Five from One Pod

Five peas sat in a pod; they themselves were green, the pod was green too, so they thought the whole world was green; and so it should be! The pod grew, and the peas grew; they adapted to their quarters and sat all in a row. The sun shone on and warmed the pod, the rain watered it, and it became cleaner and more transparent; it was good and cozy for the peas, light by day and dark by night, as it should be. They kept growing and growing and thought more and more, sitting in the pod, that something had to be done!

"Are we to sit here all our lives?" they said. "We mustn't harden from such sitting!.. And it seems to us there is something beyond our pod! We have such a presentiment!"

Several weeks passed; the peas turned yellow, and the pod turned yellow too.

"The whole world is turning yellow!" they said, and who could stop them from saying so?

Suddenly they felt a strong jolt: the pod was plucked by a human hand and thrust into a pocket, among other pods.

"Well, now we'll soon be set free!" said the peas, and they waited.

"I should like to know which of us will go farthest!" said the smallest. "But we shall soon see!"

"Come what may!" said the biggest.

"Crack!" The pod burst, and all five peas rolled out into the bright sunshine. They lay in a child's palm; a little boy examined them and said they would do just right for shooting from an elderberry pipe. And now one pea was already in the pipe; the boy blew, and it flew out.

"I'm flying, flying where I please! Catch me if you can!" it cried, and its trail was lost.

"And I shall fly straight to the sun; that's the real pod! Just right for me!" said another. And its trail was lost too.

"And we'll sleep wherever we land!" said the next two. "But we shall get somewhere!" They did roll across the floor before landing in the elderberry pipe, but they did land in it. "We'll go farthest!"

"Come what may!" said the last one; it flew upward, landed on an old wooden roof, and rolled into a crack just beneath the window of the attic room.

In the crack there was moss and loose soil; the moss covered the pea; so it remained there, hidden but not forgotten by the Lord God.

"Come what may!" it said.

And in the room lived a poor woman. She went out to day labor: she cleaned stoves, sawed firewood, in short did all kinds of heavy work; she had strength enough, and willingness to work was not lacking, yet she could not get out of poverty! At home remained her only daughter, a young girl. She was so thin, frail; she had been lying in bed for a whole year: neither living nor dying.

"She will go to her little sister," said the mother. "I had two of them, you know. It was hard for me to feed both; well, the Lord God has shared my care with me and taken one to Himself! The other I should like to keep, but He, it seems, does not want to part the sisters!"

But the sick girl did not die; patiently, quietly she lay day after day in bed while the mother was at work.

It was spring, early in the morning, just before the mother went out to work. The sun shone through the little window straight onto the floor, and the sick girl looked out of the window.

"What is that green thing out the window? It sways so in the wind!"

The mother went to the window and opened it a little.

"Well, I never!" she said. "Why, it's a pea that has sprouted! And how did it get into this crack? Well, now you'll have your own little garden!"

Having moved the little bed closer to the window so the girl could admire the green sprout, the mother went out to work.

"Mother, I think I shall get well!" said the girl in the evening. "The sun warmed me so today. The pea, you see, how beautifully it grows in the sun? I shall get well too, start getting up, and go out into the sun."

"God grant it!" said the mother, but she did not believe it would come true.

However, she propped the green sprout that had cheered the girl with a little stick so it would not break in the wind; then she took a thin string and fastened one end to the roof and tied the other to the top edge of the window frame. The pea shoots

could cling to this string as they grew. And so it happened: the shoots grew noticeably and crept up the string.

"Look, it will soon bloom!" the woman said one morning, and from that moment she too began to hope and believe that her sick daughter would recover.

She remembered that the girl had lately been talking as if more lively, in the mornings raising herself up in bed and sitting for a long time admiring her little garden, where grew a single pea, and how her eyes shone at the sight! After a week the sick girl got out of bed for the first time for a whole hour. How happy she was to sit in the sun! The window was open, and outside swayed the blossomed white-pink flower. The girl leaned out of the window and tenderly kissed the delicate petals. This day was a real holiday for her.

"The Lord Himself planted and grew the flower to encourage and gladden you, my dear child, and me too!" said the happy mother, and smiled at the flower as at a heavenly angel.

Well, and the other peas? The one that flew where it pleased — catch me if you can — landed in a rain gutter, and from there into a pigeon's crop, and lay there like Jonah in the belly of the whale. The two lazy ones went no farther — the pigeons swallowed them too, so they too did no small good. And the fourth, that meant to fly to the sun, fell into a ditch and lay for several weeks in the stagnant water until it swelled up.

"How splendidly I have fattened!" said the pea. "Really, I shall soon burst, and I don't think any pea has achieved more. I am the most remarkable of all five!"

The ditch quite agreed with it.

And at the window facing the roof stood a girl with shining eyes, rosy and healthy; she folded her hands and thanked God for the pea flower.

"And yet I stand by my pea!" said the ditch.