Princess for a Day

by andlat

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The Costume Box
2023

Chapter 1

Princess for a Day

"Candace!" He moaned. "What did you do?"

"Nothing." To anyone else, including their parents, she would have sounded as innocent as could be, but to her brother, who knew better, she was clearly up to something.

"But you're dragging me somewhere. Obviously."

"Yeah, to the Vindicator!" She cackled. "The biggest, fastest roller coaster in the whole park!"

"You" he stopped as reason momentarily took hold. The Vindicator was behind them. They were heading toward the shops clustered right around the entrance to the amusement park.

"Remember last time we were here? You cried in line for Cave of Shadows because you heard it was a dark ride."

"I was like five years old!"

"And you're still scared of Vindicator." She gave his captive hand a squeeze. "So, I picked the least scary thing this place has." He looked at McGrady's Candy Emporium as they neared it. Was she going to buy him candy? That did not seem like her. They passed the candy shop and stopped next to it. "The Princess for a Day Experience at Enchanted Glow."

"What?" Through the window, he could see a hair salon. Why was this even at a theme park?

"Funny you said you were five last time you were here." Candace said. "Cuz I had to lie and say you're six. That's the oldest they go. Oh, and I told them you're a girl."

"What!?" She grinned.

"Guess how expensive this was?"

"I... I dunno. Twenty dollars?" She scoffed.

"Try a hundred fifty." His eyes widened. "That's right. So either you can plan to give me your allowance for about two years to pay me back or you go through this and we call it even."

"But... no! This... this is for girls."

"The way you screamed when you saw a spider in the bathroom..."

"Shuddup."

"I'm just teasing. Come on, it'll be fun." She saw his face. "Well, it won't be, but you're doing it. After this, we can do whatever rides you want." Quinn glared at her. "Think about it. Do you really want to pay me back all that money?"

"This isn't fair. I'm calling Dad."

"They said to only call in an emergency and I'm the one with the phone."

"But" he huffed. "This isn't fair!"

"People are starting to stare." His mind raced. There had to be

some way out of this. Paying Candace back would be a nightmare, but couldn't he tell Mom and Dad what she had tried to do? "Aren't you trying to save up for a new bike?" He sighed in defeat. She was right. He almost had enough money to get the bike he wanted. Losing his allowance for so long was not an option. "Well?"

"Fine."

"Good. You were doing it anyway, but it's so much more fun for you to agree."

"I'm not agreeing!"

"Sure sounds like you were." Quinn glared at the sign as if it was to blame.

"Hey, it says it's ages three through twelve."

"So?"

"So why'd you say you told them I'm six?"

"Why does it matter? I guess I know for next time." She grinned. "If it makes you feel any better, you can tell them you're almost seven. Now come on, your makeover awaits!" She grabbed his hand again, both to keep him from running away and because it felt right to lead a six year old by the hand, and they entered Enchanted Glow.

"Welcome!" The woman at the front counter said. She glanced at Candace, but she was clearly too old to be the client. Her gaze moved to Quinn, who felt like he was about to be sick as he saw the photos of twirling princesses, larger

than life, on all the walls. "Let me guess. This is the princess we'll be working with?"

"Yes she is." Candace said cheerfully, hardly even noticing the groan that slipped through Quinn's clenched lips. "This is Quinn. Quinny, can you say hi?"

"Hi." He hoped his voice was a dead giveaway that he was not a six year old girl, but the woman was expecting a little girl, so that's all she saw and heard.

"She's a little shy, huh?" The woman said. "Well, Quinn. My name's Naomi and I'll be one of your ladies in waiting. Do you know what a lady in waiting is?" He hoped she would keep talking, but she stopped and looked at him expectantly. Candace squeezed his hand and he shook his head. "Well, my job is to help a princess get ready." There was something especially infuriating about the way she had her hands on her knees as she bent over to look him straight in the eye. "And today, that princess is you!" She seemed momentarily disappointed when Quinn didn't explode into excitement, but straightened up and looked at Candace. "Even the shy ones get excited once they see their dress." Quinn felt his stomach clench. Maybe if he threw up, this could all be over. He looked up at his sister.

