



Beauty and the Beast



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Once there was a rich man who had a lot of ships. He lived in a big white house by the sea.

He had three daughters and three sons. His daughters were all beautiful. But the most beautiful was the youngest daughter, and because she was so beautiful, everyone called her 'Beauty'.

Beauty was a kind and clever girl. She loved reading. Her two older sisters were not as nice as Beauty. They were often nasty to her. And they laughed at her, because she loved books. They only liked to wear fine clothes and go to parties.



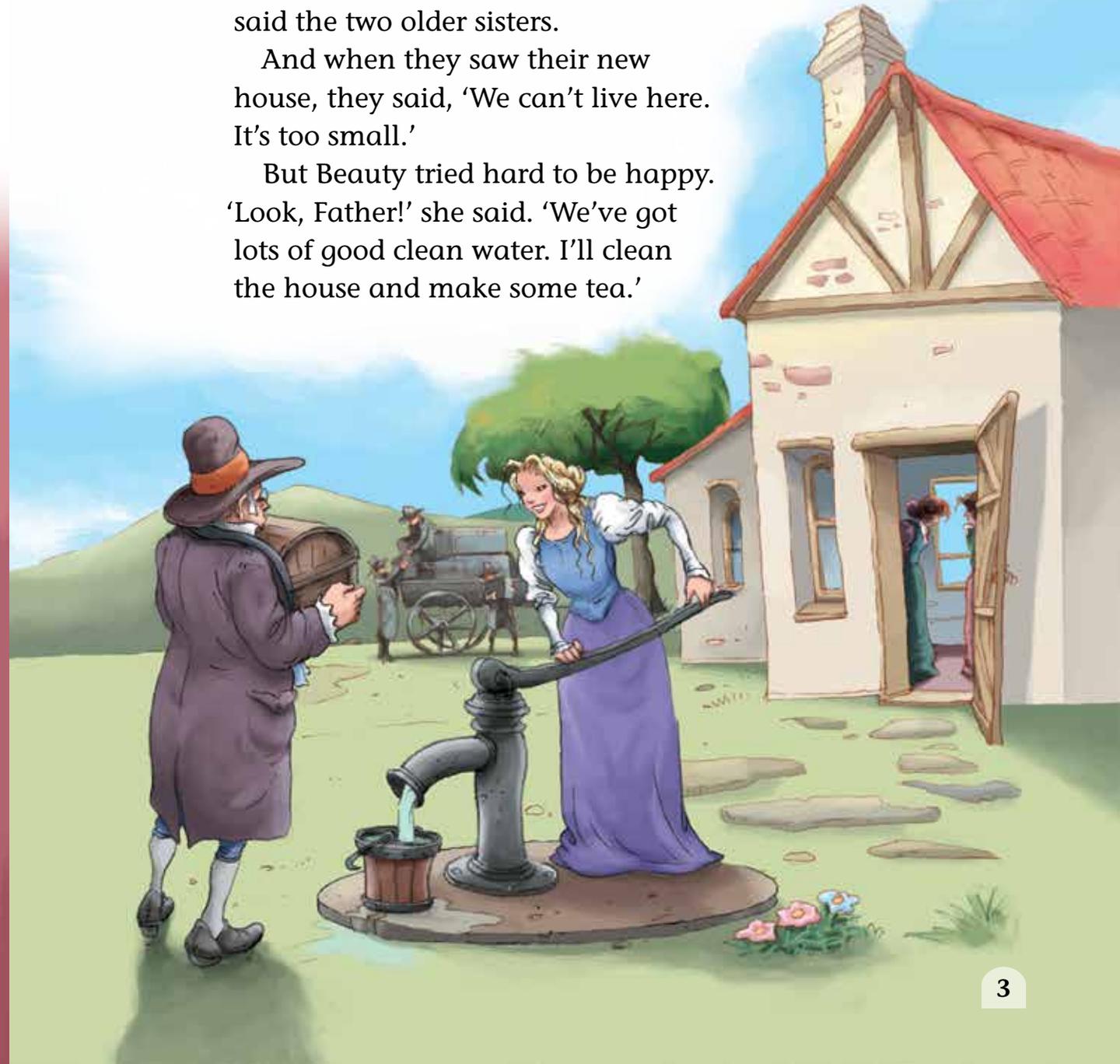
One day there was a terrible storm. All the man's ships were lost at sea. Suddenly, he had no money. He had to sell the big white house. The family had to move to a little house in the country.

'I'm sorry, my dears,' he told his children. 'We have no money. You will have to work now.'

'But we don't know how to work, Father,' said the two older sisters.

And when they saw their new house, they said, 'We can't live here. It's too small.'

But Beauty tried hard to be happy. 'Look, Father!' she said. 'We've got lots of good clean water. I'll clean the house and make some tea.'





