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opening extract from

Princess Poppy: The Big Mix Up

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Chapter One

Ever since Poppy's twin brother and sister, Angel and Archie, were born earlier that summer, Poppy's cousin Saffron had been over at Honeysuckle Cottage even more often than usual. Saffron was much older than Poppy, but they were very close. Poppy had been her bridesmaid when Saffron married the village vet, David Sage.

Saffron absolutely adored the twins and spent hours cooing over them. So one day it was decided that Poppy, Mum and Saffron

would do a swap. Saffron would come and look after the twins for the day while Poppy and Mum went to work in her shop. Poppy was thrilled: she had always wanted to work in the shop because it was so glamorous – plus it would be nice to have Mum all to herself for the day!

"I can't wait to be in charge of Saffron's shop!" Poppy said to herself as she started to get ready for her big day at work. *What would a fashion designer wear?* she wondered as she surveyed all the clothes in her wardrobe.



Poppy began to try on outfits, admiring herself in her long mirror each time she put on something different.

"Too party-girl," she said as she threw a sparkly dress across her

bed. "Too pony-girl," she decided as she discarded a jeans and wellies combo. Shorts and a T-shirt were "too sporty-girl". She eventually settled on a pretty red skirt and cute white top, with red ankle-strap sandals and a silver sequinned bag. She gathered together everything she thought she might need for the day and put it in her bag: a notebook, coloured pencils, perfume and a hairbrush – it was vital to look good at the shop!



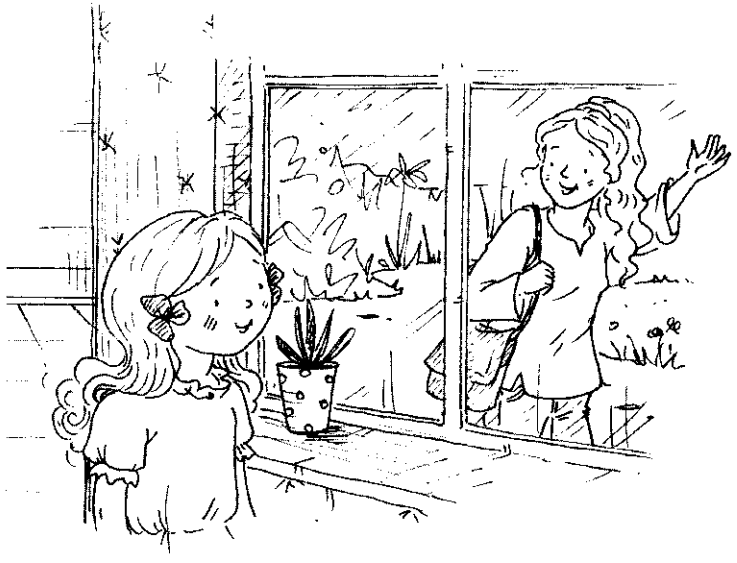
"I'm ready," Poppy called as she raced down the stairs. "Wow! You look *lovely*, Mum!" she said admiringly. Poppy hadn't liked to mention it, but since the twins were born Mum had been looking a bit scruffy.



But today she was wearing a pretty yellow dress with a wide belt and matching kitten-heeled shoes. Plus she had put on pearl earrings *and* make-up!

"Thank you, darling," smiled Mum. "And you look lovely too."

Just as Mum was wondering where Saffron had got to, she saw her niece walking up the garden path and waving at them cheerily. Poppy rushed to the window to see what her cousin was wearing – Saffron had such a great eye for fashion. But Poppy was rather disappointed by what she



saw. Saffron looked perfectly nice, but what surprised Poppy was that she looked very . . . well, ordinary and sensible. For Saffron this was definitely extraordinary! She was wearing some old jeans with a loose emerald-green kaftan top and flat gold gladiator sandals. Her beautiful red hair was tied back in a ponytail and she wasn't even wearing any make-up.

"I'm dressed for childcare!" Saffron explained as she saw the look on Poppy's face, which seemed to say, *Why don't you look as glamorous as usual?* "I've cut my nails short

so that I don't scratch the babies, and I've taken off all my jewellery except my wedding and engagement rings."

"That's very sensible, Saffron," replied Mum. "Angel absolutely loves all things sparkly and shiny – she'd be tugging at your earrings and beads in no time if you hadn't taken them off."

