

good friends with Prince Charles's younger brother, Prince Andrew.

Diana's mother and father divorced in April 1969. Frances married Peter Shand Kydd soon after. Diana and her brother had holidays with Peter and his three children. Later, Frances and Peter bought a big house on the Isle of Seil. Seil was an island near the west coast of Scotland.



The Spencer family at Althorp House, 1969. Diana (left) and Charles are at the front of the picture

Diana went to a small day school near her home called Silfield. But when she was nine, her father sent her to boarding school. The school was called Riddlesworth Hall.

In September 1973, when Diana was twelve, she moved to another school called West Heath. West Heath

was near the town of Sevenoaks in Kent. Diana liked her new school. She had some good friends there. She learned to dance and play the piano. She was not very interested in school exams, but she was good at dancing and swimming.

At this time, Johnnie Althorp met a new woman. Her name was Raine Legge, the Countess of Dartmouth. Raine was also the writer Barbara Cartland's daughter.

Raine was married with four children. Johnnie's children loved their father very much and they did not want him to be with another woman.

Then, on the 9th of June 1975, Johnnie's father, Jack, died. Jack was the seventh Earl Spencer. Now Johnnie became the eighth Earl Spencer and Diana became 'Lady Diana Spencer'. Johnnie and his family went to live in his father's great house at Althorp in Northampton.

The Spencer children did not like Althorp very much. It was a very big house in a large park. It had 121 rooms. It was a beautiful house but it was also very cold. It was not a 'home' like Park House.

Raine started to come to Althorp a lot. In May 1976, Raine and her husband divorced. Two months later, in July, Johnnie and Raine married quietly in London. Johnnie did not tell his children about the wedding. They read about it in the newspapers.

The Spencer children were very angry with their father. Now Raine lived at Althorp all the time. Diana loved her father, but he was now married to Raine. This was very difficult for Diana.



Johnnie Spencer and his second wife Raine in front of Althorp House, 1 January, 1981

Many of Raine and Johnnie's friends visited Althorp. They had a lot of parties there. But the Spencer girls were always cold to Raine. In 1978, Johnnie was very ill and was close to death. Raine looked after him and helped save his life. Johnnie was lucky and he got better. But still the children did not like Raine.

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The Prince

Prince Charles was born on the 14th of November 1948 at Buckingham Palace. He is the oldest of the Queen's four children. He is also the Prince of Wales. After the

King or Queen dies, the Prince of Wales usually becomes king. So Charles is 'heir to the throne', or the next king.

When he was a boy, Charles was very shy. He went first to a day school in London. Later his parents sent him to Gordonstoun, a boarding school in north-east Scotland. Life for Charles at Gordonstoun was very hard. Charles was sad there and did not have any friends. He did not see his parents very often.

Later, Charles went to Cambridge University. Then he was an officer in the Royal Navy – the part of the armed forces that works at sea. He was in the navy for five years. He was a pilot and flew planes and helicopters.

Charles enjoyed horse riding, and loved playing polo – a game for people riding on horses. He also liked hunting and shooting animals, for example birds and deer, with a gun.



Prince Charles playing polo in Kenya, February 1971

When Charles was twenty-three, in the summer of 1970, he met Camilla Shand at a polo match. Camilla was fifteen months older than Charles. Camilla was pretty and fun. She liked the same things as Charles. She loved horses, dogs, the countryside and hunting.

Charles and Camilla spent weekends together at the home of Earl Mountbatten. Earl Mountbatten was Charles's father's uncle. Charles was very close to Earl Mountbatten. He called the Earl 'Grandpa'.

But Camilla married another young man called Andrew Parker Bowles in July 1973. After that, Charles had many girlfriends. The newspapers started calling him 'the Playboy Prince'.

Charles liked tall, blonde women. Some of his girlfriends were Davina Sheffield, Anna Wallace and Mountbatten's granddaughter, Amanda Knatchbull.

Charles also had friends who were married women. One of these was an Australian woman called Dale Tryon (her friends called her 'Kanga', like the Australian animal 'kangaroo').

But the most important woman friend for Charles was still Camilla Parker Bowles.

Camilla and Andrew Parker Bowles were now married with two children. Andrew Parker Bowles knew about his wife's friendship with Prince Charles, but he was not unhappy about it. In fact, Andrew and Prince Charles were friends.

Then something exciting happened. Sarah Spencer, Diana's older sister, met Prince Charles at a party at

Windsor Castle in the summer of 1977. She went to watch the Prince playing polo. Later, they went on a skiing holiday together. The Queen invited Sarah to Balmoral, the Royal Family's Scottish home.

