

The Preposterous Princess

Carlotta was a princess who lived on the Sherwood Estate in Royal Tunbridge Wells.

She loved living in a town with the name "Royal" because it reminded her of princesses and princes and kings and queens. She loved living in a place called "Sherwood" because that reminded her of Sherwood Forest and the dashingly brave adventures of Robin Hood.

One day Carlotta was in the local shopping mall called Royal Victoria Place. "What a lovely name", she thought. "The Queen lives in a palace at the end of a road named The Mall and I go shopping in my own nearby mall!"

As she walked past some shops with lovely long dresses in the window Carlotta was spotted by one of her friends, a girl about the same age as Carlotta named Lucy. When Lucy was little her mum called her Lucy Lastic because her knickers kept falling down and her mum thought the elastic must have broken or become loose.

"Good morning your majesty!", said Lucy to Carlotta, "I hope you are well today".

"Oh, one is fine", said Carlotta in the poshest voice she could think of. "One hopes the same for one's friend Lucy Lastic and hopes her knickers stay up"

Carlotta grinned as she said it.

"A question", said Lucy. "Why is your arm so straight by your side? Do you have cramp or perhaps an illness, ma'am?"

"No illness", said Carlotta, "It's the diamond in this ring. It's so big and heavy I have trouble lifting it and it makes my arm stay straight down by my side!"

"Perhaps you should get a pram and push it around, then!", said Lucy.

"Ha ha, you are so funny. How would anyone see it and marvel at its splendour if it was all covered over with baby blankets?"

"OK, then perhaps you should have the diamond fixed to a tiara and wear it on your head so it's easier to carry. Or maybe have it fixed to a necklace or amulet and let it hang from your neck!"

"Then it would pull my head down and make me bow, said Carlotta. "I don't bow to other people, they bow to me because I am a princess".

You may know by now that Carlotta isn't really a princess. She just pretends she is because it makes her feel good. Her friend Lucy plays along with her because she thinks it is fun too.

The ring Carlotta wore was really a cheap "dress ring" which she bought from a market stall the day before. The "stones" were made of plastic and the ring wasn't heavy at all.

When Carlotta and Lucy go to the shops they think of princess things and look for clothes and other items that princesses may wear or use. One day they were walking past a car showroom

and saw a very old car called an Austin Princess.

"Wow!", said Carlotta. "What an absolutely fabulous name for a car! Imagine being a princess and having a car named princess as well. Perhaps the only thing to beat that would be having a horse named princess!"

As she said it to Lucy, Carlotta thought of a beautiful white horse with golden leather reins, a golden leather saddle, and the word "Princess" written on the corner of the saddle blanket in pink letters.

"Kreld my grimpleberries and throngle my chongles!" said the old man as Carlotta walked into him. She was so busy daydreaming about horses that she forgot to look where she was going and didn't even notice the man in front of her.

"We are very sorry" she said, looking at the man rather shamefacedly.

"Who are WE?" he asked, not knowing what she meant.

"It is the royal we", said Carlotta. "I am a princess and I always use the royal we when I am talking to my subjects".

"Well", said the old man, "I am not one of your subjects and I suggest you watch where you are going miss, otherwise you might walk into a lamp post or something one day and make a right royal mess of your nose!"

Suddenly Carlotta came down to Earth and realised she should stop playing princess pretending games when she is in a shopping mall, unless it is with her mum or Lucy.

"I really am very sorry, sir" she said. "You are quite right of course and I will watch where I am going. Are you alright, or did I hurt you?"

"No, you didn't hurt me, be careful and have a nice day" said the man, as he walked away.

"Are we still playing princesses?" asked Lucy, who had kept out of the way whilst Carlotta was talking to the man.

"Of course, but not if there are other shoppers near us", said Carlotta.

Upstairs in the shopping mall was a clothes shop which had large mirrors so shoppers could see what the dresses and other clothes would look like against them. This was one of Carlotta's favourite shops because she could hold lots of different dresses against her front, one at a time of course, and imagine herself in a glorious palace.

Carlotta and Lucy both tried holding some lovely dresses against their fronts and told the salesperson they were looking for something to wear for a special event at school. They said if they each found a dress that looked right their mums would come up and buy them.

Something Carlotta and Lucy didn't think about much was that a princess is the daughter of a king or queen or both. Usually princesses have to do what their parents tell them to do.

When Carlotta got home after going to the shopping mall her mother and father wanted to

know what Carlotta and Lucy had been doing.

"We tried some dresses in the shopping centre", said Carlotta rather matter-of-factly.

"Did you buy anything?" asked her father.

"No, we didn't have any money!" replied Carlotta in a sad voice and putting on a sad expression.

"Well, you've had money but always spend it all very quickly", said her father. "How about Lucy Lastic, does she have money and spend it like lightning?"

"Probably like greased lightning" replied Carlotta. "If you think I am a fast spender you should watch Lightning Lastic!", commented Carlotta, giving Lucy yet another comical nickname.

"Anyway, if I was a real princess my father would be very rich and buy all the clothes I could ever wear in the whole of my lifetime. Plus, servants would bring them to me to try on I wouldn't have to go to a stupid shopping mall and risk bumping into other people", said Carlotta.

"Did you bump into someone you knew today?" asked her mother.

"No, but I did bump into an old man I didn't know. But it was a pure accident and he wasn't hurt!", said Carlotta.

"I suppose you were daydreaming about being a princess in a magnificent crinoline gown and not looking where you were going!" said her mum.

"No I wasn't", snapped Carlotta who then decided to sulk for at least three hours. "Why do mothers always guess things right?" she asked herself.

But before three hours had passed it was dinner time.

Her mum had been suffering from backache and didn't feel like cooking so her dad helped everyone by going to a nearby fast food shop and buying a big boxful of fried chicken with chips and sweetcorn.

Without anyone having to say anything Carlotta knew that royal people were supposed to sit upright at a table and use knives, forks and spoons correctly when eating food.

Today she sat on a pouffe near a coffee table and tore into the food with her bare fingers.

Sometimes she was very glad she wasn't really a princess!

The End

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