

= The Princess and the Pea =

" The Princess and the Pea " (Danish : " Prinsessen paa Ærten " ; literal translation : " The Princess on the Pea ") is a literary fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen about a young woman whose royal identity is established by a test of her physical sensitivity . The tale was first published with three others by Andersen in an inexpensive booklet on 8 May 1835 in Copenhagen by C. A. Reitzel .

Andersen had heard the story as a child , and it likely has its source in folk material , possibly originating from Sweden , as it is unknown in the Danish oral tradition . Neither " The Princess and the Pea " nor Andersen 's other tales of 1835 were well received by Danish critics , who disliked their casual , chatty style and their lack of morals .

In 1959 " The Princess and the Pea " was adapted to the musical stage in a production called Once Upon a Mattress starring Carol Burnett .

= = Plot = =

The story tells of a prince who wants to marry a princess , but is having difficulty finding a suitable wife . Something is always wrong with those he meets , and he cannot be certain they are real princesses because they have bad table manners or they are too fat or thin or not beautiful . One stormy night a young woman drenched with rain seeks shelter in the prince 's castle . She claims to be a princess , so the prince 's mother decides to test their unexpected , unwitting guest by placing a pea in the bed she is offered for the night , covered by 20 mattresses and 20 feather @-@ beds . In the morning , the guest tells her hosts that she endured a sleepless night , kept awake by something hard in the bed that she is certain has bruised her . The prince rejoices . Only a real princess would have the sensitivity to feel a pea through such a quantity of bedding , so the two are married .

The story ends with the pea being placed in a museum , where according to the storyteller it can still be seen today , unless someone has removed it .

= = Composition = =

Andersen deliberately cultivated a funny and colloquial style in the tales of 1835 , reminiscent of oral storytelling techniques rather than the sophisticated literary devices of the fairy tales written by les précieuses , E. T. A. Hoffmann , and other precursors . The earliest reviews criticized Andersen for not following such models . In the second volume of the 1863 edition of his collected works Andersen remarked in the preface : " The style should be such that one hears the narrator . Therefore , the language had to be similar to the spoken word ; the stories are for children , but adults too should be able to listen in . "

Although no materials appear to exist specifically addressing the composition of " The Princess and the Pea " , Andersen does speak to the writing of the first four tales of 1835 of which " The Princess on the Pea " is one . New Year 's Day 1835 , Andersen wrote to a friend : " I am now starting on some ' fairy tales for children . ' I am going to win over future generations , you may want to know " , and , in a letter dated February 1835 he wrote to the poet , Bernhard Severin Ingemann : " I have started some ' Fairy Tales Told for Children ' and believe I have succeeded . I have told a couple of tales which as a child I was happy about , and which I do not believe are known , and have written them exactly the way I would tell them to a child . " Andersen had finished the tales by March 1835 and told Admiral Wulff 's daughter , Henriette : " I have also written some fairy tales for children ; Ørsted says about them that if The Improvisatore makes me famous then these will make me immortal , for they are the most perfect things I have written ; but I myself do not think so . " On 26 March , he observed that " [the fairy tales] will be published in April , and people will say : the work of my immortality ! Of course I shan 't enjoy the experience in this world . "

= = Publication = =

" The Princess and the Pea " was first published in Copenhagen , Denmark by C.A. Reitzel on 8 May 1835 in an unbound 61 @-@ page booklet called Tales , Told for Children . First Collection . First Booklet . 1835 . (Eventyr , fortalte for Børn . Første Samling . Første Hefte . 1835 .) . " The Princess and the Pea " was the third tale in the collection , with " The Tinderbox " (" Fyrtøiet ") , " Little Claus and Big Claus " (" Lille Claus og store Claus ") , and " Little Ida 's Flowers " (" Den lille Idas Blomster ") . The booklet was priced at twenty @-@ four shillings (the equivalent of 25 Dkr. or approximately US \$ 5 as of 2009) , and the publisher paid Andersen 30 rixdollars (US \$ 450 as of 2009) . A second edition was published in 1842 , and a third in 1845 . " The Princess and the Pea " was reprinted on 18 December 1849 in Tales . 1850 @-@ with illustrations by Vilhelm Pedersen . The story was published again on 15 December 1862 , in Tales and Stories . First Volume . 1862 .

The first Danish reviews of Andersen 's 1835 tales appeared in 1836 , and were hostile . Critics disliked the informal , chatty style , and the lack of morals , and offered Andersen no encouragement . One literary journal failed to mention the tales at all , while another advised Andersen not to waste his time writing " wonder stories " . He was told he " lacked the usual form of that kind of poetry ... and would not study models " . Andersen felt he was working against their preconceived notions of what a fairy tale should be and returned to writing novels , believing it to be his true calling .

= = English translation = =

Charles Boner was the first to translate " The Princess and the Pea " into English , working from a German translation that had increased Andersen 's lone pea to a trio of peas in an attempt to make the story more credible , an embellishment also added by another early English translator , Caroline Peachey . Boner 's translation was published as " The Princess on the Peas " in A Danish Story @-@ Book in 1846 . Boner has been accused of missing the satire of the tale by ending with the rhetorical question , " Now was not that a lady of exquisite feeling ? " rather than Andersen 's joke of the pea being placed in the Royal Museum . Boner and Peachey 's work established the standard for English translations of the fairy tales , which , for almost a century , as Wullschlager notes , " continued to range from the inadequate to the abysmal " .