Beauty worked hard to help her father and brothers. She got up at four o'clock every morning and cleaned the house. She made breakfast. Then she washed the clothes and made lunch.

Her two sisters stayed in bed late every day. When they got up, they did nothing to help. They just sat and watched Beauty angrily.

'This is a nasty little house,' they said. 'And it's so boring here. Why do you sing when you work, Beauty? Why are you always happy? You're stupid!'

One day a letter came for their father.

'I have to go away on business,' he told his children. 'One of my ships has come back. It has come from the East with gold and silver. We are rich again. But I must hurry.'

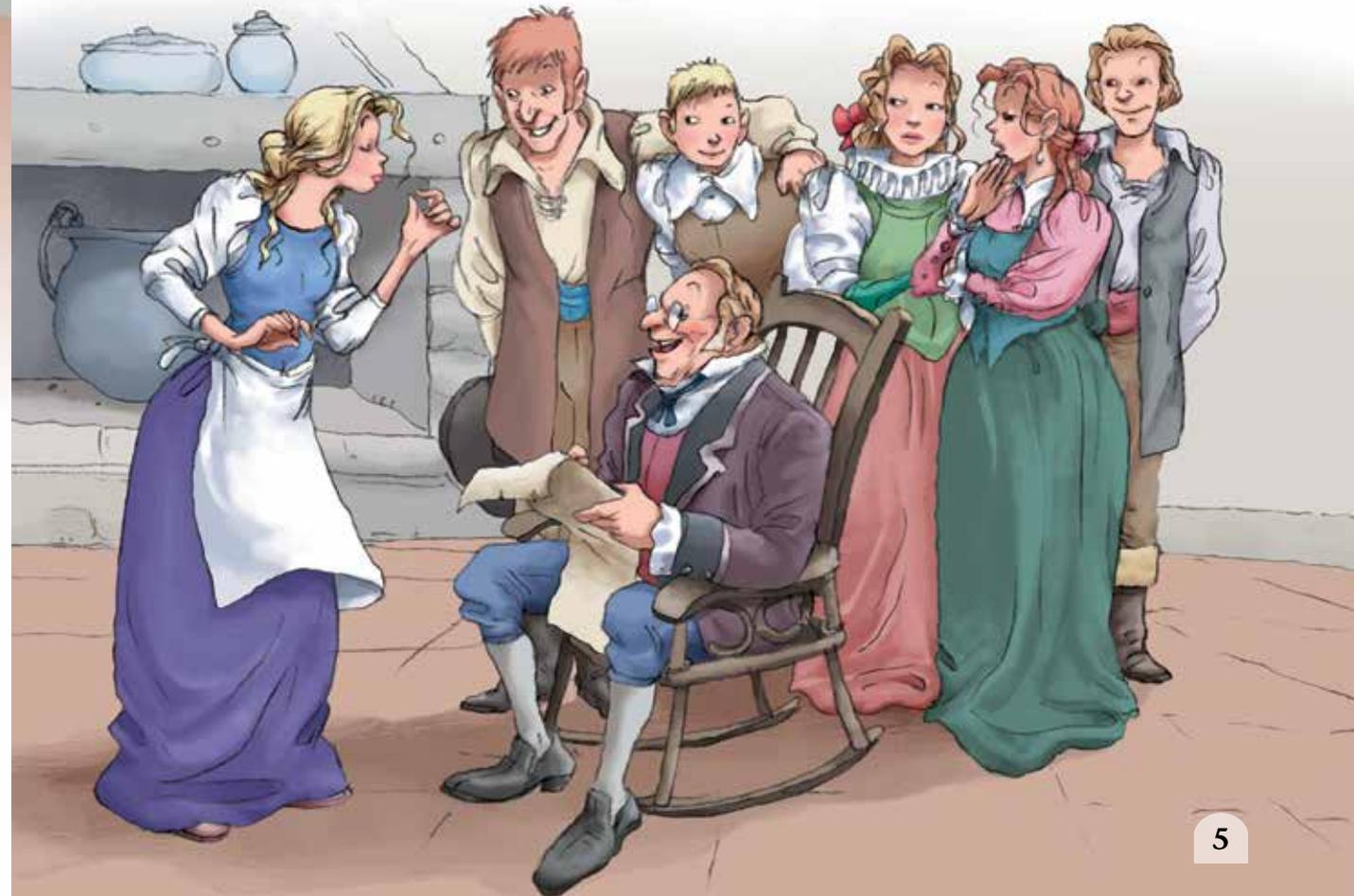
'Oh, Father, when you get the gold, please buy us some new dresses!' said the two older sisters.

'Yes, my dears, I'll try,' said their father. Then he turned to his youngest daughter.

'And you, Beauty. Would you like something?'

'Yes, Beauty. You must have something,' said the older sisters.

