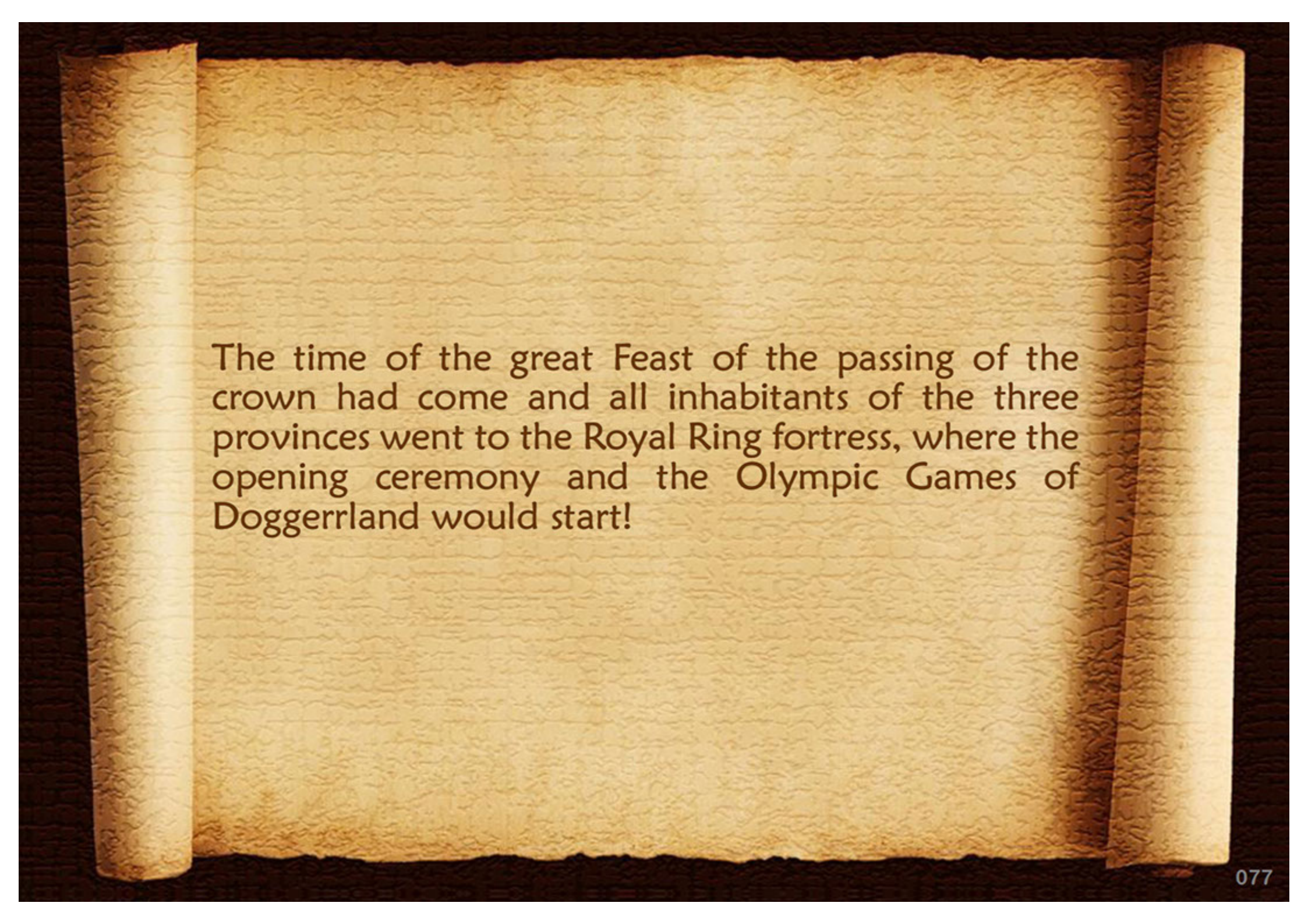


CHAPTER IV – THE PASSAGE OF THE CROWN AND THE CHOSEN ONE

So, Gandra The king did as Mad-ellia proposed, issued a decree calling on all young maidens to go to the castle and sent dispatches to all parts of Harlewoods to announce this decree. Then he appointed commissioners in every town of his province to bring all these beautiful girls into the castle for the beauty treatment with oil of myrrh and special food.

