

The Princess and the Pea

Version by Tamara Kula

I am running away. My name is Princess Madeline, but I don't want to be a princess anymore, so now my name is only Madeline. A princess has to live in a castle and wear fancy dresses and marry a prince. How boring! I don't want to live in a castle, I don't want to wear fancy dresses, and I definitely don't want to marry a prince!

I ran across a field, over a bridge, and through a dark forest. Suddenly it began to rain very hard and a strong wind began to blow. I saw lightning in the sky. I was very cold.

I looked around for somewhere to go. The only place was a castle on top of a hill. I ran quickly up the hill and knocked on the castle door.

A handsome young man opened the door. "Hello," I said. "I'm a traveler and I need a place to stay tonight during this horrible weather."

"Please come in," the prince said politely.

I stepped into the castle and took off my very wet coat. The prince looked at me closely.

"You have the most beautiful long golden hair!" he said. "Are you a princess?"

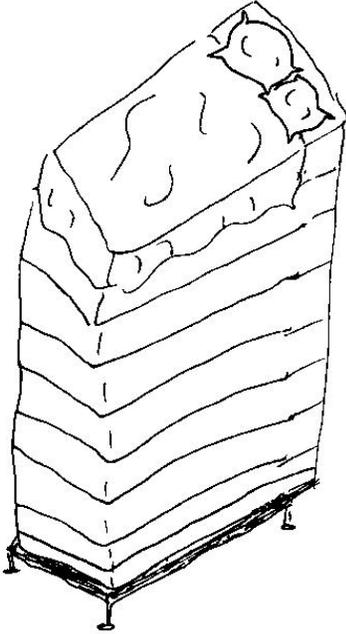
"Oh no!" I lied. "I am just a traveler from a far-away village. My name is Madeline."

The prince looked doubtful. "But you have the most gorgeous sparkling blue eyes! Are you sure you're not a princess?"

"I am definitely not a princess," I said.

"What a pity," said the prince. "I am looking for a princess to marry."





The prince left to prepare a room for me. When he showed me where I was going to sleep, I was surprised. There were nine mattresses on my bed!

"Good night, Madeline," said the prince.

I tried and tried to fall asleep, but I couldn't. I was so uncomfortable! This was the worst bed in the world! In the morning I was exhausted because I didn't sleep at all during the night.

At breakfast, the prince said, "Madeline! You look so tired! Didn't you sleep well?"

"No, I couldn't sleep," I admitted. "I don't know why. I was very uncomfortable!"

"HAH!" exclaimed the prince. "I knew it! You are a princess! Last night I put a pea under the nine mattresses. Only a princess can feel a pea. Princess Madeline, will you marry me?"

I was shocked! He knew my secret! "But prince," I said. "I don't want to live in a castle and I don't want to wear fancy dresses, and I definitely don't want to marry a prince!"

"But why?" asked the prince. "Please stay one more day with me in my castle and think about it."

That night, I sneaked into the prince's room and put a pea under his mattress.

The next morning I asked him how he slept.

"I slept wonderfully, as always!" he said.

I smiled to myself. He did not feel the pea!

"Now," said the prince. "Have you thought about my question? You don't have to wear fancy dresses and we don't have to live in the castle every day. I would love to have a beautiful princess like you for my wife."

I laughed happily. "Yes, my prince, I will definitely marry you."