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Hans Christian Andersen Stories

by Lisa Kramme

During her presentation at the international conference "Danish Culture, Past and Present: The Last Two Hundred Years," Lisa Kramme shared the following stories by Hans Christian Andersen: "The Princess on the Pea," "The Old Man Is Always Right," and "The Little Match Girl." She also shared several tales of the famous people of Mols, but passed them off as stories about her relatives in Denmark.

Hans Christian Andersen was born on April 2, 1805 in Odense, Denmark, which is on the island of Fyn. He was the son of a shoemaker, and since most shoes at that time were made out of wood, they tended not to wear out very quickly and people did not buy many shoes. As a result, Hans Christian Andersen's family was quite poor. To make matters worse, Hans's father died when Hans was only 11 years old.

After going to the school for poor children in Odense for awhile, Hans left his hometown at the age of 14 to attempt to find a career in Copenhagen, the Danish capitol. He tried to earn a living as an actor, a singer, and a dancer, but he almost starved while trying. Fortunately, Hans met a wealthy benefactor who helped him obtain a royal scholarship, and he was able to finish his schooling.

In 1829, at the age of 24, Hans Christian Andersen began his writing career in Copenhagen. He began by writing mostly plays and novels, but in 1835, he wrote the first of what was to be his 168 fairy tales. Hans Christian Andersen is known around the world for these stories, ranging from folk tales, to stories based on his life, to tales that make fun of human faults.