At the time of this decree, Maxim had become lovely in form and features and she was among the chosen girls who were taken to the Harlestone Castle in Harlewoods for the beauty treatments, a whole month of treatments, prescribed by Mad-ellia for the young ladies.

An open scroll with a parchment-like texture, showing a central section of text. The scroll is unrolled, with the edges of the pages visible on the left and right sides. The text is written in a simple, dark font.

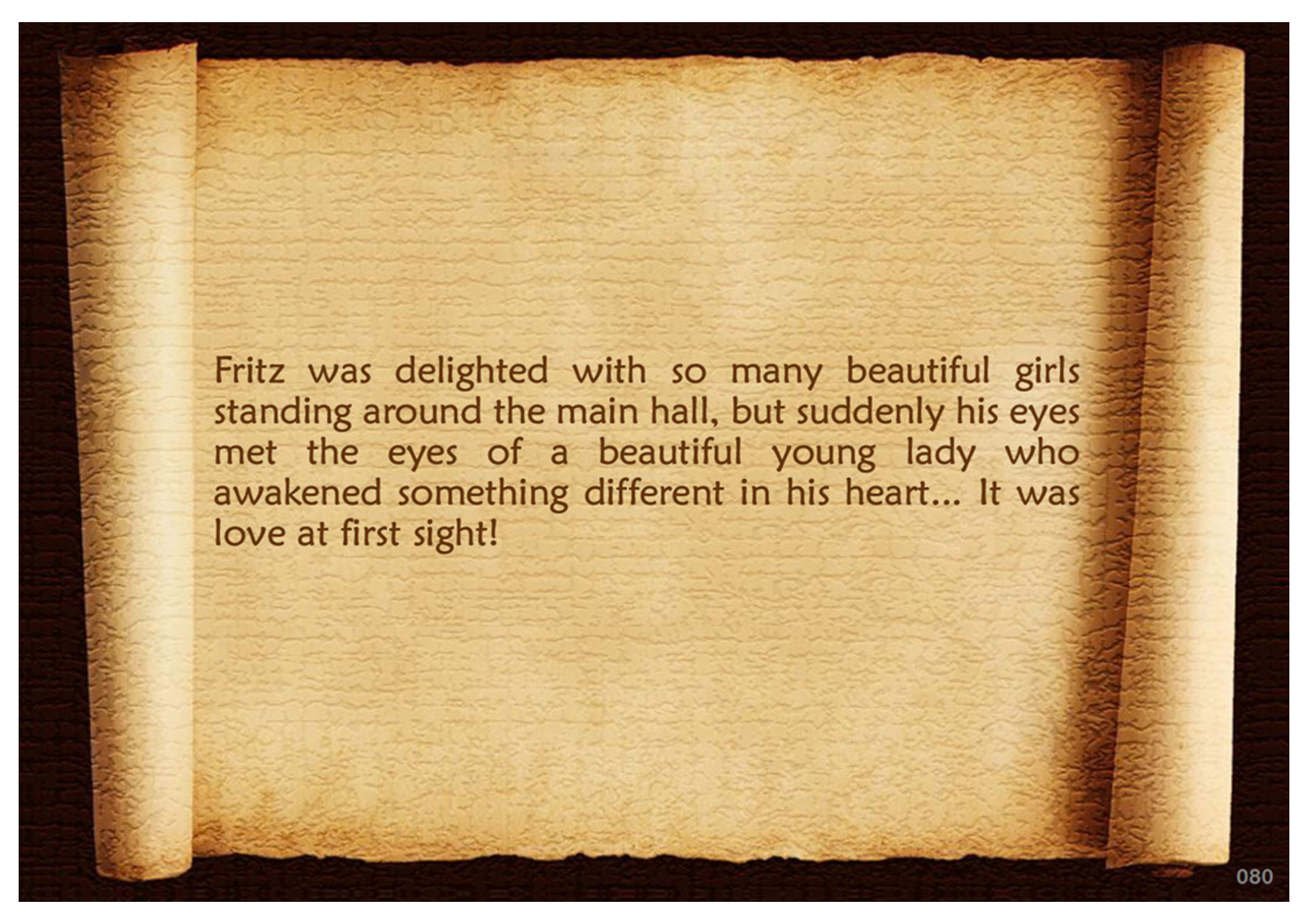
The time of the great Feast of the passing of the crown had come and all inhabitants of the three provinces went to the Royal Ring fortress, where the opening ceremony and the Olympic Games of Doggerland would start!



