



## Chapter One



I stood in the doorway, and stared. I'd never seen a school dormitory before, and I couldn't believe my eyes. It was a long thin room, and although the walls were a lovely rose pink, it was so empty. Just six cupboards, six chairs, and six beds arranged in neat and tidy rows.

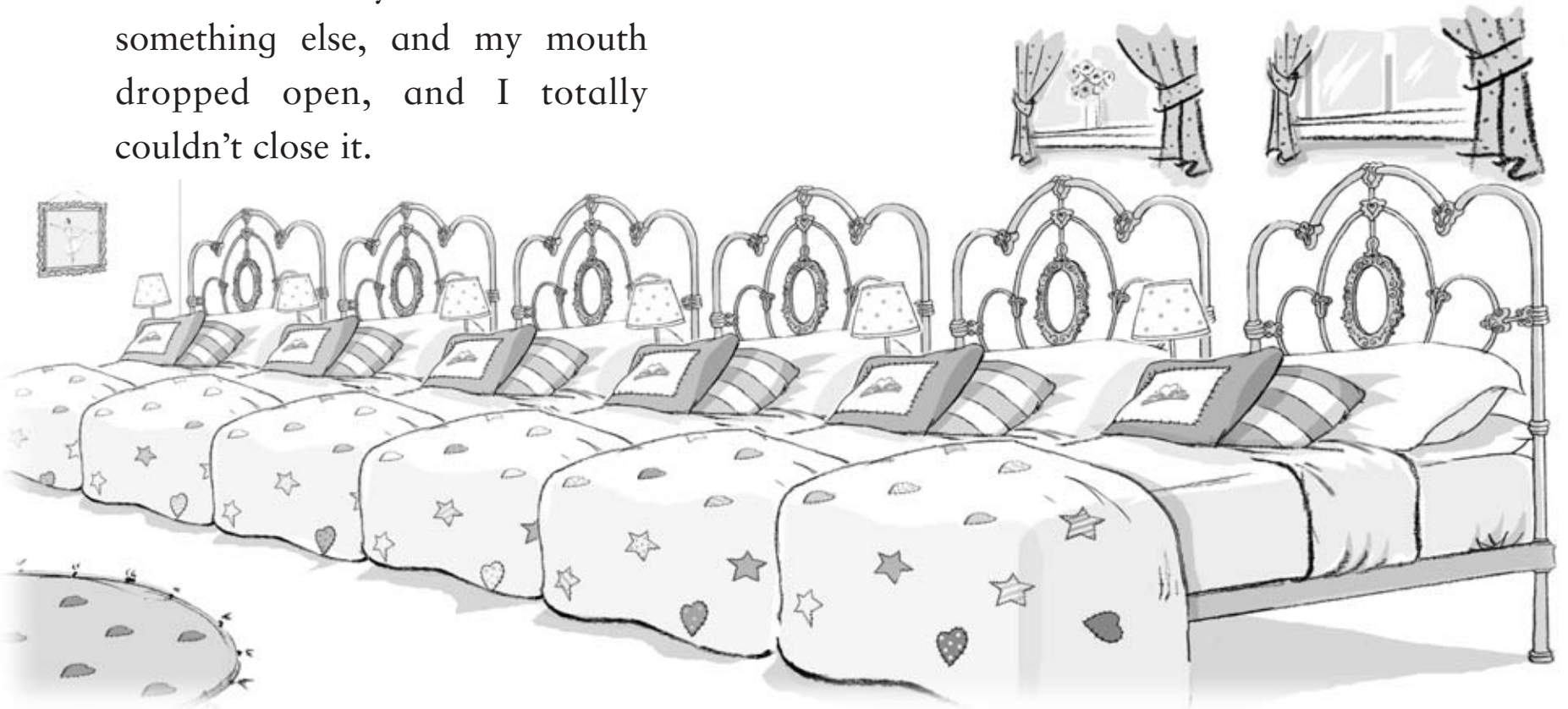


And a thought hit me –  
ZONK!!!!

I was going to have to SHARE  
with five other princesses!!

I gasped. I did my best to  
pretend it was a sort of cough,  
but it wasn't easy. And then I saw  
something else, and my mouth  
dropped open, and I totally  
couldn't close it.

NOT ONE of the beds had satin  
sheets! They were plain white  
cotton. They did look very  
sparkly clean, but all the  
same...how could ANY princess  
be expected to sleep on plain  
cotton sheets?



“Now dear, unpack your things, and make yourself at home.” Queen Gloriana smiled at me as if everything was perfectly normal, and waved me towards the bed by the window.

“You’re the first here in Rose Room, but the other princesses will be arriving any minute. They’re all lovely girls, and I’m sure you’ll be GREAT friends!” My new headmistress waved again as she swept away, her long velvet skirts brushing the floor as she went.

“Thank you, your majesty,” I said as politely as I could, but my heart was thumping.





I hurried to the window, and looked out...and I was just in time to see my father's golden coach glinting in the sunshine before it turned the corner of the drive and disappeared.

If I hadn't heard someone coming up the stairs I'd have howled my eyes out. I mean, what WAS this place?

I'd been reading up about "The Royal Palace Academy for the Preparation of Perfect Princesses" for AGES. The brochure was full of pictures of sweeping staircases, and a magical lake with swans



floating on their own reflections. Best of all, there was the Princess Academy Annual Birthday Ball. It looked FABULOUS. Imagine the most wonderful ballroom ever, with a dark blue ceiling lit by millions of tiny sparkly stars, and lots and lots of the most beautiful princesses in lovely LOVELY dresses twirling round and round the floor. And it all happened on the very first evening of the new school year!!!

I'd been dreaming about the Birthday Ball. I could SO imagine every head turning as I drifted onto the dance floor.

I'd decided that my dress would be soft pink with lots of swirly petticoats, and my tiara would be so sparkly that everyone would be completely dazzled. No one would EVER notice my hair was a little bit mousy, and my nose wasn't exactly perfect, because if I was at the Princess Academy Birthday Ball then I'd be beautiful too.

I nagged and NAGGED Mum and Dad until they said I could go to the Academy, and then I nagged a whole lot more until Mum agreed to let me have the dress I'd imagined.

(It wasn't EXACTLY right, but it was very nearly.) I counted every single day until the beginning of term...





...but as I stared miserably out of the window I knew I'd made a HUGE mistake. Queen Gloriana was scary. The school was too big. The dormitory was horrid. I didn't want to share a room with anyone, let alone five girls I'd never ever met.

I decided I absolutely HAD to run away. At once.

“Hello,” said a voice from the doorway, and I turned, blinking hard so whoever it was wouldn't see I was nearly crying.