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## THE PRINCESS AND THE PEA

Once upon a time there was a prince who wanted to get married, and who was determined to choose a real princess. He travelled all over the world and met many princesses, but it was hard to know whether they were real ones, and there was always something about them that wasn't quite right.



Alone and unhappy, he came home to his parents, the old king and queen.

One evening there was a terrible storm. Between the rolls of thunder, the king heard knocking. He went to open the great gate.





Standing in the drenching rain was a princess. Water streamed down her hair and clothes. It ran in at the toes of her shoes and out again at the heels. Yet she said she was a real princess.



“We’ll soon find out about that,” thought the queen. She placed a pea on a bedstead, then ordered that twenty mattresses be laid on the pea, and twenty quilts be laid on the mattresses. The princess was given this bed.











In the morning they asked her how she'd slept.

"Oh, very badly!" she replied. "Heaven knows what was in my bed, but it made a lump so hard and uncomfortable that I'm black and blue all over!"

If she was so sensitive that she felt a pea through twenty mattresses and twenty eiderdowns, she *must* be a real princess. So the prince asked her to marry him, and she agreed.

The pea was put in a museum, where it can still be seen,  
if no one has stolen it.

And this is a true story.

