

# Three wishes for Ava





**Once upon a time, a long time ago, lived a young lady named, Ava, with her step-sister, Maggie, and her step-mother.**

**Ava was kind and generous and loved by everyone that knew her, especially her father. Because of this, her step-mother and step-sister grew very jelous of Ava. However, as long as her father was alive, she lived safely and happily blessed by her father's love.**



**However, after Ava's father died, her stepmother determined to break Ava's spirit and make her as mean-spirited and bitter as she was. She gave Ava as many chores as she could handle, filling up her whole day with work. If ever Ava was caught up, her mother would find more work for her to do. She washed the dishes, made the beds, and mopped the floors, every day. She did all the laundry, tended the animals, and cooked all the meals. However, to her step-mother's great dismay, her sweet and charming spirit never changed.**





**One very cold day in the winter, while Ava was washing the dishes, her step-mother secretly took Ava's only coat and burned it. Then, she told Ava that she must go out into the forest and find some mushrooms for supper. Ava tried to protest, but her step-mother wouldn't listen. She shoved her on her way. Then, she went inside and told her daughter that they might, finally, be rid of Ava and her revolting cheerfulness.**



Just as Ava was starting to get desperately cold, she happened upon a little cabin with smoke coming from the chimney and three little men standing behind it dancing. “What are you doing?” Ava asked, approaching them, her voice shivering.

“Rehersing,” one of the little men replied. “We put on a show for the king and queen, every few months.”

“Oh,” Ava shivered. “That sounds like fun.”

“Come inside and warm yourself by the fire,” another of the little men suggested.





**“Thank you. I appreciate your kindness. Your fire is very nice.”**

**“Oh, it’s no problem. It’s pretty cold out to be wandering without a coat, isn’t it.”**

**“Yes, I must have lost my coat, somewhere,” Ava sniffed back tears. “And my step-mother told be I can’t come home, until I find some mushrooms for supper. I’ve looked and looked, but I can’t find any.”**



**The three little men felt very sorry for the sweet young lady. “We know where there are some mushrooms,” one of the men said.**

**“Oh, that would be wonderful!” Ava brightened up.**

**“Here. Warm up.” Another one handed her some tea.**

**“Oh, thank you. This is delicious.” Ava smiled.**







**After Ava was warmed up, she went out and found the mushrooms, right where the little men said they were.**

**After she was gone. The little men discussed how unusually sweet and kind the girl was. They agreed to bless her with three wishes. One of the little men said, “I wish for her that her mushroom will turn to gold when she gets home.”**

**Another said, “I wish her to get even more beautiful day to day.”**

**The third said, “I wish her to marry the handsome prince.”**



**When Ava cheerfully came home with the mushrooms, she became a little concerned with how put-out her step-mother seemed to be at her return. “Didn’t you want me to come back?” Ava asked.**

**“Of course, Dear,” her step-mother sighed. “Go inside, warm yourself by the fire, and then start on supper.”**

**“Okay,” Ava replied.**



Ava sat down and warmed herself by the fire. She thought of the stories the three little men had told her over tea. *How fun it must be to entertain at the palace*, she thought. She laughed to herself when she recalled the jig they danced for her. She imagined herself going to one of the fancy balls inside the mysterious palace. She'd seen the palace from a distance many times, and day-dreamed often of someday visiting.





While Ava was sitting there, her mushroom, one by one, started turning to gold. Maggie walked into the room and was the first to notice the mushrooms. “Mom!” she shouted. “Look at these mushrooms! Are these real gold?” She picked one up and knocked it against the fireplace. “Mom, get in here! Look at this! We’re rich!”

Her mother, quickly rushed inside, snatched up the mushroom, and carried them to her room.





**The next morning, Maggie insisted on going out and looking for more mushrooms. “We’ll be rich... rich... rich,” she kept repeating as she gobbled her breakfast.**

**Ava, catching the excitement and feeling the loss of her mushrooms that her step-mother had confiscated, asked if she could go along, but her mother sternly rebuked her and told her to get to work washing the dishes.**



About mid-day, Maggie happened upon the cabin, with the three little men rehearsing outside. She laughed hysterically when she saw them. “What are you? You’re so short! Are you clowns?” she laughed.

“We perform for the king and queen,” one of the little men replied.

“Oh, wow, who would believe that? I don’t!” Maggie laughed.





