

# The Ricotta Dialogues : A Fairytale

[The sidelined double-spaced paragraphs contain unpunctuated dialogue]

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4 ONCE UPON A TIME, in the rich and peaceful kingdom of Bel Paese, there ruled a good King, Bill, and his  
5 beautiful and beloved Queen, Belle. Paese was full of sunlight and happiness. The people sang as they went  
6 about their daily work.

7 But Queen Belle did not sing. Queen Belle was sad. For in the many years of their marriage, the King and  
8 Queen had had no children of their own. And who would rule Bill and Belle's Paese when they were gone?

9 Queen Belle knew she had no choice; she consulted a witch. As it happened, she had one more or less to hand  
10 since her faithful retainer, Slack-Britches, was well-connected on the witching front. His great-aunt Mascarpone  
11 was the head of the local coven. Belle and Mascarpone put their heads together and came up with a foolproof  
12 witcherly plan.

13 And lo! a year later, Queen Belle was cradling a baby daughter in her arms.

14  
15 King Bill gazed proudly down at their first-born. What shall we call her

16 Ricotta Belle Paese replied the Queen firmly. It has a fine ring to it, don't you think, dear? Fit for a princess.

17 And fit for a queen, too she paused to allow herself to let out a soulful sigh one day. Long in the future, of course  
18 she added hastily at the sight of the King's frown.

19 The King ignored his wife's slur on his potential lifespan. A queen has to have a husband, though.

20 I fancy, my dear, that we can leave that for a while. The Queen stroked the baby's soft cheek. Ricotta is but  
21 two days old.

22 King Bill nodded. Then, perhaps he said brightening now that we have a girl child, we might hope for a boy  
23 as well? To follow me as king? We've had one miracle. He beamed at her. Might there not be  
24 another?

25 Slack-Britches, standing in the shadows of the nursery, was suddenly overcome by a fit of coughing. Queen  
26 Belle threw him a black look and he backed out of the presence, bowing low.

27  
28 We may always hope said Queen Belle airily but I think we had best cherish the heir we have, since she took  
29 so many years to appear. She smiled at her husband. When she is old enough to marry, we can look for the right  
30 kind of suitor. It goes without saying that he must be a prince. Blue blood is paramount in the reigning business.  
31 And preferably a rich prince, though I suppose Ricotta will be rich enough to marry a poor one if nothing better  
32 is on offer.

33 Ricotta will be allowed to choose for herself, of course. We want her to be in love, as we were she added,  
34 gazing wistfully over King Bill's shoulder.

35 But we will provide the candidates. The King was firm. Queen Belle knew better than to object.

36 ~ ~ ~

37 Eighteen years later, the search began in earnest, for there had been no second miracle. Ricotta Belle Paese was  
38 definitely the heir, and a very fine catch indeed, for she wasn't really ugly and she was not as dim as either of her  
39 parents. Crucially, she would one day be very, very rich; and a reigning queen. So, as far as any suitors were  
40 concerned, Ricotta was *very* beautiful and *very* clever. It comes with the job description.

41 Soon, two ardent suitors appeared in Bel Paese: Prince Six-Pack and Prince Square-Jaw. Both filled the basic  
42 job specification by being princes (though, sadly, not rich princes). Neither had two brain cells to rub together,  
43 but both had splendid bodies which they did nothing to hide, being fond of parading up and down wearing only  
44 an open leather waistcoat over tight riding breeches.

45  
46 Mozzarella, daughter of Slack-Britches and also Princess Ricotta's maid, watched the performance wide-eyed.  
47 Definitely fit she said Either of them turn you on, Princess? If you chose one of them that would leave the other  
48 one for

49 Square-Jaw is hairy Ricotta announced, before Mozzarella could finish and I don't like hairy men. Six-Pack  
50 would be hairy too, except that he shaves his torso to show off his...er ...six-pack.

51 Ooh breathed Mozarella how do you know that

52 Mozarella Ricotta raised an admonishing finger there are some things that a minion should not ask.

53 ~ ~ ~

54 After a few weeks of watching the two princes in the full panoply of the Bel Paese court, Ricotta was permitted  
55 to spend time alone with each of them to make her choice.

56  
57 Six-Pack, much taken with the honour of having Ricotta to himself at last, bowed low and said, proudly,  
58 They call me Six-Pack the Braw.

59 Six-Pack the who

60 It's a what, no' a who. Braw. Rhymes with guffaw. Means brave, where I come frae.

61 And where is that, exactly

62 Six-Pack jerked a thumb toward the window and the snowy mountains in the far distance. North he said  
63 laconically.

64  
65 Ricotta decided that Six-Pack was a suitor of very few words. After seven more words – which took nearly  
66 half an hour to emerge – she dismissed him to return to his strutting and exercising. She would not marry a man  
67 who couldn't talk to her.

68  
69 Might as well get it over with she said to herself. Raising her voice, she called out Mozarella, you may send  
70 in the next She stopped in mid-sentence. No, that won't do, she thought. Not princely at all. Mozarella, pray  
71 invite Prince Square-Jaw to join me here for wine and 'elegant' conversation.

72  
73 Prince Square-Jaw talked extremely elegantly for almost forty minutes. Ricotta could barely get a word in. As  
74 soon as she said anything, he was off again, praising her beauty, her fine eyes, her seductive voice. Ricotta  
75 wanted to ask how he knew anything about her voice since he had barely heard her speak a word. But manners  
76 got the better of her. She maintained a fixed smile and tried to endure.

77  
78 Can't you see I love you, you little fool Square-Jaw gritted out at last, pulling Ricotta into his manly embrace  
79 and lowering his lips to hers.

80 I would be a fool, if I believed a word you say Ricotta retorted acidly kneeing him in the groin. What you  
81 love, Square-Jaw, is my money and my throne. She sucked in a quick breath. And the sound of your own voice  
82 she snapped glaring down at him.

83 For a moment, Square-Jaw was so shocked that he stopped writhing on the floor. s not true he gasped,  
84 between groans.

85  
86 Ricotta raised her foot as though she were about to add a kick to his earlier injury. Square-Jaw clutched his  
87 genitals and curled into a ball, whimpering softly.

88  
89 Nuts Ricotta spat and grinned as Square-Jaw clutched and curled even tighter I won't marry you, Square-Jaw.  
90 And I won't marry that other braw buffoon either. I've got a much better idea. Mozarella, come here  
91 at once

92 Mozarella, who had of course been listening at the door, appeared in the blink of an eye. She curtsied more  
93 demurely than she usually did and grinned up at her mistress.

94 Get our horses saddled, Mozarella, and pack for a month. You and I are going husband hunting. And if I  
95 don't find a decent man in that time, I swear I'll marry you instead.

96 ~~~ENDS~~~

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