



## The Princess and the Pea

*Rachel Isadora (Retelling)*

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## **The Princess and the Pea** Rachel Isadora (Retelling)

When a prince sets out to find a princess to marry, he soon discovers this is not a simple task. There is no shortage of so-called princesses, but how can he tell whether or not they are what they claim to be? Then one night a great storm rages, there comes a knock on the palace gate, and the prince's life is never the same . . .

## **The Princess and the Pea Details**

Date : Published May 14th 2009 by Puffin Books (first published June 21st 2007)

ISBN : 9780142413937

Author : Rachel Isadora (Retelling)

Format : Paperback 32 pages

Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Fantasy, Fairy Tales, Cultural, Africa, Folklore

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## From Reader Review The Princess and the Pea for online ebook

### Gretyl says

Though the fairy tale will be familiar and is re-told simply and clearly, the setting and characters based in Africa are a pleasant adaptation that will give children an early introduction to a variety of African styles, culture and language - including how to say 'hello' in Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya. A nice multi-cultural addition to fairy tale collections.

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### Margaret says

I love the illustrations of this Hans Christian Andersen classic. It's given an African setting, and the images are colorful and appealing. There aren't many changes to the story, but I did like the addition of a few ways to say hello in different languages from the African continent.

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### Amanda says

3.5

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### Alyssa Kleiner says

Title: The Princess and the Pea

Author: Hans Christian Andersen

Illustrator: Rachel Isadora

Genre: European Folktale

Theme(s): Princes, Princesses, Africa, Palaces,

Opening line/sentence: Once upon a time, there was a prince.

Brief Book Summary: Set in Africa, a prince is looking for a princess. A woman comes during a storm and claims to be a princess. She sleeps on top of 20 mattresses and 20 feather beds, not knowing there is a pea underneath the bottom. She wakes up with bruises, which proves she is a real princess. They get married and the pea gets put into a museum.

Professional Recommendation/Review #1:

- Kirkus Reviews

- <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-re...>

- "Where this treatment goes dangerously wrong, however, is in the portrayal of the three rejected princesses who precede the mattress-princess: The first wears a series of rings that elongate her neck; the second is very dark and tattooed all over; the third is darker yet, overweight by Western standards and wears a dead fish on her head. The successful princess sports buoyant dreadlocks and physically adheres to an American norm. By thus exoticizing the rejected princesses, the tale does an enormous disservice to readers and continent alike."

Professional Recommendation/Review #2:

- Booklist Reviews
- NYPL
- <https://browse.nypl.org/iii/encore/re...>
- “The storm scene is confusing: which figure is the visitor? Otherwise, the European story works beautifully in the lush new setting with an all-black cast and clear, detailed layers everywhere, including necklaces, head cloths, fabrics, and kente cloth. Collage is the perfect medium to show the piled-up mattresses and feather beds, each one a different texture and pattern.”

Response to Two Professional Reviews:

- I agree with both of the reviews. I think that the illustrations were very beautiful. However, I agree with Kirkus Reviews about how the portrayal of the African women is dangerous. I think that it definitely stereotyped African culture and this can definitely be wrong to place in a classroom.

Evaluation of Literary Elements: ?

- The illustrations are very bold and colorful, which immediately grabs the readers' eyes. The background of the text is plain white, which helps to draw the attention towards the illustrations, which really support the text. The rain is drawn diagonally and in triangles, which really make it look harsh. I think the illustrations really support the plot of the story and offer a new perspective to the classic story.

Consideration of Instructional Application:

- I could talk about how illustrations support text in a mini-lesson. If it weren't for the illustrations, the reader wouldn't know that the book took place in Africa. As an extension activity, I could have students write a sentence or a paragraph and then draw a picture that supports what they wrote.

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## Marlee Adams says

### **Summary:**

The Princess and the Pea tells the story of a young prince who is desperate to find his wife, another princess. Through many trials and meeting many women, the prince and his family become discouraged. On a stormy night, a princess arrives and faces the test of the pea.

### **Evaluation:**

This book is focused on the original story of the *The Princess and the Pea* but gives a twist to tell the story of an African princess. The book has the same storyline as the original story, but the characters, location and setting have changed to align with the culture in which the story is told. It provides the same story, but with new aspects to demonstrate the difference of cultures, such as hair, clothing and background. The book also had words written in African on the pages, which did not translate.

### **Teaching Ideas:**

I would use this book to introduce to the students different regions of the world and their cultures. I would use this book for a integrated lesson of Social Studies and English. I would use this book to introduce different parts of the world and how their culture is different than the known of the United States. I would use this lesson for an upper grades in Elementary school, such as 3rd thru 5th. I would have the students compare the language and culture of this book to things they are familiar with within their life and community.

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## Cris Ingram says

African version of the story of the Prince traveling the world to find a Princess. They come to a village and there is a princess standing at the gate, wet from the rain. He brings her to their tents and have her sleep on 20 mattresses and 20 feather beds with a pea underneath them. When she awakes, says she is black and blue from sleeping on this bed. So they knew she was a princess. The Princess and the Prince got married and the pea was put in a museum.

