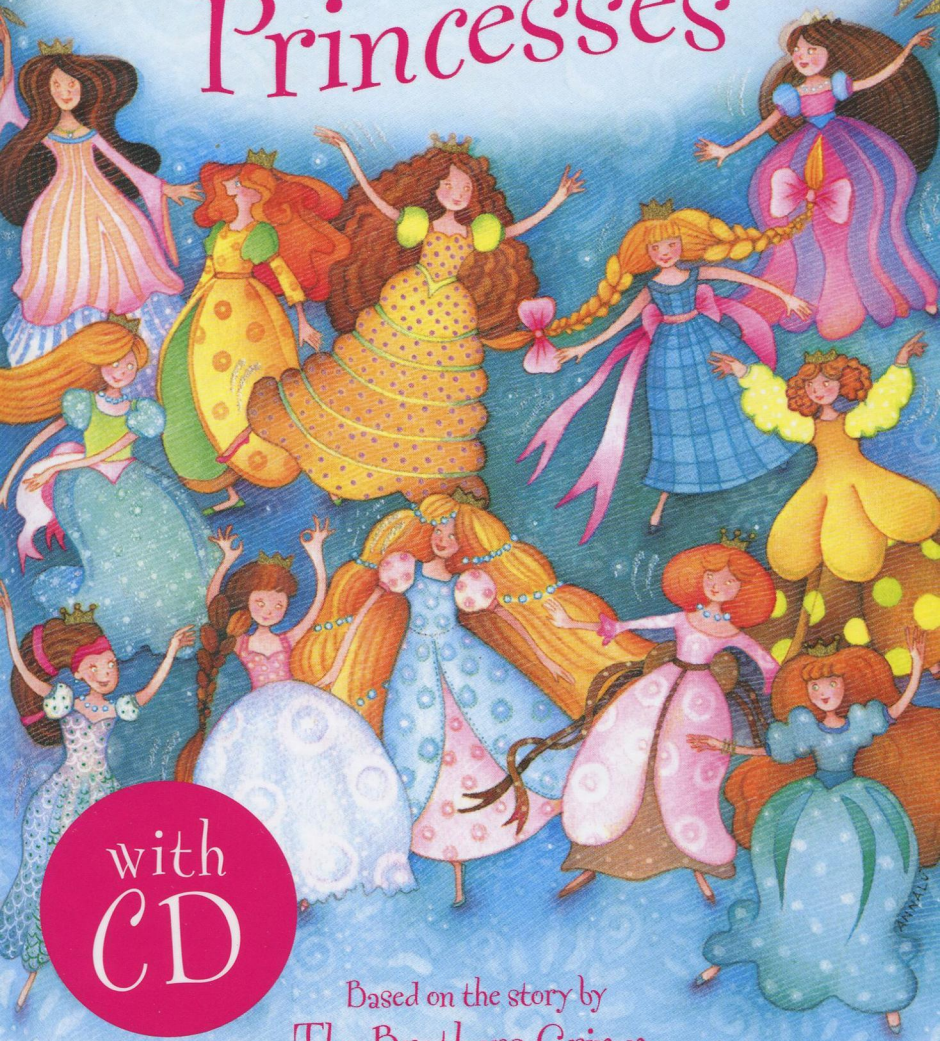


USBORNE YOUNG READING



The Twelve Dancing Princesses



with
CD

Based on the story by
The Brothers Grimm
Illustrated by Anna Luraschi

The Twelve Dancing Princesses

Retold by Emma Helbrough

Illustrated by
Anna Luraschi



Reading Consultant: Alison Kelly
Roehampton University

Contents

Chapter 1	Family trouble	3
Chapter 2	The sisters' secret	7
Chapter 3	Taking the challenge	14
Chapter 4	Ralph and Rascal	20
Chapter 5	Ralph on the trail	29
Chapter 6	A shock for the king	39





Chapter 1

Family trouble



There were once twelve beautiful princesses, all with long, flowing hair and short, fiery tempers.

Their father, the king, was a grumpy old man who didn't believe in having fun.

All of you just sit down and look pretty!

