



PRINCE HARRY

SPARE

PRINCE HARRY

SPARE



RANDOM HOUSE
NEW YORK

Copyright © 2023 by Prince Harry, The Duke of Sussex

All rights reserved.

Published in the United States by Random House, an imprint and division of
Penguin Random House LLC, New York.

RANDOM HOUSE and the HOUSE colophon are registered trademarks of Penguin
Random House LLC.

Published in the United Kingdom by Transworld Publishers Ltd, a division of
Penguin Random House UK and in Canada by Random House Canada.

Part Two opening photograph © MoD/Newspix International

Prince Harry wishes to support British charities with donations from his proceeds from SPARE. The Duke of Sussex has donated \$1,500,000 to Sentebale, an organization he founded with Prince Seeiso in their mothers' legacies, which supports vulnerable children and young people in Lesotho and Botswana affected by HIV/AIDS. Prince Harry will also donate to the nonprofit organization WellChild in the amount of £300,000. WellChild, which he has been Royal patron of for fifteen years, makes it possible for children and young people with complex health needs to be cared for at home instead of hospital, wherever possible.

Hardback ISBN 9780593593806

Ebook ISBN 9780593593813

randomhousebooks.com

Book design by Simon M. Sullivan, adapted for ebook

Cover design: Christopher Brand

Front-cover photograph: Ramona Rosales

Back-cover photograph: © Martin Keene - PA Images/PA Images via Getty Images

ep_prh_6.0_142385339_c0_r0

Contents

[Cover](#)

[Title Page](#)

[Copyright](#)

[Epigraph](#)

[Prologue](#)

[Part 1 Out of the Night That Covers Me](#)

[Part 2 Bloody, but Unbowed](#)

[Part 3 Captain of My Soul](#)

[Epilogue](#)

[Dedication](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

The past is never dead. It's not even past.

—WILLIAM FAULKNER

WE AGREED TO MEET a few hours after the funeral. In the Frogmore gardens, by the old Gothic ruin. I got there first.

I looked around, saw no one.

I checked my phone. No texts, no voicemails.

They must be running late, I thought, leaning against the stone wall.

I put away my phone and told myself: Stay calm.

The weather was quintessentially April. Not quite winter, not yet spring. The trees were bare, but the air was soft. The sky was gray, but the tulips were popping. The light was pale, but the indigo lake, threading through the gardens, glowed.

How beautiful it all is, I thought. And also how sad.

Once upon a time, this was going to be my forever home. Instead it had proved to be just another brief stop.

When my wife and I fled this place, in fear for our sanity and physical safety, I wasn't sure when I'd ever come back. That was January 2020. Now, fifteen months later, here I was, days after waking to thirty-two missed calls and then one short, heart-racing talk with Granny: *Harry... Grandpa's gone.*

The wind picked up, turned colder. I hunched my shoulders, rubbed my arms, regretted the thinness of my white shirt. I wished I'd not changed out of my funeral suit. I wished I'd thought to bring a coat. I turned my back to the wind and saw, looming behind me, the Gothic ruin, which in reality was no more Gothic than the Millennium Wheel. Some clever architect, some bit of stagecraft. Like so much around here, I thought.

I moved from the stone wall to a small wooden bench. Sitting, I checked my phone again, peered up and down the garden path.

Where are they?

Another gust of wind. Funny, it reminded me of Grandpa. His wintry demeanor, maybe. Or his icy sense of humor. I recalled one particular shooting weekend years ago. A mate, just trying to make conversation, asked Grandpa what he thought of my new beard, which had been causing concern in the family and controversy in the press. *Should the Queen*

Force Prince Harry to Shave? Grandpa looked at my mate, looked at my chin, broke into a devilish grin. *THAT'S no beard!*

Everyone laughed. To beard or not to beard, that was the question, but leave it to Grandpa to demand *more* beard. *Let grow the luxurious bristles of a bloody Viking!*

I thought of Grandpa's strong opinions, his many passions—carriage driving, barbecuing, shooting, food, beer. The way he embraced *life*. He had that in common with my mother. Maybe that was why he'd been such a fan. Long before she was Princess Diana, back when she was simply Diana Spencer, kindergarten teacher, secret girlfriend of Prince Charles, my grandfather was her loudest advocate. Some said he actually brokered my parents' marriage. If so, an argument could be made that Grandpa was the Prime Cause in my world. But for him, I wouldn't be here.