"I've changed my mind. I'll pay you back." Naomi reached over and took his hand.

"Let's get started. Sorry, big sis. Only princesses and ladies-in-waiting past this point, but Quinn will see you in about an hour and a half." He looked over his shoulder at his sister.

Somehow, none of the waiting attendants seemed to notice the look on her face as she waved goodbye. Serves the little sissy right, she thought as he vanished behind swinging doors.

"Oh, we're going to have so much fun!" Naomi said, giving his hand an excited squeeze. "Don't you just love princesses?"

"Uh-huh." He mumbled. He had to get through this and he knew he was supposed to be an excited little girl. Excitement was asking a lot, so he figured just agreeing would be better than nothing.

"Now don't you worry. You're in very good hands. See? You have three ladies-in-waiting who are going to take care of everything." She smiled at the other two women who had followed them into the room. One of them looked barely older than Candace! "Ladies, say hello to our princess for the day, Quinn!"

"Hello, Princess Quinn!" They said, bobbing into curtsies.

"Do you know how to curtsy?" Naomi asked. Quinn shook his head. "Once you're in your dress, we'll help you."

"Oh, she's a cutie." He heard one of the other ladies murmur.

"So, first of all, you get an official princess magic wand!" Naomi handed him a wand with a sparkly star at the top. "Give it a practice wave." He felt foolish as he waved it around.

"Very good!" The attendant around Candace's age beckoned him over to a big white box. Her name tag said she was Lady-

in-Waiting Olivia. "Now, you're going to wave that wand over that box and I'll say the magic spell. Ready?" Quinn nodded, confused. "Bip bop boo, bip bop bess! Princess Quinn needs her pretty dress!" Quinn had been waving the wand in a circle over the box and was quite surprised when it began to shake back and forth.

"It's working!" Naomi said. Olivia nodded.

"You must be a true princess!" Quinn doubted that, but he forced a weak smile.

"She's still so shy." Naomi murmured.

"So, while the spell is working, Quinn, how about you go behind that screen there?"

"Why?"

"So you have some princess privacy to get undressed! When you're ready, ask for your dress and we'll pull it out of the box, kay?" He felt a moment of panic, but realized this was an out. If he was revealed as a boy, that meant the deal was off, right? They'd probably refund Candace and he would get to escape this.

"We won't peek." Olivia said. "Don't worry. It's just us girls here. A princess and her ladies-in-waiting." You'd be surprised, Quinn thought as he stepped behind the screen.

His hands shook as he undressed, noticing a little table for him to put his clothes on. In no time, he was down to his underwear. They did not really expect him to ask for the

dress, did they?

"Almost ready? Do you need any help, Princess Quinn?"

"Uh, no. I'm" he swallowed. His mouth suddenly felt so dry. "I'm ready."

"Reach around the side here." Naomi said. "Princess Quinn needs her dress!"

"The dress for Princess Quinn!" Olivia called. "Oh, she's so lucky! You are going to love this, Quinn!" He felt the material brush his outstretched hand and he pulled it back. With the screen hiding him from view, he was able to react the way he wanted to, mouth agape, eyes wide, a hundred swear words trying to burst free. There was no way on earth he was going to wear this!
Pink and frilly, he barely even understood what he was looking at. It looked, he supposed, every bit like how he would expect a princess dress to look. He was supposed to wear this? Why can't i just put my clothes back on and tell them I changed my mind?

"Looks like we've got a daydreaming princess." Naomi said, coming around the screen. "It'll look even prettier once you've got it on, Princess Quinn." Taking the dress, she did not even bat an eye at the boy in his underwear. She expected to see a little girl, so that's all she saw as she gathered the dress and pulled it over his head. Quinn hardly had time to even know what was happening as she threaded his arms through the dress's puffy sleeves, a wave of confusion washing over him as the soft material seemed to touch him

everywhere at once. Before he could even be sure what had happened, his head was free and the bodice of the dress tightened around him as Naomi zipped it up.

