

The fairy tale of the stone and the flower

Once upon a time, before you were born, and far from here, a ferocious knight was riding his horse through an eerie forest. The trees here are so close together that the sunlight does not reach the earth. That is why this forest is also known as the dark forest. The knight is dressed in black armour, adorned with silver spikes across the chest. He likes this harness, because the silver spikes shine exuberantly in the sunlight. The armour makes him feel strong and perhaps invulnerable. Nobody knows what the fierce knight looks like underneath his armour, and that makes him dangerous in this armour.

Suddenly the fierce knight discovers a lost princess between the rows of trees. She's alone and scared in the dark forest. And because the knight feels strong and dangerous, he rides towards her. He wants to hurt her. The princess falls to the ground crying and begs the knight to stop. But the knight shows no mercy. He puts a stone in her hand and whispers in her ear: "You will carry this stone forever and it will remind you of this sorrow." Without another thought, the fierce knight gets back on his horse and disappears through the dark trees.

The princess looks at the stone in her hand and feels the sorrow in her heart swell. It's strange, but she can't look at the stone without crying. So she gets to her feet and

tries to throw the stone away. She wants to get rid of it, but the stone is stuck to her hand. The princess looks bewildered at the stone on her hand and shakes her hand.

But it doesn't help, the stone sticks. She desperately rubs her palm along the trunk of a tree until her hand hurts, but that doesn't help either. The princess screams and starts crying in despair. Luckily, the forester is doing his rounds and hears her. He takes her home, where she can be comforted.

In the days that follow, everyone in the palace tries their best to comfort the princess. The lackey brings her tea, the dog gives her hugs and the budgie sings to her. And even though the tears slowly diminish, the stone, and the sorrow that comes with it, stays stuck. The king consoles her and the queen fluffs up the pillows of her bed, but the sorrow remains. One day, the princess decides she's had enough. There has to be a solution! But where to start?

The princess looks at the stone and begins to study it. Though the tears start running down her cheeks as she examines it, the princess bravely persists and does not stop. The princess discovers that the stone is oval in shape and is rough to the touch. However, the stone begins to feel smoother in places due to rubbing with her fingers. Furthermore, the stone is veined, and if you look very closely, there is a small visible crack.

The princess is now crying so hard while studying the stone that the tears coming down her cheeks drip onto the stone and into the crack. What the princess does not know, nor can she see this, is that there is a tiny seed in that crack.

When the sun rises the next morning, a ray of sunshine falls through the window onto the hand of the princess and, as if by magic, the seed germinates. The little growing sprout tickles the hand of the princess. It's so tickly, it wakes her up. Surprised, she looks at the small, green sprout coming from the crack. For a brief moment, the princess does not think of her grief and sees only the little sprout. But then the tears well up again and she soon looks the other way. The next few days, the tingling constantly reminds the princess what is growing in her hand. This fresh green sprout growing in her hand slowly becomes a familiar feeling.

The growing green sprout becomes part of the princess and the princess starts to feel it immediately when something changes in her hand. She slowly opens her hand and looks at the bud appearing at the top of the sprout in amazement. She can't help it, but she is flooded by a warm feeling. She is curious: what will grow from this bud? She now checks the growing sprout in her hand more often, even though sometimes she sheds a tear when she sees the stone. She longs for the day when the bud will become a flower.

When the first petals unfold from the bud, the princess feels happy for the first time in a long time. Full of admiration she looks at the little flower; the shape of the heart is so



perfect, the veins in the petals are so fine, and the colour of the flower is her favourite colour. And the flower's scent is fresh and sweet at the same time. It's all so beautiful, she has no words for it! Every day she looks with admiration at how much the flower has grown. And more and more often, she manages to feel happy, despite the fact that she then also sees the stone, and feels sad.

The princess takes good care of the flower every day. When no one is around to hear, she talks to it softly and kindly. The flower quickly grows bigger and stronger. And as the flower grows bigger and bigger, it seems as if the stone is getting smaller and smaller. Fortunately, it's getting easier to look at the flower without seeing the stone. The princess is grateful for the flower, it is so beautiful and gives her so much warmth. She has become very fond of the flower in her heart. What an incredible miracle for such a beautiful flower to grow from a stone!

And then, when no one expects it, something special happens. The flower has grown so large and strong that the roots no longer fit in the crack. For a long time they have been pushing against the walls of the stone with all their strength. Just as the princess tells the flower how much she loves it, the flower wants to lift itself up pushes its roots extra hard against the walls. The stone cracks and falls to the ground in two pieces. There lies the beautiful flower with its roots exposed on the hand of the princess. Tears run down the princess's cheeks, but this time of happiness.

The princess looks attentively at the flower and feels love burning in her heart. At that moment she decides that the flower deserves the most beautiful place on earth. Fortunately, she knows exactly where that spot is, she really doesn't have to think about it for long! Her fingers are shaking slightly as she gently picks up the flower and plants it in the garden of her heart. For a moment she closes her eyes to enjoy this special moment. Now the princess and the flower are together forever.

Darling, you are like that flower, born of a stone, but fused with my heart, where you will always be loved.



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