Not A Princess

by andlat

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Chapter 1

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Caleb rolled his eyes as the girls across the table giggled once again. They had only just gotten to Abigail's house and they were already getting on his nerves. Why did Mom think it was okay to make him play with his obnoxious little sister and her annoying little friend?

"They're two years younger than you." Mom had told him, clearly not understanding the difference between nine and seven. All they did was giggle and talk about princesses. What seven year old still played princess?

"After lunch, we should play something." Well, duh, Caleb thought. That's why we're here, Marie. Actually it seemed most of the time like they were there for their moms to hang out.

"What do you want to play?"

"It should be something all three of us play." Marie said.

"So no princesses." Caleb said.

"Caleb, watch your tone." Mom said from nearby before returning to telling Abigail's mom some story.

"Princesses are fun!" Abigail protested. “Everyone knows that.”

"I..." he blushed and leaned forward to whisper. "Wore a dress last time. I'm not doing it again." His last demand was

all but drowned out by the girls' giggles. "In fact" he extended his hand. "Pinky swear that I am not a princess, whatever we play."

"I swear." He got both girls to agree and shake his pinky before he relaxed.

"So, what are we going to play?"

"Hmm... me and Marie will be princesses and you can be our guard." Caleb considered it and then nodded once. "Perfect! Marie, do your special trick."

"No," Caleb began to say, but it was too late.

"Caleb loves to play with me!"

The next thing Caleb knew, he was standing in Abigail's bedroom. The girls were in princess dresses, Marie in yellow and Abigail in purple. He wore the beginnings of a guard outfit: a red jacket with gold braids and epaulets, a tall hat atop his head, boots waiting near his neatly folded clothes and... nothing but his underwear from the waist down!

Marie had a special trick where, whenever she said the special phrase, Caleb would black out. In truth, he became perfectly obedient and cheerful. She had never really explained how she managed it, but he had gotten a glimpse of a book on hypnosis under her arm during a recent library trip. When he thought back, he could remember happily stripping and folding his clothes, just like how last time, he remembered happily putting on that white dress, but it always felt like a realistic dream.

"Why am I not wearing pants?" He asked.

"I'm looking for 'em." Abigail said.

"Guess that means you're back with us?" Marie asked sweetly. Caleb frowned. "Don't complain too much or back down you'll go." She turned back to Abigail. "Found them yet? He looks weird."

"Shoot, uh" she began to dig through the trunk. "Huh."

"What's going on?" Abigail and Caleb asked in almost unison

"I can't find the pants anywhere." She threw a princess dress aside and he realized just how lucky he was to be their guard instead of another princess. "I swear they were in here earlier."

"Well, maybe I can wear"

"You're not wearing your shorts." Marie said, shooting him a look.

"No, I was gonna say maybe I can wear something else."

"Not your shorts."

"I know!"

"Hm... well, I guess it's ok to mix and match." Abigail kept digging through the dress-up trunk until she was satisfied the pants were gone. "Hmm..."

"Well? I can't just stay in my underwear."

"Good point." Marie said, walking over and whispering into

Abigail's ear. "It is a dance costume, right?"

"True." Marie nodded.

"Alright, Caleb. Take off that jacket."

"What? Why?" He grabbed the top button of the jacket protectively.

"You'll be putting it back on. You just need to put something else on first."

"What?"

"Would it kill you just once to play along?" Marie shook her head. "Caleb loves playing with me."

The next thing Caleb knew, he was staring at his face in the mirror. He had the guard hat atop his head, but also makeup on his face.

"Marie!" He gasped as he stood up and felt something shift against him. He looked down and saw that he was wearing the guard jacket, but it ended where it met a big white tutu! His heart pounded as bits and pieces of getting dressed washed over him. Putting on a leotard, which he had to still have on under the soldier jacket, pulling tights up his legs, slipping his feet into his boots, sitting quietly as the girls did his makeup. He shuddered. This had gone too far! Clearly they had broken their deal.

"We're out in the hall." Marie said. "Come here, Caleb."

"No! I'm changing!"

"We still need to play. Don't make me" Caleb snarled. "Now, come here." Caleb knew he could either go to his sister himself or let her... he sighed and made up his mind. He would go out there on his own terms. Placing his arms out in front of him so his fingertips touched, he lifted his chin and began to dainty tiptoe all the way across Abigail's room, only realizing what he was doing when the girls cackled with laughter.

"Oh, perfect!" Abigail said.

"Not so fast.” Marie said, looking him over. “Caleb, salute your princesses." Caleb's arms moved smoothly out to his sides, elbows bent slightly, fingers pointing upward as he dipped into an elegant curtsy.

"What is going on?"

"While you were in your state," Marie explained. "We gave you some proper training.'

"What?"

"You're a ballerina soldier." Abigail added. "And now you march and salute like a good ballerina soldier should."

"So, you’re not a princess." Marie said smugly. Caleb glared at them.

"C'mon, we're gonna go play outside."

"No."

"Caleb, you know a good ballerina soldier obeys his

princesses."

"And you'll need to lead the way!" Abigail pointed ahead of them. "Go on!" She coaxed, even though his arms were already coming up in front of him as he rose onto his toes, no small feat in the boots he wore.

Thanks to his dainty little steps, the girls were able to walk leisurely behind him, chatting about suitable princess things as their ballerina soldier guard grandly led the way. When they reached the sitting room, they had to stop and show their moms their outfits.

"Oh, and ballerina soldier Caleb, salute our moms!" Abigail said. The women were already quite surprised by the boy's outfit, but Caleb and Marie's mom nearly dropped her phone as he slipped effortlessly into his curtsy-salute.

"Well, you kids have fun." Abigail's mom said.

"As if they weren't already." Caleb's mom added as she watched her son lead the way out toward the backyard.

"He really commits to the bit." Abigail's mom said as Caleb's dainty tiptoes meant they had ample opportunity to watch and get photos of the regal trio. “Was he even wearing makeup?”

Finally, they reached the back patio and Caleb was allowed to halt at least for the moment. He knew no one could see them, but feeling the breeze on his tights-clad legs did nothing to make him feel better about the way he was dressed.

"Salute?" The girls giggled and he sighed as he curtsied

again. He could not explain it. He knew what a salute really was, but it was also this curtsy when it came to the girls in front of him. Just like he knew marching looked nothing like the tiptoeing he was forced to do, yet when they said march, he knew they meant that. It made no sense! "And back to marching!" Marie ordered. He groaned as he unerringly snapped to attention, tutu bouncing slightly.

"Keep doing that or it'll be off with your head!"

"And don't even think that means you'll get to change." Marie said. "You'll just come back as another ballerina soldier who tiptoes when he's ordered to." The girls ran ahead to the playground that was their castle so they could watch his slow, dainty progress.

"You should ask your mom if you two can sleep over so we can have our ballerina soldier all night long!" Abigail said. Marie smiled. That did sound fun. As Caleb arrived and gave them a curtsy-salute, she thought that maybe she would ask.