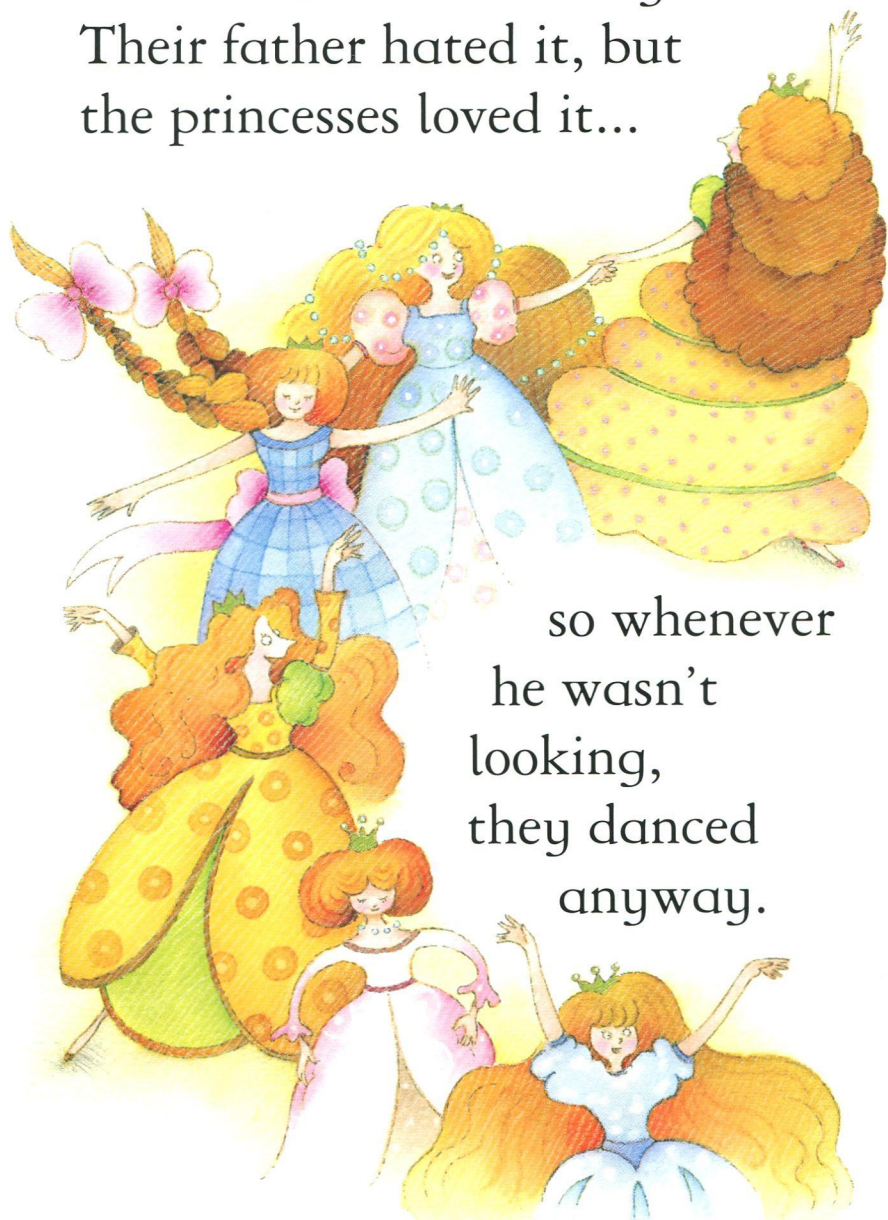


In fact, he believed that princesses should be seen and not heard.



The princesses strongly disagreed.

The thing they argued
about most was dancing.
Their father hated it, but
the princesses loved it...

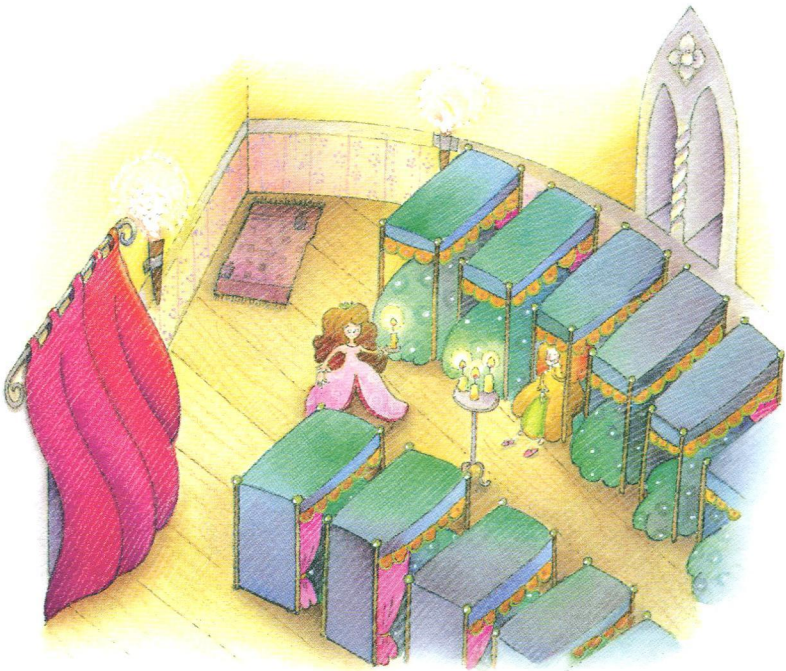


so whenever
he wasn't
looking,
they danced
anyway.



Chapter 2

The sisters' secret



The girls slept in a tall tower
with their beds side by side.

Every night, the king locked
the tower door, so that they
couldn't sneak out.



One morning, when the door was unlocked, the princesses were still asleep.

As the maid went to wake them, she noticed their shoes were lying in a soggy pile on the floor.

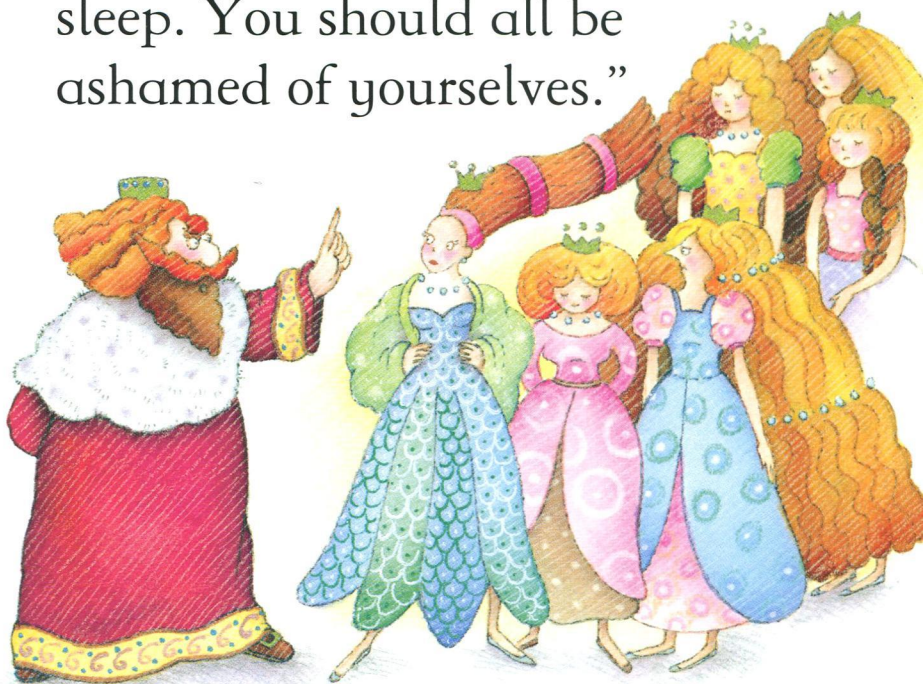


The shoes were worn out.

When the king heard about the shoes, he was furious. "Those girls have been out dancing," he spluttered.



