

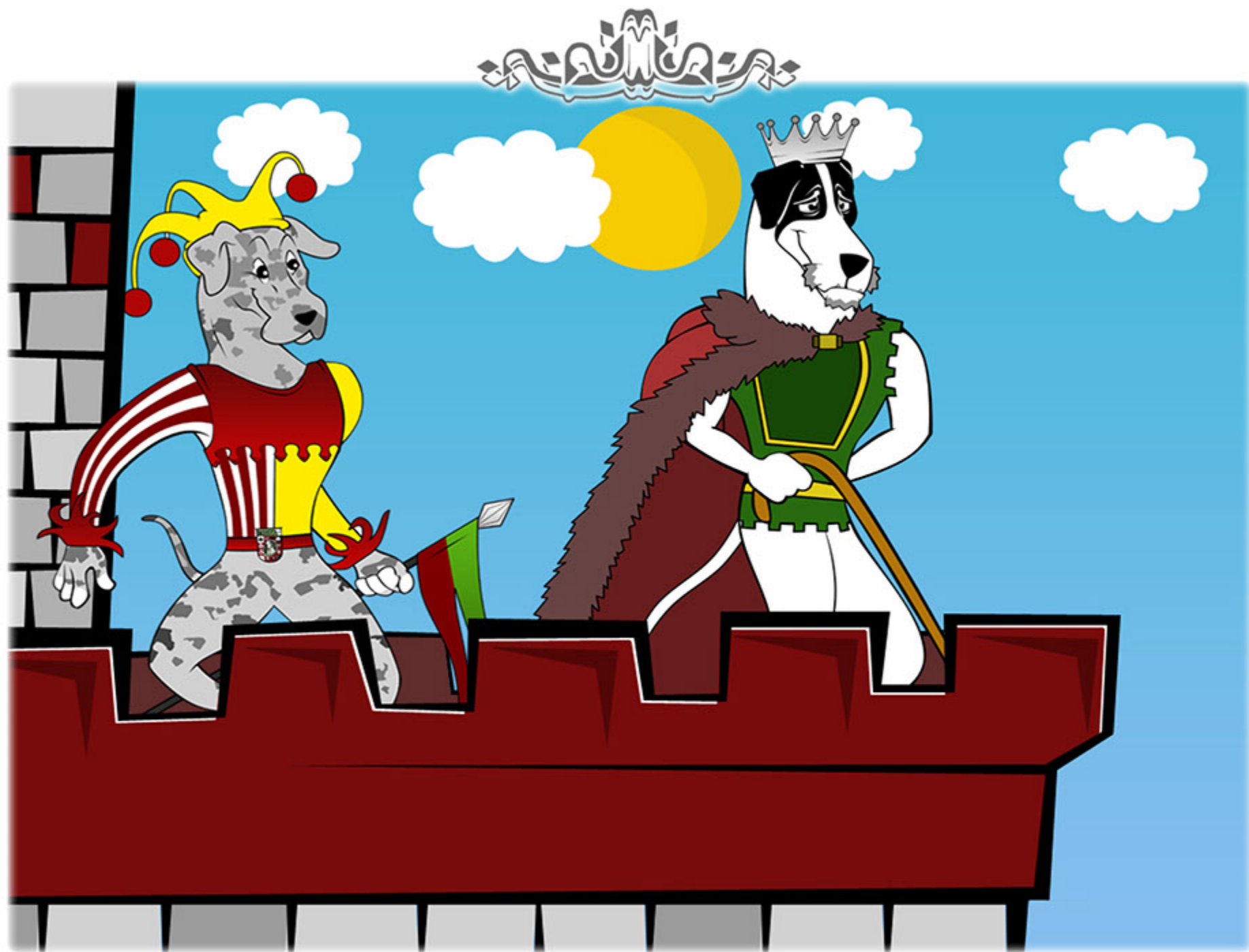
CHAPTER V – TRAP BEHIND LIES: MAD-ELLIA'S SECOND ATTEMPT

Fritz and Maxim had married and over the years they became more and more in love with each other. The years passed and Maxim had forgotten the vision of the silver fish that she had had in her childhood.



They lived happily in the castle with Gandra The King, who was now much older, but still in good shape and in good mood. Meanwhile Maxim and Fritz have had nine children: Fritz Jr., Olimpia, Oliver, Olivia, Obi-Wan, Ottieszka, Owtinne, Odrian and One-Neo. King Gandra was still a good king and also a loving Grandpa.

One day as king Gandra was on the balcony enjoying the fresh morning air and the beautiful garden of the castle, Mad-ellia was announced to the king by Florian, Maxim's childhood friend, now working at the castle as a court jester.



The king ordered Mad-ellia to enter and received her on the balcony where he was enjoying the morning sun.

- 'Good morning Your Majesty!' – greeted Mad-ellia.

- 'What a long time since your last visit. What brings you to me this morning?' – answered the king.

- 'I thought it would be nice to visit you again and see how you are doing, Your Majesty, and, also, I brought you a little gift, rare truffles that are found near the big oak tree, just beside my house in the forest.'

- 'How lovely of you Mad-ellia, you know how much I appreciate this delicacy!'

- 'Of course I do, your Majesty... and, I thought it would be nice to give the king this pleasure, while I am able to do so... since, you know, life is so short, we never know how long we are going to live...'

