



Chapter One



Does being nervous ever make you do silly things? It does me! The Silver Ball was only a week away, and I was trying to keep calm – but it was SO difficult. Honestly – every time I looked at a clock I could see the minutes disappearing! I couldn't stop thinking, "Will I have enough



tiara points?” And that meant I kept getting things wrong.

On Monday we had a lesson in Cutting Ribbons. Prince Dandino was in charge, and he told us to imagine we were cutting the ribbon to open a new library.

“Now,” he said, “everybody will be watching, so you must be Perfect Princesses.” He marched across to the workroom cupboard and came back with a large pair of scissors and a length of coloured ribbon. “Princess Diamonde and Princess Charlotte, please take one end each, and hold it tight. And



we’ll ask Princess Emily to be our first guest princess. Make your speech, Princess Emily, then cut the ribbon.”

We’d made up a speech for homework, but as I stood up my mind went blank.



“Erm...” I began. “That is... I mean, I’m very happy...erm...”

Prince Dandino frowned. “Emily,” he said, “if you haven’t learnt your speech off by heart, please read it.”

“Yes, Your Highness,” I said,



but as I picked up my bag I remembered where my homework was. On my bedside table! I felt SO stupid.

“I’m very sorry, Your Highness,” I mumbled. “It’s in Silver Rose Room.”



Prince Dandino sighed. “Never mind. Let’s see what Princess Diamonde can do.”

Diamonde looked SO smug. She gave a perfect speech with no “erms” or “ums” at all. As she finished, she tried to cut the ribbon – but the scissors were too blunt. At once she whipped a tiny penknife from her pocket, and cut the ribbon neatly in two.



“THERE!” she said, and she turned to me. “THAT’S how to open a library! I’ve watched Mummy do it a hundred times.”

Of course Diamonde got LOADS of tiara points. We could tell, because Prince Dandino whipped out his notebook, and while he wrote he kept saying how clever she was to bring her penknife. She was, too, because almost everyone else really struggled to cut the ribbon with the blunt scissors. Gruella tugged so hard she nearly pulled Sophia over. Only Princess Freya managed to cut it properly, and

Prince Dandino nodded, and scribbled down more points.

“Well done,” he said. “Those scissors are VERY blunt. But Perfect Princesses must be prepared for all kinds of difficulties. Emily, I’m afraid I must give you two minus points unless you can show me your speech by the end of the day. Class dismissed!”

As we trailed away down the corridor my friends tried to cheer me up. “You’ll be OK,” Katie said, “just take him the speech at lunch break!”

“WE all know you knew it

really well.” Alice patted my arm.

I began to feel a little bit better, but when I took Prince Dandino my homework he gave me a sad shake of the head.





“It isn’t like you to be so forgetful, Princess Emily,” he told me. “I hope you don’t think that because it’s nearly the end of term you don’t have to try!”

That made me feel AWFUL. What if I had ALMOST got enough tiara points to win my silver sash, but not quite? Was Prince Dandino trying to tell me something?