That November, Sarah invited Prince Charles to Althorp for the weekend. Diana was there too. She first met Prince Charles in the countryside near her home. She was just sixteen years old.

In April 1978, Diana's sister, Jane, got married. Her husband was Robert Fellowes, the son of a Norfolk family. Later, Robert Fellowes had a very important job. He was private secretary to the Queen – helping her and working very closely with her.

Sarah's romance with Prince Charles ended. On the 14th of November 1978 the Prince had a dance for his thirtieth birthday at Buckingham Palace. He invited Sarah but he invited Diana too. Diana was very surprised and excited. She liked Prince Charles very much.

Mountbatten wanted Charles to marry and have children. Charles usually listened to Mountbatten, but he did not want to get married. He did not need a wife. He liked painting pictures and he liked reading books. He had his girlfriends. He also had servants – or people who worked for him – to do things for him.

Then in 1979 the IRA (Irish Republican Army) killed Earl Mountbatten with a bomb in his fishing boat. Mountbatten was dead and Charles was shocked and very sad. 'I have lost someone very special in my life,' he said.

The Fairy Story Begins

Diana was now a young woman of seventeen. She wanted to go and live in London. Both her sisters, Sarah and Jane, lived there. They worked for *Vogue* magazine. But Diana was not interested in a job that paid lots of money. She loved children and was very good with them. So she went to London and found jobs looking after children.

Diana was very happy with her new life. Her mother, Frances, had a flat in Cadogan Square – a very wealthy part of London. Diana lived in the flat with two girlfriends. In July 1979 her mother bought her a flat in London for her eighteenth birthday. The address was 60 Coleherne Court, Chelsea. Diana lived there with three friends – Carolyn Pride (or Carolyn Bartholomew after she was married), Anne Bolton and Virginia Pitman.

Diana enjoyed London. She did not like parties, but sometimes she went to dances at country houses. But she liked sitting at home and watching television with her girlfriends.

In May 1980, Diana's sister, Sarah, married Neil McCorquodale, an officer in the army. The married couple lived in Chelsea too, near Diana. Diana often went to Sarah's house. Sometimes Sarah paid Diana to clean her house for her.

Diana was now nineteen years old. She was a happy, pretty young woman. Life was good for her.

Diana met Charles again in July 1980 at a house party in West Sussex. He invited her to go with him on the royal yacht – a large boat called *Britannia*. They were on the boat at Cowes in the Isle of Wight, an island off the south of England. Later, in September, Prince Charles invited Diana to stay at Balmoral in Scotland. He invited some other friends, too, but they were all much older than Diana. Diana's sister, Jane, and her husband, Robert Fellowes, were there. Camilla and Andrew Parker Bowles were there too.

Charles started seeing Diana more and more. The newspapers were very interested in Charles's romantic life. Soon, they knew all about his beautiful new girlfriend. One story in *The Sun* newspaper said, 'He's in love again! Lady Di is the New Girl for Charles!'

The newspaper reporters – the people who write the stories for newspapers – came to Diana's flat at 60 Coleherne Court in London. They waited outside. All the reporters wanted to take photographs of her. Diana was always nice to the reporters. The reporters liked her, and became her friends. The newspapers started calling her 'Shy Di'.

On the 14th of November 1980 Charles was thirty-two years old. The newspapers and Charles's family asked the same question – 'Is Prince Charles going to marry Lady Diana?'

In January 1981 Charles went on a skiing holiday to Klosters in Switzerland. When he was there, he telephoned Diana. 'I've got something to ask you,' he

said. Diana was very excited. She sat with her girlfriends very late at night talking about Prince Charles.

When Charles returned from his holiday, he asked Diana to marry him. Diana said, 'yes'. On the 24th of February 1981, Buckingham Palace told the country that Charles, Prince of Wales, was going to marry Lady Diana Spencer. Charles and Diana gave a television interview in the garden of Buckingham Palace.

'Can you find the right words to say how you feel today?' asked the interviewer.

'Difficult to find the right sort of words,' said Charles. 'Just delighted and happy ...'

'And I suppose in love?' asked the interviewer.

'Of course,' said Diana shyly.

'Whatever "in love" means,' Charles answered.

Two nights later, Diana went to live at Buckingham Palace.

Most people in Britain were very happy about Charles and Diana. People liked reading about Charles's girlfriends, but now it was time for him to marry. Everyone was excited about the royal wedding.

Many people thought that Diana was the perfect wife for Charles. She was a beautiful young girl – tall and blonde. She was very sweet and shy. And – very importantly for the Royal Family – Prince Charles was her first boyfriend. Because of this, the newspapers could not write stories about Diana and other boyfriends.

Camilla was also happy about Diana. Camilla was married and had a husband, Andrew Parker Bowles. She