

THE A-LIST

HOLLYWOOD ROYALTY

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poppy

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FAIRY PRUDENESS

Even before the white stretch limo pulled to a stop outside the Nokia Theatre, Amelie Adams could hear the screams of hundreds of fans. She blinked out the tinted windows as the driver slowed to a stop in front of the ruby red carpet. Behind the ground-level throngs of fans and photographers, models stood on six-foot risers, wearing hot pink Prada sunglasses and bright white tent dresses with graphic prints of L.A. landmarks on them: the Hollywood sign, Grauman's Chinese, the Beverly Hills Hotel, a postcard shot of Malibu. Most of the fans barely paid attention to the glamazons; they were more interested in catching a glimpse of their favorite Hollywood starlets arriving for the premiere of *The A-List*.

“Fairy Princess!”

“Fairy Princess!”

Even though Amelie wasn't in the movie, her fans knew she was coming tonight. Clusters of little girls waved homemade, glittery signs proclaiming their high-pitched love for her Kidz Network character, Fairy Princess. Amelie leaned back in her seat, pushing a red ringlet from her turquoise eyes.

Across from Amelie, her mother's face broke into the wide, voluptuous smile that Amelie had inherited. Helen Adams's own red hair was shorter—shaped into a face-framing chin-length bob by Mario, her one-name-only personal hairdresser for the last ten years—and her eyes were a dark hazel, but otherwise she and Amelie could have been mistaken for sisters.

“Have fun. And remember, you'll get it next time.” She winked one heavily mascaraed eye and smoothed her strapless violet Carolina Herrera gown over a flat stomach courtesy of a three-week fitness boot camp in Studio City.

Amelie's gloss-lacquered lips formed a grimace. She'd been up for the part of Emma Hardy, *The A-List's* lead, but had lost the role to Marlee Aces, a blonde with one screen credit in a sexy indie, *Rock My World*—about a lesbian heavy metal band in Mormon Utah. The producers had deemed her “more mature” and therefore better for the part. The Emma character had a sex scene, and while Amelie knew that a jump from petting winged ponies to heavy petting would've been a risky career move, sometimes she longed to do *something* that wasn't G-rated.

“No scowls.” Helen leaned over to kiss her daughter on the cheek. “And have fun. I'm going to take a quick meeting about your Christmas special, but I'll find you at the party later.”

Amelie reached back, giving her mom's hand a squeeze, as two tuxedoed valets reached in to extract her from the limo.

“Fairy Princess! Fairy Princess!”

Amelie stepped out of the limousine, plastering on the same magical grin that had sold four million T-shirts with

her face on them. Her new white patent Miu Miu wedges sank into the plush carpet and she gracefully adjusted the hem of her silver Jovani flapper-inspired dress. Her character wore pink *exclusively*, so it was nice to not feel like human cotton candy for once.

She made her way down the row of crazed fans—the younger ones near tears—signing glossy pictures, massive posters, and *BOP* magazines in her trademark swirly script. After each autograph, she flourished her pink Sharpie with Fairy Princess's signature wand wave. *Elbow left, wrist swish, elbow right, wrist swish.*

At the far end of the red carpet, cast members from *The A-List* mingled with other actors about her age. Raven-haired Kady Parker and milky-skinned Moira and Deven Lacey, twins whose trademark sexy scowls had helped them get parts on *School of Scandal*, a new CW show, shot her curious glances and then returned to their conversation.

Used to being ignored by her Hollywood peers, Amelie sighed, signing a talking Fairy Princess doll with bubble gum pink hair and glittery accessories. She knew she was lucky to be seated at the helm of a multimillion-dollar empire at only sixteen, but sometimes she just wanted to move up from the kids' table. She was growing up, but no one besides Mary Ellen, the on-set stylist who'd had to let her Fairy Princess wardrobe out in the chest, had really seemed to notice.

Amelie smiled at a white-blond seven-year-old in a replica of Fairy Princess's Winter Festival ball gown. She held up a shirt for Amelie to sign. "Is it true you're playing a new kind of fairy in *Class Angel*?" the little girl asked, awestruck.

“You got it,” Amelie answered, shooting another dazzling smile that almost outshone her dress’s sequins and crystals. Filming started on her new movie, *Class Angel*, the day after tomorrow. It was PG, and more mature than her Fairy Princess role, but she still played a teenager’s guardian angel rather than an *actual* teenager. It was like calling Pinkberry ice cream.

