

Bourne toWrite...

creative writing
workshops

Princess

by Sue Hitchcock

Once upon a time there was a little princess – she knew she was a princess because her mum said, her father would give her the top brick off the chimney, if she wanted it. The princess was called Hope, because her parents wanted so much for her, encouraged her to try hard, saying “Aim for the stars! You may hit a tree.”

Princess Hope was a nice little girl, friendly and only slightly disfigured by a lazy eye, the pupil turning in unnecessarily, which made her look odd. She started school wearing a little pair of wired-framed spectacles, but she was still a princess. The only hostility was from children who were jealous of her excellence, which made her hide her talents, telling jokes about her silly mistakes. At home she loved to draw and sew, liking the quiet.

When she was grown, a prince was expected to propose marriage to her, but those she met were not right – they tasted wrong, smelled wrong, were too spotty, too bony or too fat. So she returned to drawing and sewing. Finally the right prince arrived. He was tall and handsome and he even had a squint, which she loved.

But Prince Squint wanted to go on an adventure to Africa and Princess Hope became Princess Despair. Only the drawing and sewing consoled her. The years passed and her parents aged and became sad.

Then a charming prince arrived who loved to draw as much as she, though he didn't have a squint. They made a comfortable and companionable marriage, and the princess stopped aiming for the stars.

Then after the passage of several years, Prince Squint returned from Africa and started to search for the Princess Hope he had known. He searched high and low, in the city and in the country and finally he found her. He thought maybe she loved him enough to wait, but he had been away too long.

Princess Hope's heart leaped when she saw him. Her love had endured but Prince Constant, whom she had married, stayed strong and loved her. She knew he wouldn't go on adventures to Africa. Prince Squint could see that too and the memory of their love was all they had. Renewing it would only lead to their destruction. Prince Constant didn't notice the tears, which filled the squinty-eyes of the lovers as they said "Goodbye."