Neither would my older brother.

Then again, maybe our mother *would* be here. If she hadn't married Pa...

I recalled one recent chat, just me and Grandpa, not long after he'd turned ninety-seven. He was thinking about the end. He was no longer capable of pursuing his passions, he said. And yet the thing he missed most was work. Without work, he said, everything crumbles. He didn't seem sad, just ready. *You have to know when it's time to go, Harry.*

I glanced now into the distance, towards the mini skyline of crypts and monuments alongside Frogmore. The Royal Burial Ground. Final resting place for so many of us, including Queen Victoria. Also, the notorious Wallis Simpson. Also, her doubly notorious husband Edward, the former King and my great-great-uncle. After Edward gave up his throne for Wallis, after they fled Britain, both of them fretted about their ultimate return—both obsessed about being buried right here. The Queen, my grandmother, granted their plea. But she placed them at a distance from everyone else, beneath a stooped plane tree. One last finger wag, perhaps. One final exile, maybe. I wondered how Wallis and Edward felt now about all their fretting. Did any of it matter in the end? I wondered if they wondered at all. Were they floating in some airy realm, still mulling their choices, or were they Nowhere, thinking Nothing? Could there really be Nothing after this? Does consciousness, like time, have a stop? Or maybe,

I thought, just maybe, they're here right now, next to the fake Gothic ruin, or next to me, eavesdropping on my thoughts. And if so...*maybe my mother is too?*

The thought of her, as always, gave me a jolt of hope, and a burst of energy.

And a stab of sorrow.

I missed my mother every day, but that day, on the verge of that nerve-racking rendezvous at Frogmore, I found myself longing for her, and I couldn't say just why. Like so much about her, it was hard to put into words.

Although my mother was a princess, named after a goddess, both those terms always felt weak, inadequate. People routinely compared her to icons and saints, from Nelson Mandela to Mother Teresa to Joan of Arc, but every such comparison, while lofty and loving, also felt wide of the mark. The most recognizable woman on the planet, one of the most beloved, my mother was simply indescribable, that was the plain truth. And yet...how could someone so far beyond everyday language remain so real, so palpably present, so exquisitely vivid in my mind? How was it possible that I could see her, clear as the swan skimming towards me on that indigo lake? How could I hear her laughter, loud as the songbirds in the bare trees—still? There was so much I didn't remember, because I was so young when she died, but the greater miracle was all that I did. Her devastating smile, her vulnerable eyes, her childlike love of movies and music and clothes and sweets—and us. Oh how she loved my brother and me. *Obsessively*, she once confessed to an interviewer.

Well, Mummy...vice versa.

Maybe she was omnipresent for the very same reason that she was indescribable—because she was light, pure and radiant light, and how can you really describe light? Even Einstein struggled with that one. Recently, astronomers rearranged their biggest telescopes, aimed them at one tiny crevice in the cosmos, and managed to catch a glimpse of one breathtaking sphere, which they named Earendel, the Old English word for Morning Star. Billions of miles off, and probably long vanished, Earendel is closer to the Big Bang, the moment of Creation, than our own Milky Way, and

yet it's somehow still visible to mortal eyes because it's just so awesomely bright and dazzling.

That was my mother.

That was why I could see her, sense her, always, but especially that April afternoon at Frogmore.

That—and the fact that I was carrying her flag. I'd come to those gardens because I wanted peace. I wanted it more than anything. I wanted it for my family's sake, and for my own—but also for hers.

People forget how much my mother strove for peace. She circled the globe many times over, traipsed through minefields, cuddled AIDS patients, consoled war orphans, always working to bring peace to someone somewhere, and I knew how desperately she would want—no, *did* want—peace between her boys, and between us two and Pa. And among the whole family.

For months the Windsors had been at war. There had been strife in our ranks, off and on, going back centuries, but this was different. This was a full-scale public rupture, and it threatened to become irreparable. So, though I'd flown home specifically and solely for Grandpa's funeral, while there I'd asked for this secret meeting with my older brother, Willy, and my father to talk about the state of things.

To find a way out.

But now I looked once more at my phone and once more up and down the garden path and I thought: Maybe they've changed their minds. Maybe they're not going to come.

