

## The Princess and the Pea



### Characters:

Narrator  
Prince  
King  
Queen  
Princess

(The setting is a formal living room in a large castle. The castle is located in a small town in Europe.)

### ACT I

NARRATOR

There was once a prince who was ready to marry. He was looking for a real princess. He had traveled all over the world in search of his bride but he returned to the castle alone. He had met plenty of princesses, but there was always something that was not quite right about them. For weeks, the prince moped around the castle in despair.

QUEEN

Son, I know you are upset about not finding a real princess to marry. Don't give up, though. I know she is out there...somewhere. (to the King) Would you like to address your son's concerns?

KING

I agree with your mother. You have time. It will be many years before you take the throne. Take your time and choose wisely.

PRINCE

(a tear slipped down his cheek) I just wish there was a way to know for sure. I wish there was some sort of test that, if she passed, I would know she was a real princess.

(The queen and king exchange knowing looks and smile.)



NARRATOR

Just then, a flash of lightning lit up the room. The royal family bolted out of their seats and looked out the window. They were so engrossed in their conversation, they had not noticed the storm outside. The wind howled and the rain poured down. When the next bolt of lightning struck, the king noticed someone standing at the gate.

KING

Oh my! Look! A young woman is caught out in the middle of this terrible storm.

(The king rushed out of the room to help the young woman.)

NARRATOR

The queen and prince watched as the king opened the gate and helped the young woman inside. The woman was in a terrible state. The water streamed out of her hair and her clothes. It ran in at the top of her shoes and out at the heel. Her appearance shocked the royal family, but not as much as her claim that she was royal herself.

KING

I present to you, Princess Caroline.

PRINCESS

I know the way I look may be misleading, but I promise you that I am a real princess. I have traveled a long way to meet the prince.

NARRATOR

The prince was immediately smitten with the princess. He looked past her wet hair, clothes, and shoes. He saw something special, a twinkle in her eye.

QUEEN

Well, we can't be sure if that is true, but you are certainly welcome to stay the night. I will prepare your room.

(The queen winks at the king as she leaves the room.)

NARRATOR

In the guest room, the queen removed all of the bedclothes from the bed. Next, she laid a single pea on the bed. Then, she took twenty mattresses and piled them on top of the pea. Finally, she piled twenty feather beds on top of the mattresses.

QUEEN

(calling from the guest room) The room is ready for you, my dear.

NARRATOR

At the top of the twenty mattresses and twenty feather beds was where the princess was to sleep that night.

**ACT II**

(The next morning, the storm has cleared and the sun is shining. The royal family is sitting at the formal dining table. They are eating breakfast and drinking tea. The family looks up from their plates when the princess enters the room.)

QUEEN

(to the princess) Good morning. Did you sleep well?

PRINCESS

Oh, terribly badly! I don't mean to complain, but I hardly closed my eyes the whole night. I seemed to be lying on something very hard, and my whole body is black and blue this morning.



NARRATOR

The king and queen smiled broadly at the princess. The prince jumped out of his chair to pull out a chair for the princess.

PRINCE

I'm terribly sorry to hear that. Please join us for breakfast and tell us more about yourself.

NARRATOR

The queen and king did not object. They knew at once that the young woman was a real princess when she had felt the pea through all twenty mattresses and feather beds—only a real princess could have skin so delicate. The prince did not know about the test. He did not seem to care about her being a real princess after all. He just knew that he wanted her to be his bride. They married shortly after that day and lived happily ever after.