**The little men were a little insulted by Maggie's remarks, but they decided to invite her inside to warm by the fire. They thought maybe her unpleasant temperment was because she was tired and cold.**

**However, her temperment did not improve. She laughed at their little house. She told them they needed more wood on their fire. She told them their tea tasted awful. She told them about the her dumb sister, who happened to find some golden mushrooms the day before.**







**They listened to her for a long time... longer than they wanted to. They listened to talk about how poor her and her mother were. She said how her father had died but that was fine with her, except for losing his paycheck. She talked about her dumb sister and how her and her mother had thought they would finally be rid of her yesterday. Then, she told them about the golden mushrooms and how her and her mother really deserved those. She told them what they were planning to buy with them. She asked them if they knew where there were any more.**

**When she finally left, one of the men said that he hoped Ava would move away from them, soon. The second said that he hoped Maggie would keep getting unglrier and uglier. The third said that, hopefully, that would keep anyone from marrying her. He hoped that didn't happen to any man.**



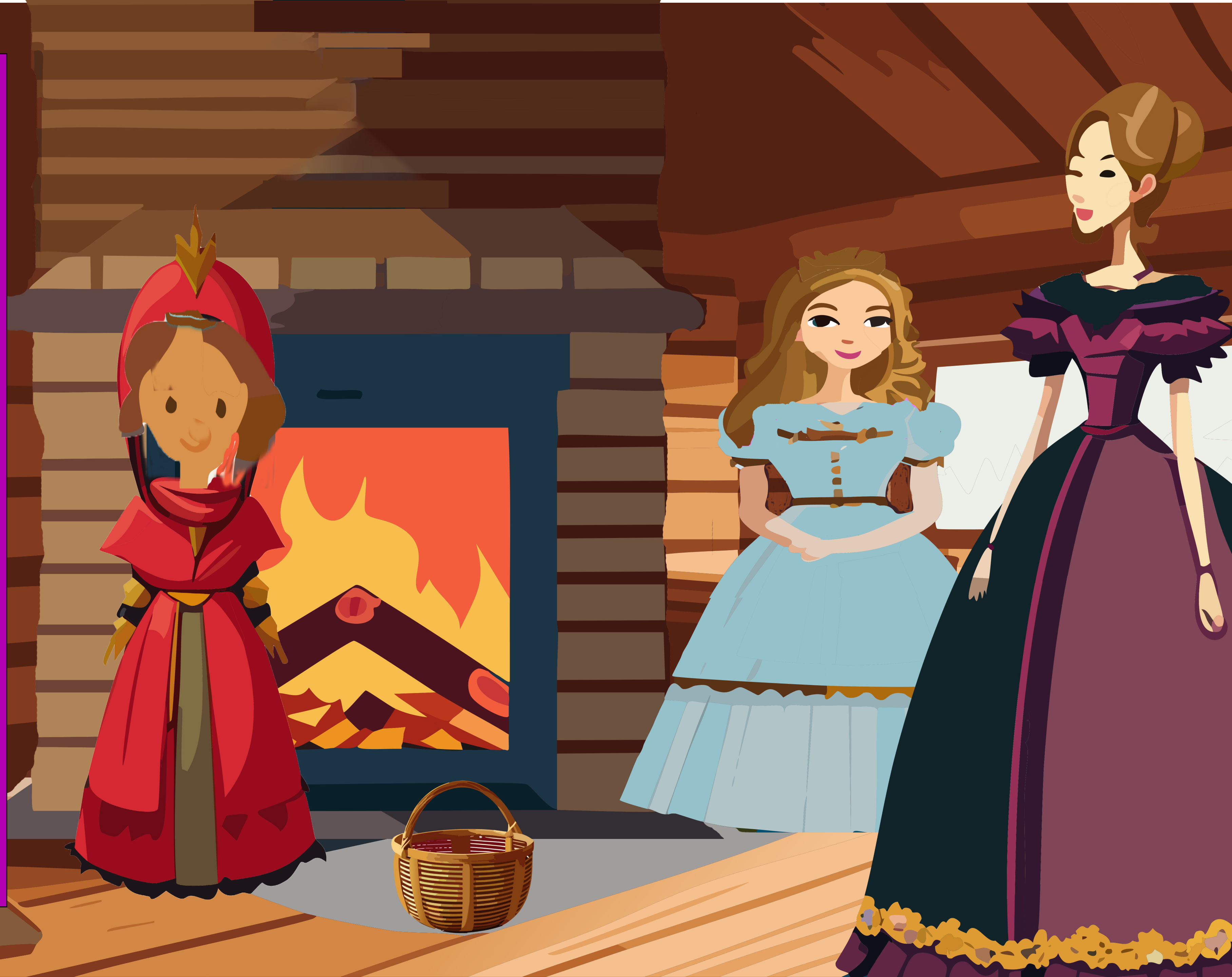
**When Maggie got home, she told her mother that she hadn't found any mushrooms, but she laughed about the three funny little men she had seen. She asked her mom if she had gone to town to see how much the mushrooms were worth.**

