



*Newton Park's
Twisted Tales -*

The Princess

And

The Postman



The Princess And The Postman

In a far away country, on top of a misty mountain, there was a gigantic, glorious castle. The tall imposing walls were covered with precious rocks and gems that shone like stars in the bright morning sun. It was an amazingly impressive sight. Within the castle there lived a King. He was very rich, wealthy beyond any man's imagination. He kept his money and jewels in the foundations of the mountain, guarded by a dragon who was trained only to obey his master. He lived lavishly, with his own menagerie of animals in the courtyard, complete with exotic creatures and mythical beings. The King was a cruel man, he made his fortune by enslaving and persecuting his people, who lived in the poverty stricken town at the bottom of the steep, snowy slopes. The peasants worked fifteen hour days, digging in the surrounding lands, farming for the precious potato pearls that could only be found in this Kingdom. These special spuds were the most sort after food in the entire world and people would pay a fortune for just one sack.

Every week the King would send his cruel guards down to the town, led by his two equally as evil sons. The princes would select a citizen at random and take the poor prisoner back to the castle as food for his hungry dragon. The King, his Queen and their two boys would watch the beast feast on the innocent sacrifice, laughing and joking all the while.

The townsfolk were obviously living in fear of their tyrannical ruler, his blood-thirsty family and his deadly dragon. They didn't dare oppose him, as he was so powerful and the people felt weak and helpless. However, this was their life and they got on with it as best they could, with a smile on their face and a spring in their step. They were all surprisingly positive, despite their dreadful treatment.

Up in the castle there was another member of the royal family I've not yet mentioned. A little princess called Penny. She was not at all like the rest of her dastardly clan, Penny was sweet and pleasant to everyone she met. In fact, she preferred spending time with the servants, helping with their daily chores. Her mum would often shout at her that she shouldn't mix with the peasants, they were above them and should be worshipped and feared.

Penny didn't agree, but she preferred to be disciplined by her mother than her father. He would lock her up with the dragon if she ever got caught chatting with the young maids. Often, he'd leave her there for days, totally forgetting his daughter even existed.

She didn't mind it so much, to be fair the dragon was pretty kind to her, as she had the same royal blood as his master. The creature just left her alone, as she sat next to a crack in the mountain slope, staring out at the busy town and its market place. She'd never been to town before, but loved watching the people going about their daily lives. Her favourite person to study was the postman. He would skip from house to house, shop to shop, delivering letters and parcels. He always looked so happy and so friendly, everyone seemed to like him and greeted him with such warmth and love. Penny wished she could meet him, she often dreamt of being his daughter as he was so vastly different to her own cruel father.

When she was allowed out of her mountainous prison, she began writing out notes for the servants. If she wasn't supposed to speak to them maybe they could be pen pals? There was method in her madness, it gave her a chance to pretend she was like the postman she admired so much. After finishing her notes, Penny skipped around the castle, cheerfully delivering her little letters. It was fun, she understood why the postman seemed so jolly.

It didn't take long before the replies were being slid under her bedroom door. Before she had a chance to read them her dad burst in.

"What are you playing at, Penny?" he yelled. "This is not how a young princess should behave." In a great rage he ripped up all the notes, threw them onto the fire and roughly grabbed the frightened little girl. "It's the dragon's cave for you, young lady!" The King dragged his daughter and threw her down the stone steps to the bottom of her mountain prison.

Days passed and she heard nothing, this wasn't unusual, but then she heard strange noises coming from outside. Trumpets and the clanking of metal on metal. She rushed to the crack in the wall and saw that a small clattering of soldiers had assembled outside the castle. A very large, angry looking man with scars all over his face stood up on a big rock.

"I grew up in this town," he shouted fiercely. "I know how cruel your King and his family can be. You all must be tired of living in fear? Join me and we will put an end to his rule."

The townsfolk cheered, grabbed pitchforks and clubs and followed the band of soldiers up the mountain. As they stormed the castle, Penny could hear them chanting songs of hate and death to the entire royal family. The princess was terrified, she didn't want to be killed. She stayed as quiet as a mouse and hoped the trouble would pass her by.

