

The Princess Disease

Jin Hee was a young Korean girl that suffered from *gong-ju-byung*. It was a terrible disease. It threatened to push away all of her friends, and her family didn't even want to see her. It was a horrible thing that wasted away at one's social life and people's tolerance. Literally, it meant: the princess disease.

Jin Hee, you see, was a bit conceited. She thought she was a bit better looking than her friends and generally most people that she met. It was, as far as she was concerned, a well-known fact that she dressed better, sang better, and danced better than most people in her school, too. She was popular, but she was also disliked, because people were jealous, right?

Call it arrogance, call it conceit, all the students around her called it the *gong-ju-byung*. It was a Korean word. *Gong-ju* means princess, and *byung* means disease. It was a phrase reserved for people who thought they were way better than everyone else, without a real reason. Certainly there are people who are prettier, smarter, nicer, taller, and more fashionable than others, but when you thought that this meant you and most people didn't agree, they would say you had *gong-ju-byung* – unless you were a boy, and then they'd say *wang-ja-byung*, which meant: the prince disease.

So was Jin Hee justified in believing that she was better than everyone else? She was cute, but not amazingly so. Quite a few of the boys were interested in her, and several of the girls wanted to be her. She dressed well, because her family had some money. They were well-to-do without being filthy rich. She sang well, but not quite well enough to get a lead spot on the choir. Of course, they thought this was because the choir coach hated her, since the choir coach had bad skin and a bad haircut, and was jealous of her. Maybe her attitude was the real reason, right?

She was thin and athletic, but she wasn't the strongest, fastest, or even the best at any of their school's events. She also didn't join teams, because it put too much of a restriction on her important time. She ran for class president, but came in third. She, again, thought it was because of the 'haters.' After losing, she pretended she'd just run for fun and it was no big deal, but to her it was a HUGE deal.

Jin Hee also surrounded herself with friends that were less than her in some way. They weren't as pretty, as fashionable, as rich, or something like that, so that she was in some way their superior. This allowed her to be the most important one in their group. She never let them forget it, either.

Jin Hee definitely had the disease. The diagnosis was certain. The treatment was not easy: stop being so mean and get a little humility. Then things would get better for her. However, once someone caught the disease, it was hard to get rid of. Watch out so that you don't catch it!



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Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. What disease has Jin Hee caught?
 - A. gong-ja-byung
 - B. gong-ju-byung
 - C. wang-ja-byung
 - D. gong-wang-byung

2. TRUE OR FALSE: The disease Jin Hee has is a real one that affects her body and health.
 - A. True
 - B. False

3. Which of these is NOT one of Jin Hee's symptoms?
 - A. She thinks she is better than most people around her.
 - B. She thinks that she isn't the choir lead because the coach hates her.
 - C. She thinks her mom is jealous of her looks and steals her clothes.
 - D. She keeps friends around her that are less than her in some way.

4. What language is *gong-ju-byung* from?
 - A. Japanese
 - B. Chinese
 - C. English
 - D. Korean

5. Which of these words does NOT describe someone with the Princess Disease?
 - A. humble
 - B. conceited
 - C. arrogant
 - D. prideful

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