- 'That is true, Mad-ellia. I'm getting older too...'

- 'You know, Your Majesty, in front of my house down in the forest there is an old well that has a secret... but I haven't commented about it before, believing that it wouldn't be of your interest...'

- 'As you should well know, Mad-ellia, there shouldn't be any secrets from the king, since I am the representative of the God of Life in Doggerland.'

- 'Yes, I do understand Your Majesty, that's the reason I am telling it to you now... I didn't know about this secret until a short time ago. By the way, Your Majesty, did you ever thought of being the king of Doggerland forever, and never die?'

- 'What nonsense, you know what is said in the Book of Life, each province should reign for one hundred years, then the kingdom's government should be passed to the next province. That's an old tradition, determined by the God of Life.'

- 'Well... and, what would you think if I were to say that YOU could become like the God of Life himself, and reign over Doggerland forever and ever, and doing so ... would... never die?'

- 'That's impossible, Mad-ellia ..., but... well, how... how on Doggerland, could that be??'

- 'Let me explain it to you and make you a proposal, Your Majesty... after all, didn't you say there should be no secrets between your Majesty and his subjects...?'

- 'That's right, proceed...'

- 'A few days ago I was going to take some water from the well in front of my house, but carelessly I dropped my bucket into it. At first I was so upset, this bucket was a very precious and rare old piece of my ancestors and, also, it seemed that the well had dried up... But then, as I just wished the bucket should return to me, behold, the bucket was found immediately right back in my hand! I was so surprised that I decided to take an old ladder from my backyard and went down to the bottom of the well to figure out what had happened... but I did not find anything, just an old door there that leads to a small and empty chamber underneath the earth.'

- 'That's an amazing experience, Mad-ellia!' -
exclaimed the king.

- 'Yes, indeed! And now comes the most interesting part of all that...'

- 'Go ahead...'

- 'Every time I make a wish and throw the bucket into the well, my wish is immediately fulfilled!'

- 'That's quite extraordinary!' – exclaimed the king.

- 'And that's the reason I have come to see you, Your Majesty. I must say that this well has become a sort of... wishing well!'

- 'Wishing well...???'

- 'Yes ...you don't know but, the world I once came from has many kinds of wishing wells... people use to go there and make their wishes.'

- 'That's bad, Mad-ellia. You should know that in the Book of Life is said that we should trust all our wishes, and all our concerns to Him, and only to Him, the God of Life.'

- 'Listen to me, my friend Gandra, I understand that YOU should be the only one to have access and make use of this secret. Why don't you come with me to my house in the forest, and make a wish to the well? You could wish to be King over Doggerland forever. That would also mean that you would ...never die!'

- 'Mad-ellia, I couldn't do such a thing! The Book of Life is clear about wishes. It says that the God of Life is to be our one and only helper, we should never put our wishes and beliefs in anything else, only before Him, always.'

- 'Oh, come on, my old friend Gandra... Haven't I become the counselor to the king over the years? Haven't I give you many good advices, and help you marry your son to a pretty and lovely wife? Aren't Fritz and Maxim such a lovely couple? Listen to me once more Your Majesty, that's just an old book... an old fashioned book... it is time to renew your mind. Why don't you just give it a try... and... well, anyway, no one needs to know about that ...it would be our little secret, only between you and me.'...'

At first Gandra was shocked by the idea of making a wish to a well...It seemed weird to establish an intelligent contact with an inanimate object and tell it a wish... But suddenly he became so curious and interested about Mad-ellia's proposal... he was silent for a while, and then he said:

- 'Well, it wouldn't do any harm just to give it a try and see what happens... but you must promise me that this is going to stay only between us.'

- 'That's what I meant Your Majesty, only between you and me; after all, we've grown to be old and close friends, haven't we?'



Then king Gandra and Mad-ellia, agreeing to meet after dark in front of the castle gate, went together to Mad-ellia's house, within the forest. They walked for a long time and it was almost dawn when they arrived in front of the house where the well was.

- 'Here we are, your Majesty – said Mad-ellia – now, this is what you'll have to do: Come up here, step on the wall of the well, hold your golden scepter in your right hand straight in front of you, close your eyes, focus and desire with all the power of your heart and your soul, and then recite the words: I-want-to-be-king-of-Doggerland-forever! Once you have wished and said these words, let the scepter fall into the well and wait to see what happens...'

Gandra was so very tired from the long walk through the forest that he decided to do what Mad-ellia told him without a thought. As soon as he was standing there holding his scepter in front of him with his closed eyes, Mad-ellia came running behind him and gave him a push, throwing the king into the well!

She laughed loudly and said:

- 'You foolish old man, you should not listen to old ladies' tales... Now, I am going to be you, I am going to become a king over Doggerland, forever!'

After saying these words, Mad-ellia picked the scepter that flew in the air as King Gandra was falling into the well, and went to the old oak tree, where the magic mirror was. She looked firmly into the mirror and said:

- 'I am King Gandra now, I will reign over Doggerland, forever!!!'

The moment she uttered these words, she was transformed and assumed the appearance of king Gandra! Then she locked the king with Arlequina into the old barn behind the house and returned to the castle.

Now, Mad-ellia reigned over Doggerland!