On the seventh Day of festivities, after the Passing of the Crown ceremony, Gandra the King gave a great feast in the court yard of the fortress for all guests, from the least to the greatest, and instructed all the stewards to serve each one all the drinks and food they wished. Mad-ellia was there also, eagerly awaiting the start of the great ball, where the girls would be presented.

Later on in the evening, as King Gandra was in high spirits, he ordered the trumpets to be sounded to announce the start of the ball. Then he commanded his attendants to bring before him and his son Fritz all the young chosen girls that had stayed for a month in Harlewood's Castle.

The great Ball had begun!



Fritz was delighted with so many beautiful girls standing around the main hall, but suddenly his eyes met the eyes of a beautiful young lady who awakened something different in his heart... It was love at first sight!



They danced all night and Fritz knew that this beautiful and lovely girl was the love of his life; his chosen one... her name was Maxim!

Mad-ellia was furious and burned with anger, but she pretended she was happy for the choice of Prince Fritz and greeted the young couple politely.

After the great feast, when the day was already dawning, Mad-ellia and Arlequina returned home. Mad-ellia was distraught and could not understand how the prince could have chosen Maxim, instead of Arlequina.

In fact, Mad-ellia belonged to another world, called Probopolo. There she had become well known as a judge and breeder of Great Danes and, as such, was highly respected. There, she was very wealthy and possessed more than a hundred great danes in her properties.

Arlequina was her best bitch and she often won 'Best in Show' in nearly all dog shows that she had participated. Being well known among all most important breeders, she became an icon of the breed in Probopolo.

In the gardens of the property where Mad-ellia used to live in Probopolo was a big old oak tree. This oak was huge and had a hidden passage behind the foliage, giving entrance to the inside of the tree trunk.