Amelie leaned over the metal barricade railing to sign the shirt, her face inches from the little girl’s.

“Mommy!” The little girl pointed at Amelie, then yelled, “Mom, Fairy Princess has boobies!”

Amelie felt the blood rush to her face. Well, then. Maybe people *were* noticing her growing up, after all. . . .

Amelie stood bathed in the sapphire-blue lights cast by the Nokia’s looming facade. She’d barely paid attention to the ninety-minute movie, mentally replaying her red carpet humiliation instead of focusing on the film. Not that she could have focused even if she’d tried. She’d given up her primo reserved seat to an agent who’d brought his grandmother, and had wound up seated next to three fifteen-year-old girls who’d driven in from the Inland Empire after winning tickets on KROQ. They’d snuck in cans of Coors Light with them, and Amelie had struggled to hear the movie over their giggly conversation about the cute slacker who’d sold them the beer at 7-Eleven. She stretched her tired neck from side to side, wishing she could skip the afterparty and head home. Unfortunately, she knew she had to put in an appearance, or her absence would be chalked up to sour grapes.

Now she stood just outside the outdoor party area,

watching people trickle out from the theater. Stars donned their occasionally misguided interpretations of the invite-specified “sexy *A-List* evening wear”: skin-baring miniskirts, long glittery gowns that looked like expensive prom dresses. Security was already manning the makeshift entrance to the afterparty area, to make sure that people like Amelie’s drunken underage seat-mates didn’t crash.

She’d do one turn around the party space, meet and greet with some studio bigwigs, smile big, look sweet, and get the heck out of there. Amelie had an early call time tomorrow to shoot a music video for the Kidz Network site, anyway. It was the perfect excuse to trade her painful wedges for her Paul Frank monkey slippers. Add a bowl of Häagen-Dazs and her *Veronica Mars* DVDs, and she was set for the evening.

Someone tapped her on the back. “Hey, do you mind walking in with me?”

Amelie turned. Kady Parker was standing by herself, her wide sapphire blue eyes shimmering beneath the fringe of glossy black bangs that framed her heart-shaped face. “I always feel weird walking into a party alone.”

Kady Parker was her costar in *Class Angel*. Since getting into the business as a twelve-year-old, Kady almost always played the sassy tomboy who gets kicked around by bitchy prom queen types but gets the guy in the end. Amelie nodded, half surprised that Kady—whom she’d met only briefly, at a table read—was being so friendly.

“Cool,” Kady said, flashing her wristband and leading the way. The movie premiere might have been open to the hundredth caller, but the afterparty was strictly by

invitation only, and you needed a “Get A-ed” wristband, which of course they both had. “Hot dress, by the way.”

“You look great too,” Amelie replied. Kady’s feminine-cut black Armani tux fit her slightly rebellious movie persona and her petite frame.

“Thanks. Let’s hit the bar—you can meet some of the other girls from *Class Angel*,” Kady half-shouted over the new Santogold song, leading Amelie into a courtyard area, where four bars were set up in a square. The platform models now wore opaque white Prada one-piece swimsuits and the kind of sultry yet bored expressions mastered only through lots of practice. They danced languidly to the music as guests loaded their plates with food from the catered buffet. Three twentysomething brunettes hovered at a cocktail table, congratulating themselves for getting in without wristbands.

Kady paused, standing on the tiptoes of her already-high cherry red Christian Louboutin stilettos, searching the crowd for her friends. “I don’t know what they’ll be drinking tonight,” she said.

The four bars were all serving drinks inspired by the characters, and behind each was a backdrop featuring a glamorous publicity shot of one of the *A-List* actors. The Emma bar was serving classic cocktails like Manhattans and martinis, and rare Opus One wine in an exclusive *A-List* vintage. A bar for Peter, Emma’s on-and-off-again love interest, was serving twenty microbrewed beers in frosted glasses. The bar for Sarah, a super-rich character with movie star parents (allegedly based on young director Sam Sharpe), offered Cristal, Veuve, and Dom Pérignon champagnes, while a bar for Dahlia, the wild

child with a mean streak, served potent vodka, rum, and tequila combos.

