



## Chapter One

This is Minna. She is a **princess**.

Princess Minna is very good at **lots** of things.

She is good at taming unicorns, kissing frogs and fighting dragons.

Princess Minna lives in

# Castle Tall-Towers

with the King, the  
Queen and a wizard  
called Raymond.

Castle Tall-Towers  
has some

very


tall towers.

They reach right



up

to the sky. On  
cloudy days you  
can't even see  
the tops of them.






When all is well in the kingdom, lots of grey doves **sweep** and **swoop** around the towers making soft cooing noises. They make the whole castle smell like tutti-frutti ice cream.



When all is **not** well in the kingdom, big seagulls fly up from the coast and scare the doves away. Then they **flip** and **flap** around the towers, making screechy squawking noises. They make the whole castle smell like old seaweed.

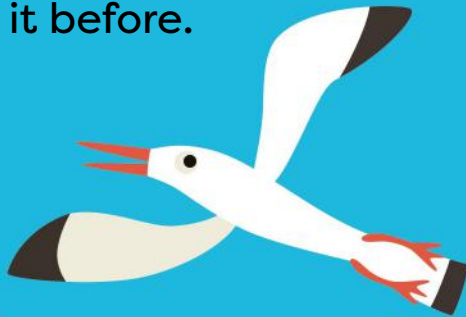




One afternoon Princess Minna was in her bedroom when she noticed a funny smell. She sniffed a

**big sniff.**

She knew that smell. She'd sniffed it before. Seaweed.



Princess Minna looked out of her window. There were **big** seagulls screeching and squawking. The doves were nowhere to be seen. Oh dear, she thought. All is not well. All is not well **at all**. Princess Minna's room was right at the top of this tower here.

She ran down  
and down  
and down



and down  
and down  
and down  
until finally  
she reached  
the bottom.

“Oh, Minna!” said the Queen,  
pulling seagull feathers out of  
her crown. “All is not well!”

“Something dreadful has  
happened,” said the King,  
wiping seagull poo from his  
velvet robes. “We’ve just had a  
phone call from Lord  
and Lady Welling-  
Tunboot.”



“It’s their son’s birthday,” said Raymond,

magically.

“Yes,” said the Queen. “He turns ten years old today.”

Prince Welling-Tunboot’s birthday? That didn’t sound too bad, thought Princess Minna. Birthdays were usually quite nice.

“However,” added the King, “on the day he was born, a

bad fairy

put a CURSE upon him.

She said that on his tenth birthday he would prick his finger on the spindle of a spinning wheel and fall asleep ...



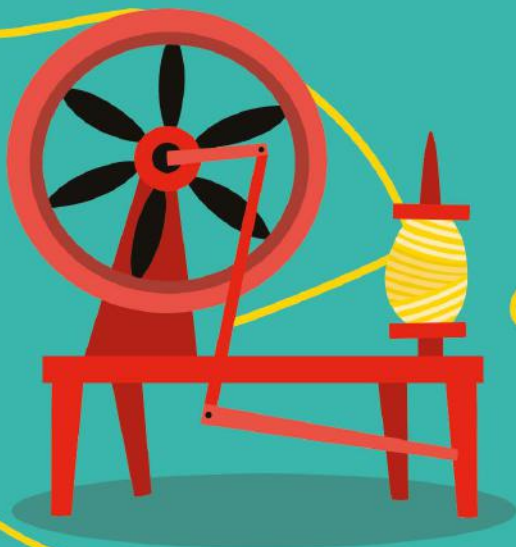
“... along with everyone else who happened to be near him at the time. Then **thorny bushes** would grow up around the palace, and **fearsome guards** would appear, and if the prince wasn't awoken by sundown he would

**never  
wake again!”**





**Gosh**, thought Princess Minna.  
“So,” said the Queen, “Lord and  
Lady Welling-Tunboot swore that,  
on the eve of their son’s tenth  
birthday, they would remove all the  
spinning wheels from the palace.  
Then it would be **impossible** for  
the prince to prick his finger.”



“However,” added the King, “they completely forgot about it. They went out this morning to collect the birthday balloons and now they can’t get home ...



“... because fearsome guards have appeared and thorny bushes have grown up around the palace and the prince and his nanny and the cook and the gardener and the lady who came to deliver the raspberry-ripple-flavour birthday cake are all fast asleep and not answering their phones!”



Fearsome guards?  
Thorny bushes? Sleeping  
prince? **Excellent**, thought  
Princess Minna.

“It’s a **disaster**,” said the King.  
“Please go and sort it out, Minna.  
Straightaway!”



“Goodness me, no,” said  
the Queen. “It’s Raymond’s  
turn to sort out the kingdom.”

“Oh,” said the King. “In that  
case, please go and sort it out,  
Raymond. Straightaway!”



Raymond flicked through his

Very Big Book  
Of Highly  
Magical Spells.

“Unfortunately,” he said,  
“I don’t have any spells  
that will lift a **curse**  
cast by a

**bad fairy.**

Not a single one.”



“No matter,” cried Princess Minna, already running for the door. “I’ll do it!”



Princess Minna loved sorting out the kingdom.

“Remember,” called the King, “you must reach the prince before sundown, or he will **never wake again.**”

“And then where will we be?” called the Queen.