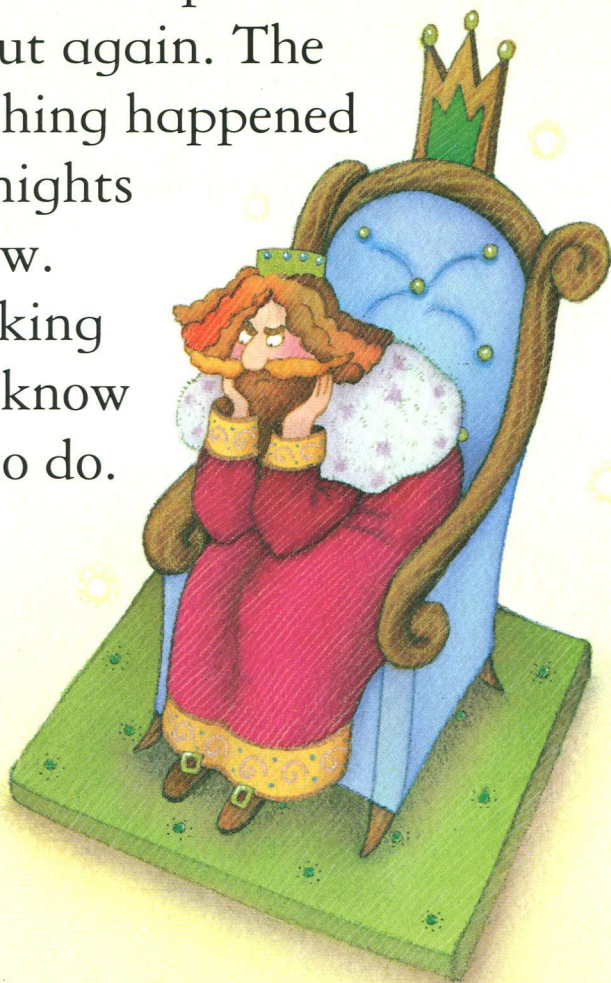
“Princesses should not be out dancing all night!” he yelled at them. “You need your beauty sleep. You should all be ashamed of yourselves.”



The girls weren't ashamed in the least. What's more, they wouldn't tell him how they had escaped or where they had been.

The next morning, it was clear that the princesses had been out again. The same thing happened seven nights in a row.

The king didn't know what to do.

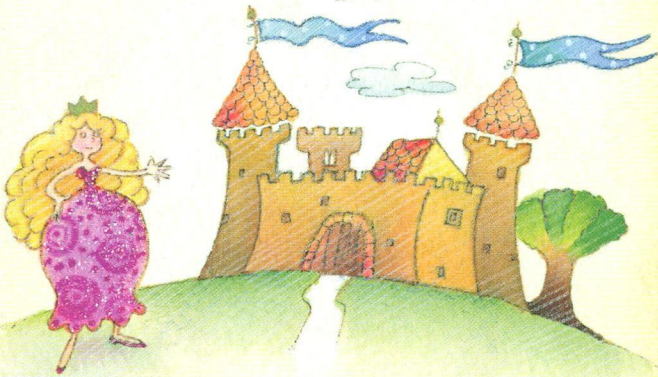


Then he had a brilliant idea.

He decided that the first man to discover where his daughters went each night could marry one of them. Posters went up across the land.

Fed up with your job? Feel like a challenge?

Solve a royal mystery
and win big prizes!!



Win your own kingdom and
marry a genuine princess!

Interested? Drop in to the
castle for further details.

No time wasters please.



Chapter 3

Taking the challenge



The first man to take up the king's challenge was brave Prince Marcus.

“By the way, there is one small catch,” the king told him. “If you fail, I’ll cut off your head!”

Um...okay...
no problem, your
majesty.



That night, Prince Marcus was taken to the tower and put in a room next to the princesses.



They made him very welcome. One even brought him a cup of hot, milky cocoa.



As Prince Marcus drank the cocoa, he began to feel sleepy.



He tried splashing cold water on his face, but that didn't work.

Soon he was fast asleep and snoring loudly.



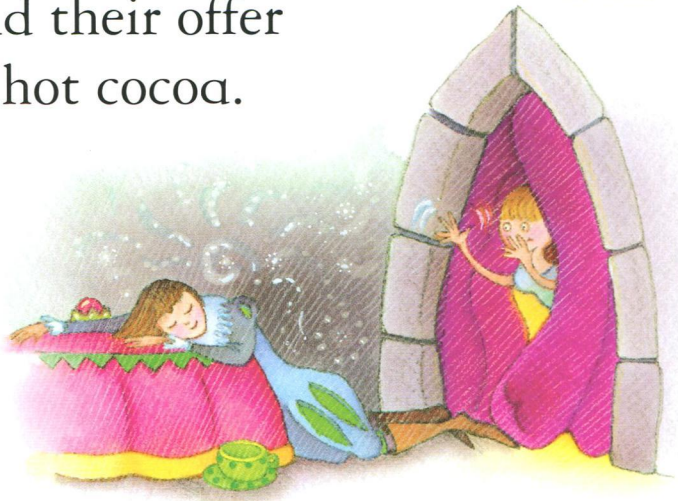
Next morning, the princesses' shoes were worn out again. Prince Marcus had failed – and the king wasn't joking about chopping off his head.



Many more princes and noble knights came forward. But they were all fooled by the princesses' sweet smiles...



and their offer of hot cocoa.





Chapter 4

Ralph and Rascal



One day, a magician named Ralph and his pet dog, Rascal, were passing the castle.

Ralph noticed one of the king's posters and decided to find out more.

This could be interesting, Rascal!



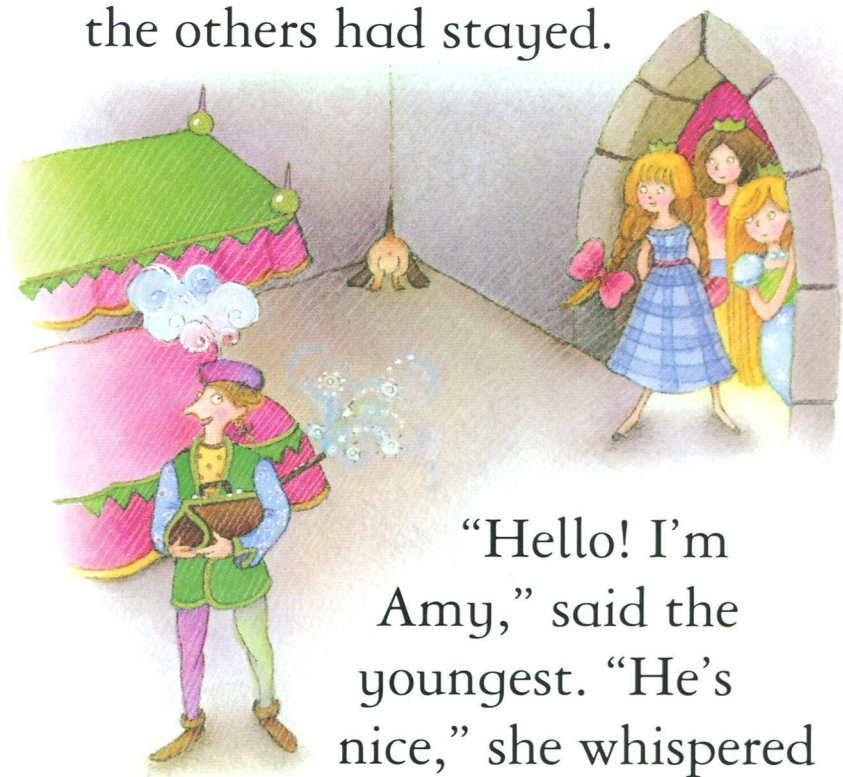
When he saw Ralph, the king looked doubtful. But he was desperate to know what the girls were up to, so he agreed to let Ralph try.