For half a second I considered giving up, going for a walk through the gardens by myself or heading back to the house where all my cousins were drinking and sharing stories of Grandpa.

Then, at last, I saw them. Shoulder to shoulder, striding towards me, they looked grim, almost menacing. More, they looked tightly aligned. My stomach dropped. Normally they'd be squabbling about one thing or another, but now they appeared to be in lockstep—in league.

The thought occurred: Hang on, are we meeting for a walk...or a duel?

I rose from the wooden bench, made a tentative step towards them, gave a weak smile. They didn't smile back. Now my heart really started thrashing in my chest. Deep breaths, I told myself.

Apart from fear, I was feeling a kind of hyper-awareness, and a hugely intense vulnerability, which I'd experienced at other key moments of my life.

Walking behind my mother's coffin.

Going into battle for the first time.

Giving a speech in the middle of a panic attack.

There was that same sense of embarking on a quest, and not knowing if I was up to it, while also fully knowing that there was no turning back. That Fate was in the saddle.

OK, Mummy, I thought, picking up the pace, here goes. Wish me luck.

We met in the middle of the path. *Willy? Pa? Hello.*

Harold.

Painfully tepid.

We wheeled, formed a line, set off along the gravel path over the little ivy-covered stone bridge.

The way we simply fell into this synchronous alignment, the way we wordlessly assumed the same measured paces and bowed heads, plus the nearness of those graves—how could anyone not be reminded of Mummy's funeral? I told myself not to think about that, to think instead about the pleasing crunch of our footsteps, and the way our words flew away like wisps of smoke on the wind.

Being British, being Windsors, we began chatting casually about the weather. We compared notes about Grandpa's funeral. He'd planned it all himself, down to the tiniest detail, we reminded each other with rueful smiles.

Small talk. The smallest. We touched on all secondary subjects and I kept waiting for us to get to the primary one, wondering why it was taking so long and also how on earth my father and brother could appear so calm.

I looked around. We'd covered a fair bit of terrain, and were now smack in the middle of the Royal Burial Ground, more up to our ankles in bodies than Prince Hamlet. Come to think of it...didn't I myself once ask to be buried here? Hours before I'd gone off to war my private secretary said I needed to choose the spot where my remains should be interred. *Should the worst happen, Your Royal Highness...war being an uncertain thing...*

There were several options. St. George's Chapel? The Royal Vault at Windsor, where Grandpa was being settled at this moment?

No, I'd chosen this one, because the gardens were lovely, and because it seemed peaceful.

Our feet almost on top of Wallis Simpson's face, Pa launched into a micro-lecture about this personage over here, that royal cousin over there, all the once-eminent dukes and duchesses, lords and ladies, currently residing beneath the lawn. A lifelong student of history, he had loads of information to share, and part of me thought we might be there for hours, and that there might be a test at the end. Mercifully, he stopped, and we carried on along the grass around the edge of the lake, arriving at a beautiful little patch of daffodils.

It was there, at last, that we got down to business.

I tried to explain my side of things. I wasn't at my best. For starters, I was still nervous, fighting to keep my emotions in check, while also striving to be succinct and precise. More, I'd vowed not to let this encounter devolve into another argument. But I quickly discovered that it wasn't up to me. Pa and Willy had their parts to play, and they'd come ready for a fight. Every time I ventured a new explanation, started a new line of thought, one or both of them would cut me off. Willy in particular didn't want to hear anything. After he'd shut me down several times, he and I began sniping, saying some of the same things we'd said for months—years. It got so heated that Pa raised his hands. *Enough!*

He stood between us, looking up at our flushed faces: *Please, boys—don't make my final years a misery.*

His voice sounded raspy, fragile. It sounded, if I'm being honest, old.

I thought about Grandpa.

All at once something shifted inside of me. I looked at Willy, really looked at him, maybe for the first time since we were boys. I took it all in: his familiar scowl, which had always been his default in dealings with me; his alarming baldness, more advanced than my own; his famous resemblance to Mummy, which was fading with time. With age. In some ways he was my mirror, in some ways he was my opposite. My beloved brother, my arch nemesis, how had that happened?

I felt massively tired. I wanted to go home, and I realized what a complicated concept home had become. Or maybe always was. I gestured at the gardens, the city beyond, the nation, and said: *Willy, this was supposed to be our home. We were going to live here the rest of our lives.*

You left, Harold.