“There they are,” Kady said, grabbing Amelie’s arm and leading her to the Dahlia bar. A group of bored-looking girls stood around a shiny silver cocktail table. The Lacey twins slouched on stools, sipping identical Grey Goose and cranberry cocktails. They were mirror images of each other, with endlessly toned legs, thick caramel hair, and the same “don’t mess with us” expressions. (Though rumor had it that three-minutes-younger Deven was actually a sweetheart.) Next to them stood DeAndra Barnett, a former child model who’d made her foray into acting in the massive Kidz Network hit *West High Story*. She had luminous toffee-colored skin, a lean, athletic body, and short curly hair that highlighted her sharp cheekbones. She wore a strapless D&G dress in a wild lily-and-leopard print that kept falling down her skinny chest.

“You guys know Amelie, right?” Kady gestured to Amelie as though she were a showcase prize on *The Price Is Right*.

DeAndra squinted as though she barely recognized Amelie, gracelessly pulling up her dress. The twins smiled faintly. “*Fairy Princess*, right?” they said in unison. Amelie nodded.

“*Fairy Princess*, and *Class Angel* with me and DeAndra,” Kady corrected. “And now Hunter, too.”

Hunter?

Amelie thought she was hearing things. Kady could only be talking about one Hunter. Hunter Sparks. The guy so hot his role in *West High Story* had propelled little girls from their “I hate boys” phases directly into their “I heart Hunter” obsessions.

“Wait, Hunter Sparks is in *Class Angel*?” Amelie

fought to sound casual as her brain hyperventilated: *HunterSparksHunterSparksHunterSparks!*

Amelie had starred in her first feature with him, when she was eleven and he was fourteen, before her Fairy Princess reign began. He played her older brother, who died trying to save Amelie when aliens invaded Chicago. Even though he treated her in a brother-sister way the whole shoot, she'd fallen totally in love with him. She still had script pages covered in hearts filled with loopy cursive musings: "I love Hunter," "Mrs. Hunter Sparks," and "Mrs. Amelie Adams-Sparks." For five years, she'd barely run into him, even at Kidz Network headquarters. And, yet, just glimpsing his face on a *West High Story* poster or hearing his name was enough to make her heart thud in double time, the way it did now.

"I thought our lead was Raleigh Springfield," Amelie hastily added, naming the actor who was originally slated to play the role.

"Nope, he's out." Kady shrugged. "Said he wants to do an indie instead, but I think it's just rehab. The producer called in a favor and Hunter's in."

"Cool." The twins nodded and drained their glasses. "He's yummier anyway. Raleigh has that greasy hair."

A delightful tingle worked its way through Amelie's body. Her stars were falling into place, *Fairy Princess* style.

"Anyway, this party blows, K." The twins looked at Kady like two dogs begging their owner to take them outside.

"Okay, then," Kady said, processing the info. "We could hit the Standard, the downtown one on Flower." She turned to Amelie. "Have you been? The rooftop bar has waterbed pods and great bottle service. And no

wannabes.” She glanced at the uninvited brunettes in Payless heels at one of the bars.

Before Amelie could answer, she felt a hand on her shoulder.

“Hi girls.” Amelie’s mom’s voice strained over the noise. Amelie flushed with embarrassment. “Amelie, honey, they moved up the call time for tomorrow by a few hours. The limo’s waiting out front.”

Amelie turned back to Kady, who’d probably never brought her mom to a premiere before. She shrugged. “Thanks for the invite, but it looks like I’ve got to call it a night.”

She made an apologetic face, though secretly she was thankful for the interruption. Party hopping was fine if you wanted to end up with a has-been rep and a drug habit by age twenty-one on *E! True Hollywood Story*, but Amelie intended to be the industry’s anti-Lohan, thank you very much.

“No worries,” Kady said, hugging Amelie. “I’ll see you on Sunday.”

“For sure,” Amelie said, waving at the other girls as she grabbed her clutch off the cocktail table.

Helen led the way back through the crowd, walking with her perfect Pilates posture. “They seemed nice. You might have fun on this movie.”

Amelie grinned. She and Kady didn’t have to get matching BFF bracelets, but at least Kady didn’t seem like the kind of crazy costar who’d put Nair in Amelie’s shampoo bottle. Plus, a movie where she didn’t have to match dance steps with whimsical sprites? One that might even have Hunter Sparks?

Amelie was definitely ready for her close-up.

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