


THE  
*Twelve Dancing*  
PRINCESSES



*a fairy tale retold by Jennifer Julian*



11 PT. SMALL CAPS

11 PT. ROMAN

11 PT. BOLD

ONCE UPON A TIME LIVED A  
**king** who had twelve beautiful  
**daughters**. They all slept in  
twelve beds in one room, and  
when they went to sleep at night  
the doors were shut and locked  
tight. Every morning, their shoes  
were mysteriously found to be  
quite worn through as if they had  
been danced in all night, yet no  
one could figure out how it had  
happened or where they had been.

TO SOLVE THIS MYSTERY, THE KING  
made it known far and wide that if  
anyone could discover the secret  
of the princesses' shoes, he would  
have the hand of one princess in  
marriage. However, if after three  
days and nights he could not  
succeed he would be put to death.

SOON A KING'S SON ARRIVED. HE WAS WELL TAKEN CARE of, and in the evening he was taken to the bedroom next to that of the princesses. There he was asked to keep watch to discover where the princesses danced. The **king's son** tried with all his might to stay awake, but he soon fell asleep. When he awoke in the morning and looked at the soles of the princesses' shoes, he saw that he had failed. This same thing happened the second and third night, and so the king's son was put to death. After him came several others, but all came to the same end and lost their lives.

DURING THIS TIME AN OLD SOLDIER passed through the kingdom where this king reigned. While he was travelling through a wood, he met an **old woman** who asked him where he was going. *I barely know where I am going or what I am going to do,*

9 PT. PETITE CAPS  
9 PT. ROMAN  
9 PT. BOLD

12 PT. PETITE CAPS  
12 PT. ITALIC  
12 PT. ROMAN  
12 PT. BOLD

said **the soldier**, *but I think I would like to try and find out where the princesses dance and become king. Well, said the old woman, that is no hard task. Just be sure to not drink any of the wine the princesses offer you, and pretend to sleep come evening. She then gave him a cloak and said, As soon as you wear this you will become invisible. Use it to follow the princesses wherever they go.* When the soldier heard all this good advice, he was sure he wanted to try and went to the king.

He was well received the way the others had been, and everything happened just as it had with them. In the evening just as he was preparing to sleep, the **eldest princess** brought him a cup of wine. The soldier secretly threw it all away, and laid down and pretended to sleep.

9 PT. ROMAN  
9 PT. ITALIC  
9 PT. BOLD

12 PT. ROMAN  
12 PT. BOLD

11 PT. PETITE CAPS

11 PT. ROMAN

11 PT. ITALIC

11 PT. BOLD

WHEN THE TWELVE PRINCESSES HEARD HIM SNORING LOUDLY THEY LAUGHED. THEY THEN ROSE UP AND OPENED THEIR DRAWERS AND BEGAN dressing themselves in their finest clothes. All were happily skipping about as if they were eager to dance, but the **youngest** said *I do not know why, while you are so happy, I feel nervous. I have a feeling something will go wrong tonight.* To this the eldest replied, *You silly girl. Stop being afraid. Remember how many other kings' sons have already failed? And as for this soldier, he would have slept soundly enough even if I had not given him the wine.* WHEN THEY ALL WERE READY AT LAST, THEY WENT AND CHECKED ON THE SOLDIER, WHO SNORED ON. They then felt quite safe, and the eldest went to her own bed and clapped her hands. The bed sank into the door and a trap door opened. Then all followed the eldest through the door and down the staircase. The soldier, meanwhile, had been watching all of this, and rushed to put on his cloak and follow them. He was halfway down the stairs when he accidentally stepped on the gown of the youngest princess. She immediately cried out to her sisters, *All is not right! Someone has pulled on my gown.* Again, the eldest answered, *You silly girl! It is nothing but a nail on the wall.* THEY CONTINUED DOWN THE STAIRS, AND AT THE BOTTOM FOUND THEMSELVES IN AN ENCHANTED GROVE OF TREES. All of the leaves were of silver, and sparkled beautifully. The soldier wanted to take away a token of the place, so he broke off a small branch from one of the trees with a loud snap.

11 PT. PETITE CAPS

11 PT. ITALIC

THE YOUNGEST DAUGHTER AGAIN SAID, I AM SURE ALL IS NOT RIGHT- DID you not hear that sound? *That has never happened before.* But the eldest said, *It is only our princes, who shout for joy at our coming.* They then came to second grove of trees with leaves all of gold, and following that to a third with leaves of glittering diamonds. Again at each the soldier broke a branch, and every time there was a loud noise. Again at each noise the youngest sister trembled with fear, to which the eldest always responded that, *It is only our princes who are crying for joy.* At last they came to a great lake, and on the shore rested twelve little boats with twelve handsome princes waiting in them.

11 PT. PETITE CAPS

11 PT. ITALIC

One of the princesses rode in each boat, and the soldier took the same boat as the youngest. As they were rowing across, the prince who took the youngest commented that, *I do not know why, but though I am rowing as fast as I can we are not moving as quickly as usual. The boat seems very heavy today. It is only the warm weather,* said the princess. *I am feeling quite warm too.* AT THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LAKE STOOD A BEAUTIFUL CASTLE, WITH THE SOUNDS OF HAPPY MUSIC DRIFTING FROM IT. When all the boats had landed, all of the princesses and princes went into the castle, and they all danced. The soldier, who was still invisible, danced with them too. Whenever any of the princesses set down a cup of wine, he would drink it immediately.

THIS CAUSED THE YOUNGEST SISTER TO BECOME FRIGHTENED, BUT THE ELDEST ALWAYS IGNORED HER. THEY ALL DANCED UNTIL THREE o'clock in the morning, when all of their shoes had worn through. The princes rowed them all back across the lake, only this time the soldier rode with the eldest, and at the other side they all said good-bye, promising to all return the following night. BEFORE THE PRINCESSES REACHED the stairs, the soldier ran ahead and reached his room and again pretended to sleep. When the princesses heard him snoring, they knew themselves to be safe, and put away all of their fine clothes and went to sleep. In the morning the soldier did not let on any of what he had seen, and again followed the princesses the second and third night. On each he remembered to take a token of that place with him:

10 PT. PETITE CAPS

10 PT. ROMAN

10 PT. ITALIC

on the second night a branch of diamonds, and on the third one of the golden cups. ON THE MORNING HE WAS TO DECLARE THE SECRET, THE SOLDIER BROUGHT THE BRANCHES AND GOLDEN CUP WITH HIM TO THE KING. When the king asked him, *Where do my twelve daughters dance each night?* he answered, *With twelve princes in an underground castle.* He then told the king all that he had seen, and showed him the branches and golden cup. The king then called for the princesses, and asked them if what the soldier said was true. Seeing that they had been found out, the princesses confessed to it all. When the king asked which princess the soldier wanted to wed, he answered, *I shall have the eldest, since I am no longer so young.* They were married that very day, and the soldier became the king's heir.

