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A View from the Top

By: *Amelia Wheeler*

On a dull, grey Tuesday our story starts. I was woken from my nap! I was carried out of my home, spluttering awfully at the smart men who carried me. The ride to my 'holiday home'- Buckingham Palace- was not how I expected. The limousine bumped and juddered, not how royalty should be treated. When we arrived, I was taken into a golden-pillared room where I was carefully placed onto a pedestal inside a glass case; it was very appropriate for my royalty.

Sitting snugly in my case, someone, once again, disturbed my slumber. The future King. He had snuck in just to wake me up from my beauty sleep. I was most shaken. As he put me on, I could sense his trembling hands, his sweating temples, his nervous aura. How dare he contaminate my sleek fur with his disgusting sweat! I could feel the vein throbbing in his temple but after a few minutes I felt him relax. I was most pleased at how he felt calm in my presence. Soon I could hear the giggles of the girls as the Princesses played in the pouring rain. Someone entered my room and the King fumbled (almost

dropping me in his surprise, as though he forbidden to be here) and put me back in my case.

“Sir, with the Coronation in three days’ time, you really must choose your gown,” announced the servant. The king to be (George VI) nodded and left.

Slowly, the door opened and for a few seconds I thought no person was behind it. As though he was having second thoughts about entering, Prince Edward stepped inside and quietly closed the door behind him. He proceeded to open my case and carefully pick me up. This was the first time he had approached me since his sudden and unexpected decision to abdicate. In the time we were apart he had changed, his posture was straighter, more relaxed but he still looked sad. Had he had second thoughts? The sweaty hands clutched at my jewel-encrusted exterior and his trembling lips announced that he wanted to see me for the last time before I was truly not his. He wanted to explain. His life had been perfect with the throne until the love of his life had appeared and he had to relinquish the responsibility of the crown to be happy. I felt knocked off my pedestal. Why would someone not be happy as I sit atop their head? I asked this many times, but as if I was a mere object, he seemed not to ‘notice’ my pressing question, too absorbed in his own affairs. He then

explained how the woman he loved had been divorced, so in order to marry her, he would have to give up the throne. "I am so sorry," he muttered. "Goodbye!" He left the room.

As I was drifting off to sleep, I could hear the chattering of eager princesses just outside my room. I heard them talking about how excited they were for their father's coronation. "I wonder what the crown will look like," uttered Princess Elizabeth in a whisper.

"I am certain it will look stunning!" said Princess Margaret, and I felt a glowing pride. "What about the television service coming?" asked an excited Princess Elizabeth.

"I know!" replied Princess Margaret, "It is all terribly exciting, isn't it?" After that, all I could hear was the faint murmurs of servants.

After hours that felt like seconds, a new servant entered bringing another case. It was covered with a red velvet cloth and he placed it next to me. Opening my case, he picked me up roughly. I blustered a good deal and as though he heard me, changed his approach. He cleaned me thoroughly and took me back to my case. I was slotted in with great care and it felt as though I was once again being treated as I should be. As I lounged in comfort, polished to

perfection, I could not help wondering what was in this other case. As though the servant had read my mind, he removed the red cloth and to my horror, a second crown was revealed. How dare they! Aren't I supposed to be the centre of attention? Although I was perturbed by the appearance of this second crown, I could not help but notice how much smaller and less intricate this imposter was. Surely the King wouldn't even contemplate wearing this 'hat'! The servant then left, closing the door behind him. Silence filled the room until I heard a quiet, "Hello?" Pretending to be asleep, I let out a tremendous snore. I sat pondering on her greeting but my thoughts were interrupted again by the voices of the two princesses outside. I was surprised to hear their voices were no longer elated. By the sound of their heated tones, I could tell that they were in the middle of a tempestuous discussion. Listening in once again, I heard Margaret say, "But why can't the television cameras come into the Cathedral?"

Elizabeth, in a serious voice, replied, "Father explained all this. It is because some parts of the Coronation are sentimental and private between him and God. There will be three cameras stationed outside the building and the whole service will be heard on the radio." I heard an indignant sigh from Margaret and their arguing continued as they walked away from the window of

my room. I agreed with Princess Margaret, the cameras should be allowed in the building. The King and I would look fabulous together.