'All right,' said Beauty. 'I would like a rose. I haven't seen a rose for a long, long time.'



The man got on his horse and rode to the sea. But when he arrived, he heard bad news.

'Your gold and silver has gone,' said his friend. 'And your ship has holes in it.'

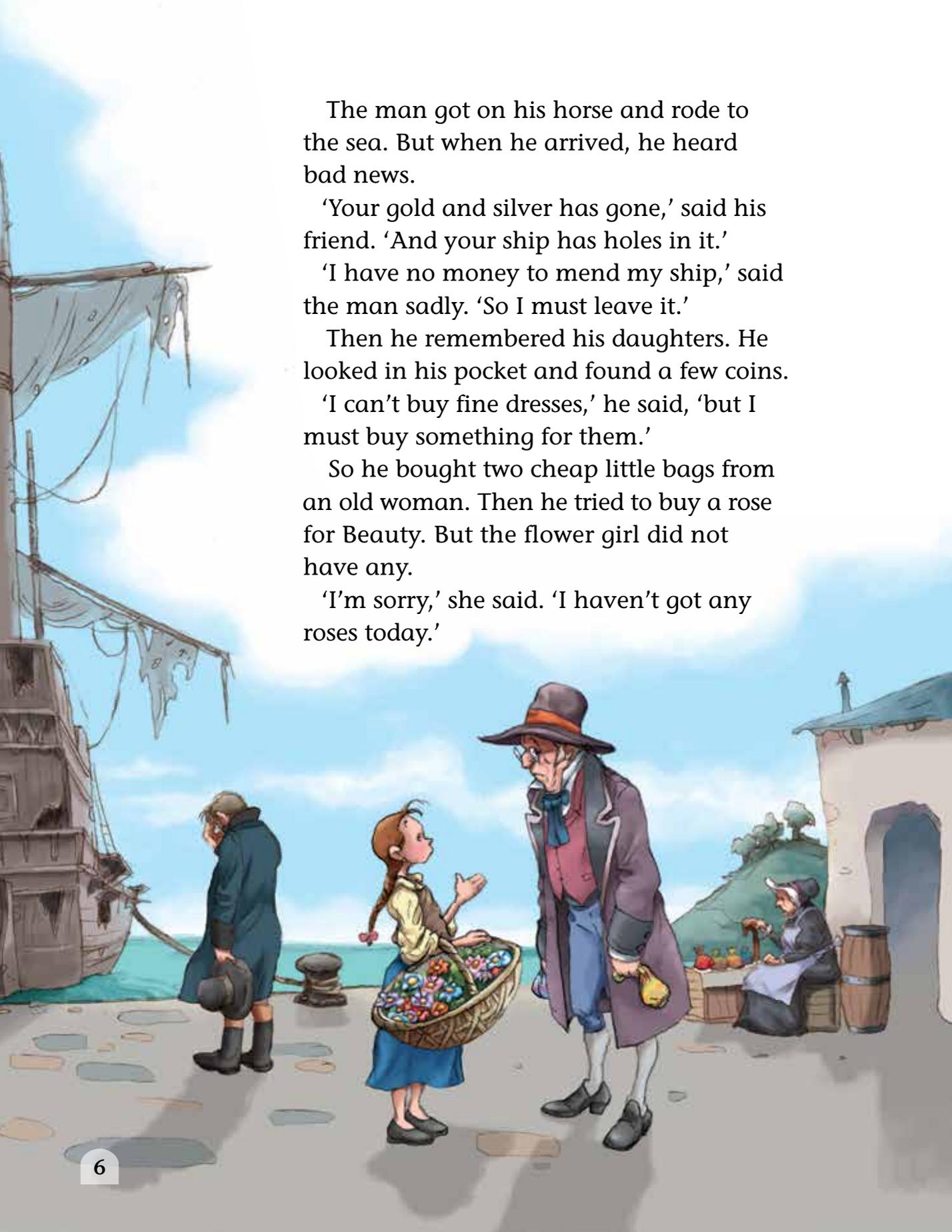
'I have no money to mend my ship,' said the man sadly. 'So I must leave it.'

Then he remembered his daughters. He looked in his pocket and found a few coins.

'I can't buy fine dresses,' he said, 'but I must buy something for them.'

So he bought two cheap little bags from an old woman. Then he tried to buy a rose for Beauty. But the flower girl did not have any.

'I'm sorry,' she said. 'I haven't got any roses today.'



The man started to ride home, but soon he was lost in a strange forest.

'Where am I?' he said. 'I don't remember this forest.'

It began to snow and a strange wind blew. He fell from his horse onto the ground. He heard the loud cries of wolves. He was afraid.

'I don't think we will get home tonight,' he said to his horse.

Then, when he looked up again, he saw a light through the trees.

'What's that light?' he said. 'Is there a house there?'

