

“Someone Like Me” by Chafia Flynn

There once lived a princess, named Ruth. She lived in a beautiful palace on a mountain with a stream that flowed into a valley down below. Every morning the princess was greeted with a breakfast of anything her heart desired. Pancakes were her favourite breakfast dish. The maids would come into her room with breakfast and Princess Ruth, waited with excitement for the food and for them to open her heavy curtains and pull the windows open. Her room was filled with beautiful things from all over the world, but when she looked out her windows, no matter how beautiful the things in her room were, the valley below was much more beautiful and exciting.

Inside the palace, Princess Ruth was adored by her parents, maids, and all the people who visited her from near and far. Everyone who came told her how beautiful and talented she was. Princess Ruth never knew there was anything different about her, and she never felt ashamed of not having an arm. The princess felt she could do anything she wanted and was very talented at riding horses, singing, and she could even climb any tree in the castle yard. But Princess Ruth was never allowed outside the castle grounds.

One bright day after the maids had opened her windows she looked out into the valley as she did many times at the people and children below. She became overwhelmed with a desire to go down and be with the people and play with the children. After breakfast Ruth dressed quickly and told everyone she would be out in the castle yard playing fairies and tea and “please don’t look for me as I don’t want anyone to scare the fairies away.” Everyone in the palace knew the princess had a great imagination so they laughed to each other and never minded the princess doing her thing.

Ruth was really planning to go into town. Quickly, she put on ordinary clothes and took a sack of food and set off to the valley with no one noticing. She followed a path down the mountain over the stream and into the town, she had seen so many times before from her window. In the town, she saw and smelled many wonderful new things she had never saw or smelled before. Everywhere she looked she was amazed. Soon she came upon some children playing tag and asked if she could play but

they laughed and pointed at where her arm should be and ran away. She came across more children and they did the same thing. Soon it got dark and Ruth couldn't find the path to the mountain she had come to the valley from. She saw some adults standing with the children she tried to play with earlier on in the day. She went over to ask them directions and the adults turned their backs and began to whisper to their children walking quickly away from Ruth. Ruth felt all alone and scared.

After searching a long while Ruth found her way to the mountain path and ran hurriedly back home to the palace.

The next morning Ruth woke up and when the maids opened her windows she did not want to look out at the valley below. She then said to the maids: "Can you please tell me why would other children laugh and point at me when I asked them to play?" The maids felt sorry for Ruth.

They knew how sweet Ruth was and that she must have sneaked out to try and meet some of the children in the valley. They told her the story of how she lost her arm as a baby to an infection. The maids said:

"Your parents insisted no one was to tell you, you were different or to treat you differently. This made you a very happy child growing up and now that you have grown up a bit you might know that people don't always treat people who are different kindly. You see you really aren't any different than anyone else. We are all different from each other some have more obvious differences than others." The princess then had an idea.

Ruth's wonderful idea was to tell all the people in the valley and towns around, that the palace was going to have a royal feast and everyone was invited. When the feast began everyone was talking and laughing, later they began to dance. The princess came out in a beautiful pink gown and when they saw her the people said "we have never seen such a beautiful princess before". They did not notice that Ruth did not have an arm or that she was the same little girl asking to play in the town. Later she called for a royal announcement. The princess stood on the balcony looking down on all the people. Ruth then told them about what happened in town and said "But tonight everyone sees me as special. We are all special and all different. As I was growing up I never knew I was special or different and I never thought I couldn't do

things. When I met the people in town the other day in ordinary clothes, they made me feel different and sad too. They ran away, whispered, laughed and pointed. Inside we are all the same. We should all remember to be kind first and not make our differences a bad thing.” Everyone clapped for Ruth and felt sad that they had been so cruel. From that day on Ruth was not left out and she was actually just another child.