

The White Country

In a country which favoured the colour white for their clothing there lived a very handsome Prince. One day as He was travelling through a distant village in His domain, He spotted a very pretty young woman and fell in love with her instantly.

The problem was that she came from a very poor family and wore multi-coloured clothes which were quite dirty, for she loved playing in the mud! But this did not faze the young Man for a moment because He came back the next day with a completely white dress and asked her to marry Him.

She accepted Him, put off her old clothes, had a bath, and clothed herself with the white garment.

Thus they announced their engagement, which would last a number of years, for that was the custom of those times.

His clothes were like that of a naval officer's dress uniform, sparkling white and crisp. Her new frock was also a very stylish cut, and came down to about midcalf, so that her beautiful feet could be plainly seen.

She moved into a special apartment in the palace and began the process of learning how to fit in with the ways of royalty. Although there was much to remember and practise, she delighted in it and was diligent in her studies. Because she was now counted as a presumptive member of royal family, she was given a strong Bodyguard who accompanied her wherever she went.

Every day the couple met and courted some more, making plans for the wedding, getting to know each other more fully, and falling more and more in love as they did so, and thereby putting to one side the fact that some of the royal relations were not too keen on having her in their family. She delighted in showing Him some of the new skills she had learned, and telling Him how enjoyable many of her new "school chums" were, for she was now attending the royal university.

One day the girl decided she needed to go to town to get some supplies, so she and the Guard went off. While walking down the high street, she noticed a gutter full of muddy water, and without thinking, she took off her shoes, left the pavement and trod in the mud revelling in the feel of its coolness between her toes! Her Guard remonstrated with her but she took no notice. She often thought that she knew better than He did!

Eventually, tiring of her fun, she stepped back on the footpath, but alas, her formerly beautiful feet were now caked in mud and no matter how hard she tried, she could not get any of it off although it remained very sticky. So she put her shoes back on over it, but it was not very comfortable.

Then she returned to the palace where she met her Prince who asked how her day had been. She pointed to her feet and explained what had happened, how she had really enjoyed having that little treat just like her old days, but now she couldn't get rid of the mud. The Prince assured her that He could do it and to her surprise He knelt down in front of her chair and lifted one of her feet onto His lap. She naturally protested that a servant should do this, but He said that He would rather do it because He loved to massage her feet. So she enjoyed the feel of His hands and thanked Him profusely.

Then she noticed that He was not using water, or any cleansing agent, but was simply scooping the mud off with His hands and then wiping them on His white robe! She cried out at this, but He carried on assuring her that this was the only way to do it in His kingdom. When He had finished, and she was clean from head to toe again (as the saying goes), she asked Him what He was going to do about the stains on His previously spotless garment.

He told her not to worry and that He would get it cleaned later.

Then they went in to see His Father, the King, and others of the family.

She spent the next hour being very uncomfortable when she realised that her mud on His clothes was highly visible in that white-dressed company – not that any one commented on it. But she thought of His statement that He would get cleaned later, and then forgot about it as she went back to her apartment after the audience with her Father-in-law to be.

The next morning she came out as usual and looked for her Prince. What a surprise to find Him still in His muddy clothes! When she asked about it, He just shrugged and said that it would be dealt with later, which she accepted without too much thought and they had a good time together making more plans for the wedding.

As you can imagine, that event was very high on her list of things to do.

The next day she and the Guard went to town again, and as they passed by the muddy area, she remembered how nice it had been and despite the warning from the Guard of what it would mean, she deliberately stepped off the pathway and into the mud. Oh, such bliss! But she came to her senses eventually and listening to the Guard she hurried back to the palace where her

Beloved cleansed her feet again. This time she felt guilty as the mud stains increased on Him.

So she asked His forgiveness and vowed to never do such a thing again! She did not just say, "I am a sinner, please forgive me". Oh no, she knew what she had done and she, as His intended wife, confessed exactly where she had gone wrong. There were to be no secrets between them on her side.

A few days later, as they were shopping again, she noticed a nice green grass area alongside the footpath, and thinking that this would give her the same feeling as the mud, she looked longingly at it. Her Guard warned her that although it looked good, it had been placed there by her Prince's enemy and that it was not a good thing to be on it. She, remembering her feelings of the last time, ignored Him and jumped onto the grass. Immediately it opened and she was in the mud which had been concealed under it!