I'll chop off your head if you fail, you know.

Yes, but I won't fail...



Night came and Ralph was put in the same room where the others had stayed.



“Hello! I’m Amy,” said the youngest. “He’s nice,” she whispered to her sisters. “I don’t want him to die because of us. Maybe we shouldn’t go out tonight...”

Her sisters ignored her.

A few minutes later, Annabel, the eldest sister, brought Ralph a cup of cocoa. But Ralph was a wise magician. He knew what she was up to.

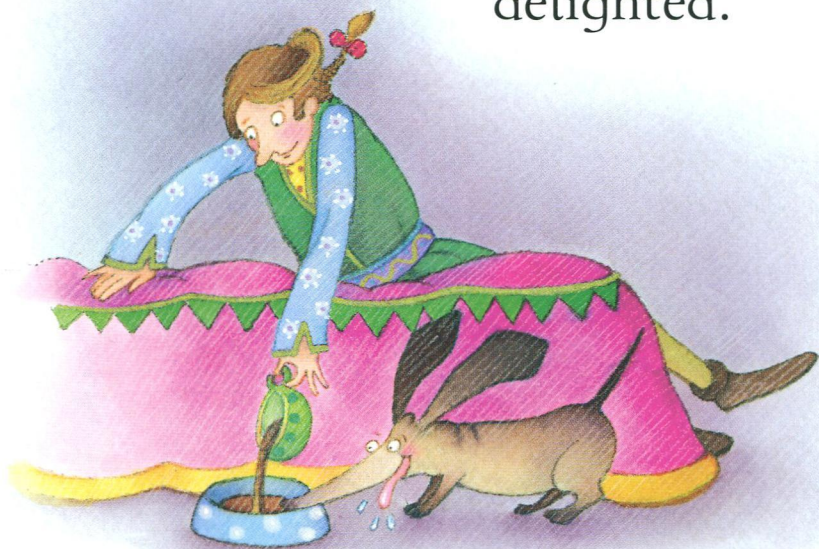
It'll take more than that to fool me!

This is for you...



He pretended to drink the cocoa. Then, when Annabel wasn't looking, he poured it into Rascal's bowl.

Rascal was delighted.




Ralph yawned. "I think I'll just put my feet up for a few minutes," he told Annabel.

Then, with an even bigger yawn, he pretended to fall fast asleep.



Annabel crept back to her sisters. "He's asleep," she whispered. "Let's get ready!"

They put on their sparkliest ball dresses...



and new shoes. The princesses shimmered like a rainbow.

With the last button buttoned and the last bow tied, the girls stood by their beds. Annabel pulled back a dusty, old rug in the corner of the room to reveal a secret trap door. The hinges creaked as she pulled it open.

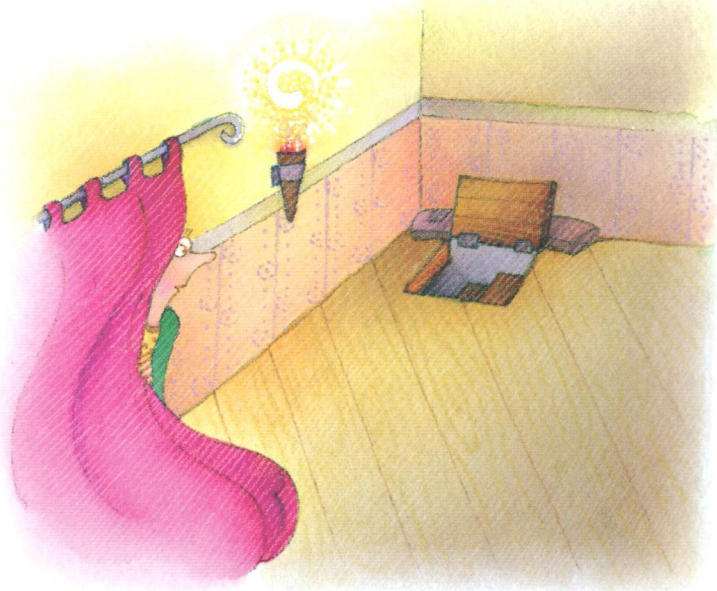


One by one the girls disappeared down some steps and into a long, dark tunnel.



Chapter 5

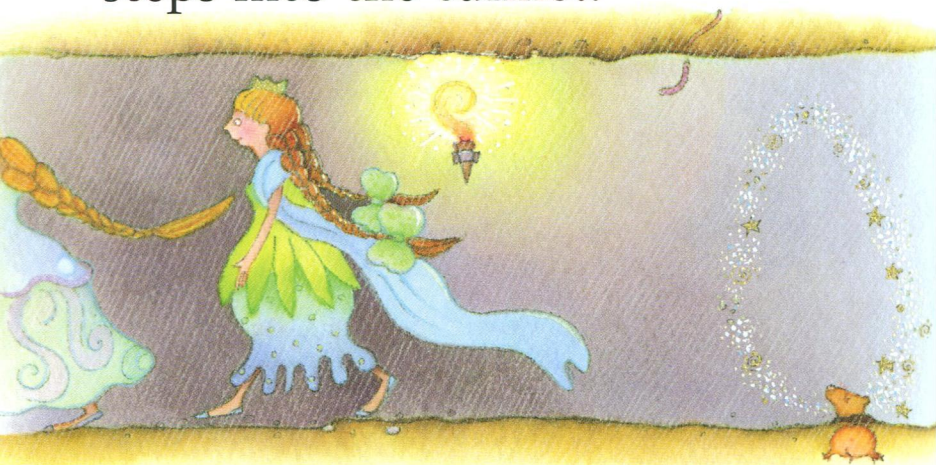
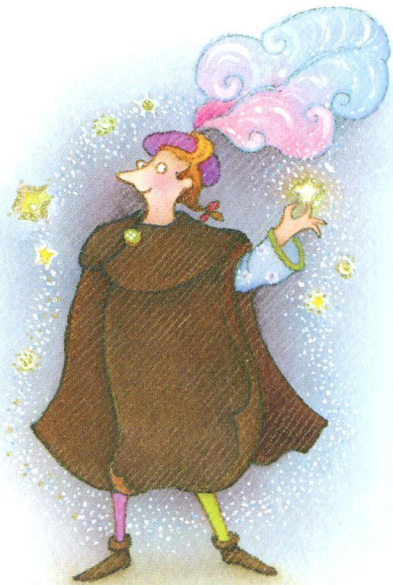
Ralph on the trail



When the princesses were out of sight, Ralph quickly entered their room.