The day had arrived... People were shouting excitedly in the palace and some very rude servants came and woke me early to take me and the other crown to the Cathedral. I should have been given a lie in, as I did not want to be looking exhausted. The journey was luxurious. I was taken to the Cathedral in a beautiful carriage and I could see people on the streets becoming excited for the Coronation. When we arrived, the other crown tried to talk to me again but I just huffed and turned away. I did not know why she would think I would want to talk to *her*. How dare she intrude on my time to shine with the King! Why was here? Surely, the King would not want *that* over me.

Soft music played in the background, as important people began to fill their seats. The Archbishop was greeting the countries around the globe and the other members of the Royal Family. All of these people were here to see me. I felt important and knew that when the time came everyone's eyes would be on my jewels.

Suddenly, a commotion arose outside the Cathedral. The King had arrived. Trumpets were blaring, and after a few minutes, the double doors

opened and there they were. In stunning splendour, the King and Queen were at the head of the procession, walking slowly in their heavy, burdening robes. As they walked down the aisle, I noticed the two young Princesses behind them wearing cream dresses with tiny crowns atop their head. I felt smug. These were nothing compared to me!

The service began with a speech from the Archbishop of Canterbury. I was disgusted as I noticed a couple of the older dignitaries having a nap in the middle of the service! However, the droning voice of the Archbishop was like a soothing lullaby and I felt myself drifting off to sleep too. I woke with a start as they took me off my pedestal and carried me over to the King. As I looked over at the soon-to-be Queen Elizabeth, I felt relief as I noticed the other (much smaller) crown being placed onto her head. I suddenly felt rather apologetic. I had ignored this other crown all this time and for no reason. I could not dwell on this now. My moment had finally arrived, as they lifted me onto the King's head. I began to feel rather flustered, as they seemed to not be able to put me onto the King's head correctly. As I was being put on (or not put on), I could sense the angst in the Archbishop as his hands were trembling. I was shocked to be placed the wrong way round. I was most exasperated.

Finally, it was all over.

Without warning though, a crash stopped the King in his tracks. Looking over, I realised that a chaplain had fallen to the ground. In the commotion that followed, a Bishop, not looking where he was going, stood on the back of the King's robes. The King stumbled and I was almost knocked off. Following this, the King muttered sharply, "Get off!" to the Bishop and the Bishop jumped in surprise, apologised earnestly and immediately stepped off the robe.

As we finally walked down the aisle, the great doors were opened at last. The King and Queen stepped out of the building and cheers erupted, much louder than when they had arrived. The crowds were obviously excited to see me.

As we made our way home in the glorious carriage, the crowds of people stretched as far as the eye could see. Clearly, wanting to catch a glimpse of the King and me, his beautiful crown. Suddenly, the window to the carriage smashed open and a camouflaged arm reached in. The King let out a shout and his bodyguard stepped up in front of him. As the bodyguard tried to stop the intruder, 'the soldier' (an imposter) made a grab for me and the King pulled back. He was trying to steal me! The bodyguard managed to push the

'soldier's' arm back through the window and the sleeve of his uniform ripped. The procession was halted and this monster was led away in cuffs. I felt shaken to my core. Why would anyone want to deprive me of my King? What if I had been taken away? I looked over at the smashed window, feeling relieved but sad. I contemplated on who would want to ruin the King's special day.

After this terrible moment, the King finally relaxed, which was obviously attributed to me sitting atop his head: the calm and beautiful influence that I always am. Sitting in the carriage, as the King and Queen waved to the crowds, I turned to talk to the other crown. "Hello, I don't believe we have formally met yet. I am sorry for being rude; I thought that you were going to usurp my place on the King's head," I admitted remorsefully.

"It's okay, I think you are very handsome and clearly meant for the King," the other crown replied cheerily. "I am sure we will have plenty of time to get to know each other."

As we talked about our day, she told me how frightened she was when I was almost stolen but I assured her that my (and the King's) bodyguards would always come to the rescue. We chatted all the way back to the palace and did not even notice the crowds around us.

At long last we arrived back to our room, where we were gratefully placed back onto our pedestals in our cases. I was ready for a nice long sleep when I began to speculate. When would I be needed again? I wonder if Princess Elizabeth would follow in her father's footsteps...