Not long after, the band of soldiers and the mob returned back to the town. They were celebrating wildly and the same brute of a man stood up, with blood splattered across his face. "Today is a day for rejoicing, the evil king is dead, the queen and princes too. You are all now free, we will make our own fortune from the pearl potatoes and all live in happiness and prosperity." The people cheered and whooped in delight. "Hold your celebrations," the scarred man interrupted. "We have still one more loose end to tie up. The Princess Penny still lives, we must make sure we eliminate the whole of this hideous family."

Again the people cheered in agreement. Penny sat shaking and sobbing, she couldn't understand why people she'd never met wished her dead. Then she heard a soft, friendly voice echoing through the crack in the mountain. "Hello, is there someone there?"

Penny looked through the tight gap and saw the friendly postman looking back at her. She panicked and hid herself away.

"Don't be afraid," the voice continued. "Are you trapped in the mountain? I will come and find you. Is that OK?"

The princess thought for a moment. If no one has ever seen me, maybe I can pretend to be someone else? She whispered back through the crack. "I believe there's a door in the main palace, the king locked me away from my family many years ago."

"Poor young child," the postman sighed. "Hold tight. I know every inch of this kingdom and every single person, I will find you."

Penny hated lying to him, but it was probably the only way she could stay safe. She looked down at herself, at her jewel encrusted dress and knew that she looked nothing like a regular town girl. She quickly ripped off her elaborate gown and ran up the stairs in just her plain underwear. As she got higher and higher she said goodbye to the dragon, who just kept snoring deeply in his death-like slumber. She waited anxiously by the door, shaking as she sat on the cold, rock staircase.

Suddenly, the door swung open and the postman was standing there in his pale blue uniform, with a big smile on his face. Penny couldn't help herself, she hugged him so tight around the neck he gasped for air.

"Come now, child," he whispered. "This is no place for a little girl. Just hold on to me and whatever you do, keep your eyes closed."

Penny did as she was told. Though she could see her old home had been devastated and destroyed from the doorway to the cave. She shut her eyes and clung on to the postman's muscular neck. Although her eyes were closed she could feel they were moving fast, the scent of burning and death lingered in her nostrils, but overall she felt a sense of freedom, the kind she'd never felt possible. Eventually, she heard a door open and then slam shut, moments later she fell softly on to a plump cushion.

"You can open your eyes now," came the calm, reassuring voice.

Penny opened her eyes and looked, it was just one room. Against the wall opposite, a small log fire burnt away, two armchairs sat next to the warm, glowing flames, a small cooker and sink were situated under the only window and a fluffy grey rug covered the wooden floor boards. Penny lay on the small bed, surveying a rickety door that led to another room which she assumed must be the bathroom. It was a world away from the palace, but she felt more at home here than she ever had in the castle.

"Is this your house?" Penny asked hopefully. The postman nodded his head. "I know it's not much," he sighed, "But it's mine and you're welcome to stay here as long as you want."

Penny thought for a moment. Why hasn't he asked anything about me? Why doesn't he want to know where my parents are? And for a moment, she was worried.

"Listen," he said noticing her concerned face. "I know exactly who you are, remember I told you I know everyone in this town. I'm sorry about your parents and brothers, Princess Penny."

She sat there in shock for a moment. "Are you going to tell on me?"

The postman smiled sweetly, "Of course not, although you'll need a new name. It isn't that safe for you out there, but don't worry, I'll look after you."

"Why?" Penny blurted out.

"Because you shouldn't be held responsible for the crimes of your family. You are an innocent child and I can tell you're a nice person, I always believe in giving people a chance. There's good in everyone, you just need to give them an opportunity to show it."

Penny was relieved and so ecstatic that she was with the person who she aspired to be. "So, what now?" the little girl asked.

"From now on you'll be my niece, Poppy and I'll teach you to deliver the post like I do. I know it's not as glamorous as being a princess, but at least you'll be safe."

