

“Princesses with a Twist”

Text and illustrations by [Piret Raud](#)

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Storybook, fiction

Age: 6+

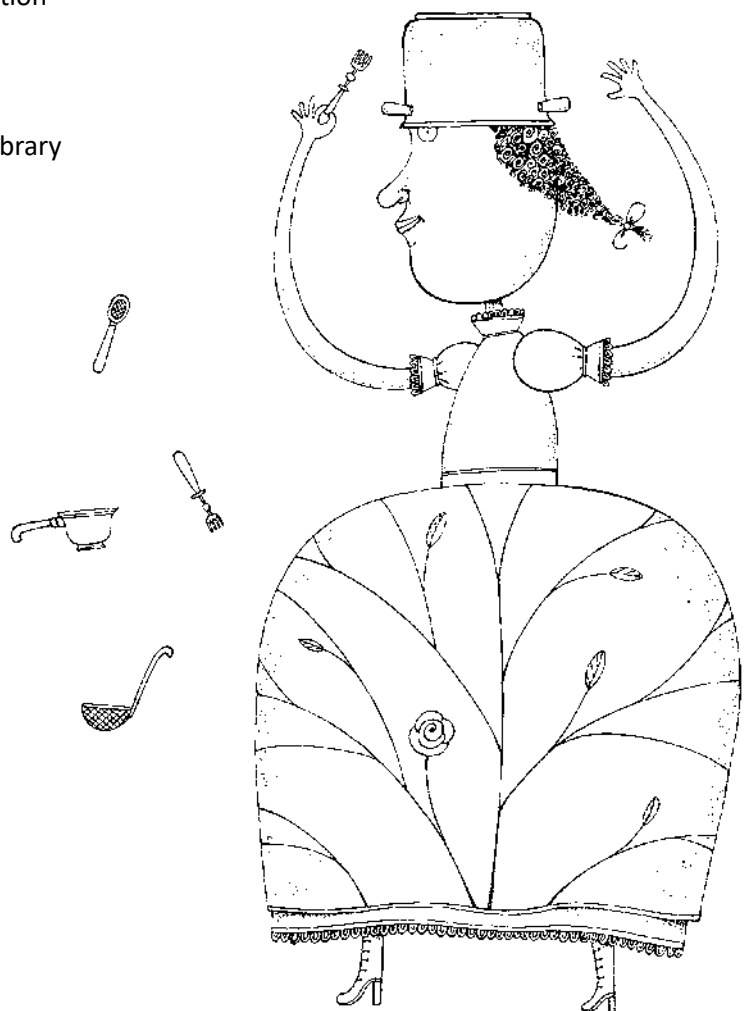
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In this book of short stories, Piret Raud has taken on the dream of many little girls: princesses. However, these are no ordinary princesses that live in ordinary castles. Instead, one finds a backwards-princess who does everything the wrong way around, a barking princess who gets bitten by a flea, as well as Princess Balloon, who organizes a ball for her balls, and Princess Mummy, who is afraid of mice. The book isn't short of a couple of evil dragons and a few nice princes; not to mention heaps of beautiful dresses, hats, and rose bushes.

Awards:

2014 “Järje Hoidja” Award of the Tallinn Central Library

2013 5 Best-Designed Estonian Children's Books



Reading sample

The Princess who Barked

There once lived a princess who was very bad-mannered and would bark constantly at grown-ups.

When a teacher said, "Time to start studying!" the Princess would reply, "No, I won't! Woof-woof!"

When the dinner lady said, "Do start!" the Princess would reply, "No, I won't! Woof-woof!"

And when the Princess's Mum, the friendly, courteous Queen said, "Off you go for a bath!" the Princess would reply, "No, I won't! Woof-woof!"

And so on, every day.

As time went on the Princess became thinner and stupider and dirtier. And ruder. In the end she would not even take the trouble to say "No!" she merely barked: "Woof-woof-woof-woof!"

