

Three important things.

Once upon a time there lived a Queen. She was born in a big but very poor kingdom. When she was a little girl her father the King was at war with a neighbor kingdom and all the money were spent on the war. The Queen had no toys, only one plush bunny which she loved heartily. When the war had finished life in the kingdom gradually returned to its usual way. In due time the girl came of age and became the real Queen of her country. She contributed a lot to her country's prosperity. She was stringent with her servants but her kingdom flourished and enemies didn't dare to invade it. The Queen had everything she wished but she was childless. To have a child was her only and the most cherished wish. And once a kind magician showed compassion on her as she was a good Queen and did a lot of good to her servants. He came to her and said, "Soon you will bear a child, a girl, but you should promise me that you will teach her three main things without which her life cannot be full and worthy." "Of course I promise," said the Queen joyfully, "but what are these three things?" But the magician had already waved his magic wand and disappeared.

In a time the Queen gave birth to a lovely Princess. The Queen was very happy but being a Queen she had to take care of her kingdom which required more and more time. So most of the time the girl was left with her nurses ready to fulfill any of her whims.

She always had a lot of presents and nice dresses and all her wishes were immediately fulfilled as her mother the Queen vividly remembered her own childhood without toys which she badly needed at that time and with sweets eaten only on great holydays. The Queen wished that her beloved daughter had everything she liked.

The girl ate sweets and cakes to her heart's content and even an ice-cream if the doctors permitted. Sometimes when the girl wanted something forbidden or harmful for her she had only to drop several tears and her panicked nurses let her have anything she wanted. When the girl badly wanted something forbidden by her mother, the Queen, she used a trick nobody could withstand to: she simply dropped herself on the floor and drummed with her legs and demanded what she wanted. Such behavior upset her mother but she thought to herself, "*Maybe it is just my daughter's strong character that makes her always get her own way.*"

The girl had a great many toys. She could take a new doll, play with it for five minutes and then completely forget about it as she had too many dolls. She could try on a new dress but she would not put it on again as she wanted a new dress more beautiful and immediately forgot about this one.

One day when the Princess was walking with her nurses she saw some girls playing with their dolls and teddy-bears. They were cooking soups for them from water and grass, taking their dolls and teddy-bears to the imagined kindergarten and one girl was adorning her rag doll with flowers. The doll came out beautiful with flowers in its fiber tresses and trimming its dress and even its shoes had bows made from small forget-me-nots.

The Princess wanted to possess this doll immediately. She didn't ask for the doll or for the permission to play with the girls, she just stamped and said to her nurses that she wanted to play with the flowered doll. The nurses asked the girl to give them her flowered doll but she refused. They tried to shift the Princess' attention to other toys but she continued to stamp and shout and cry. So the nurses had no other alternative than to take the doll away from the girl and give her instead another doll which was like a real child and could even say some words such as "mom" and "dad". But the girl was not glad to a new doll although the new one was much more expensive than her rag one and she cried bitterly. And the Princess got the doll adorned with flowers. In a time the flowers faded so the Princess threw the doll away and forgot about it at once. One of the nurses found the doll and returned it back to its owner.

Some time passed and the girls met again. The Princess was surprised to see that the girl plays with her old doll.

"Where is your new doll?" asked the Princess.

"It is at home," answered the girl.

“Why don’t you play with it?”

And the girl told the Princess a story about how she saw this rag doll in a toy shop and how she dreamt about it and asked her mother to buy it; how she herself made the dress for a doll and her father helped her to make the bed for it and when the parents finally bought this doll she was so happy that she would never part with it. The Princess was very surprised to hear that story and even retold it to her mother the Queen. And the Queen showed her daughter her own plush bunny which was her only toy when she was a little girl. And the nurses told her about their favorite toys and how they cared about them, and how they took them to bed and shared with them their most intimate secrets. The Princess realized that she had never had one favorite toy, she even could not recall her toys as she had too many of them and changed them too frequently.

And the girl cried bitterly grieving that she is fond of nothing and that although she could remember piles of toys she could remember no special one.

At that moment the kind magician appeared before the Queen and said that she had not taught her daughter one main thing which is to value and enjoy what one already had.

