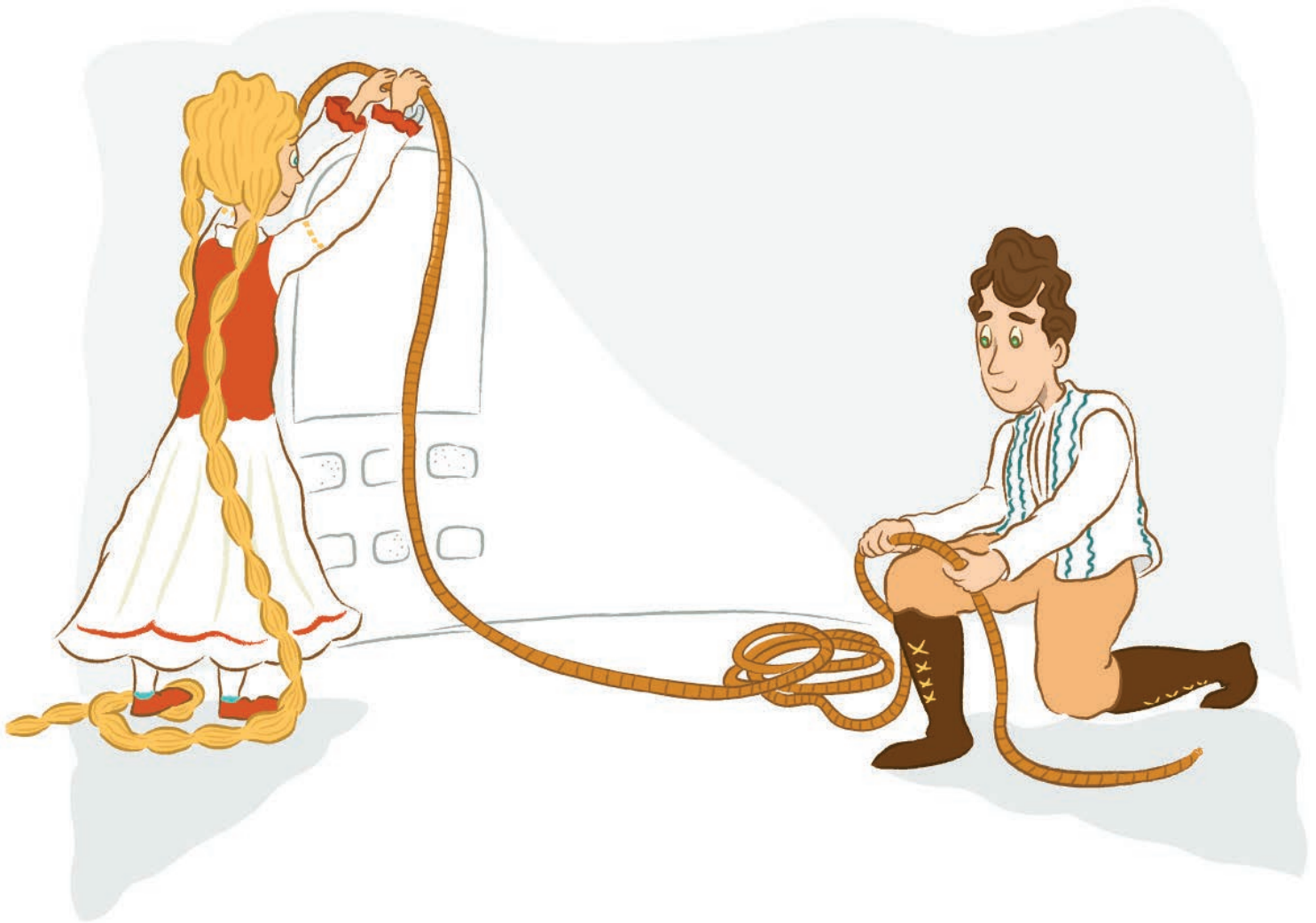


The prince and Rapunzel decided to flee together, and the prince left to find a long rope for their escape. Rapunzel paced the floor of the tower with an aching worry; what if the sorceress caught the prince returning to the tower?