And what was even crazier was that she would bite! She bit the teacher, she bit the dinner lady and she bit her Mum, the friendly, courteous Queen. The whole court was most worried about the Princess.

"She won't eat and she won't study and she won't wash. What will become of the Princess if she carries on like this?" the teacher, the dinner lady and the Queen asked each other as they tried to bring the Princess into line.

But the Princess didn't care about anything.

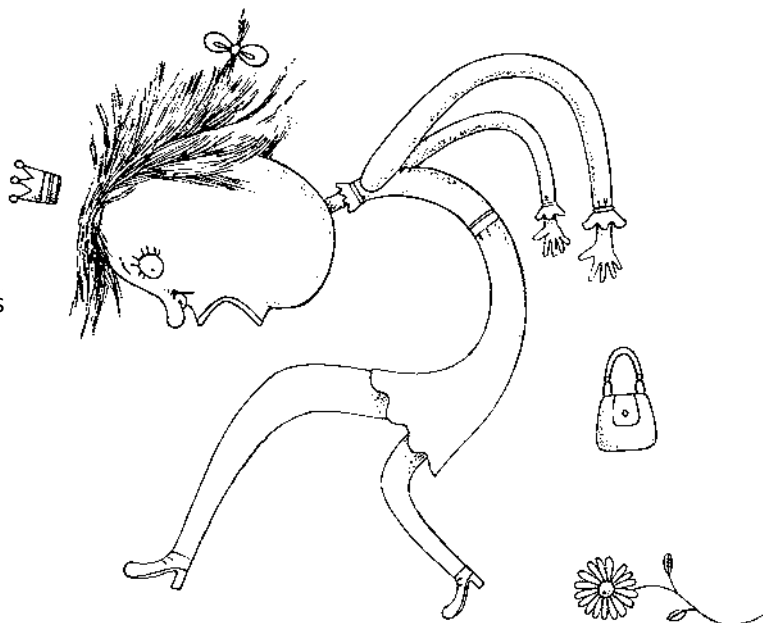
"Woof-woof!" she barked and raced to the park.

At the park the Princess saw a flea, who thought to itself:

"Now that filthy, barking animal definitely looks a tasty tidbit."

It jumped onto the Princess's leg and thrust its jaws into her shin.

"Ow!" shouted the Princess and it was the first time in a long while she'd said something other than



"Woof!"

She wanted to bite the flea, but the flea was so teeny that she bit round it and into herself instead.

"Ow! Ow!" she yelled now and the flea bit her again. And again. And then again.

The Princess began to cry and went back to the castle. Once there, she complained to her Mum that she was being pestered by a stupid flea.

"The only thing that will help with fleas is a bath!" the Queen told her, and in the end the Princess actually agreed to go and have a bath. She carefully washed herself clean.

When the Princess came out of the bath, the whole court rejoiced. Although the Princess was dreadfully thin and not at all educated, she was at least clean.

From that very day the Princess stopped barking and biting. She became a world-famous model. The flea disappeared without a trace and nothing was ever heard of it again.

The Princess Mummy (The Mummified Princess)

In a great pyramid in distant Egypt there lived Princess Mummy. Princess Mummy was very old – three thousand years at least! – and very ugly but otherwise very friendly and, most importantly, immensely brave.

Princess Mummy was not afraid of the dark, or of scary dogs or even of robbers. There were hordes of treasures of all kinds in the Princess's home and it was not an uncommon occurrence for tramps to break into the pyramid to rob her of her gold and jewels. When she saw this, courageous Mummy never crept away to hide, instead she would bravely start to talk to the thieves, upon which the thieves would always become very afraid and run away. The thieves probably thought that Princess Mummy was some sort of hideous ghost. Well, they weren't to know that she was friendly underneath.

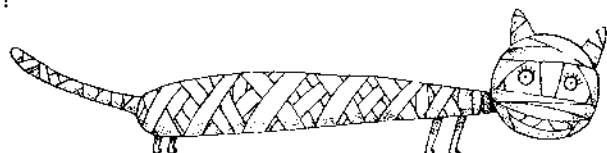
One day, however, it so happened that a small grey mouse appeared in the pyramid instead of a robber. When the princess saw the mouse, she began to scream and jumped on a chair.

