Contrary to the rumors I have been trying to spread for some time, Disney Princess products are not contaminated with lead. More careful analysis shows that the entire product line—books, DVDs, ball gowns, necklaces, toy cell phones, toothbrush holders, T-shirts, lunch boxes, backpacks, wallpaper, sheets, stickers, etc.—is saturated with a particularly potent time-release form of the date rape drug.

We cannot blame China this time, because the drug is in the concept, which was spawned in the Disney studios. Before 2000, the Princesses were just the separate, disunited, heroines of Disney animated films—Snow White, Cinderella, Ariel, Aurora, Pocahontas, Jasmine, Belle, and Mulan. Then Disney’s Andy Mooney got the idea of bringing the gals together in a team. With a wave of the wand ($10.99 at Target, tiara included) they were all elevated to royal status and set loose on the world as an imperial cabal, and have since busied themselves achieving global domination. Today, there is no little girl in the wired, industrial world who does not seek to display her allegiance to the pink-and-purple clad Disney dynasty.

Disney likes to think of the Princesses as role models, but what a sorry bunch of wusses they are. Typically, they spend much of their time in captivity or a coma, waking up only when a Prince comes along and kisses them. The most striking exception is Mulan, who dresses as a boy to fight in the army, but—like the other Princess of color, Pocahontas—she lacks full Princess status and does not warrant a line of tiaras and gowns. Otherwise the Princesses have no ambitions and no marketable skills, although both Snow White and Cinderella are good at housecleaning.

And what could they aspire to, beyond landing a Prince? In Princessland, the only career ladder leads from baby-faced adolescence to a position as an evil enchantress, stepmother or witch. Snow White’s wicked stepmother is consumed with envy for her stepdaughter’s beauty; the sea witch Ursula covets Ariel’s lovely voice; Cinderella’s stepmother exploits the girl’s cheap, uncomplaining, labor. No need for complicated witch-hunting techniques—pin-prickings and dunkings—in Princessland. All you have to look for is wrinkles.

Feminist parents gnash their teeth. For this their little girls gave up Dora, who bounds through the jungle saving baby jaguars, whose mother is an archeologist and whose adventures don’t involve smoochy rescues by Diego? There was drama in Dora’s life too, and the occasional bad actor like Swiper the fox. Even Barbie looks like a suffragette compared to Disney’s Belle. So what’s the appeal of the pink tulle Princess cult?
Seen from the witchy end of the female life cycle, the Princesses exert their pull through a dark and undeniable eroticism. They’re sexy little wenches, for one thing. Snow White has gotten slimmer and bustier over the years; Ariel wears nothing but a bikini top (though, admittedly, she is half fish). In faithful imitation, the three-year old in my life flounces around with her tiara askew and her Princess gown sliding off her shoulder, looking for all the world like a London socialite after a hard night of cocaine and booze. Then she demands a poison apple and falls to the floor in a beautiful swoon. Pass the Rohypnol-laced margarita, please.

It may be old-fashioned to say so, but sex—and especially some middle-aged man’s twisted version thereof—doesn’t belong in the pre-K playroom. Children are going to discover it soon enough, but they’ve got to do so on their own.

There’s a reason, after all, why we’re generally more disgusted by sexual abusers than adults who inflict mere violence on children: We sense that sexual abuse more deeply messes with a child’s mind. One’s sexual inclinations—straightforward or kinky, active or passive, heterosexual or homosexual—should be free to develop without adult intervention or manipulation. Hence our harshness toward the kind of sexual predators who leer at kids and offer candy. But Disney, which also owns ABC, Lifetime, ESPN, A&E, and Miramax, is rewarded with $4 billion a year for marketing the masochistic Princess cult and its endlessly proliferating paraphernalia.

Let’s face it, no parent can stand up against this alone. Try to ban the Princesses from your home, and you might as well turn yourself in to Child Protective Services before the little girls get on their Princess cell phones. No, the only way to topple royalty is through a mass uprising of the long-suffering serfs. Assemble with your neighbors and make a holiday bonfire out of all that plastic and tulle! March on Disney World with pitchforks held high!