He clicked his fingers and a cloak appeared. With a second click, Ralph vanished.

Carefully, he tiptoed down the steps into the tunnel.



It didn't take long for him to catch up with the princesses.

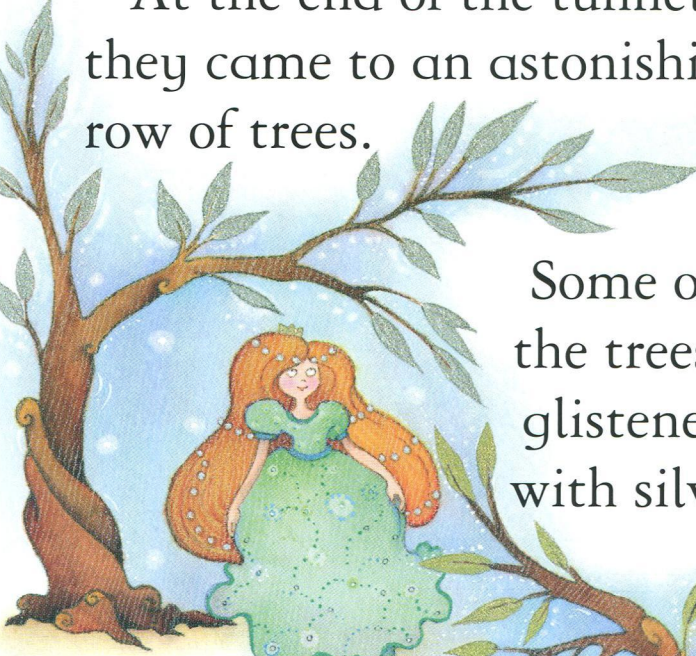
Ralph tried to walk quietly, but it wasn't easy. At one point he stepped on Amy's dress. She jumped and turned around, but there was no one there...



A few moments later Ralph stepped on a twig. Now Amy was convinced that someone was following them. Her sisters didn't believe her.



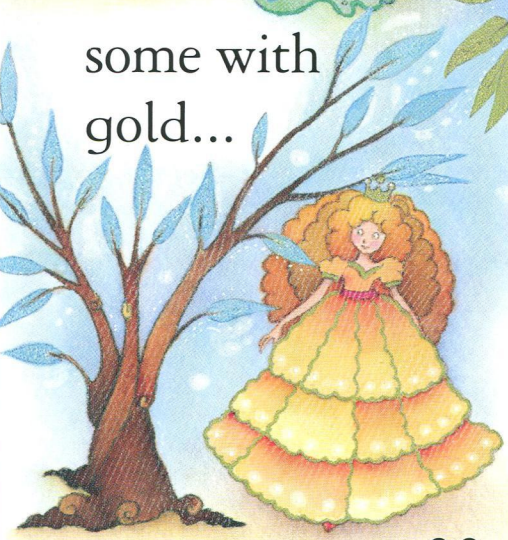
At the end of the tunnel
they came to an astonishing
row of trees.

A girl with long, flowing red hair and a small crown stands under a tree with green leaves. She is wearing a green dress with a scalloped hem and small white dots. The background is a light blue sky with white sparkles.

Some of
the trees
glistened
with silver...

A girl with long, flowing red hair and a small crown stands under a tree with blue leaves. She is wearing a yellow and orange dress with a scalloped hem and small white dots. The background is a light blue sky with white sparkles.

some with
gold...

A girl with long, flowing red hair and a small crown stands under a tree with blue leaves. She is wearing a yellow and orange dress with a scalloped hem and small white dots. The background is a light blue sky with white sparkles.

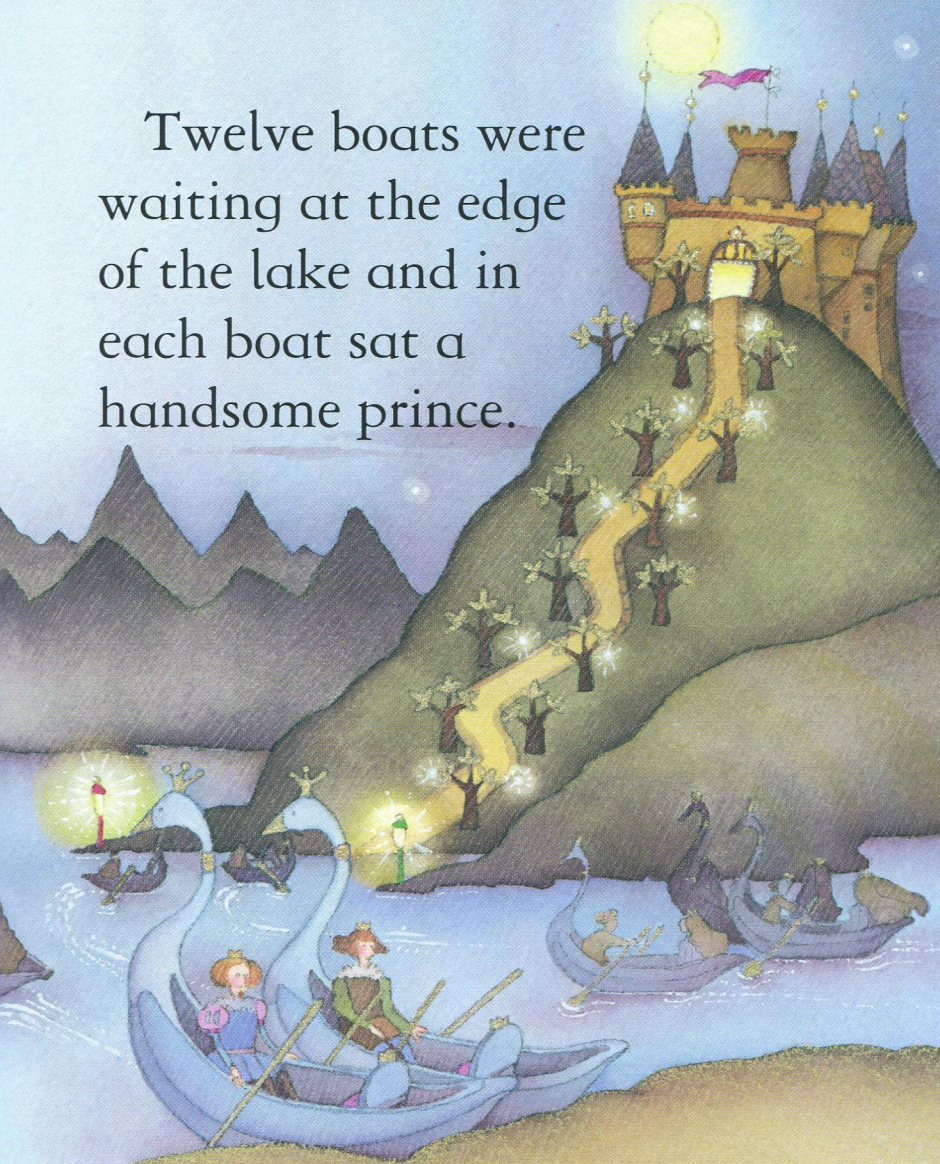
and some
with sparkling
diamonds.