"Help! Help me!" shouted Mummy. She was, after all, a Princess, and princesses are definitely afraid of mice. Well, perhaps not all princesses are, but Princess Mummy certainly was. Mice aside, she was very brave.

"Get away, hideous creature!" she screamed, but the little mouse had no plans to go anywhere and instead scuttled around the princess's chair legs saying "eek-eek!" Princess Mummy trembled from head to toe and it was clear that she was on the verge of fainting, so scared was she of the little grey mouse.

Help came from where the Princess least expected it. A cat mummy suddenly leapt out from who-knows-where and said:

"Nrrraow!"



The little mouse was startled and raced off at top speed and Princess Mummy felt brave enough to climb down from the chair. She stroked the cat mummy and said thank you and asked him where he had appeared from.

It turned out that the cat mummy lived in the same pyramid as the princess but in another part of it.

"That's great news," said Princess Mummy. "Until now I thought I'd been living in this pyramid all by myself."

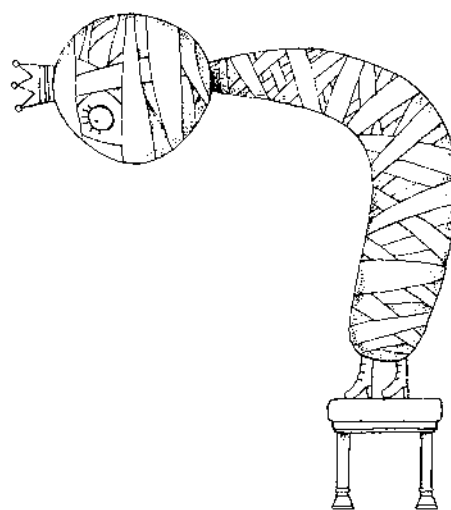
"Oh no, Princess! In fact there are three of us living here!" said the cat mummy, and called to the crocodile mummy.

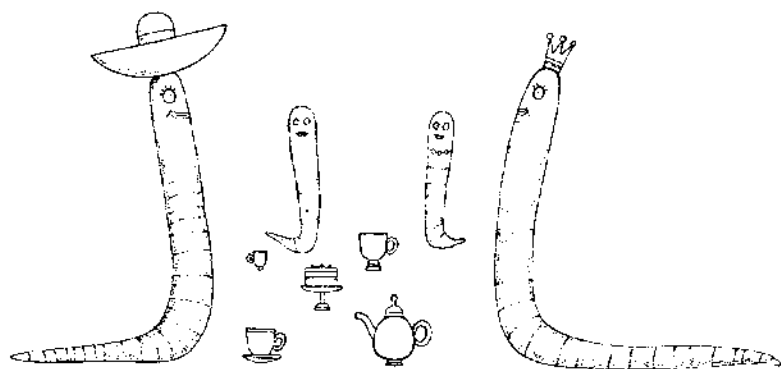
The Princess was extremely pleased to meet the cat mummy and the crocodile mummy. She made everyone some delicious tea and poured it into cups. To her own cup the Princess added several spoonfuls of sugar.

"Sugar calms the nerves," she told her new friends. "That mouse gave me a proper fright."

And she added a couple of extra spoonfuls of sugar just to be on the safe side.

The three of them sat together for a long time, drinking tea and talking. It was a very pleasant afternoon.





Princess Earthworm and the Frog-Prince

Princess Earthworm and a group of other fine young earthworm ladies were drinking tea and chattering about this and that. Among the chit-chat one of the earthworms, whose name was Delila, said, "Did you know that if you kiss a frog, the frog might very well turn into a prince?"

"Really?" replied the other earthworms in surprise. "If that's true, then Princess Earthworm should definitely try her luck!"

Princess Earthworm responded with, "Are you mad? It would be tantamount to earthworm suicide! If I went to kiss a frog, it'd just eat me up!"