= = Commentaries = =

Wullschlager observes that in " The Princess and the Pea " Andersen blended his childhood memories of a primitive world of violence , death , and inexorable fate , with his social climber 's private romance about the serene , secure and cultivated Danish bourgeoisie , which did not quite accept him as one of their own . Researcher Jack Zipes said that Andersen , during his lifetime , " was obliged to act as a dominated subject within the dominant social circles despite his fame and recognition as a writer " ; Andersen therefore developed a feared and loved view of the aristocracy . Others have said that Andersen constantly felt as though he did not belong , and longed to be a part of the upper class . The nervousness and humiliations Andersen suffered in the presence of the bourgeoisie were mythologized by the storyteller in the tale of " The Princess and the Pea " , with Andersen himself the morbidly sensitive princess who can feel a pea through 20 mattresses .

Maria Tatar notes that , unlike the folk heroine of his source material for the story , Andersen 's princess has no need to resort to deceit to establish her identity ; her sensitivity is enough to validate her nobility . For Andersen , she indicates , " true " nobility derived not from an individual 's birth but from their sensitivity . Andersen 's insistence upon sensitivity as the exclusive privilege of nobility challenges modern notions about character and social worth . The princess 's sensitivity , however , may be a metaphor for her depth of feeling and compassion .

While a 1905 article in the American Journal of Education recommended the story for children aged 8 @-@ 10 , " The Princess and the Pea " was not uniformly well received by critics . Toksvig wrote in 1934 , " [the story] seems to the reviewer not only indelicate but indefensible , in so far as the child might absorb the false idea that great ladies must always be so terribly thin @-@ skinned . " Tatar notes that the princess 's sensitivity has been interpreted as poor manners rather than a manifestation of noble birth , a view said to be based on " the cultural association between women 's

physical sensitivity and emotional sensitivity , specifically , the link between a woman reporting her physical experience of touch and negative images of women who are hypersensitive to physical conditions , who complain about trivialities , and who demand special treatment " .

Researcher Jack Zipes notes that the tale is told tongue @-@ in @-@ cheek , with Andersen poking fun at the " curious and ridiculous " measures taken by the nobility to establish the value of bloodlines . He also notes that the author makes a case for sensitivity being the decisive factor in determining royal authenticity and that Andersen " never tired of glorifying the sensitive nature of an elite class of people " .

? The Princess and the Pea ? spurred on positive criticism , as well . In fact , critic Paul Hazard pointed out the realistic aspects of the fairy tale that make it easily relatable to all people . He believed that " the world Andersen witnessed ? which encompassed sorrow , death , evil , and man 's follies ? is reflected in his tales , " and most evidently in " The Princess and the Pea . " Another scholar , Niels Kofoed , noticed that ? since they involve everyday @-@ life themes of love , death , nature , injustice , suffering , and poverty , they appeal to all races , ideologies , classes , and genders . ? Moreover , Celia Catlett Anderson realized that one of the things that makes this story so appealing and relatable is that optimism prevails over pessimism , especially for the main character of the princess . This inspires hope in the readers for their own futures and strength within themselves .

= = Adaptations = =

In 1927 , German composer Ernst Toch published an opera based on " The Princess and the Pea " , with a libretto by Benno Elkan . Reportedly this opera was very popular in the American student repertoires ; the music as well as the English translation (by Marion Farquhar) were praised in a review in Notes . The story was adapted to the musical stage in 1959 as Once Upon a Mattress , with comedian Carol Burnett playing the play 's heroine , Princess Winnifred the Woebegone . The musical was revived in 1997 with Sarah Jessica Parker in the role . A television adaptation of " The Princess and the Pea " starred Liza Minnelli in a Faerie Tale Theatre episode in 1984 . The story has been adapted to two films , one full @-@ length animation film in 2002 , and a six @-@ minute IMAX production in 2001 .

The tale was the basis for a story in The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith , wherein the prince decides to slip a bowling ball underneath one hundred mattresses after three years of unsuccessful attempts with the pea . In the morning , the princess comes downstairs and tells the queen , " This might sound odd , but I think you need another mattress . I felt like I was sleeping on a lump as big as a bowling ball . " which satisfies the king and the queen . The princess gets married to the prince , and they live happily , though maybe not completely honestly , ever after . American poet Jane Shore published a poem , " The Princess and the Pea " , in the January 1973 issue of Poetry , in which a close dependency between princess and pea is posited : " I lie in my skin as in an ugly coat : / my body owned by the citizens / who ache and turn whenever I turn / on the pea on which so much depends " (13 @-@ 16) . Russian writer Evgeny Shvarts incorporates the story , with two other Andersen stories , in his Naked King .

= = Similar tales = =

Tales of extreme sensitivity are infrequent in world culture but a few have been recorded . The 11th @-@ century Kathasaritsagara by Somadeva tells of a young man who claims to be especially fastidious about beds . After sleeping in a bed on top of seven mattresses , and newly made with clean sheets , the young man rises in great pain . A crooked red mark is discovered on his body , and upon investigation a hair is found on the bottom @-@ most mattress of the bed . An Italian tale called " The Most Sensitive Woman " tells of a woman whose foot is bandaged after a jasmine petal falls upon it . The Brothers Grimm included a " Princess on the Pea " tale in an edition of their Kinder- und Hausmärchen , but removed it after they discovered that it belonged to the Danish literary tradition . A few folk tales feature a boy discovering a pea or a bean assumed to be of great

value . After the boy enters a castle and is given a bed of straw for the night he tosses and turns in his sleep , attempting to guard his treasure . Some observers are persuaded that the boy is restless because he is unaccustomed to sleeping on straw , and is therefore of aristocratic blood .

In the more popular versions of the tale , only one pea is used . However , Charles Boner added in two more peas in his translation of the story upon which Andersen based his tale . Other differences amongst versions can be seen in various numbers of mattresses as well as feather beds . Versions of the story differ based on whether or not the character of the helper is included . The helper , in some cases , tells the princess to pretend as though she slept badly . In other versions , the helper does not appear at all , and the princess decides to lie all on her own .