Colorful pictures and easy reading.

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### **Jenna (Falling Letters) says**

Lovely illustrations, but still just a European fairy tale dressed up in 'exotic' African clothes.

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### **Rekha says**

The only reason it gets any stars at all is because I really love oil paint collage (think Leo Lionni). Other than that, the story is told flatly and the cultural context is flattened as well.

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### **Hilary says**

A lovely retelling of the old tale, with all the original elements and the addition of African illustrations and words. My 3yo was fascinated and keeps asking for this one!

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### **Katelyn Gerressen says**

In this rendition of "Princess and the Pea", a prince is on a journey to find a princess of his own, but struggles on his journey after realizing many of the women he had met were not in fact real princesses. He was discouraged and headed home, and while he was there, a woman came knocking on the door who was a princess and needed help. The mother decided to test the woman, and put a Pea under forty mattresses for her to sleep on, because if she was delicate enough to feel the pea, she was in fact a real princess. Not only did I love this classic tale, but the images throughout the book were absolutely astounding. Rachel uses many bold colors in the images to make them stand out, and it helps the reader really see what is going on in the story. Because the story is from a different country and time period, the author organizes the pictures and text on the page in a way that allows the pictures to tell the story as much (if not more) than the text itself does. Although the pictures are not organized in specific places like a photograph, there is very clean line work, which makes this picture book more easy to read. The tone of this reading is positive, and towards the end of the book, especially when she wakes up from sleeping on the bed, there is a lot of excitement in the tone. Rachel's writing style is quite simplified, and other than the interesting names for other princess we meet along the way, it is a pretty simple read. This award-winning picture book opens the reader's eyes to new cultures, while at the same time creating a happy feeling from the outcome of the book. This is a great book to keep in your classroom or to read to your kids, and I would definitely recommend this as a way to introduce new cultures to kids.

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### **Kayla DeRemer says**

A prince that sets out to find a wife to marry soon realizes this is not an easy task. How can he tell whether his potential new wife is a real princess. So, he decides that he will place a pea under a bed of tons of mattresses and if when she wakes the pea is not smushed she is truly the best fit. This version of the book was a spin off of the typical fairy tale we read. The author brings in an African American setting and characters to make this more of a diversity book.

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### **Caitlin Wilson says**

review: A prince wanted to marry a princess but was a lot harder than that. The princess got caught up in a storm and ended up at the boys house. The princess stayed over night but slept terribly one a pea being in the bed. They then knew she was a real princess and the prince then wanted to marry her.

use: To teach children that different people have different sensitivities and not everyone is the same.

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### **Roy says**

This version of The Princess and the Pea is succinctly told with a stunning, African themed illustrative style.

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### **Alyson Mahony says**

Genre: Traditional Story / Picture book

Copyright: 2009

Age level of interest: 4-8 yrs old

Reading level: Pre-K - 3rd grade

#### **Brief Description:**

A remake of the classic story by Hans Christian Anderson tells the story of a Prince who sets off to find a Princess to marry. Set in Africa with an all black cast representing different African cultures with vibrant collage illustrations

#### **Two Characteristics:**

**Plot:** The story keeps many of the traditional prince and princess elements (prince has the power to choose, princesses eager to marry). It is simple and straightforward for the most part but a bit confusing toward the end when a storm ravaged Princess finds her way to the castle. It took me a reread to understand what was happening.

**Characters:** This all black cast shows various shades of brown and cultural differences (although in a colonial exoticism way) within East Africa. These differences are seen through greetings in different languages, different clothing and hair styles and landscapes.

Serving it's audience:

This picture book would serve Pre-K through 2nd grade readers somewhat. It is beautifully illustrated and offers a different image of your classic princess story. Some of the pictures and writing is awkward however and tends to give a falsely exotic Africa image reminiscent of old National Geographics. Although the author has lived in East Africa for 10 years it is clear that she is still impacted by a colonial world view (like many of us) - I would not include this in my collection.

Awards:

None found.

Review:

Kirkus Review - June 1, 2007

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### **Hannah Barnes says**

Summary: A prince is looking for a princess to become his other half, but he is becoming quite doubtful in his search when he does not find a princess to fit his liking. Until one day when a distraught princess shows up at the king's door, disheveled, but a princess none the less. Now the pressure is on the King to discover if she is truly a princess.

Evaluation: This book is a twist on the classic story of The Princess and the Pea. It provides a story that most people have heard, but with different characters and based in a different culture and setting. It provides a newness to a seemingly older story and allows the reader to see insight on different cultures wardrobes, actions, and perceptions. The only downside I found in this book were the non-english words. They were just placed on pages and I could only assume they were names of the princesses that the King was meeting.

Teaching Ideas: This book could make a great compare and contrast lesson as the student could compare the original version to the African version. This could also be used to teach different cultures. It's a good way to explain to students that everyone can make anything their own by just changing it to fit their culture.

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