"It wouldn't eat you!" said Delila, and the other earthworms nodded in agreement. "A Prince would definitely recognise a Princess!"

At that very moment the group saw a handsome frog hopping round nearby.

"It must be fate that the frog has turned up here right now!" remarked Delila. "Go over and give him a kiss!"

Princess Earthworm was in a quandary. There was no way she wanted to kiss the frog! The frog terrified her! But looking scared in front of her friends terrified the Princess even more.

And so she plucked up courage and crept towards the frog, closed her eyes and gave the frog a rough kiss on the cheek. And lo and behold! The frog did

not eat Earthworm, instead it actually turned into a Prince! Not a charming earthworm prince, admittedly: a human one, but that's something at least.

The Prince looked at the Princess before him and said, "Oooh! Just the kind of lovely earthworm I was looking for!" And he lifted the earthworm princess from the ground.

"What did I say?" said Delila happily. "There'll be wedding bells soon!"

But the Prince had no plan for any kind of wedding, unfortunately.

He gathered up all the other earthworms, put them in a glass jar and went fishing.

It's such a pity, but it just goes to show that it's not always wise to do what your friends suggest at a tea-party.

The Sand-Castle Princess

On the sandy shore by the sea there stood a castle. A sand-castle. It was made completely of sand: the walls were sand and the floors were sand and the roof was sand and the doors and windows were sand. If you didn't know it was a sand-castle you might have thought it wasn't even a castle, just a heap of sand festooned by clams.

In the castle there lived an imaginary princess. No-one else could have lived there because, like all sandcastles, this one was full of sand from the inside out and it wasn't possible to move about in there or breathe. This posed no problems for our princess, however: she was imaginary.

The imaginary princess lived here completely alone. She ate imaginary biscuits from the clamshells and drank imaginary tea from the coiled snail seashells. During the day she went swimming in the sea, but in the evenings she would sit on the stone terrace in front of the castle and watch the sunset.

One evening, however, the sunset could not be seen at all. Instead of the sun large storm clouds raced

across the sky. The wind rose and it began to rain. The sea's stormy waves destroyed the sandcastle completely and dragged the princess herself into the water.

A large fish swam up to the princess in the sea. It sniffed the princess with interest and asked, "Want some bubble gum?"

The Princess did and so they chewed the bubble gum and the fish taught the princess how to blow bubbles. It was so much fun that the cold and the storm didn't seem so scary any more. Besides, the storm finally came to an end too.

The princess swam back to the shore. The storm had wrecked the castle, but that didn't matter because the imaginary princess didn't need a real sand-castle. She could just as easily live in an imaginary one.

Everything would have ended there beautifully, but unfortunately the fish caught a dreadful cough from the cold wind and lost the knack of blowing bubbles with bubblegum. Just try blowing bubbles with bubblegum when you have a cough – it's completely impossible!

The princess felt very sorry for the fish and wanted to help the poor thing. She made him a mugful of imaginary lime-blossom tea with honey. The fish drank it down but unfortunately it didn't make him feel any better. Really it didn't – what helps a real cold is real lime-blossom tea with real honey, not the imaginary stuff.

The Smiling Princess

The smiling princess lived in a great castle in a picture hanging on a wall. The castle was no ordinary castle, but an art museum, and there were other pictures there besides that of the princess: there were landscapes and flower meadows and drawings of all kinds of creatures from foreign lands. But the picture of the smiling princess was the most famous and most important picture in the museum. People came from far and near to see her. They crowded in front of the princess and jostled and elbowed each other to get a better view of her.

