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The Rescue Princesses: The Secret Promise

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The Rescue Princesses
The Secret Promise

Paula Harrison

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For Abby and Megan, true Princesses,
with all my love

Chapter One

The Castle of Mistberg Forest

Princess Emily leaned right out of the carriage window, trying to get her first glimpse of the famous castle of Mistberg forest.

She'd waited nine years for her chance to visit and she couldn't wait a second longer. The forest air swept over her, sending her crown slipping sideways and her red curls flapping.

"Emily! Please don't push your head out of the window in that manner. It doesn't

look very graceful," said her mum, straightening her own crown.

Princess Emily took one last look, then reluctantly drew her head back in. "You should have let me drive. I could have gone much faster than this."

Her dad's mouth twitched into a smile.

"The aim is to arrive in royal style," said her mum. "Not to shoot along like a racing car."

Emily resisted saying that racing would be more fun. Her mum and dad were the King and Queen of Middingland and they always knew the correct way to do things.

They had flown across the sea from Middingland that morning in the royal jet. Then they had ridden from the airfield in a carriage, because everyone arrived at the Mistberg Grand Ball by horse and carriage. The Ball took place

at King Gudland's castle every spring and was one of the biggest events of the season.

The scent of pine trees filled the carriage and Emily caught a flash of movement as a deer ran deeper into the forest. The horses pulling the carriage slowed down to a walk as they passed between a pair of gigantic golden gates.

The call of a peacock echoed across the grass. Emily held her breath. They must be inside the grounds of the castle! She stuck her head out of the window again, her heart drumming with excitement.

"Now, when we get inside we have a dress fitting at two o'clock," said the queen. "And you will remember to brush your hair, won't you? It's gone a bit wild in the breeze."

But Emily wasn't thinking about brushing her hair. Above her towered the

round turrets of King Gudland's castle, stretching up to the sky.

Usually her little sister would have nudged her out of the way, but Lottie was staying with their cousins to recover from a bout of chickenpox, so for once, Emily had a perfect view.

The castle was much more magnificent than their palace in Middingland and she had three whole days to explore it.

A short, white-haired man hurried down the flight of steps as the carriage drew to a halt.

"Philip! Maria! How lovely to see you!" he exclaimed.

"Hermann, how are you?" said Emily's mum, stepping gracefully down from the carriage. She turned to her daughter. "Emily, I'd like you to meet King Gudland."

"A pleasure to meet you, Princess," said