

The Princess and the Pea

Once upon a time there was a prince who wanted to marry a princess; but she would have to be a real princess. He travelled all over the world to find one, but nowhere could he get what he wanted. There were a lot of princesses, but it was difficult to find out if they were real or not.

Some were too grumpy.

Some were too rude.

Some were too loud.

Some were too bossy.

Some were too selfish.

There was always something about them that he didn't like. So he came home again and was sad, for he would have liked very much to have a real princess.

One evening there was a terrible storm. There was thunder and lightning, and the rain poured down in torrents. Suddenly a knocking was heard at the city gate, and the old king went to open it.

It was a princess standing out there in front of the gate. But, good gracious! what a sight the rain and the wind had made her look. The water ran down from her hair and clothes; it ran down into the toes of her shoes and out again at the heels. And yet she said that she was a real princess.

"Hmmm" thought the old queen, "She is a mess. I will do a test." She said nothing, but she went into the bedroom where the princess would sleep. She took all the bedding off the bed, and put a pea on the bottom; then she took twenty mattresses and laid them on the pea, and then twenty duvets on top of the mattresses.

On this the princess had to lie all night. In the morning the queen asked, "How did you sleep my dear?"

"Oh, very badly!" said the princess. "I have scarcely closed my eyes all night."

"Was it too hot?" asked the Prince.

"Was it too cold?" asked the King

"Was it too hard?" asked the Queen

"I don't know what was in the bed, but I was lying on something very hard, I am black and blue all over my body. It's horrible!"

Now they knew that she was a real princess because she had felt the pea right through the twenty mattresses and the twenty duvets.

Nobody but a real princess could be as sensitive as that.

The Prince was very happy and started to get to know the Princess because now he knew she was a real princess. They fell in love and they had a beautiful wedding.

The pea was put in the Royal Museum, where it may still be seen, if no one has stolen it.