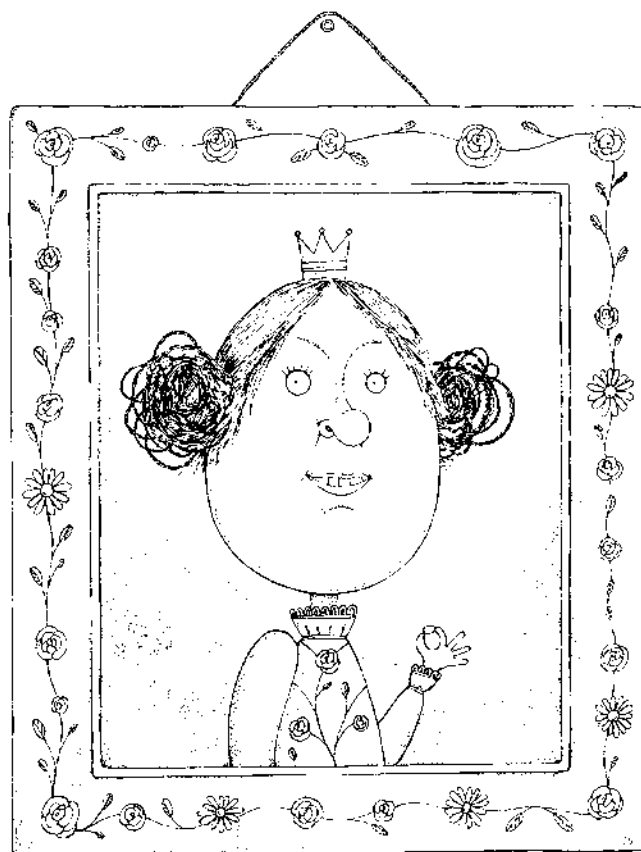
"It's because you smile in such a friendly way all the time," the basket of orchard fruit picture, which hung near the princess, told her. "I never smile and just the odd one or two look at me."

The basket of orchard fruit picture was right. People were very interested in the princess's smile. They all thought the princess's smile was very distinctive and exceedingly enigmatic.

"Why is she smiling mysteriously like that?" they would ask each other, although no-one knew the answer.

In fact the only secret behind the princess's smile was the fact that she happened to have a very sweet tooth and so had a lollipop in her mouth. And when you smile with a lollipop in your cheek, then your smile is slightly different from your ordinary lollipop-free smile.

Anyway, sucking on lollipops for such a long time is really bad for the teeth. One day a dreadful thing happened: the princess came down with toothache and she couldn't smile any more. In fact, forget the smile, the princess had such bad toothache that she burst into tears.



The museum director was called over straight away. The director looked at the miserable princess and said, "No-one will want to look at a face with that glum expression. The picture will be taken to the restoration department for urgent work."

The restoration department is the part of a museum where old, damaged paintings are taken for repair. Working there was Jüri, who immediately realised what the trouble was.

"Open wide and say 'aaa!'" he told the princess, and the princess did as she was asked. Now Jüri applied white paint to his brush and painted the princess's damaged teeth back to health and whiteness. The princess's toothache disappeared at a stroke.

"No more lollipops for you!" Jüri told her. "They damage your teeth. Much better to chew on an apple – fresh orchard fruit is very good for the teeth!"

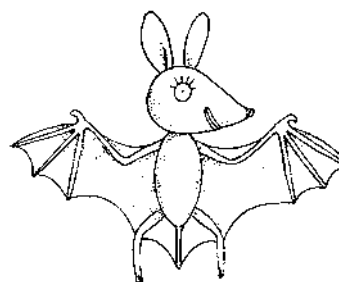
The picture was put back on the wall and the princess ate not a single lollipop more. Admittedly, her smile was slightly different from what it had been before, but no-one noticed. Just as no-one noticed that with each passing day the orchard fruit picture next to it on the wall had one apple fewer.

The Princess And The Dark

Once upon a time there lived a princess who was afraid of the dark. Or rather, not the dark itself, but of the goblins who crept around in the shadow of darkness, spiteful, horrid creatures. When it was dark, no-one could be certain whether a goblin was lurking nearby.

The princess was so terribly afraid that one day she decided to ban the dark. She banned it from everywhere. The dark was banned from rooms and cinemas, potato cellars, mushroom cupboards and the night's streets. It wasn't even allowed under the bed.

