The Princess and the Pea

Once upon a time there was a prince who wanted to marry a princess, but she had to be a real princess.

That’s why he travelled all around the world to find one, but everywhere there was something wrong.

There were plenty of princesses, but he couldn’t quite work out if they were real princesses; there was always something that wasn’t quite right.

Eventually he came home again, but he was so sad because he so much wanted to have a real princess.

One evening the weather became dreadful: there was thunder and lightning; the rain poured down; it was quite frightening! Then, there was a knock at the town gate, and the old king went out to open it.

It was a princess who stood outside, but my goodness, what a sight she was with the rain and the bad weather! Water was running down her hair and clothes, and it was running into the tips of her shoes and out of the heels, and she said she was a real princess!

“Well, we shall soon find out,” thought the old queen, but she didn’t say anything. Went into the bedroom, took off all the duvets and placed a pea on the bottom of the bed. Then she took twenty mattresses and laid them on top of the pea, and then placed another twenty feather duvets on top of the mattresses.

The princess had to spend the night there.

In the morning they asked her how she had slept.

“Oh, badly, terribly” said the princess. “I barely closed my eyes the whole night. Goodness knows what there must have been in the bed. I have been lying on something so hard that I am simply black and blue all over my body. It is so dreadful!”

Then they could see that she was a real princess, because through twenty mattresses and through twenty feather duvets she had felt the pea. Nobody could be so sensitive without being a real princess.

The prince then made her his wife, because now he knew that he had found a real princess.

And the pea was placed in the art-museum, where it is still to be seen unless someone has taken it.

See, that was a true story!

The moral of this story: Since this story was written by Hans Christian Andersen, I can only guess the meaning of this story, but I think this story is all about exaggeration and the fun that comes from its use. No reason to read more things into this story.
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It is also one of his first fairytales and was in the first pamphlet he released in 1835.

Enjoy!

Q&A fun
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**Question 1:** The Princess and the Pea is a story about a prince that travels all over the world because…?

A1: The prince wanted to buy apples.
A2: The prince wanted to marry a princess.
A3: The prince liked to travel.

**Question 2:** Was the princess dry or wet when she knocked at the town gate?

A1: The princess’s hair and clothes were dry and fine.
A2: The princess had a nice haircut, lovely clothes and a dog with her.
A3: The princess had water running down her hair and clothes.

**Question 3:** In the morning they asked how the princess had slept. What did the princess answer?

A1: The princess said she had slept perfectly fine.
A2: The princess was black and blue all over her body.
A3: The princess was disturbed because of the drilling by some builders.

**Question 4:** How many mattresses did the princess sleep on?

A1: Ten mattresses.
A2: Twenty mattresses.
A3: Thirty mattresses.

**Question 5:** Whom did the prince marry?

A1: The pea.
A2: The king.
A3: The princess.