When she got back to the palace, and the Prince performed the cleansing for the third time, all she could say was, "I was tricked!!" But she wasn't really, because her Bodyguard had warned her over and over that it was a deception, and she had ignored Him. But, knowing this, the Prince still forgave her because He loved her and when they went into tea she was practically her old self again until she saw the contrast between His clothes and those of His family. This time she got really emotional and promised repeatedly that it would never happen again!

But you know human nature! It was not because she was still in her coloured clothes and didn't mind mud on them that she was doing this, but because of her recollections of how nice it had been and the desire to feel the cooling effect of the mud. This was quite normal for the human body even in the palace and that's why her Prince knew that she hadn't gone back to her old way, but was trying to live it in her new clothes. There were other ways of getting the same result, but she never asked about them.

However, the next time the princess-to-be and the Guard went to town there was a handsome-looking gentleman standing on the path and he raised his hat to the girl which immediately lifted her opinion of him even higher. When he suggested that they walk together she agreed and made her Guard walk behind them while they talked. After a little mild flirting they parted with the suggestion from him that they meet again another day. When she got home to the palace her Fiancé was pleased that she was clean and they had a good time together with the family.

But the mud was still on His clothes.

There came another day when she went to town and met the handsome stranger (although now she knew his name, which was “Mr. Temptation”), and she enjoyed his company once more. When he suggested that they walk in the mud in the gutter she was shocked at first and refused, but continued to stroll on with him. After a few playful and bantering exchanges he reached out and prodded her lightly so that she overbalanced and stepped into the mud. When she realised where she was she laughingly pulled him in too and they trod on a little in the cool dirt. Her Guardian had been protesting quietly all the time they had been promenading down the pathway, but she had ignored Him completely. Soon, however, she woke up to where she was and hurriedly stepped out and ran all the way back home.

There she confessed to her Prince that she “couldn’t help it, I was pushed” when He looked carefully at her as she came in the door. This was in fact, a partial truth, for Temptation had lightly raised his hand to her, but it was her walk with him and their intimate conversation which had set up the opportunity and so it became a lie. Now the Prince knew that she was in real danger of choosing to do it again, so He pleaded with her not to even talk with the Tempter.

She, of course, promised not to. But she was still unaware of her complicity in the actions – she had at first pleaded ignorance, and then that she had fallen or been pushed – but she never owned up to the fact that always she had wanted to – that she had chosen the way which would lead to that end!

When she went to town yet again the Prince was fearful of what might happen, so He instructed the Bodyguard to be even more direct in His warning if she should meet the Tempter once more. But when they did, His warnings were brushed aside (He was not allowed to complain too loudly for she had free-will in her actions), and the young woman nestled up close to her companion. When they reached the area of the cooling mud she clung to him so that she would not fall but he callously thrust her aside and deliberately pushed her into it. This time not just her feet, but also the skirt of her white frock was soiled! How she cried – but to no avail!

When she arrived home her behaviour and her frock showed her Prince what her actions had been and He seemed to hesitate momentarily before He knelt to cleanse her. But He did!

Now, whenever she thought about it she felt a great remorse, for her lovely white garment had been soiled. Sure, her Prince had cleaned it marvellously well, and it looked as good as new, but she remembered how pained He had looked when He first saw it, and she vowed never to put Him in that situation again. What she didn’t know was that every time He had taken the mud from

her it had increased an agony inside of Him which is what had made Him hesitate. It also separated Him from the love of His family for they all felt disgusted by the mud, and kept their distance.

But all this He bore for her because He loved her.

Time went by and she matured into a delightful young woman under the tutelage of her Bodyguard, and even learnt to allow Him to step in between her and Temptation. When He did this, the rogue just seemed to melt away and she was left as free and unsullied as her Prince had promised.

Then came the day when she no longer wanted to go to town and visit with Mr. Temptation for she had learned of some of the result of her behaviour on her Husband-to-be.

But it was necessary to do errands from time to time which took her into the vicinity of Temptation, so when she did see him in the city, she stayed close to her Guard who gave her much encouragement and the strength to pass him by, by word and by action. All she had to do was choose, and He would stand between them and Temptation would back off.