Things now were very difficult for the dark. It had nowhere to go. As a last resort it went into hiding in the princess's pocket and kept very quiet inside.



The princess was very content. Everywhere was light and bright. Not a single dark corner or opening anymore, and no terror of goblins.

But not everyone was pleased about the disappearance of the dark. The moon, for example. The moon just loved being in the dark, gleaming modestly. It couldn't do that in the light.

So the moon followed the dark into the pocket.

It was unspeakably pleasant and spacious in the princess's dark pocket, so the moon decided to invite his friends to visit. He found the princess's phone in the pocket and phoned up the stars to ask them over for a cup of tea. And then he rang the owl and the moth and the bat and invited them over too.

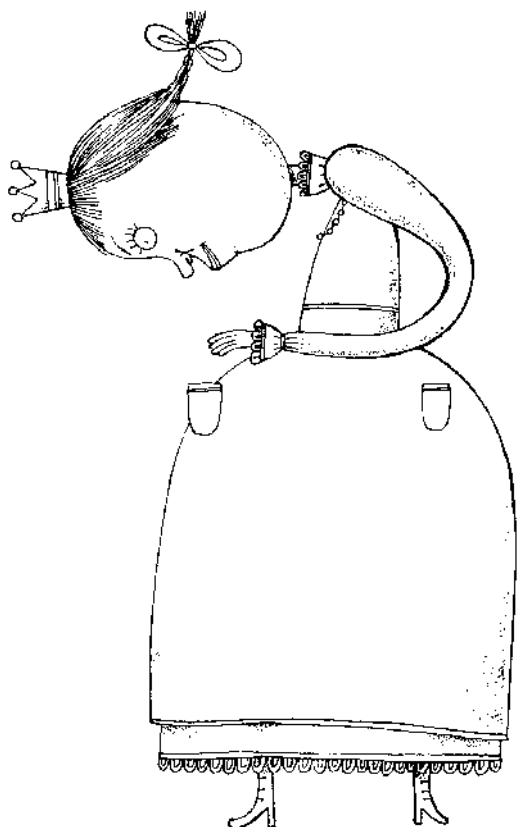
And after a little while they all arrived. The stars brought some crumbcake and the bats some biscuits. The telephone made the tea and the moon set the table and the party was ready to start.

When the princess felt something strange moving in her pocket she looked inside. She was most surprised when she saw the dark and the moon and the stars and the owl and the moth and the bat and the telephone drinking tea and eating cake.

"What's going on?" she asked, eyebrows raised.

"It's a cosy tea evening," answered the friends, and invited her to join them.

The princess climbed into her pocket too and suddenly realised that the dark was quite pleasant, especially being in the dusk with cool companions. They ate cake and talked until the wee small hours. The bat told a couple of goblin stories, but they didn't seem at all scary, instead they were quite funny. Finally it was time for the princess to go to bed.



As she was leaving she said to the dark:

“You are no longer banned and you may come and go as you please. I won’t be scared of goblins now I know that I’ve got so many friends in the darkness.”

The dark smiled and replied:

“There’s no such thing as goblins, princess, my sweet, believe me! Who could be surer of that than me, the Dark?”

He jumped out of the princess’s pocket and spread over the land. And the moon and stars went back into the sky and the owl, the moth and the bat flew back to their homes.

Only the phone stayed in the princess’s pocket, but it now had everyone’s numbers in its memory. Just in case there might be a need to invite everyone back for another pleasant evening of tea-drinking.

The Princess with the Problem Feet

There was once a princess who had problem feet: they were spiteful and always spoiling for a fight. They kicked and hacked at everything in their path: stones and chestnuts and discarded plastic bottles and tin-cans, not forgetting dropped teddies, snowmen and lost hedgehogs. Her feet also liked to stomp about in the mud and cover themselves in it, even though they had been clean when they set off. Even worse, sometimes her problem feet got under other people’s feet.

