

The Princess and the Pea

A Fairytale by Hans Christian Anderson



Once upon a time lived a prince. The prince wanted to get married. The prince looked in every kingdom, all over the world. He met many princesses. But the prince did not like any of them. How could he be sure that they were real princesses? There was something wrong with each of them. One was too short. One was too tall. One was too fat. One was too thin. One was too ugly. One was too pretty.

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One stormy night there was a knock at the gate. The old king went to answer it. Outside in the rain stood a young lady. She said she was a princess. But she sure did not look like one. Dripping wet and windblown, the lady looked like a mess. And yet she said that she was a real princess.



Was she a real princess? The queen had an idea. The queen knew how to test the lady. The queen set up a bed for the lady. The queen put a pea at the bottom. She piled 40 mattresses on top of the pea. Only a real princess would feel a pea under 40 mattresses.

In the morning, the lady went to see the queen.

“How did you sleep?” asked the queen.

“I did not sleep at all,” said the princess. “There was something hard in the bed. It hurt me. It made me black and blue.”

The queen's test worked. The lady was a real princess. Only a real princess would be so sensitive. Only a real princess would feel a pea under 40 mattresses.

The prince married the princess. They lived happily ever after. They put the pea in a museum. It may still be there today.

