

The Princess and the Pea

By: Hans Christian Anderson

Once upon a time there was a prince who wanted to marry a princess; but she would have to be a real princess. He traveled all over the world to find one, but nowhere could he get what he wanted. There were many princesses, but it was difficult to find out whether they were real ones. There was always something about them that was not as it should be. So he came home again and was sad, for he would have liked very much to have a real princess.



One evening a terrible storm came on; 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.

Well, we'll soon find that out, thought the old queen. But she said nothing, went into the bedroom, took all the bedding off the bed, and laid a pea on the bottom; then she took twenty mattresses and laid them on the pea, and then twenty down blankets on top of the mattresses.

On this the princess had to lie all night. In the morning she was asked how she had slept. "Oh, very badly!" said she. "I have scarcely closed my eyes all night. Heaven only knows what was in the bed, but I was lying on something hard, so that 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 down blankets.

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

So the prince took her for his wife, for now he knew that he had a real princess; and the pea was put in the museum, where it may still be seen, if no one has stolen it.

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Read the story. Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. What made the prince so sad?

- A. He was black and blue all over
- B. He wanted to have a real princess
- C. There was a terrible storm
- D. He couldn't sleep at night

2. In the sentence, "One evening a terrible storm came on; there was thunder and lightning, and the rain poured down in torrents." what does the word torrents mean?

- A. There was a rainbow
- B. A hurricane
- C. A downpour of heavy rain
- D. A snowstorm

3. What did the old queen first think of the princess?

- A. The queen did not believe she was a real princess
- B. The queen was scared of the princess
- C. The queen knew she was a real princess
- D. The queen thought the princess looked tired

4. Why was it difficult for the princess to sleep through the night?

- A. She had a very long day
- B. She was all wet from the storm
- C. She was cold and wet
- D. She was lying on something hard

5. How does the reader of this story know that the prince married a real princess?

- A. Her mother was a queen
- B. A real princess wears a crown
- C. A real princess is very sensitive
- D. She looked just like a real princess

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ANSWER KEY

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