

THE DUKE AND THE DUCHESS

Tell the following story:

*Once upon a time, a long, long time ago, there were a **Duke** and a **Duchess** who lived in a castle surrounded by a very wide, very deep moat.*

One day at breakfast, the Duke announced that he had to go away. He told the Duchess that while he was away she was free to do whatever she liked as long as it was inside the castle but that she was not to leave the castle for any reason whatsoever.

*Off he went, and for the first few days the Duchess was perfectly happy pottering about the castle, talking with her maids, doing her embroidery, clearing out some cupboards and so on. But by the fifth day she was getting pretty bored. And when a week had passed with no word from the Duke and no sign of him returning, she decided that she would make a quick trip into town to do a bit of shopping and catch up with what was happening. As she was crossing the bridge over the moat, she waved to the **Guard**, who waved back.*

*It was a beautiful day, there was a colourful market on the town square with lots of interesting things for sale, and she found time to visit several friends. But just as she had decided she must return to the castle with no more delay, she met a **Boyfriend** from long before she knew the Duke. He pressed her to have dinner with him, and the next time she thought about getting back to the castle was the following morning when she woke up in his bed. She rose in a panic, worried that the Duke might have returned overnight in which case he would find that she had disobeyed his orders.*

After dressing quickly she raced back to the castle, where she was shocked to find that the Guard was blocking her way so that she couldn't cross the bridge over the moat to get back into the castle and safety. She begged and pleaded but nothing would change his mind. He told her that the Duke had given him orders to allow her to leave the castle but not to let her back in; if he did let her back in and the Duke found out he could be punished by death.

*Of course she didn't want anything bad to happen to the Guard; so she looked for another way back into the castle at which point she noticed the **Boatman** who had a boat tied to the bridge. She ran over to him to ask if he would row her across the moat, and fortunately he was very happy to do so; "it will only cost you one gold coin," he added. She explained that she was the Duchess so had plenty of gold coins but didn't have any with her – all the money was inside the castle, but if would just row her quickly across she would be happy to pay the one gold coin fee and an extra coin for his trouble, once they reached the other side. Unfortunately, the boat business had had many bad debts recently; so the owner had told the boatman that under no circumstances was he to allow credit to anyone – not even a duchess, or else he could lose his job. He was ready, willing and able to take her across as soon as she was able to pay the fee.*

Of course she didn't want him to lose his job; so she returned to the town where she was sure she could borrow a gold coin from the ex-boyfriend; however, when she told him the whole story he took fright. First he complained strongly because she hadn't told him that she had defied the Duke's orders by coming to town and then he immediately packed his bags and ran away; he was afraid that he would be blamed if he was still there when the Duke returned.

*Next, she visited the **Doctor**, who had always been very good to her in the past. She told him about her predicament and asked for his help. He was very sorry to say that his services didn't include*

money-lending, but he would come immediately to care for her if the Duke punished her physically upon his return.

*She was still determined to get back into the castle before the Duke returned, because of course she didn't want to be punished; so next she turned to the **Priest**. But he wasn't any help either – he had no money at all, although he did promise to pray that the Duke wouldn't punish her too badly for disobeying his orders.*

*That wasn't going to help her get back into the castle though; so with increasing anxiety she went to visit a **Friend** and explained her problem. Like the others, her friend didn't have a gold coin, and although she was sympathetic she had never been married so didn't even have any advice for how to manage the Duke's anger when he returned.*

By now, another whole day had passed, and the Duchess was very afraid the Duke would return any minute – if he hadn't already; so she returned to the castle and tried again to convince the Guard to let her across. When he adamantly refused, she tried to run past him; in order to stop her he drew his sword and killed her.

THE END