

MRS. WELLINGTON'S PRINCESS ACADEMY

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST - RIVENLAND - DAY

Birds CHIRP in the shady trees. A ray of sunshine highlights a leaf on the ground. Suddenly, the ground shakes, and the birds flee.

On horseback, the SCARLET RIDER and the EMERALD RIDER emerge. Both riders wear gear such as helmets, jodhpurs, and riding jackets of their specific colors.

The Scarlet Rider rides a white horse with a pale blue mane and tail. A blue filigree pattern accents the horse's face.

The Emerald Rider rides a light brown horse with an ombré green mane and tail, and short, nubby horns.

The brown horse's hoof STOMPS on the leaf and grinds it into the dirt while the white horse leaps over a log. The Emerald Rider takes the lead and looks over his shoulder.

EMERALD RIDER

You don't stand a chance against
the fastest horse in Rivenland!

SCARLET RIDER

Fastest horse, huh? Perhaps I'll
let you ride her one day.
(whispers to the horse)
Come on, Aires. Let's show him what
we've got.

With a burst, the white horse speeds up and overtakes the brown horse. The two riders break the shady forest line to reveal --

EXT. RIVENLAND - DAY

A bustling port village with tall ships at its docks. The riders guide their horses towards a massive stone castle beyond the port.

FADE TO:

EXT. ROYAL STABLES - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The Scarlet Rider reaches the stables first, with the Emerald Rider close behind. The Scarlet Rider dismounts and pets the white horse's neck.

SCARLET RIDER

I believe that's six wins in a row.
Better luck next time, Francis.

The Emerald Rider, dismounts and removes his helmet. FRANCIS, 16, a tall redhead covered in freckles, wipes away the sweat from his forehead.

FRANCIS

Ugh, I was so close!

SCARLET RIDER

Practice makes perfect, I suppose.

FRANCIS

Maybe I should ride Aires next time, and we'll see who's the better rider.

SCARLET RIDER

Not a chance!

NAKOTAH, 25, a royal attendant in a long blue dress and a white apron embroidered with the Rivenland crest enters. Out of breath, she tucks a stray strand of hair behind her ear.

NAKOTAH

There you are! I've run higgledy-piggledy all over this castle looking for you!

GEMMALYN, 15, removes her scarlet riding helmet and ringlets of blonde hair cascade down her back. Her green eyes have a worried expression.

GEMMALYN

Sorry, Nakotah. I hope there isn't any trouble.

NAKOTAH

I'm sorry, princess. I don't know. Their majesties, the king and queen, summoned you.

GEMMALYN

This can't be good.

INT. THRONE ROOM - DAY

From the large double doors, a long blue rug leads towards the gold and opulently bejeweled thrones where the king and queen sit.

KING OLIN, late 30s, wears a gold crown over his cropped, tightly curled black hair. His ebony fingers reach for an inner pocket of his navy coat, where he keeps a pocket watch.

QUEEN SARAFINA, mid-30s, wears her blonde hair in an elaborate bun and her yellow, corseted gown compliments her green eyes.

King Olin checks the time and glances at his wife. Queen Sarafina looks to her right, towards QUEEN CICELY, 40s, of Aquatica. She wears a fussy, ruffled aquamarine gown.

QUEEN CICELY

A proper princess would not keep people waiting.

Queen Sarafina winces.

QUEEN SARAFINA

I'm certain she'll be here any minute.

QUEEN CICELY

You said that twenty minutes ago.

Queen Sarafina shoots King Olin a worried look. King Olin bristles at Queen Cicely's comment.

The throne room doors open with a BANG.

NAKOTAH

Princess Gemmalyn, your majesties.

Nakotah curtseys and exits. Thoroughly disheveled in her riding gear, Gemmalyn hurries forward.

GEMMALYN

Papa, Mama, is everything alright?

QUEEN SARAFINA

Everything is fine, dear. But, we have a guest.

Queen Sarafina cocks her head to the right, and as Gemmalyn notices Queen Cicely, her face falls into a slight frown.

