

Beware, Princess!



Poppy was a princess, but she didn't feel like one. Her parents were a King and Queen and they lived in a castle so she knew she must be a princess. But Poppy had read a lot about princesses, and she knew what they were supposed to be like. They should have long blonde hair, blue eyes and pink cheeks. Poppy had short black hair and brown eyes. She spent as much time out of doors as she could, so her face was nice and brown too.

Princesses in books always wore beautiful dresses. Poppy was rather scruffy and though she *had* some beautiful dresses, they always seemed to end up torn and dirty. Beautiful dresses are no good if you like to play outdoors a lot.

For the first nine years of her life, Poppy more or less had her own way. Although the King and Queen were perhaps a little disappointed by her, she was a great favourite with the castle guards, the cook and the gardener. Then on her ninth birthday, after a really royal tea - there were *some* advantages in being a princess - her parents took her aside for a serious talk.

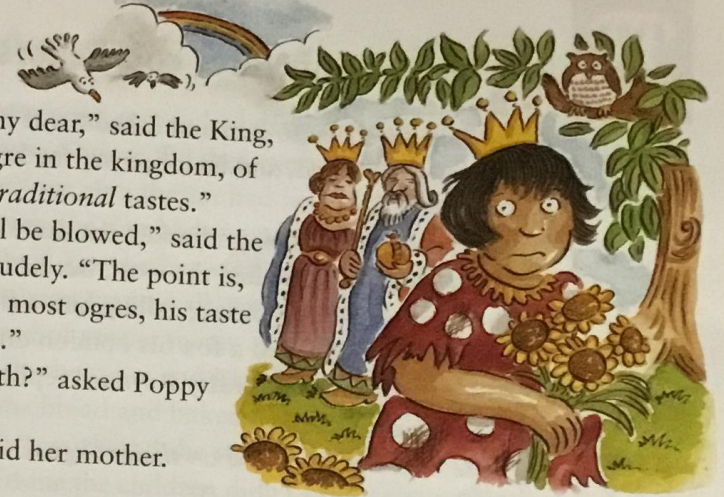
"Now, my dear," said the King, "as you are the only heir to our throne, your mother and I thought it was time for you to start on some of your princessly duties."

"Bother," thought Poppy, "I suppose I'll have to stop enjoying myself now. And I know I'll be no good at them."

Out loud, she said, "Yes, Father, but what *are* my princessly duties?"

The King began to look vague. "Well," he said.

"Don't beat about the bush, Algy," interrupted the Queen. "Tell her about the ogre!"

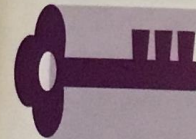


"You see, my dear," said the King, "we have an ogre in the kingdom, of rather ... er ... *traditional* tastes."

"Traditional be blowed," said the Queen, rather rudely. "The point is, Poppy, that like most ogres, his taste is for princesses."

"To play with?" asked Poppy innocently.

"To eat," said her mother.



Answer in sentences.

- 1 What colour were Poppy's eyes?
- 2 Did Poppy have long hair or short hair?
- 3 Why did Poppy's dresses get so torn and dirty?
- 4 What do the following words and phrases mean?
 - a) advantage
 - b) heir to the throne
 - c) beat about the bush
 - d) interrupt
 - e) ogre
 - f) innocent
- 5 The passage comes from a story called "Beware, Princess!" Why do you think it is called that?