

The Princess & the Pea by Simone Plant

Ch B: No you wally. I meant she was very pretty and he takes after her, in the looks department.

Chamberlain: As you all know, we have gathered here in the Throne room to commemorate a special occasion. Prince Valiant will in 3 days be crowned King.

All: Hurrah.

Chamberlain: **How-ever**, as the law decrees here in our little Duchy of Grande Florentia he must first take a bride.

*Everyone oohs and arrhs*

Chester: Take a bride? Where? On holiday. Ooh I haven't had a holiday for years, could I go too?

Chamberlain: Not that sort of take. Marry a bride!

Chester: My mistake.

Valiant: But I'm not ready to get married and when I am, I want to marry someone I love, Chamberlain.

Chamberlain: That's all good and well sire, for the **lower** classes (*Chorus grumbles, he carries on ignoring everyone else*) but for a member of royalty it's more about cementing alliances and duty rather than romance.

Chester: Is that something like what you get if you cross a chicken with a cement mixer?

*Everyone looks at Chester vacantly*

Chester: A brick layer!

*Everyone stops looking at Chester*

Valiant: I've heard about those types of arranged marriages, you never know who you're going to end up with. Prince Rupert of Schmaltzbergen got lumbered with Princess Edna, who's 85 years old.

Chamberlain: And a very nice lady she is too.

Valiant: Yes but he's only 21. Then there was Prince Edgar from Borogrovia, he ended up betrothed to Princess Agnes.

Chamberlain: They are the same age sire.

Valiant: True I'll give you that, but her beard is longer than his.

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Chamberlain: Sire you must trust me. I would never let anything like that happen to you.

Valiant: I should jolly well hope not, because if it did, I'd...well I'd...I'd ... run away with the circus.

Chester: You don't want to do that sire. The police will only make you bring it back.

Valiant: I meant I'd **join** the circus.

Chester: Oh that's alright then. It's a good life in the circus though. My Uncle Albert was a clown man & boy.

Chamberlain: I think you must take after him.

Chester: After he died, all 17 of his friends came to the funeral in one car.

Valiant: Chester?

Chester: Yes sire.

Valiant: Shut up.

Chamberlain: The question is how do we find a suitable queen in 3 days?

Dolly: *(calling from off stage)* Coo-eee.

*Everyone groans. Dame Dolly rushes on, slips in her haste and careers into the Chamberlain. In the ensuing distraction Fairy Rosebud enters in servant disguise (probably an apron & mop cap) and waves to the audience.*

Dolly: Oh I **am** sorry. *(brushes the Chamberlain's clothes down)*

Chamberlain: Madame, please remember your place.

Dolly: Yes it's right here next to you.

Chamberlain: Madame, you are the Dame of the Bedchamber.

Chester: That's Nanny to me and you. *(he speaks aside to the audience)*

Chamberlain: Your place is behind and slightly to the right of the Crown Prince as well you know. Now before we can have the coronation, we have to have a wedding.

Dolly: Oh I thought you'd never ask. *(without taking a breath as she's so excited)* I've got my wedding dress all sorted all I need to do is grab the archbishop and we're all set where shall we go on honeymoon do you think I've always fancied somewhere exotic like Barlaston then there's invitations ones where the mice have nibbled at the edges and flowers we must have lots and lots of flowers gladioli and antirrhinums oh and the cake with lots of layers all full of lovely cream ....

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Chamberlain: You silly woman, this has to be a secret, you can't go blurting out how we are going to choose our King's consort.

Chester: Dolly, what's a consort?

Dolly: It's a musical performance given in public, typically by several performers or of several compositions.

Chester: Right, glad I asked. *(actually not glad he asked at all)*

Chamberlain: That's a concert. I said consort; that's a wife, husband, or companion of a reigning monarch. *(catches himself being drawn into their stupidity)* What am I saying? Could you take a couple steps over there please. *(They move away looking confused)* Thank you, I fear I may be suffering from a nut allergy.

*Chester thinks about what the Chamberlain has said, then realise it was an insult.*

Chester: Ere, hang on a minute that was an insult wasn't it?

Dolly: Ssshhh, while his Lordship is pontificating.

Chamberlain: I will be the only person to know what the final test is to be, thereby ensuring fair play all round. Can you two leave now?

D & C: Oooohhhh *(and start to walk off)*

*Fairy Rosebud quickly enters and freezes the scene the Chamberlain reading the book and Dolly & Chester in mid walk; Duchess, Selena & Travis frozen still peering round the side of the stage.*

Rosebud: Hello everyone. Now I have to own up to something. The book of magic actually isn't a book of magic. It's "Mary Berry's Fool Proof Cooking" I just changed the dust cover. Aren't I a naughty fairy? I'm going to make the Chamberlain think he's read the spell, which is much simpler than actually creating a book of magic out of thin air and doesn't use up as much fairy dust.

But before I do that I need to sort these three out first *(walking over to Duchess, Selena & Travis)* Hum, what to do? *(pause)* I know, as they over hear my little bit of magic they will think the last task is to be dancing *(waves her hands in front of their faces)*. Good that's sorted them out.

*Goes back over to the Chamberlain*

Unfortunately I have to speak in rhyme again, so I apologise in advance for the dreadful couplets.

*Rosebud goes and stands next to the Chamberlain and clears her throat*

Ahem...

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Listen Chamberlain to my command,  
Here is how to give fate a hand,  
Mattresses' piled high to the sky,  
For our ladies to sleep on, both will try.  
The secret a pea so tiny and small,  
To one who is royal it will feel like a ball,  
She will toss and turn all night wide awake,  
This to make sure there is no mistake,  
That the Queen standing by the side of King Valiant,  
Will prove she possess the greatest royal talent,  
.....Sensitivity.

Oh, (*quite shocked*) not too bad at all, well done author.

*She unfreezes everyone as she leaves.*

Chamberlain: Chester, Dolly, come back here. (*pause*) Chester go and ask the servants to take all the mattresses they can find in the castle to the bedchambers of Lady Selena and Eleanor.

Chester: Go away, come back, go away again, I feel like a yo-yo.

Dolly: You look like a .....**mr potato head...cabbage patch doll... other old fashioned toy?**

*Chester stomps off*

Chamberlain: Dolly, go to the kitchens and ask the cook for a handful of peas, uncooked.

Dolly: This isn't Jack and the beanstalk you know. You're not turning veges are you? That would be a big "missed steak". (*she peers over the Chamberlain's shoulder to try and see what's in the book.*) Have you found the next challenge in there?

Chamberlain: (*shuts the book with a slam nearly taking Dolly's nose off*) Dear lady please don't look over my shoulder, it's the height of rudeness.

Dolly: Sorry I'm sure.

Chamberlain: In answer to your question yes I have found the next challenge but I won't be telling anyone about it until tomorrow, so off you trot.

*He watches Dolly mutter to herself as she walks off*

Dolly: Well really I was only trying to take an interest there's no need to take that kind of attitude is there honestly I don't know why I bother....

Chamberlain: (*to the audience*) I won't be telling anyone that tonight I'm putting the next challenge into place. This way I can ensure complete fair play all round.