GEMMALYN

Oh...Aunt Cicely! What an unexpected surprise...

Queen Sarafina clears her throat. Gemmalyn composes herself and curtseys.

GEMMALYN (CONT'D)

What brings you to Rivenland?

QUEEN SARAFINA

Cicely brings great news from Republic City. There is an opening at Mrs. Wellington's --

Gemmalyn scoffs.

GEMMALYN

The princess academy?

KING OLIN

Gemma.

Gemmalyn bites her lip.

QUEEN SARAFINA

Your father and I agree that it's time for you to join the academy.

QUEEN CICELY

Frankly, you should have gone to the academy some time ago.

(to Queen Sarafina)

My girls began their training when they were ten.

Gemmalyn paces and ticks off each skill on her fingers.

GEMMALYN

Miss Robbins already taught me how to dance and greet dignitaries and hold a salad fork. There isn't much more than that, is there?

QUEEN CICELY

I'm afraid not, Princess Gemmalyn.

Queen Cicely eyes Gemmalyn.

QUEEN CICELY (CONT'D)

There is always something a princess has yet to master.

QUEEN SARAFINA

And, it's a wonderful tradition. Your Aunt and I both went, as did your grandmother, and many more before her.

Gemmalyn stops pacing.

GEMMALYN

So what? It's outdated and stupid,
and I don't want to go.

Queen Cicely raises an eyebrow and gives Queen Sarafina an expectant look.

QUEEN SARAFINA

Gemmalyn, Aunt Cicely went through
a lot of trouble to secure your
position at the academy.

Gemmalyn glares at her parents.

GEMMALYN

I'm not going to some ridiculous
princess school.

KING OLIN

Gemmalyn, you would do well to mind
your tongue, especially in the
presence of a guest.

GEMMALYN

But Papa, it doesn't make sense!
Everything that I need to know and
learn about how to rule Rivenland
one day is right here in Rivenland.

QUEEN SARAFINA

Traveling to Republic City is a
great opportunity --

GEMMALYN

But I --

King Olin holds up his hand. Gemmalyn looks hurt but bites her lip.

KING OLIN

Enough. You are going to the
academy, and that's final.

INT. GEMMALYN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lavishly furnished, and includes a four-poster bed, several bookcases, and a desk covered in knickknacks. Gemmalyn sits on an upholstered banquette by a large window.

A soft KNOCK comes from the door, but Gemmalyn ignores it. The door SQUEAKS open.

KING OLIN

Gemma.

Startled, Gemmalyn jumps, turns and looks at King Olin, and then pointedly stares out the window.

KING OLIN (CONT'D)

The silent treatment, huh? You know, not many in this kingdom would dare use such a tactic on me.

King Olin walks to the banquette and sits down opposite Gemmalyn, but she ignores him. King Olin raises an eyebrow.

KING OLIN (CONT'D)

This behavior is most unbecoming.

GEMMALYN

Of a princess?

KING OLIN

Of my daughter.

Gemmalyn pouts. King Olin huffs.

KING OLIN (CONT'D)

I admit that the announcement was less than ideal, but --

GEMMALYN

So, it doesn't matter what I want to do?

KING OLIN

Unfortunately, in this case, no.

Gemmalyn draws her knees up to her chest and turns away from King Olin.

GEMMALYN

(into her knees)

It's not fair.

KING OLIN

Life isn't always fair. Despite what you may think, I don't make all the rules.

GEMMALYN

Of course you do. You're the king.

KING OLIN

Sometimes, even when you are the king, you don't always get to have your way. Come on, where's your adventurous spirit? The academy could be fun...

Gemmalyn directs her attention to King Olin.

GEMMALYN

(sarcastic)

Did you have to go to a prince academy?

KING OLIN

No, I didn't. Do you suppose if there had been one for princes when I was your age, I could have become a better dancer?

King Olin stands and pantomimes a waltz.

Gemmalyn rolls her eyes.

GEMMALYN

Very funny.

KING OLIN

Are you going to tell me what's really bothering you?

GEMMALYN

Why do I have to change who I am to be a "proper princess"?

