The Kind-Hearted Pea

Once, there was a pea pod. The pea pod grew on a long pea plant. One day, when it was harvest time, the farmer came and cut the pea plant, and the pea pod fell down. The pod opened and the three peas inside woke up.

'Oh, the world is so big!' said the first pea.

'Oh, the world is so beautiful!' said the second pea.

'Oh, I am scared!' said the third pea. 'The world is too big and too beautiful! I want to sleep in my pod.'

But then a wind blew and talked to the peas.

'Peas, peas,' said the wind. 'I can carry you! I can take you to interesting places. Where do you want to go?'

'I want to go to the sun!' said the first pea.

So the wind blew the pea up into the sky. The pea flew through the clouds and the pea flew into the stars. The pea saw the world and it was amazing!

But then the pea got close to the sun, and it was very hot. It was too hot for the pea.

'Oh, kind-hearted wind, I think I want to go –'

BANG! And the pea was gone.

The wind blew back down to the pea pod and spoke to the second pea. 'I have taken your friend to the sun!' it said. 'Now, where do *you* want to go?'

'I want to be a queen!' said the second pea.

So the wind blew the pea to a castle. The pea flew onto the queen's chair. The pea watched all the people, and the pea said, 'Aha! I am the queen! I am queen pea!'

But then the real queen came and sat down, and the real queen was much bigger than the pea. SPLAT! And the pea was gone.

The wind blew again, and went back to the third pea. 'Where do *you* want to go?' it asked. 'Maybe to the bottom of the sea?'

'Hmm,' said the pea. 'I don't want to see the sun or the stars, and I don't want to be a queen. I just want to help people. Take me somewhere where I can help.'

'Very well,' said the wind.

So the wind blew the pea to a house. The pea flew into a crack by a window. The pea didn't understand why the wind had taken it to the crack. How could it help in this place? Then the pea heard people talking inside the house.

There was a boy in bed, and his mother and a doctor were standing beside the bed. The boy was very ill.

'He isn't getting better,' said the doctor. 'He needs a reason to live. Give him something interesting, something that will make him want to live. Maybe some books? Or he could draw?'

'I can't afford it,' said the mother. 'It's already hard for me to afford his food and medicine. I can't afford books and paper and pens as well.'

'Well…' said the doctor. 'Good luck.'

The doctor left and the mother looked very sad. The pea felt her sadness, but it didn't know how it could help.

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For a few weeks, the pea slept. It dreamed about the boy. Sometimes, it rained on the pea. The pea knew it couldn't help, and it felt bad about it, so all it wanted to do was sleep.

Then, one day, something changed. All that rain had done something to the pea, and the pea felt a change. It hurt a little, but in a good way. The pea wanted to move, but it couldn't move – it was just a pea! But it tried and tried to move, to grow, and then – POP!

Suddenly, the pea was not just a pea – it was a plant! It could move and grow, and it was excited to see what it would become. It had made a little home in the crack, and now it was going to be a beautiful… something!

'Look, Mum!' said the boy. 'There's a plant growing in this crack!'

That's me! thought the pea.

And the boy loved the pea plant. He sat by it all day. When the birds tried to eat it, he shooed them away. 'Shoo, shoo!' When it didn't rain, the boy watered the pea plant. And slowly, the boy started to get better. The mother and the doctor were very happy.

The boy got tired of always shooing the birds away, so he put cardboard around the plant to keep the birds away. He went and got fresh, clean water and watered the plant every day. If any of the leaves went brown, he took away the brown leaves. Sometimes, his mum tried to look at the plant, and he shooed *her* away.

'Mum, go away! You're taking the pea's light.'

Now that little pea who wanted to help people was just a small part of the plant. And the pea was growing old and tired. The plant was big now, and soon it would be time to harvest it.

So the boy's mother got a bowl and said, 'Go and harvest the peas, and we'll have pea soup for dinner.'

The boy took the pea pods from the plant. But when he opened the pods, he saw that there were not normal peas inside – the peas were shaped like hearts!

'Mum, Mum!' he said, and he showed her the peas. 'The peas are shaped like hearts! Oh, I loved that kind-hearted pea plant, and that kind-hearted pea plant loved me as well… I don't think I can eat these peas. They're too special.'

So they didn't cook the heart-shaped peas. They went into the garden and planted the peas in the ground. Just like before, the boy looked after the plants. He shooed away the birds and watered the plants every day. The plants grew big and strong, and the boy did as well.

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Every pea that grew there was shaped like a heart, and people began to be interested in them. When the boy's mother was old and couldn't work, he started selling the peas. The boy and his mother were never rich, but they could always afford what they needed, and that was all that mattered.

THE END

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