

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

Scene 2
Castle corridor

FOT - enter Eleanor walking around looking lost a few servants hurry across the stage with various items of work i.e. laundry and tray full of plates.

Eleanor: Excuse me...*(to one of the servants, but they just look apologetic at her and move on quickly)* I seem to be... *(to another servant going the other way, same reaction)*

During this Prince Valiant enters looking fed up, he bumps into Eleanor

Valiant: Oh do forgive me Lady Eleanor I didn't see you there.

Eleanor: I seem to be lost. The castle is so big, and everyone is so busy, they can't help me.

Valiant: Yes the castle is on the large side isn't it? I remember as a child I once got lost and it took everyone all day to find me. To tell you the truth I was actually hiding as I was supposed to be doing my arithmetic with Dame Dolly. She'd asked me why I was doing my multiplication on the floor. And I said because she told me not to use tables, and then I ran off.

Eleanor: *(laughing)* Oh I can't imagine you being a mischievous little boy like that.

Valiant: *(also laughing)* If you had lessons with Dame Dolly you'd understand. I did grow out of it eventually. But I was rather lonely as a child, not many other children around to play with.

Eleanor: That's very sad. I was lucky, I had a large family; there were lots of children to play with.

Valiant: Where do you come from Lady Eleanor?

Eleanor: *(realising she may have said too much)* Nowhere very special.

Valiant: An unknown lady from an unknown place. You must agree it all sounds very mysterious.

Eleanor: Yes I suppose it does.

Valiant: Can't you tell me anything about yourself?

Eleanor: I'm sorry I can't, not yet. *(changing the subject)* But are you allowed to talk to me, I mean is it right to be seen alone with me before the competition is over.

Valiant: For me the competition was over the minute I set eyes on you. I really didn't want this challenge to take place but now I'm glad it has because it's brought you to me. I feel like I've known you for months not hours.

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Eleanor: So do I.

Song: That's what friends are for (Dionne Warwick) more than words, I knew you were waiting for me, just the way you are

Valiant: Have you ever been in love Eleanor?

Eleanor: No...I don't think so....have you?

Valiant: No.....I've never found the right person.... at least until now.

Eleanor: I hope I'm good enough to win the challenge.

Valiant: I have a feeling that you are. Compared to Lady Selena you are just about perfect.