**Her mother told her that she had sold one mushroom for more than a months worth of wages.**



**Maggie went inside to warm by the fire. Her and her mother laughed and planned everything they could buy with the golden mushrooms.**

**After putting supper on to cook, Ava joined her family and tried to add suggestions about what she would like to buy, but everything she suggested, the other two totally rejected, even if they had been saying before that they wanted to buy it. After a while, her step-mother snapped, “Go outside and wash the laundry, right now!” Then, she chased her out.**



**Crying to herself a little, Ava went out, broke the ice in the pond and started washing the clothes in the ice-cold water. She didn't know what she was doing wrong. With all the work she did, happily... with the golden mushrooms she had found, she just didn't know why her family didn't like her. After a while, she started to daydream and let her imagination cheer her up.**





**Suddenly, as if her daydreams were coming to life, the handsome young prince rode up to her and asked her her name.**

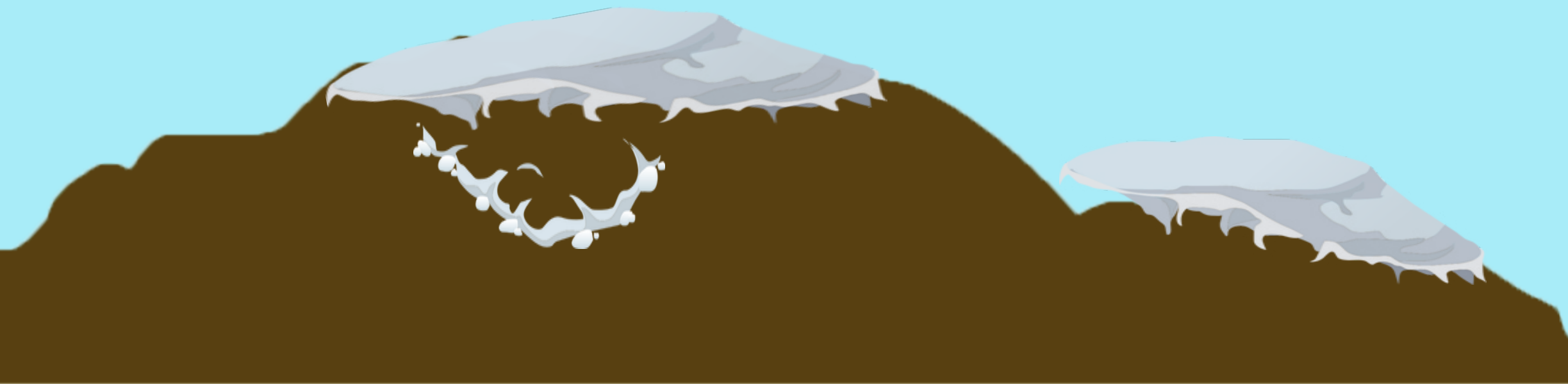
**“It’s Ava,” she replied. “My you have a beautiful horse.”**

**“I heard you humming. You have a beautiful voice, but what do you have to hum about, washing clothes in that icy water without even a coat?”**



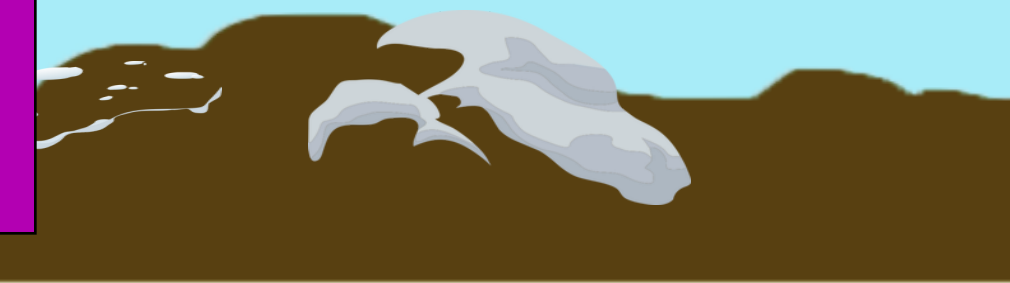
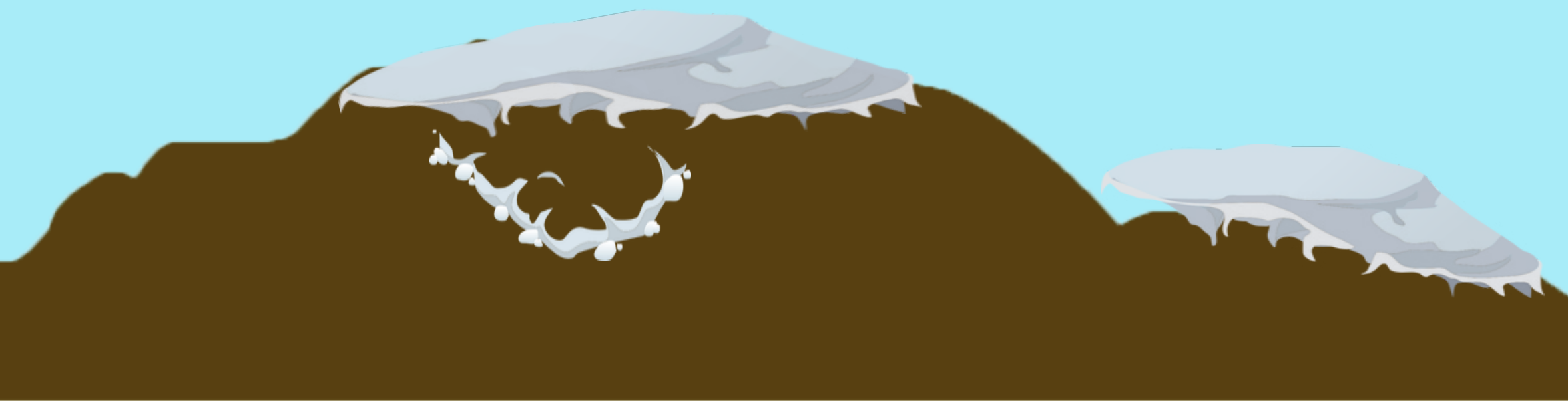
**He got down from his horse and walked over to her.**

