

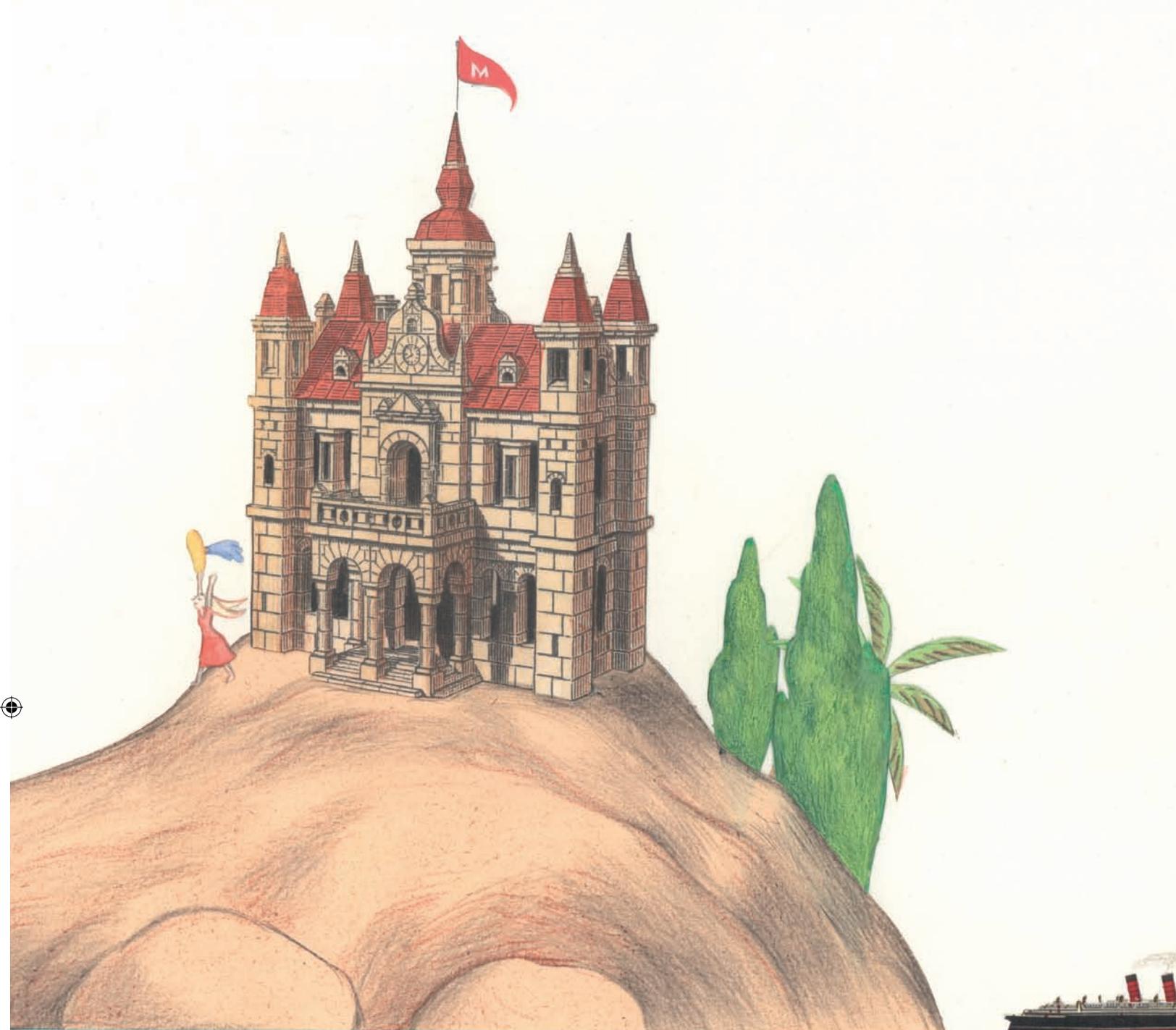
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Karen Holländer / Thilo Krapp
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Karen Holländer / Thilo Krapp
If only I had – could – were

Translated by Richard Goddard



If Only...

**Poor Julie's hair is in a shocking state
Unruly locks have made her quite irate:**

**"If only I had shiny silken hair
Like Princess Clara's - oh, it's so unfair!"**

**Meanwhile, the Princess Clara, it would seem,
Is not greatly amused by haute cuisine:**

**To put it bluntly, she won't eat her dinner,
And so her arms and legs are getting thinner.**

**Soon there'll be nothing left but hair and bones:
If only she could be as big as Jones.**

**Old Cookie Jones has set his heart on something:
If only he could make the perfect dumpling.**

**He seethes that, though he's praised for his risotto,
The dumpling prizes always go to Otto.**

**Yet, prizes don't make Otto proud at all:
He's bothered that his house is far too small.**

**If only he'd the sort of modest palace,
That meets the simple needs of Countess Alice.**

**The Countess has grown rather bored of flowers,
But finds that dancing wiles away the hours.**

**She'd gladly leave and give it all away,
If only she could dance like Prince José.**

**The acrobatic Prince can dance all day
On legs that bend like wire, so they say.**

**If only José's handstands were a patch
On Anna's – she's the star and that's the catch.**

**Although, for handstands, Anna doesn't care
To Prince José it's all too much to bear.**

**To play the trumpet is Anna's new passion:
If only she could play in Margaret's fashion.**

**Now, if you sometimes hear a distant rumbling,
It's very probably just Margaret grumbling,**

**Because she's envious beyond belief,
Of Lilly's brand-new, shining swan-white teeth.**

**Throughout the land, we've grown quite used to
reading,
Of Lilly's world-class skill at poodle breeding.**

**And yet, the champion poodle best-in-show,
Is always owned by old Miss Weston-Hoe**

**Now, she has lived more than a hundred years;
To anybody else, that calls for cheers.**

**And yet, she never will acknowledge Bill;
Perhaps because he's even older still.**

**Old prankster Bill just likes to fool around
He'll laugh until he's rolling on the ground.**

**If only he could find the perfect jest:
For jokes made up by Fred are always best.**

**Poor Fred has just a few hairs on his head
And yet, at night he sometimes dreams instead**

**Of flowing locks and many a tangled tress,
Like those that cause poor Julia distress.**

**Despite the hairy nightmares, Fred can bear,
Without unduly grieving, loss of hair.**

**In fact, he sees no cause for great alarm,
And thinks a bald patch adds a certain charm.**

**He's much too busy with big celebrations,
With cakes and games and coloured decorations.**

**He likes to see his guests laugh and get dancing;
If only hosts could all be so entrancing.**