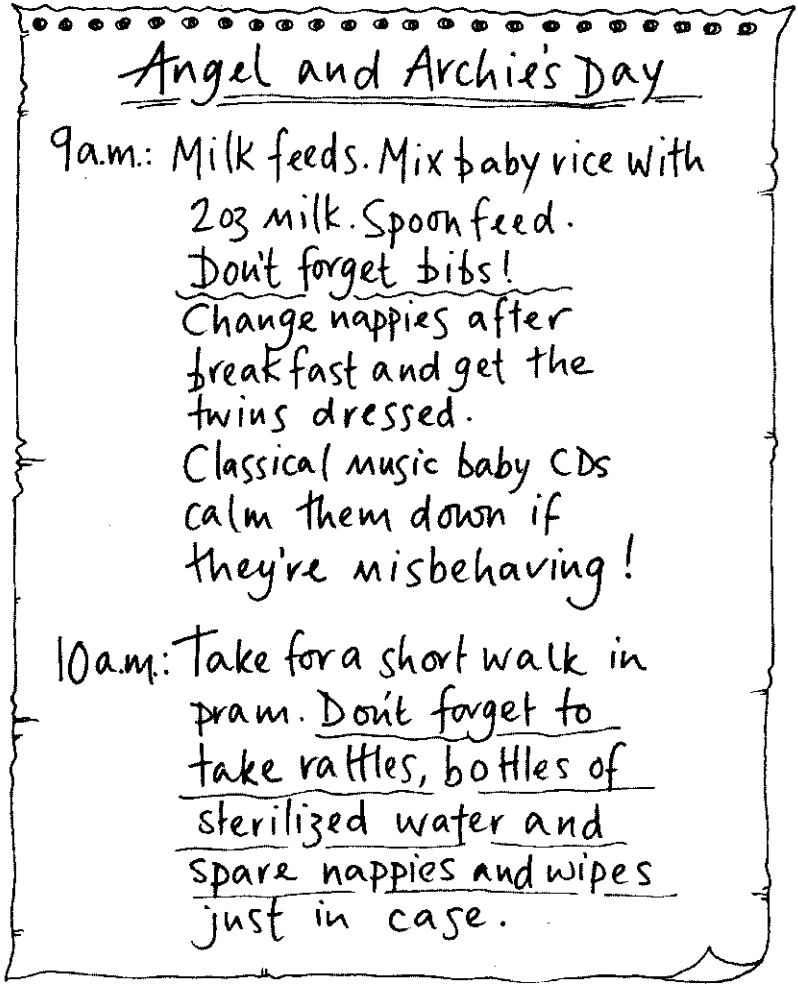
Saffron smiled. She was so excited about looking after the babies, but even though she had spent a lot of time with them since they were born, she was a little nervous – her aunt had always been there, just in case.

"Let's sit down and have a cup of tea and I'll go through everything with you," suggested Mum.

"Thanks, Aunt Lavender," replied Saffron. "I really hope I can manage everything."

"Don't worry, you'll be just fine. Poppy and I have made a list for you so you don't forget anything. Even if you do, you can

always give me a ring at the shop," reassured Mum as she unfolded a large piece of paper with writing all over it.



10.30a.m.: Put the twins down for a nap – they usually sleep for about an hour.
While they're sleeping, please put a wash on & hang up wet clothes in garden.
Prepare lunch (pureed carrots, sweet potatoes and apples).

12p.m.: Lunch, includes milk feed.
Don't forget bibs!

1p.m.: Nappies will probably need changing and clothes as well (will be messy from lunch). Put another wash on.

1.30p.m.: Walk to shop for fruit and vegetables, baby rice and baby bubble bath – the General Store has my order, it just needs collecting.

3p.m.: Put them down for another nap. Bring in dry washing and hang out wet. Make a start on casserole for supper– ingredients in cupboard and fridge and recipe on fridge. There are lots of toys and a play mat for when twins wake up.

4p.m.: Prepare the twins' tea and feed them by 5 p.m. (milk feed and porridge).

5.30p.m.: Bath time. Fill baby baths with bubbles and warm (not hot) water, warm towels on towel rail.

6.30p.m.: Bed time. Put on new nappies and clean pyjamas and tuck them into their cots. Read a story or sing a lullaby.

Saffron read through the list and gasped.



"When will I have *my* meals and read my *Buttons and Bows* magazine?" she asked.

Mum laughed. "Try to squeeze your snacks and reading times in during their naps or you'll never eat or relax!" she explained.

"Those babies are really hard work, you know," exclaimed Poppy as she put on her new hat – she didn't really need it, but it went so well with her outfit.

"Yes, I'm just beginning to realize how much!" said Saffron. "Here's the key for the shop. Now, off you go! I'm expecting a delivery of silver buttons at nine – Charlie will be dropping them off! I've left instructions for you in the shop to help you

through the day," she went on as Mum and Poppy kissed the twins goodbye and wished her luck. "Ring me if you need anything," she called after them, suddenly starting to worry that Mum and Poppy might not manage.

Mum took a deep breath. Surely running the shop would be easier than a whole day with the twins.