

Kostas  
Stoforos

# Tale in red



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Stefany Veldemiry



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Translated from Greek by  
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To Aggelos,  
to Iasonas,  
to Ioli,  
to Ionas and  
to Katerina

It was night when the princess arrived in the palace, having lost her escort in the midst of the sudden storm. She asked for the palace's hospitality.

"I am a princess" she told them.

"A real Princess?" the queen asked.

"Yes!" she answered.

With little trust and to make sure, the queen called for her maids and told them:

"You will put our thickest mattresses on her bed and on top our softest duvets. On the bottom you shall put this pea" she said, pulling out of her chic purse a small, green pea and giving it to them. They did as they were told and prepared the room for the princess.

The princess had her bath and dined with the king, the queen and their beloved only son, the young and beautiful prince. Later, when she was tired, she slept with her doll in her arms which she never parted with. The doll was made from thread dipped in color from poppies and red anemones, and it was made by her queen-grandmother herself...

She slept with a smile on her lips and dreamt of raining peas.





In her dream she gathered the fallen peas and cooked them to make a deliciously scented pea soup. Just like the one the green princess liked, in her grandmother's stories.

There were always stories of princesses in different colors. And series of colored dolls her grandmother made from the toughest of threads and from colors she gathered from the trees, the sea, from meadows and mountains....



Grandma had the odd habit of visiting the princess in her dreams. Now, how she managed that was a mystery. Right now, in this strange night, she had come again to find her and tell her of her pea soup secret. What could that mean?

The sure thing is that the next morning the princess – whose name no one knew still – got up first and had the taste of pea soup in her mouth: dill weed, carrot, lemon, but also the scent of garden during a summer night. Our princess knew well her grandma's second small garden. She helped her grub and water the plants. They would cut the ripe vegetables and put them in their basket. Each season had its own treasures to give: Lettuces, cabbages red and green, onions, leeks, spinaches, fennels, parsleys, artichokes, fava beans, peas, lentils, tomatoes, cucumbers, eggplants, and squashes with their blossoms still on...

All remembered of the tale of the queen grandmother's first garden and laughed quite often. The queen grandmother -who was not your common queen - had demanded to have her own, private space. Courtiers and servants, gardeners and knights, hunters and jesters, nannies and cooks, all wanted to do the work for her, for her royal hands mustn't touch the dirt!

Nevertheless, the queen would not listen to anyone and cultivated totally on her own, her garden. And she had all the goods all year round and she shared them with joy.

*"Just let me give! That's all I want."*

## Garden meeting

It was that garden the princess tasted, twirling her tongue in her mouth... And so, lost in her thoughts, she found herself in the palace garden. It was then that she discovered that the beautiful prince had woken up before her. And he was filling with his imagination the empty tree branches with pomegranates, on a big painting in front of him.



He was so absorbed by his work he did not notice her. And, the more cheerful were the things he drew, the more blue he seemed to be. It was as if the small crown was an unbearable weight on his head, a head that shined as if made by pure gold, under the sun's first sight... and then he saw her.

He tried desperately to discern any signs of insomnia on her face, but she was rosy and glowing and even more beautiful under the sun, unlike under the light of the candles. The prince's heart fluttered in its chains. Because for her he would draw all the world's pomegranates... But...





Did she sleep well? He wondered.

Perhaps she did not notice the pea his queen mother had placed under the mattresses and duvets?

Was she a real princess? He wondered.



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