Ralph had never seen trees like them. While the princesses carried on, he gently broke off a twig from each tree.



Up ahead, the princesses had stopped before a lake. It stood in the shadow of a beautiful castle.

Twelve boats were waiting at the edge of the lake and in each boat sat a handsome prince.



Each prince rowed a princess across the lake.

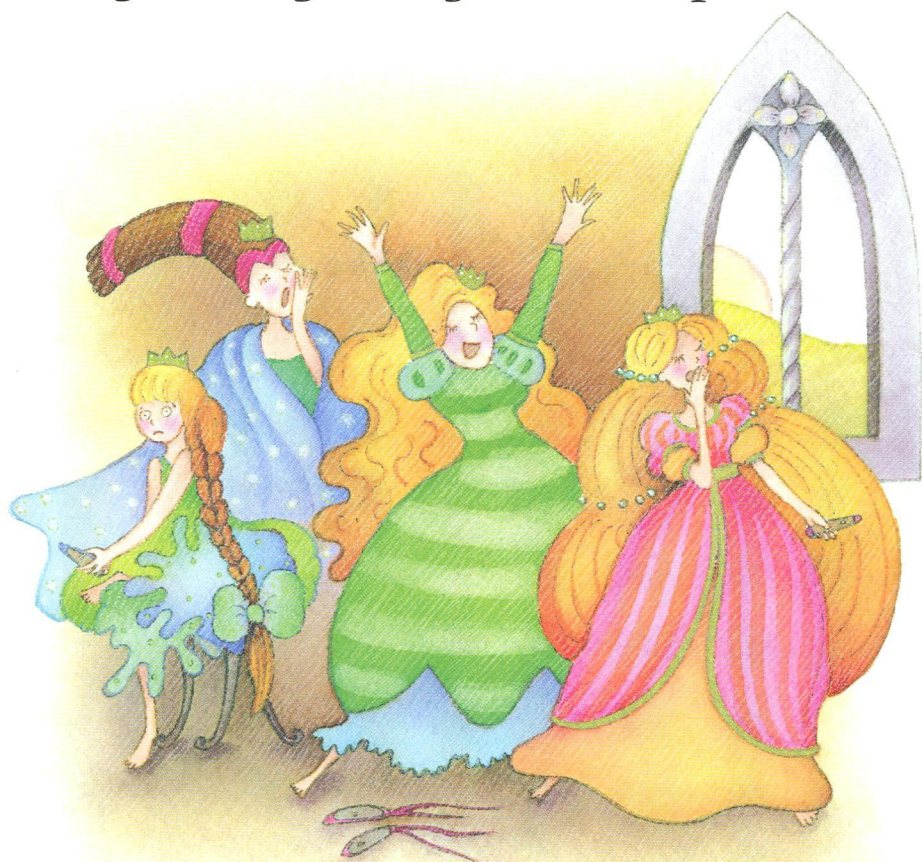
Ralph sneaked into the boat carrying Amy. When they reached the other side, a band began to play.



The princesses danced until
their feet were sore and
the soles of their shoes
were worn through.



As the sun rose, they limped home. “Our nights of dancing are still safe – unlike poor Ralph’s head!” said Annabel, yawning. Amy looked upset.





Chapter 6

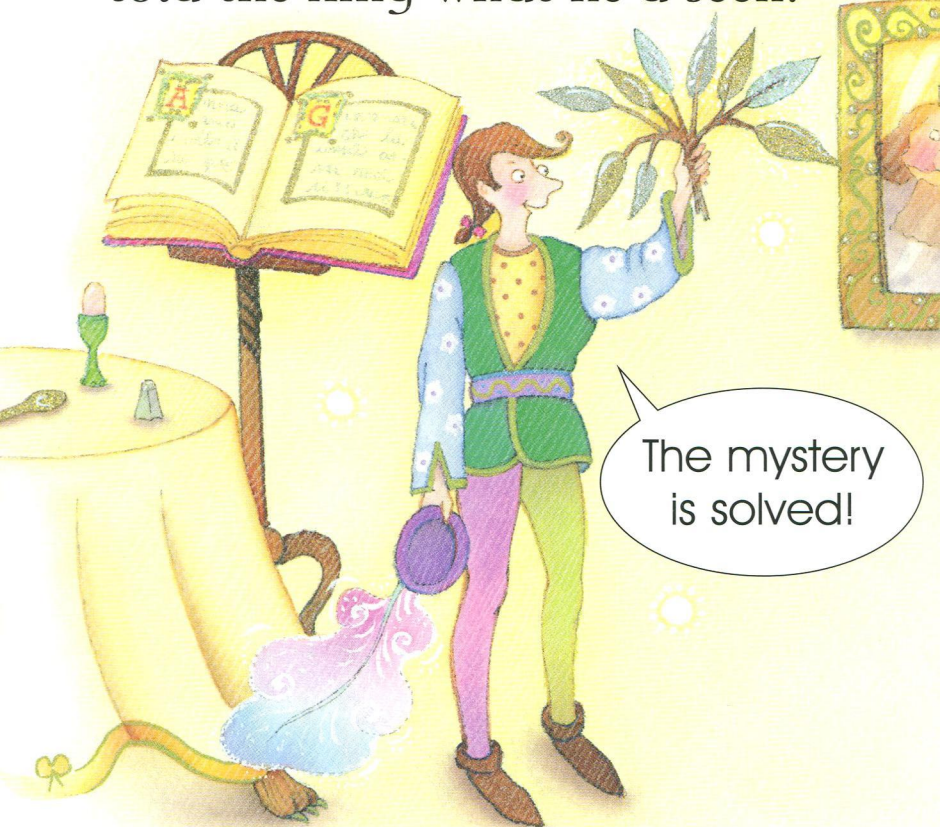
A shock for the king



The king was having breakfast when Ralph strolled in. “Good morning, your majesty,” said Ralph brightly.