Once, for example, the general’s horse fell flat on its stomach because of the Princess’s problem feet and the general, who was sitting on the horse at the time, received a large bump on the head. And another time, the castle cook went flying while carrying the soup pan and the lunchtime soup spilled all over the floor.

“Stop it!” the Princess scolded her feet. “That’s no way for royal feet to behave! Royal feet walk daintily in white socks through castles or parks, they do not indulge in silliness of any kind!”

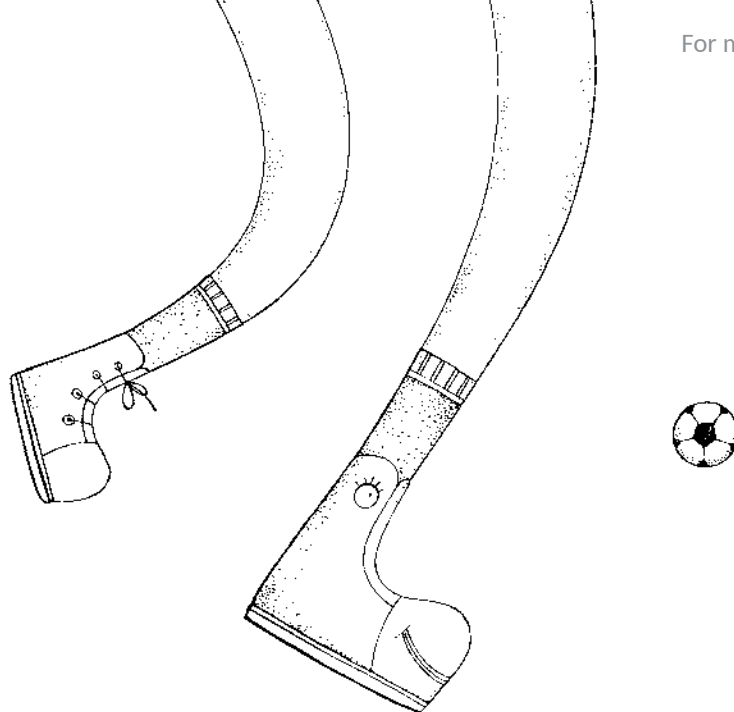
But the problem feet just laughed light-heartedly at the Princess’s words and didn’t even try to mend their ways. The Princess was greatly troubled by them.

Fortunately one day something happened that changed the life of the Princess and her feet for ever. The Princess’s feet noticed a large crowd of feet that they didn’t know chasing a ball on a lawn. They hacked at the ball and moved it and kicked it, but no-one was telling them off; in fact they were yelling “Hurray!” and “Yeeesss!” and “Nice one!” for all they were worth.

“What are they doing?” asked the feet.

“Playing football,” the Princess replied.

The feet watched the game with interest and became more wildly enthusiastic every second. They especially liked the skilled, muscular feet of the famous footballer that kicked the ball so hard on several occasions that it flew into the goal.



When the game finished, the Princess's feet told the Princess, "We want to play football too!"

When the Princess tried to tell them that football was not a game for princesses, her feet began to play up and scrape the ground.

The famous footballer noticed; he came up to the Princess and asked what the matter was.

The Princess told him about her problem feet. The footballer listened thoughtfully and then said, "Well I think footie is fantastic for Princesses!"

And the footballer's marvellous, muscular feet added:

"A good footballer's feet usually cause a few problems."

And so the Princess's feet began to attend football training every day and now they give her no problems at all any more. And it's not that they've got older and wiser – oh no! It's just that they are so

worn out after training that all they want to do is have a bath and sleep.

The hard training made the Princess's feet very good players. The Princess and her feet were even selected for the Kingdom's national football team. Even better, the Princess's feet and the famous footballer's feet and the feet of all the other players selected won the World Championships.

Now everyone praised the Princess's feet and said that the Princess's feet were very good and not at all problematic. Even the general and his horse thought so, and the castle's cook, who baked a splendid cake in the shape of a foot in the Princess's honour.

Translated by Susan Wilson