**“Well,” she stammered, trying to find a good answer to his question. “I just don’t see any point in feeling miserable all the time. I can be happy no matter what I’m doing,” she paused, “or at least, I try.”**





**The prince was so impressed with her sweet attitude, despite her circumstances that he stayed and helped her with her washing, and he asked her all about herself. When he learned that she was old enough to make her own decisions, he asked her to come and visit him at his castle and meet his family.**



**After getting over the shock of being asked to the palace by the prince, she heartily agreed. He took her to the castle, got her a coat from one of his sisters, and then showed her around. She looked on in amazement as he took her from room to room and then outside to see the stables and get a closer look at his grand horse.**





**Ava stayed at the castle for several days. The prince asked her to marry him, and she said, "Yes." They decided to announce it at the upcoming ball. Many people came to the ball, knights and nobles and royalty. To her surprise, her step-mother and step-sister were, also, there.**








**The three little men were there, and they performed, beautifully. After their performance, Ava went to talk to one of them.**

**“Wow! Are you gorgeous” the little man said. “You sure look different.” He told her about their three wishes for her. He, also, told her of her sister’s visit and how her sister wanted to be rid of her. He told her of their three wishes for her.**

**Standing not too far off, Maggie heard everything and became very angry.**





**Ava kept an eye on her step-mother from a distance. At one point, she saw her dump a powder in one of the drinks. Then, she picked it up and brought it to Ava.**

**Ava talked to her politely, accepted the drink but didn't drink it. Then, she dumped it out later.**



**Ava walked her step-mother and Maggie out to their carriage. “That’s a lovely carriage,” Ava said.**

**“We know that,” Maggie answered, angrily.**



**On the way to their carriage, Maggie snickered. “I locked the door. She can’t get back inside. With any luck, she’ll freeze out here.”**

**“I doubt it... not with that heavy coat,” her mother replied. “But we can park in the bushes and watch for a while.”**





**Ava quickly realized that she had been locked out. She knocked for a while, but no one heard her knocking on the heavy outer door. After a while, she started to sing by the door. Then, she walked through the snow, until she was under the prince's window. She continued to sing. Soon, the prince heard her and came to the window. Then, he came down to unlock the door.**





**When Maggie and her mother saw their plan didn't work, they were both angry, but not half as angry as when Maggie told her mother what the little man had said. She told her about their three wishes for Ava and their three wishes for her. Determined not to fail, Maggie snuck into Ava's room with a powder that would put her to sleep for good.**



**Ava woke up when Maggie got close. There was a big fight. They fought throughout the bedroom and then wrestled on the balcony until Maggie fell over the side, down into the snow below.**





**Shaken by the incident, Ava started to call for the royal knights, but her step-mother called up, “We’re leaving! Let us go, and will never come back!”**

**Ava called down. “Go, then, and never come back!” They quickly drove away.**



**So, Maggie and her mother went home and lived the rest of their lives in their cabin, alone.**



**The three little men married three little wives, continued to perform at the palace and lived happily ever after.**



**And of course,  
Ava and the young  
prince lived safe  
and sound in the  
palace, happily  
ever after.**