“I suppose you’ve come to tell me you failed too,” sighed the king.

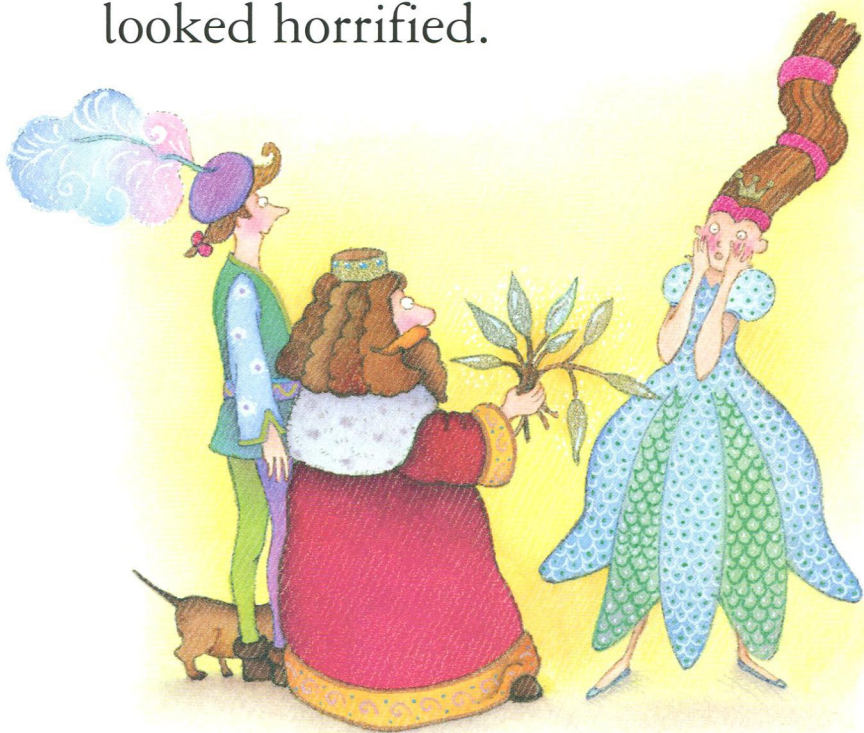
“Ah, but I didn’t, sire,” Ralph replied. Waving the twigs, he told the king what he’d seen.



“This all sounds very unlikely,” grumbled the king, when Ralph had finished. “Are you sure you’re not just making it up to save your head?”



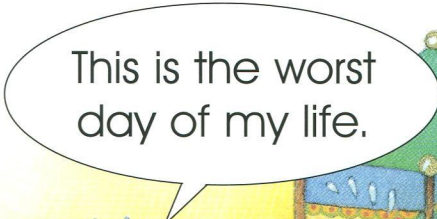
He decided to call for Annabel. When she saw the three twigs in his hand, she looked horrified.



One look at her face told the king all he needed to know. “Dancing is banned!” he declared.

The princesses sobbed and wailed when they heard their secret had been discovered.

“What will we do?” they cried. “Life is so dull without dancing.”



This is the worst day of my life.



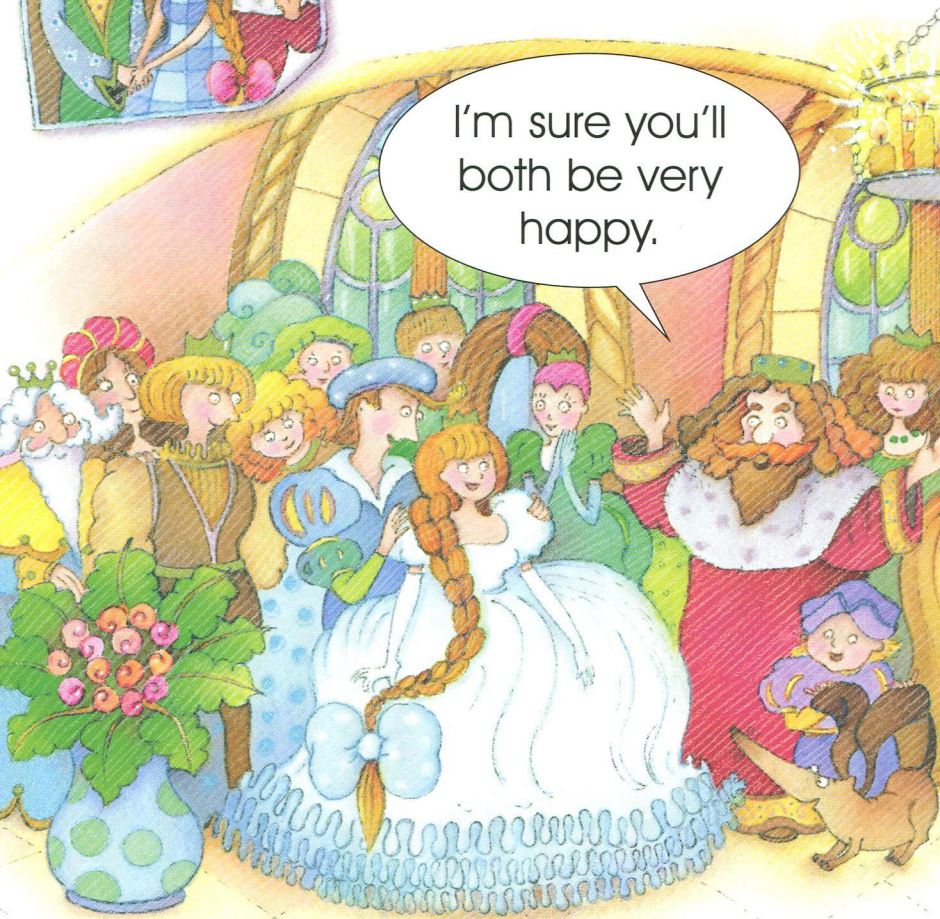
But there was nothing they could do.