As a time passed the kingdom continued to flourish and the Princess grew up so she did not need toys. She had new interests and as always had everything she wanted. One day at the ball she met the girl who had played with the rag doll long ago. The girl was glowing with happiness and danced and sang and laughed all the night and everybody around couldn’t help laughing with her. People gathered around her as it was a real pleasure to be near her, to smile and laugh with her. The Princess came to the girl and asked her why she was so happy. And the girl told her how she dreamt about coming to this ball and how much she endured to achieve this goal and now when her dream had come true how can she be not so happy!

The Princess wished to be happy too and to give pleasure to people around the same way as the girl did but she did not know what her dream really was and what she wanted most of all! And she realized in dismay that she wanted nothing as she had everything and any her wish immediately came true as soon as she said about it. And she cried bitterly at the thought that she is not able to dream and to laugh sincerely and to have real pleasure.

Once more the kind magician appeared before the Queen and said that she had not taught her daughter another main thing which is even more important than the first one. She presented her daughter with everything she wanted depriving her dreams and even ability to dream.

Some more time passed and the Princess grew up. The nurses gave way to teachers. They were excellent teachers and could teach her a lot. She was a gifted and talented girl and could quickly and easily master the subjects but mischief of it was that she did not like working and she never finished her works. As a result her expertise was superficial and in fact she had neither real skills nor real knowledge. She was able to dance but was too lazy to learn at least one dance in full. She had beautiful voice but could sing no songs as she was too lazy to learn the words. She knew only the first part of the alphabet up to the letter “L” and knew a few phrases in French and Spanish. To please the Queen the servants told her that her daughter was good at dancing and at singing and at drawing and at everything else.

And the Queen thought that when the girl needed some skills she would quickly master them as she was so talented!

One day the Queen got sick and was urged to place somebody to care about the kingdom. There was a lot of work to do such as to entertain an ambassador or to find the money for crops in treasure or to fix up debates and so on. The Queen decided that her daughter was ready to take

her place as she was already grown up and had been taught many different things. Certainly, the Princess would have royal counselors but making decisions would be her own responsibility. So the Princess entered the royal life full of charges and worries about the state affairs as queens not only dance at the balls but do a lot of good for their kingdoms.

When ambassadors came she had to decide about the relations with the neighbor kingdom. The counselors had different opinions; some of them proposed friendship with it while others thought the opposite, so the Princess had to make her own decision. And now she realized (as she was a clever girl) that she knew nothing about politics and history and could not even recognize the language ambassadors spoke. She made a decision but it almost started the war.

Then the treasurer came and asked about the amount of money for buying crops. And it turned out that the Princess was bad in mathematics and could not calculate or even verify the calculations of her counselors. As a result they bought so little crops that the kingdom nearly starved.

When the citizens came to her to settle their debates it turned out that she could not do it as she did not know the law of her kingdom.

And she failed at all the affairs she tried. So she realized that to rule the kingdom one should have a lot of knowledge and skills and she began to read books to educate herself but did not manage to do that as the time had been missed and she could not work hard. And learning always was a hard work.

And the Princess cried bitterly as she realized that the talent alone was nothing and one had to work hard to do something well.

Again the kind magician appeared before the Queen and said that she had not taught her daughter one more main thing which is even more important than the previous ones. She had not taught her daughter to work hard and now the Princess would know a little here and there but never could do herself something really worthy.

A lot of time passed. The Queen – mother died and by the inheritance rule the Princess became the Queen. The girl who had played with the rag doll long ago became the chief minister of the kingdom and due to her care the kingdom was prosperous and the Queen as always had everything she wanted. This girl was not as gifted and talented as the Princess but she had studied hard and now was a sophisticated person who knew a good thing when she saw it. It goes without saying that to rule a kingdom one should learn a lot more than just to be a good doctor or a lawyer or whatever. And she was so eager to be the best at anything!

As to the Queen she lost all her talents as they were as flowers: they fade without watering. But one can water one's talents only by hard work, and then they flourish. Now her life was prosperous but monotonous. She met with other queens and they spoke about last fashions, she bought new dresses and jewelry but nothing could bring her real pleasure or real sorrow. The Boredom became her best friend as she missed three main things in life. They are **to value everything you have, to be able to dream and to have goals and achieve them working hard to fulfill your dreams.**