

THE PRINCE'S DRESS DILEMMA

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READER ACTIVITY GUIDE

Clothes, confidence, and expressing who you are
Read together. Wonder together. Talk about what matters.

FOR GROWN-UPS - Why This Story?

Prince Eric loves dresses.

He also loves climbing trees, collecting rocks and seashells, dinosaur fossils, sugar cookies with sprinkles, and plenty of other things that make Eric simply *Eric*.

And that's important.

Nobody in Eric's family needs to learn to accept that he wears dresses. His parents aren't worried about it. Eric isn't trying to persuade anyone.

His dilemma is much more urgent: *He needs something to wear to the royal ball.*

One dress has too much glitter. Another has too many flowers. Another has too much lace. Nothing feels quite right—until Eric and his mother find a way to create something that does.

The Prince's Dress Dilemma gives children a world in which clothing can simply be another way to express personality, comfort, creativity, and joy.

Talk About It Together

Before reading

- How do you choose what you like to wear?
- Do certain clothes make you feel especially comfortable or happy?
- Do colors or clothes have to belong to boys or girls?

After reading

- What does Eric like besides dresses?
- Why doesn't Eric like the dresses he tries?
- Does Eric's family think there is anything strange about him wanting a dress?
- What makes the final outfit feel like Eric?
- Why might pockets be especially important to Eric?
- Have you ever worn something that made you feel especially like yourself?
- What would you wear if you could design absolutely anything?

A NOTE FOR GROWN-UPS

Children use clothing for many reasons: comfort, play, imitation, experimentation, culture, sensory preference, creativity, gender expression, or simply because they like something.

Eric's story doesn't require adults or children to determine what his clothing “means.”

He likes dresses.

That's enough.

Giving children room to explore preferences without immediately assigning labels can communicate something powerful: *I am interested in knowing who you are—not deciding who you should be.*

In the Classroom

Ask students to design an outfit for a fictional character. Instead of beginning with “boy clothes” or “girl clothes,” begin with the character:

What do they love? What do they do? What feels comfortable? What do they need to carry?

DESIGN WHAT FEELS LIKE YOU

If YOU Were Going to the Royal Ball...

Eric needs an outfit that looks good—but also lets him be Eric.

Now you're the designer. Design something that feels like **YOU**. Think about:

My favorite colors: _____

I love the feeling of:

- ☐ soft
- ☐ fuzzy
- ☐ smooth
- ☐ swishy
- ☐ stretchy
- ☐ something else: _____

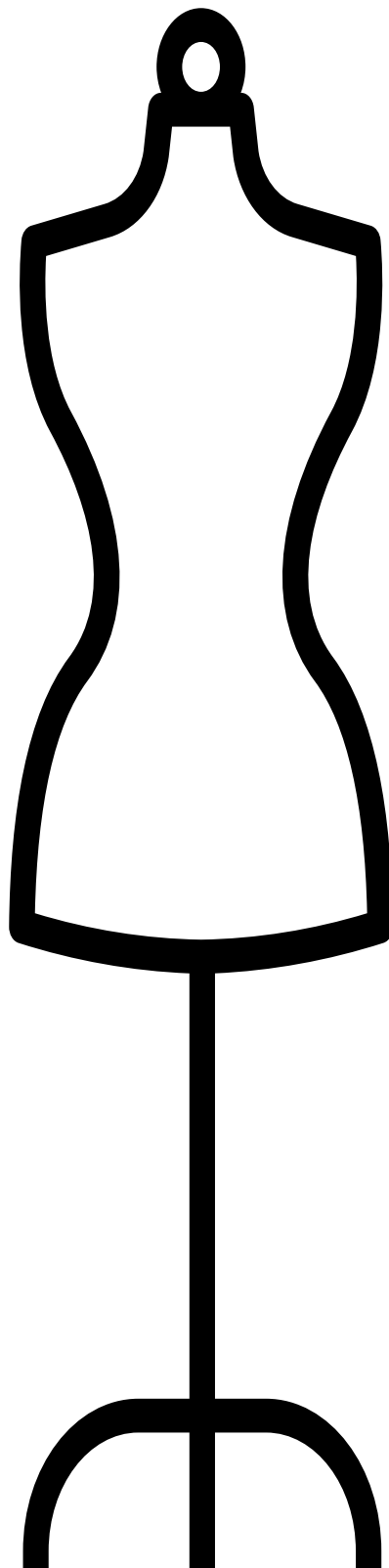
I definitely need:

- ☐ pockets
- ☐ sparkles
- ☐ buttons
- ☐ a hood
- ☐ a cape
- ☐ bows
- ☐ absolutely none of those
- ☐ something else: _____

My outfit needs room for me to...

And my pockets will hold...

There is no boy version. There is no girl version. There is YOUR version.



THE ROYAL DESIGN HOUSE

YOUR ROYAL CUSTOMER HAS ARRIVED!

A customer has come to your design shop.

They tell you: "I love purple and dinosaurs. I hate scratchy fabric. I like spinning around. I collect tiny rocks. I want something fancy, but I need to be able to run."

What would you design for them?

Why did you choose it?

How did you make it comfortable?

Where will the rocks go?

A GOOD DESIGNER LISTENS

Why is it important to ask someone what THEY like instead of deciding for them?

Wear what feels like you.