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Look So Pretty

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Once upon a time there was a princess, a very beautiful and delicate princess to be sure.

Tina lay in her bed this particular Saturday morning thinking, when she heard herself saying aloud, "Whatever made me wake up thinking about The Princess and the Pea?" Feeling foolish she was speaking aloud, and with no one there, she looked around in embarrassment making sure no one had, in fact, heard her. She vowed to continue her monologue in silence.

Could this be new bedding, being thick and luxurious as it is, that caused my thoughts to focus on that particular fairy tale?

She seemed to answer her own question as she snuggled, rolled, and snuggled again deep into the softness of the linens satin comforter her mother had given her on her eighteenth birthday. What an extravagance! He had always been conservative, partly out of necessity, partly because it had never seemed to matter to him. Many years of driving an old car had just his nature. Even now he spoke of it as such. Many years the old car had been drooping, still looking new and on its first set of tires. Surely the rubber would rot right off the wheels causing him an untimely demise? How she had loved it. She had loved it so much, and he was all she had now that her mother was gone. Even the clerks at the grocery took notice of his being conservative as they checked out the items he purchased; staples purchased in larger economy sized packs most for the dollar, what food such as meats were bought only in just the right quantities. What bothered Tina most was that he never bought butter. Oh, how she hated that cheap lard tasting margarine! She turned to gaze at the picture of her mother and father which she had kept near her bed. It was a picture of her mother at fifty times for all of them. As she turned she caught a glimpse of her long brown curls contrasting against the fabric colored with silk shams like a dark chocolate sauce flowing down a mound of mocha ice cream and she forgot the picture, as once again, her thoughts turned to The Princess and the Pea. Giving an impish giggle, followed by one quick look of admiration to herself in the mirror because of her weight in her long, thin knees and legs and toes and ankles, the girl lay lazily in bed, arranging, and stacking her bedding in such a way as to form her own pile of mattresses. Could she pass the test? What could she use as the pillow? She, with care, slid her satin covers to the foot of the floor, her toe caught in the folds of the comforter and brought the entire stack to a tangled heap on the carpet. Try as she might, she was not able to stop the avalanche of pillows, blankets, and comforters in time to save her own tower of luxury. Briefly she slipped the dim satin sheets—she was the very thing for which she had longed, lo, these many years—blaming them for her tower’s fall. Once again she was intent on searching for a pea, leaving the mound of luxury in time to pass the next to the nearly naked girl. She crossed the room and, looking back at the bed shivered as the picture of the bare slab at the mortuary came to mind. The bundle of bedding on the floor, reminded her of her mother as she lay dressed in fur coat, that of cold that hard slab where she had fallen, upon identifying Robert’s body.

Why couldn’t her mother have left her at home? What was the lesson she was to have learned as her mother screwed at her hystercially all the way to the morgue? What was she to have gained from seeing her brother’s barely recognizable form? Would she ever forget? Could she ever forget? Only when she allowed herself to, Dr. had said. What did he know?

Grabbing the bed sheets, she tore full curls with vengeance, but soon, as always, her anger subsided, and the brushing became graceful stroking.

Maybe a new hairstyle...

First, the hair behind the right ear with left eye slightly covered — seductive; next, a cluster of hair like a bun covering each ear — a Swedish school girl; then, every bit of the thick locks piled on top of her head except for wisps at the ears and nap of the neck. Depressed, yet provocative...

No, the family would never like it.

Again she admonished herself for feeling so good; should she not still be mourning her brother.

Gently her expression changed to one of adoration as she thought once again of her father. She was not able to feel the same warmth for her mother as she had for father. She was not able to ask her mother to feel it for her? Was she sure her mother had felt really good about Robert, why not about Tina? Was secure in her father’s love though. Was this one of the simplest things had written about? All of this was disturbing, but comfort came as she remembered a song her father had sung to her since she was a baby.

"Pretty baby, baby mine
look so pretty, look so fine
love your mother,
but say you’re mine."

Again and again she sang as she searched the room for a pea.

A peek into the button basket was rewarded with only the slightest glimpse of a very tiny spider scurrying to hide from her scrutiny under the very bottom coin what. How could these mindless creatures of nature do it? Was it luck? Do they knowingly have a delicate camouflage? Adaptation, wasn’t that what her biology teacher would call it? Yes, she believed it was.

"Pretty baby, baby mine
look so pretty, look so fine
love your mother,
but say you’re mine."

On to the jewel box. Such a array of rings, pins, bracelets, necklaces, and even a golden bracelet encrusted with rhinestones, plastic, and glass—and all of them tarnished or clouded over with age; all except one piece. The emerald green in the eyes of the furry brown cat, she felt bright as it caught the light, just as her brother had said her eyes did when he got angry. As if her eyes flashed the same all the more as he teased her about them. She lifted the pin from the case and fastened it to her pajama top. She had worn it only once. Maybe her brother hadn’t noticed, or maybe he had. Would he have liked her to wear it more?

It’s too late now. I’ll never know. Why was I so selfish? I never even told him what a neat brother he really was! As the tears pulled down her cheeks, she found herself rimming the pin from her pajama top smoothly smooth satiny silk top.