Now, when she came to her Prince she often thanked Him for His forbearance and love and the gift of her Guard. Eventually the day came near when they could get married, but He still carried the mud from the earlier encounters on His dress uniform – the one He had planned to wear for the wedding and this worried her. It was about this time that she began to admit that she had really chosen to get muddy in the early days, and she thanked her Prince profusely for allowing her freedom of choice.

Now she just wanted to do His will!

It was then that He told her of the special ceremony He would have to undergo before He could marry her and they settle down as Husband and wife. It would require an extensive “operation” to remove the internal growths shown by the mud stains on His uniform and this carried with it a great risk of death on the operating table (He and His clothes were one unit). He had played down the threat over the years while she was training, but now she had to know the truth if they were to share their lives at a higher level.

He told her that it would be “make or break” time for them, for the operation also required that she enter into the spirit of the occasion and stay awake as His “soul mate” during the long hours it would take. He did not explain why this had to be so, only that He could not have had the operation until she was ready and had stopped asking Him to remove her mud.

She, of course, was horrified at the knowledge, but her training and her love now stood her in good stead and she accepted the task simply because He said she could do it, all the while feeling a total lack of capability.

As the Day approached and the pressures of the time grew stronger and stronger, she clung to her Guard and relied on Him for everything.

Then it happened, one day her royal Bodyguard disappeared!
And her “Husband-to-be” went into the operating room!!

Not only could she not see either of Them, she could not hear her Guard, not even the faintest whisper. She hadn't really expected this, although He had intimated the loss many times over her training period. But it had seemed unreal that He would ever abandon her and she had dismissed the idea with the thought that it would be alright on the Day. Now all she could do was go back over the instructions He had given her, and repeat His words over and over to herself as she waited the outcome of the surgery.

As she thought back on her life, she recognised that there had been short times in the past when the Guard had moved away, but these had always been brief, and with logical explanations, and she hadn't paid much attention to them. She still didn't connect them with the times when her Prince was taking her mud stains to Himself.

Now she felt so alone!

What she hadn't known was that her Bodyguard was also the Surgeon, and His whole attention had to be on her Prince for that time, so she had to be left to trust in His word.

It was the thought of what her Prince was going through that kept her going.

He had asked her to stay awake and so she did by thinking about Him and of the promises He had made to her in the past. When eventually, after what seemed to be a never-ending time, the “Surgeon” came out to meet her and told her that the “operation” had been a great success and all the mud stains had been disposed of on to the real originator of them, Mr. Temptation, she felt a relief that she had not thought possible before.

Then she learned that the Prince's Father had been there all through the process and had now accepted that she was a fit person to marry His Son.

After the period of convalescence they eventually made their vows to one another in the presence of many guests, some of whom were from her hometown, for the wedding took place in that area of the realm which had been her former country, and which had been “made over” for the occasion.

The locals had all received a set of magnificent white clothes with their invitations and were very pleased to be among the original people of the white country.

And they all lived happily after that.

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P. S.

He never did tell her how much it cost for Him to get her wedding dress!

To make it required the foundation of a pure heart (for, like His robe, it had to be one with her) and He had given a portion of His heart in order to create it for her. Then, to make it possible for her to wear it, when she changed out of her tainted multi-coloured robe, with the aid of His Surgeon He had quietly removed her old heart and replaced it with His portion, for she could not have two hearts at the same time. Then the Surgeon placed her “old” heart “inside” the Prince to make up His quota.

That’s why she had to be His “soul-mate” during the “operation” so that he would be “completely pure” while on the table!

During that time He was trusting His life to her!

Yes, the wedding dress was the same one He had given her when He had asked her to marry Him, the one which had been sullied so often during their engagement, but on the Day it had no mud stains, and glowed so much with the radiance of love that it seemed to outshine the sun.

But the pain of obtaining that dress remained with Him forever, for her “old” heart was not removed from Him during the pre-wedding operation – that had dealt only with the blemishes caused by her forays into the mud and which had been transferred to His robe, to be seen by His relations.

The inner “blot on His creation” He carried into their marriage with only some small, seemingly fresh wounds on His hands and feet to remind thoughtful onlookers of its presence.

But from then on, He was “complete” with her at His side.

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