True to his word, the king let Ralph marry one of his daughters. “I’d like Amy,”

Ralph said, “if she’ll have me. She’s the sweetest of all.”



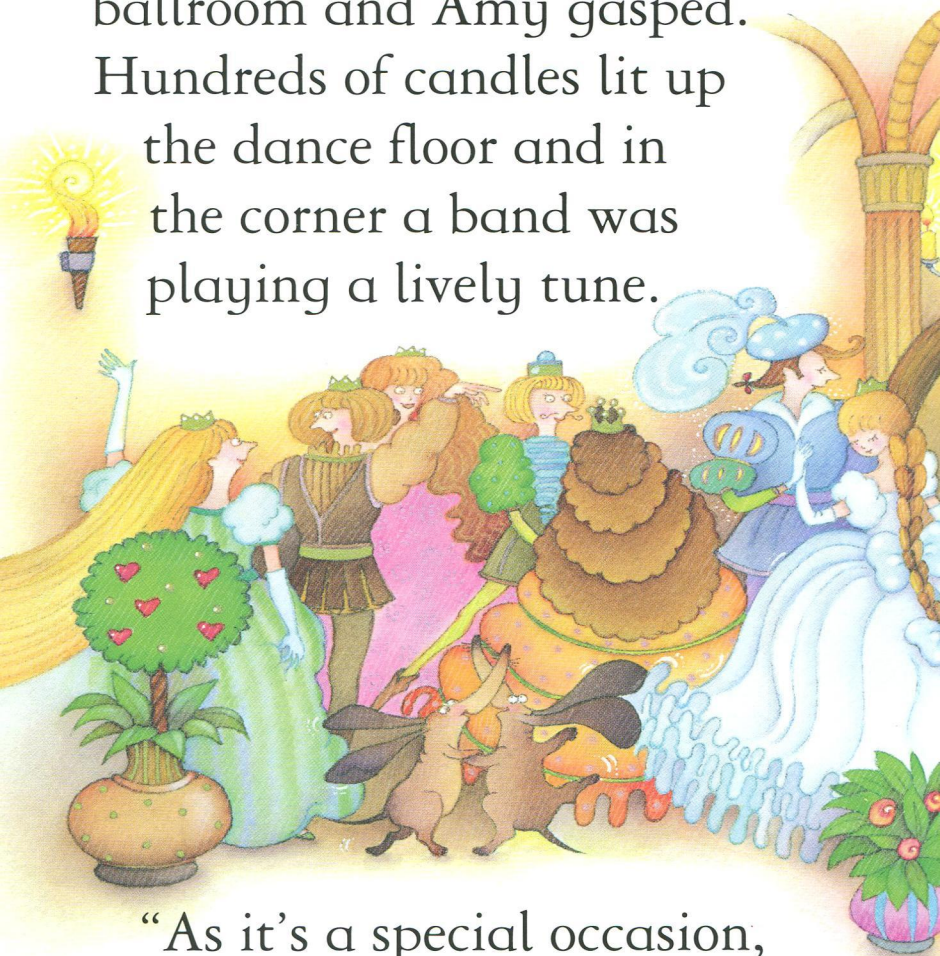
I’m sure you’ll both be very happy.



Amy and Ralph's wedding was a joyful occasion. Even the king couldn't stop smiling. "I have a surprise for you," he whispered to Amy.

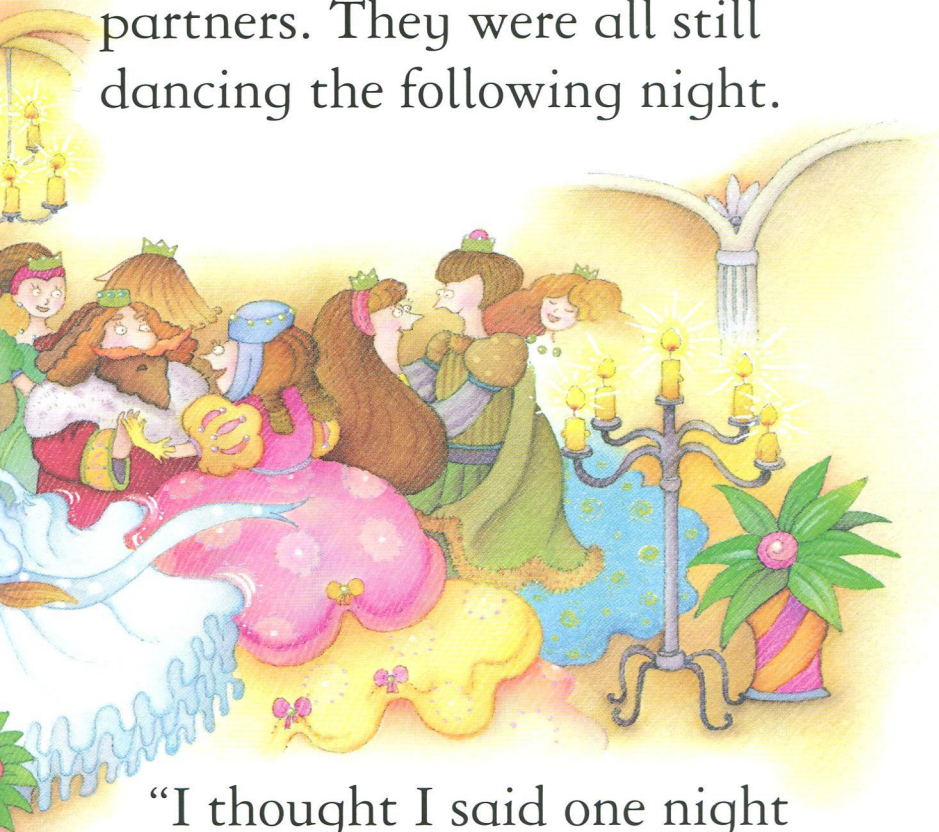


The king led her to the ballroom and Amy gasped. Hundreds of candles lit up the dance floor and in the corner a band was playing a lively tune.



“As it’s a special occasion, you may all dance – but for one night only!” said the king.

“Oh, how wonderful!” cried Amy and her sisters, grabbing partners. They were all still dancing the following night.



“I thought I said one night only!” said the king, but he smiled. Ralph had worked some more of his magic.