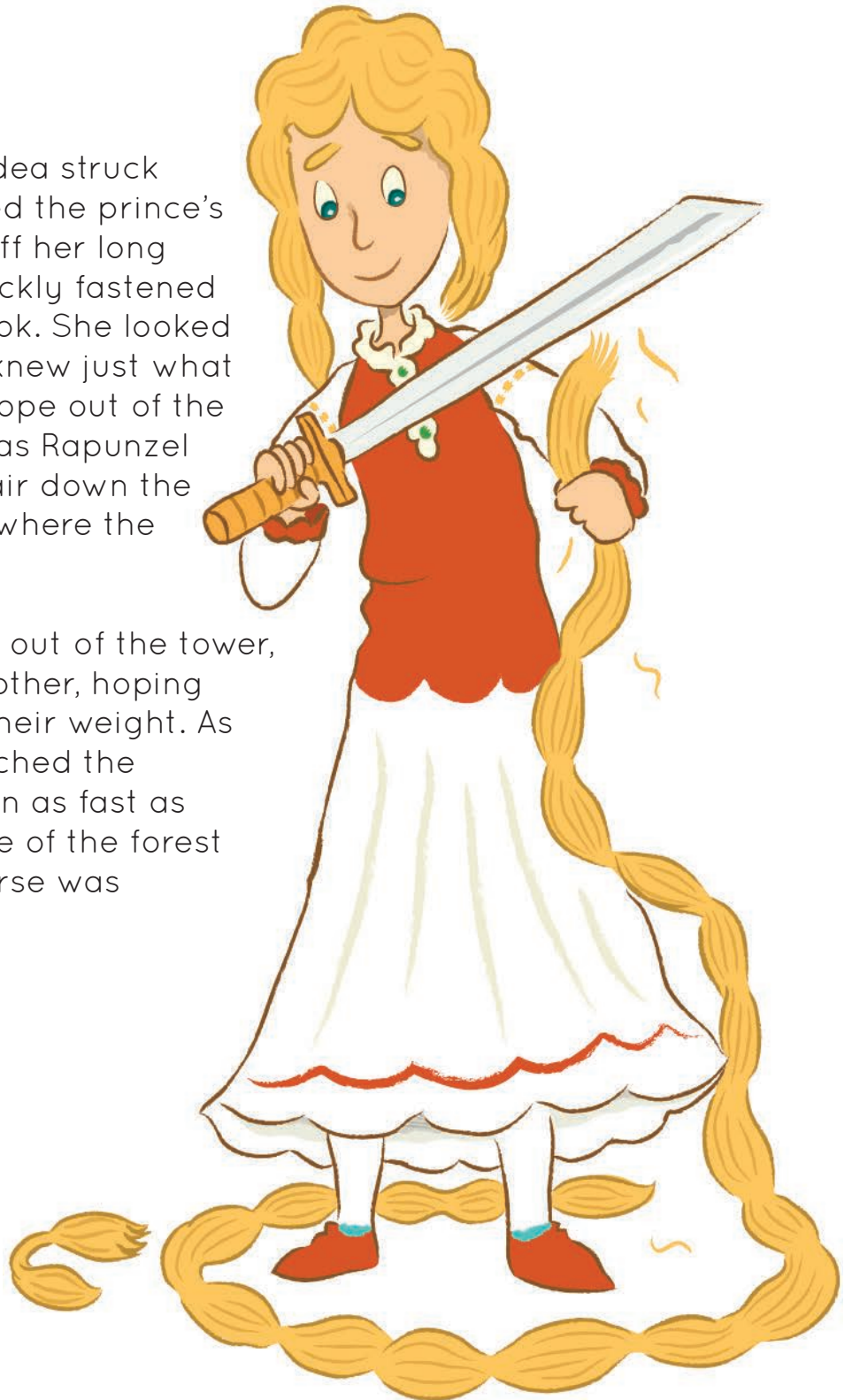
But the prince returned steadfastly with the rope and clambered up the tower once again on Rapunzel's beautiful golden hair. The pair got to work, knotting the rope to one of the two iron lantern hooks on the tower walls.

As Rapunzel took one last look at the living quarters that were her only home, she heard the sorceress approach. Rapunzel's eyes grew wide with panic at the familiar sound, "Rapunzel, Rapunzel. Let down your hair!"



Suddenly, a brilliant idea struck Rapunzel: She grabbed the prince's sword and chopped off her long braid of hair, then quickly fastened it to the other iron hook. She looked at the prince and he knew just what to do: He tossed the rope out of the south-facing window as Rapunzel tossed her braid of hair down the north-facing window where the sorceress waited.

They quickly scurried out of the tower, one right behind the other, hoping the rope would hold their weight. As soon as their feet touched the ground below, they ran as fast as they could to the edge of the forest where the prince's horse was waiting for them.



They heard the blood-curdling screech of the sorceress as she discovered there was no Rapunzel at the end of the braid. As Rapunzel mounted the horse behind the prince, she turned quickly to see the sorceress scurrying down the rope. "Quickly!" she cried.

The horse flew through the forest, the sorceress pursuing in an angry tirade. Branches scraped at their faces and arms as the witch willed the forest to slow their escape. As soon as the horse leapt across the creek and up the embankment, the prince knew they were safe, for the narrow body of water marked the borderline of his kingdom. And, in his kingdom, the sorceress's dark magic lost all its power.



“Rapunzel, without me you will age and die like all mortals!” the sorceress yelled in a desperate plea.

“I feel as though this is the first day of my real life,” Rapunzel said, touching her short crop of hair. “And I will live it to the fullest.” With that the prince pointed his horse towards home.





Upon arriving in the prince's kingdom, Rapunzel was welcomed as a princess and a heroine. With her wits, her courage, and the love of her prince, Rapunzel freed herself from a life of lonely imprisonment. Her story was told far and wide and sent an important message to damsels in distress everywhere: the power is within you.

From then on, Rapunzel kept her golden hair short, and they lived happily ever after.