The little girl jumped up and down with joy, "Are you joking?" she screamed with excitement, "That's my dream job."

So, it was agreed. Poppy lived with the postman and he taught her all about his job and over time she got to know every single person in the town too. Little Poppy fast became one of the most loved and cherished members of the community. Although the hunt for the missing princess continued, no one suspected that she was living amongst them, delivering letters and parcels on a daily basis. She was the happiest she'd ever been in her whole life.

As time went on, the townsfolk lost interest in the search for the princess, but the scarred man and his soldiers got more and more desperate. He had not really come to free the people at all, in fact he had a more sinister agenda. Growing up in the town, he had heard of the treasure buried within the mountain, he was greedy and wanted the riches for himself. Over time, he had sent many of his men to their death in an attempt to steal the riches from the deadly dragon. He was now running low on soldiers and patience.

One day he was walking through the town square on his daily search for the missing princess and he saw Poppy on her postal rounds. The man must have seen her many times before, but had not paid any attention to the lowly delivery girl. There was something strangely familiar about her, but he couldn't put his finger on it. After another unsuccessful search, he retired to the palace and slumped in the chair next to the fire. Defeated and glum he looked up at a small shelf in the corner of the room. There he saw something that sparked him back to life. There was a picture in a small frame, a picture of the little princess. He'd seen that picture every night, but today he realised that the girl in the market looked exactly the same as the missing princess. He called for his men and they stormed straight to the postman's house.

They forced their way in through the front door with no warning at all, scaring the postman and the little girl half to death. The duo were eating their evening soup and spilt the boiling broth all down themselves.

The scarred man held his sword to the postman's throat. The Postman smiled nervously, "Don't worry, Poppy. I'm sure this is all just a misunderstanding."

The scarred man bellowed, "I bet you think you're very clever? Parading the princess under my nose all this time, laughing at me behind my back. I'm going to kill you and take the princess with me."

The postman said calmly, "I think you've become obsessed, do whatever you need to do to me, just don't hurt my little Poppy."

The enraged man laughed, "Oh no. She has another purpose."

All the noise and ruckus brought the whole town out, they piled beside the postman's tiny house. The soldiers tried to keep the masses back, but there were far too many of them.

"Please," the postman pleaded. "Let the girl go, she has done nothing wrong. The people love her."

"I don't care what the people think," the livid man ranted. "She is the princess and she will go into the mountain and get me all the gold, treasure and jewels that are buried there. She is the only one who the dragon will allow in. The wealth is mine, all mine and no one will stand in my way."

The little girl bravely stood up. "I will come with you, on one condition."

"I knew it," he exclaimed, "You are the princess. Name your terms."

"The postman goes free. If you spare his life I will grant you all the riches of my father's cave. It won't make you happy though. I've lived a life in the palace, I had everything money could buy, but it just made me lonely. My family were cruel and full of greed and that's what wealth does to you. The more you riches you gain, the more you desire. I'm happier here, now I have little money and no possessions. I have had the chance to met some wonderful people and made some fabulous friends. I would much rather share moments of joy, than own the world's most expensive toy. You can keep your heaps of jewels and gold, my reward will be the people I love and hold."

"Well, you're a stupid child," the man snarled as he grabbed the little girl roughly. He tried to leave but the masses outside had heard every single word and they had made their mind up about who they loved and trusted. They dragged the scarred man off the princess and his desperate pleas grew silent as the mob carried him away. Poppy had moved them all with her speech. Over time, they had learnt to love her too and wouldn't see her come to harm.

She rushed back into the house and hugged the postman tight. "I'm so proud of you," he whispered in her ear as he held her. She'd never felt so loved.

The scarred man and his soldiers were thrown into the dragon's den and were never seen again. The treasure stayed exactly where it was, the townsfolk had no need for it, though Poppy would visit the dragon from time to time, though mostly he was asleep. Everyone lived in peace and harmony beneath the mountain for all time.

The princess and the postman carried out their postal duties and lived a pretty modest life. Not much wealth, but crammed full of happiness and love.

The End

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