KING OLIN

You are a princess.

GEMMALYN

Aunt Cicely doesn't think so.

King Olin pulls a face of disgust.

KING OLIN

Who cares what Cicely thinks? I rarely do.

GEMMALYN

(surprise)

Papa!

KING OLIN

Is that what you're worried about?
The academy isn't going to make you
into something that you're not.

Gemmalyn looks to her desk and stares at the image of an attractive young man wearing a navy coat and a crown.

GEMMALYN

Yet, you still don't trust me to
make my own decisions.

King Olin follows her gaze.

KING OLIN

Nothing bad will happen while
you're gone.

GEMMALYN

You don't know that for certain.

KING OLIN

You're right, I don't.
Nevertheless, we cannot live our
lives in fear of the unknown.
Atticus wouldn't want that.

Gemmalyn looks worried. King Olin reassuringly puts his hands on her shoulders.

KING OLIN (CONT'D)

This doesn't have to be as
miserable as you think. I trust you
to take on this challenge and do
well. Besides, I wouldn't be
surprised if you teach those
princesses a thing or two.

GEMMALYN

You think so?

KING OLIN

I know so.

King Olin smiles and kisses the top of Gemmalyn's head.

Gemmalyn takes a steady breath and looks out the window towards the port.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RIVENLAND DOCKS - DAY

Several castle attendants load traveling trunks onto the deck of a large wooden ship, where crewmembers take inventory. On the docks below, Gemmalyn stands near the gangway.

King Olin and Queen Sarafina walk up the dock towards Gemmalyn with CAPTAIN MARVOLO, 60s, a leathery looking man with a grey beard.

QUEEN SARAFINA

Captain Marvolo, are you sure
you're taking the safest route?

CAPTAIN MARVOLO

Of course, your highness!

Captain Marvolo shakes a roll of parchment in his fist.

CAPTAIN MARVOLO (CONT'D)

I've been traveling these seas for
years! And I've got my lucky hook
here to prove it!

The captain reveals a rusty, metal hook instead of a left hand. Gemmalyn and King Olin laugh at the captain's joke, but Queen Sarafina's smile falters.

KING OLIN

She is in good hands, Sarafina.

CAPTAIN MARVOLO

There's no need to fret, your
majesties! This time of year calls
for calm seas and a considerable
lack of giant squid attacks.

Captain Marvolo limps up the gangway towards the ship.

CAPTAIN MARVOLO (CONT'D)

We're ready to sail whenever you
are, Princess!

GEMMALYN

Aye, aye, Captain.

Nakotah hands Gemmalyn a black satchel embossed with the Rivenland royal crest, and she slings the long strap over her shoulder.

GEMMALYN (CONT'D)

I guess this is it.

KING OLIN

You'll meet the headmistress, Ms. Georgina, once you arrive in Republic City.

(to Nakotah)

Keep an eye on her.

NAKOTAH

Yes, your highness.

KING OLIN

Take care of yourself out there.

Gemmalyn gives her father a quick hug.

GEMMALYN

I will.

Queen Sarafina pulls Gemmalyn in for a hug. Gemmalyn hugs her and makes an embarrassed face at her father over Queen Sarafina's shoulder.

QUEEN SARAFINA

We love you.

GEMMALYN

I know, Mama. I love you, too.

QUEEN SARAFINA

And please, try not to get yourself into any trouble at the academy.

Gemmalyn flashes an impish grin.

GEMMALYN

Me? Trouble? Of course not.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAPTAIN MARVOLO'S SHIP

Men on deck run around and heed orders as the ship shoves off. Back on the dock, the King, Queen, and several attendants wave.

CREWMEMBER #1

Weigh anchor!

CAPTAIN MARVOLO

Ready to hoist the sails?

CREW
(together)
Aye!

CREWMEMBER #2
Hoist the sails!

Out at sea, Gemmalyn pointedly looks around, and then rips off her skirt and reveals a pair of trousers. Several crewmembers raise their eyebrows.

GEMMALYN
That's better.

NAKOTAH
No trouble, huh?

FADE OUT: *