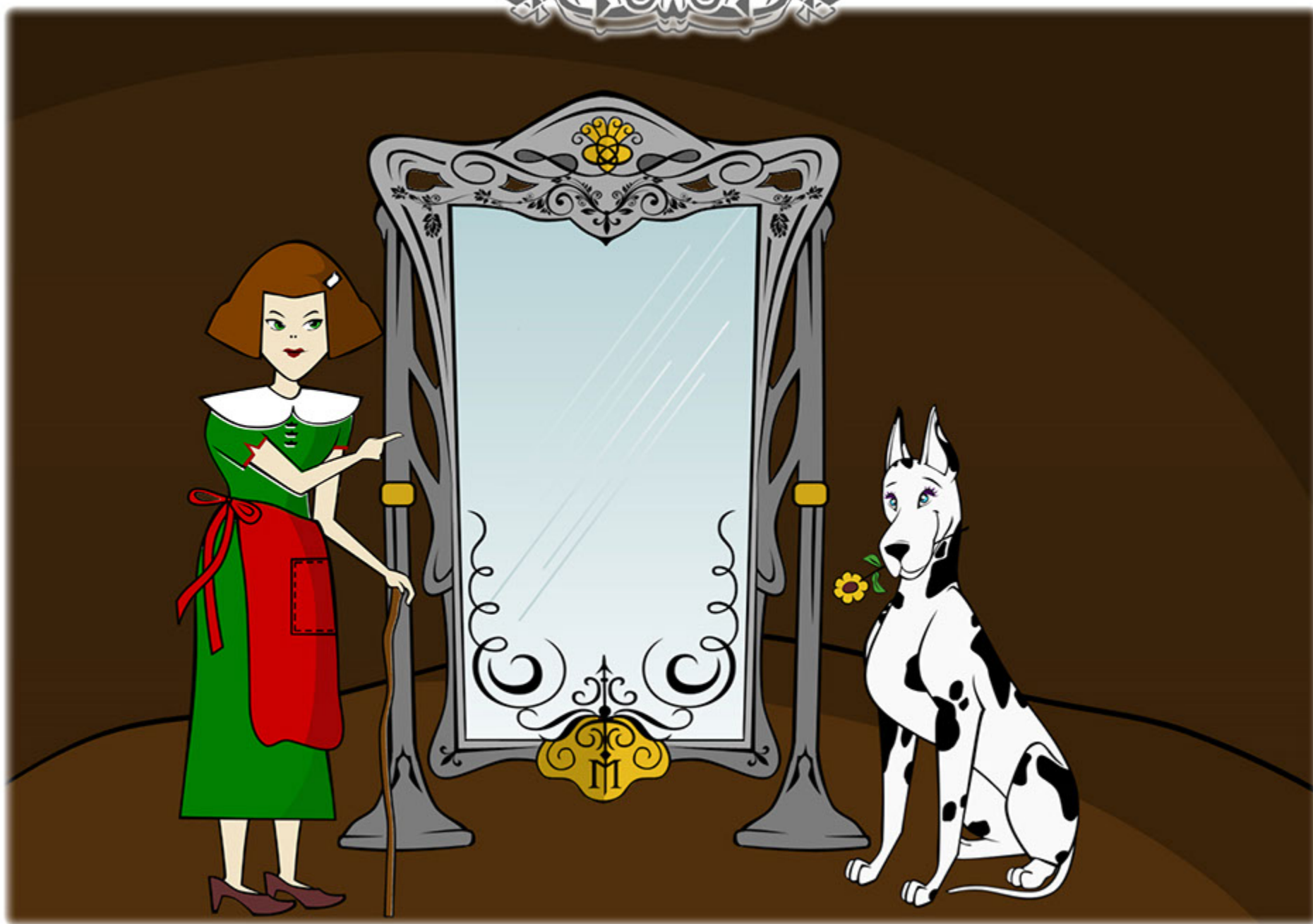
However, in the old oak was hidden a secret. Inside of it was a magic mirror that allowed Mad-ellia to transit between two worlds, Probopolo and Doggerland!

Behind her house in the forest of Harlewoods, there was also something like a doubling of the oak and the mirror, which would allow her to go back and forth to Doggerland, whenever she desired.

On the back side of the mirror there was an inscription that nobody in Probopolo could see, but only a native of Doggerland could see and read this inscription through his eyes, although, would not be able to understand its meaning. The inscription says:

VANITY IS MY NAME

In her unbridled greed, she had intended to reign over Doggerland through Arlequina. She took her from Probopolo through the mirror to the world of Doggerland, believing that she would be chosen by young Fritz to be his princess.



Full of anger and fury, Mad-ellia spent all day and all night walking from one side to the other, plotting another way to achieve her purpose.

Arlequina was a very sweet, submissive and loyal young girl, despite not receiving much affection from her owner. Seeing the state in which Mad-ellia was, Arlequina picked up some flowers in the garden and took them to her, in order to calm her down. But, this act didn't pleased Mad-ellia at all...



Arlequina!!
You used to mess up in my
garden at home in Probopolo, are you
going to behave that way even here, in
Doggerrland? Keep behaving like that, and
I'll lock you up in the kennel at home!
Or should I give you some of this
'Merkill' potion?