"Let's see!" The third lady-in-waiting said excitedly.

"Ready for your big debut, Princess Quinn?" Naomi said. "All you need to know right now is grab the front of your dress and lift it a bit when you walk, okay?" Quinn felt numb as he did as he was told, walking around the screen, the dress rustling as he walked. The ample mirrors allowed him to see himself from seemingly dozens of angles. He had seen Candace in dresses, but between the pink and the details, he didn't think she had ever worn anything as girly as this!

"Hooray! Three cheers for Princess Quinn!"

"Hip hip hooray!" The ladies-in-waiting cheered. "Hip hip hooray! Hip hip hooray!"

"And now," Naomi said. "You're properly attired for a curtsy." Quinn stared at her. "Just grab your dress here and here." She pointed. "And one foot behind the other." In her skirt, it was easy to demonstrate where Quinn's feet needed to go, even if he could not see his own. "And down." Quinn mirrored her, feeling terribly clumsy as he tried to manuever the dress. "Good! Attagirl, give it another try." Quinn had to curtsy again and again until the ladies-in-waiting were satisified.

"You're well on your way to being a princess, Quinn!"

"You must play princess at home, hmm?" Quinn was not sure

what to say.

"You'll be able to now!" Olivia said, handing him his wand back. "You get to keep all of this, you know!" Oh, goody, Quinn thought.

"Come on over to the chair, Quinn. It's time for your official princess makeover!" Naomi said. "And make sure to lift up your dress. There you go! Good girl! Just like a princess!"

"What do you mean by makeover?" He asked, hoping and praying that they would figure out he was a boy. Then again, he had a dress on. Did he really want them to realize it now? He thought so, but at the same time...

"Oh, we'll do your hair and nails. Maybe even just a teensy bit of makeup! Doesn't that sound fun?"

At least the cape thingy will cover this dress. He thought, expecting the black cape he always had at the barber. Instead, they draped a pink cape over him with a sparkly glitter tiara on it over the words 'Princess in Progress'. Like I need the reminder, he thought, glaring at his reflection.

"Alright, I'll do hair, Olivia, you do fingers, and Jen, you take the toes." Quinn's eyes widened and he tried to get out of the chair as he realized he was about to get attacked from all directions. "Nope, we're not ready yet, princess." Naomi said, gently pushing him back into the chair. "Hold still and we'll get you all pretty!"

"But... I... can you go get my sister?" Naomi looked a bit concerned.

"You're doing so good! Don't you want to surprise your sister with how beautiful you look once we're all done?"

"I... I want to be done!"

"We're almost done. You've done so well. Can you be a big girl and just sit still a little longer for us? We want to make you the prettiest princess you can be!"

"But I... I'm not..." he sighed. He was outnumbered and they did not seem to want to let him go half-finished.

"How about this?" Olivia said, pulling one of his hands out from under the salon cape. "Here's a fun song. I'll sing one line and then you sing it back to me."

"Uh"

"I'm a little princess, in my dress!" Quinn stared at her. "Come on, it'll be fun!" She sang the line again.

"I'm... a little princess, in my dress."

"Being a princess, it's the best!" Quinn echoed her again, almost grateful Candace hadn't been called in. He felt Naomi brushing his hair and could hardly see Jen at his feet with the cape and his dress in the way.

"Wearing lots of jewelry, rubies and pearls."

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"I'm a lucky little girl!" Quinn groaned. "I'm a lucky little girl!" Olivia sang again. This had to be torture, Quinn thought as he sang it back to her. "Very nice! You're a very pretty

singer, Quinn!"

"All princesses are!" Jen remarked from her place at his feet. "Oh, that made her squirm!" She laughed.

"Do you think you can sing it yourself?" Olivia asked.

"No way." Quinn said. He had to keep some dignity!

"Alrighty, let's go over it again, kay?" Olivia was determined to get him to sing the whole song on his own, taking him through it line by line three more times before he finally relented.

"I'm a little princess, in my dress. Being a princess, it's the best. Wearing lots of jewelry, rubies and pearls! I'm a lucky little girl!"

"Oh, your Mommy and Daddy will love that."

"I'm not going to sing it for them." He spat out. The ladies-in-waiting all laughed.

"You've certainly come out of your shell, Princess Quinn." Naomi said. She smiled. "And what do you think of your hair?" He had tried not to look in the mirror, but now there was little choice. He stared at his reflection, unable to believe just how much changing his hair had transformed him.

"Oh, she's beautiful!" Olivia said.

"Like a princess out of a storybook." Jen added. Naomi smiled and whisked away the cape. Somehow, even though it was every bit as pink as the cape had been, revealing the

dress made Quinn look immeasurably more like a little girl. He felt tears well up in his eyes. This was all too much, he thought, before forcing the tears back down. The last thing he needed was for Candace to hear that he cried.

"Alright, finishing touches. Let's do a little lip gloss, then we can crown our new princess!" Quinn thought that meant this was nearly all over, so he held still as Olivia glossed his lips and then the trio led him, holding his dress up in front of him, over to a backdrop of a castle gate.

"What does every princess need?" Jen asked. Quinn's mind raced with thoughts of armies and executioners.

"A tiara!" Olivia gushed. "Hold still."

"I, Lady-in-Waiting Naomi, hereby crown thee, Her Royal Highness, Princess Quinn!" She said grandly as they worked together to pin the tall tiara to his hair.

"That should hold!" Olivia said proudly. Quinn rolled his eyes.

"Time for your official princess portrait!" Naomi declared. Jen led Quinn over to the X where he needed to stand. A photo was too much! He stared down at the floor, refusing to look up.

"Hey, it works." Olivia said as the camera flashed.

"Aren't we done yet?" Quinn muttered.

"And now for the very last princess moment." Naomi said. She held a bottle of perfume in her hand. "Sugar and spice

and everything nice." She spritzed Quinn with it not once, but twice. "Perfect. Are you ready to go show big sis?"

"Do I have to?" They laughed.

Candace could hardly believe her eyes as Quinn walked over, primly holding his dress up in front of him, no small feat with a wand in his hand. The hair, the tiara, the wand. The dress! Sure, she had told them yellow, but pink was just as good! He even smelled like a blend of cotton candy and sugar cookies. Maybe they really did use magic here because her brother had been transformed into the very image of a little girl dressed as her favorite princess.

"She wiggled a lot in the chair." Naomi said. "And she's certainly good at giving princess orders! But overall, she was a very good girl. You can't really argue with the results, right?" Candace grinned.

"It's really an amazing transformation."

"What we'll do is give you this token." Candace took it. "When you're leaving the park for the day, you just come back, present that token, and we'll give you Princess Quinn's clothes back."

"What!?"

"That's right!" Candace said. "You get to walk around the park all day as a princess." Quinn fumed.

"And you remember, Princess, that you are a princess for the whole day. I'm sure your big sister will help you remind

people that you must be addressed as Princess Quinn."

"Our next appointment is here, so farewell, Princess Quinn. Have fun spreading sunshine and cheer for all who see you." The assembled stylists curtsied to Quinn.

"Here." Candace said. "I'll hold your wand so you can curtsy back." She dropped her voice. "You'd better." Her eyes widened as Quinn curtsied back a lot better than she had expected. They must have had him practice. "Ready to go?"

"Yes." The word dripped with venom. Candace laughed.

"So, how was it?" She asked after they got outside. Quinn kept walking, but then stumbled as he tripped over the hem of his dress. "Yeah, you're going to have to hold it all day, Quinny."

"Shuddup." He snarled. She shrugged it off.

"Come on, it couldn't have been that bad!"

"It was worse!"

"Oh, please. You know, a lot of kids would want to do that. You're really a lucky little girl." He scoffed. "Wearing jewelry, rubies and pearls?" He stared at her, realization dawning even before she pulled out her phone. "The best part of the Princess for a Day experience is that they take photos and video the whole time." She grinned at him. "The whole time." He sputtered. "I wanted to keep it secret until we got home. Oops." She grinned down at her brother. "Oh well, guess I know for next time."