Yeah—and you know why.

I don't.

You...don't?

I honestly don't.

I leaned back. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. It was one thing to disagree about who was at fault or how things might have been different, but for him to claim total ignorance of the reasons I'd fled the land of my birth—the land for which I'd fought and been ready to die—my Mother Country? That fraught phrase. To claim no knowledge of why my wife and I took the drastic step of picking up our child and just running like hell, leaving behind everything—house, friends, furniture? Really?

I looked up at the trees: *You don't know!*

Harold...I honestly don't.

I turned to Pa. He was gazing at me with an expression that said: *Neither do I.*

Wow, I thought. Maybe they really don't.

Staggering. But maybe it was true.

And if they didn't know why I'd left, maybe they just didn't know me. At all.

And maybe they never really did.

And to be fair, maybe I didn't either.

The thought made me feel colder, and terribly alone.

But it also fired me up. I thought: *I have to tell them.*

How can I tell them?

I can't. It would take too long.

Besides, they're clearly not in the right frame of mind to listen.

Not now, anyway. Not today.

And so:

Pa? Willy?

World?

Here you go.

part 1 out of the night that covers
me



1.

THERE WERE ALWAYS STORIES.

People would whisper now and then about folks who hadn't fared well at Balmoral. The long-ago Queen, for instance. Mad with grief, she'd locked herself inside Balmoral Castle and vowed never to come out. And the very proper former prime minister: he'd called the place "surreal" and "utterly freaky."

Still, I don't think I heard those stories until much later. Or maybe I heard them and they didn't register. To me Balmoral was always simply Paradise. A cross between Disney World and some sacred Druid grove. I was always too busy fishing, shooting, running up and down "the hill" to notice anything off about the feng shui of the old castle.

What I'm trying to say is, I was happy there.

In fact, it's possible that I was never happier than that one golden summer day at Balmoral: August 30, 1997.

We'd been at the castle for one week. The plan was to stay for another. Same as the previous year, same as the year before that. Balmoral was its own micro-season, a two-week interlude in the Scottish Highlands to mark the turn from high summer to early autumn.

Granny was there too. Naturally. She spent most of every summer at Balmoral. And Grandpa. And Willy. And Pa. The whole family, with the exception of Mummy, because Mummy was no longer part of the family. She'd either bolted or been thrown out, depending on whom you asked, though I never asked anyone. Either way, she was having her own holiday elsewhere. Greece, someone said. No, Sardinia, someone said. No, no, someone chimed in, your mother's in Paris! Maybe it was Mummy herself who said that. When she phoned earlier that day for a chat? Alas, the memory lies, with a million others, on the other side of a high mental wall. Such a horrid, tantalizing feeling, to know they're over there, just on the other side, mere inches away—but the wall is always too high, too thick. Unscalable.

Not unlike the turrets of Balmoral.

Wherever Mummy was, I understood that she was with her new *friend*. That was the word everyone used. Not boyfriend, not lover. Friend. Nice enough bloke, I thought. Willy and I had just met him. Actually, we'd been with Mummy weeks earlier when *she* first met him, in St. Tropez. We were having a grand time, just the three of us, staying at some old gent's villa. There was much laughter, horseplay, the norm whenever Mummy and Willy and I were together, though even more so on that holiday. Everything about that trip to St. Tropez was heaven. The weather was sublime, the food was tasty, Mummy was smiling.

Best of all, there were jet skis.

Whose were they? Don't know. But I vividly remember Willy and me riding them out to the deepest part of the channel, circling while waiting for the big ferries to come. We used their massive wakes as ramps to get airborne. I'm not sure how we weren't killed.

Was it after we got back from that jet-ski misadventure that Mummy's friend first appeared? No, more likely it was just before. *Hello there, you must be Harry*. Raven hair, leathery tan, bone-white smile. *How are you today? My name is blah blah*. He chatted us up, chatted Mummy up. Specifically Mummy. Pointedly Mummy. His eyes plumping into red hearts.

He was cheeky, no doubt. But, again, nice enough. He gave Mummy a present. Diamond bracelet. She seemed to like it. She wore it a lot. Then he faded from my consciousness.

As long as Mummy's happy, I told Willy, who said he felt the same.

2.

A SHOCK TO THE SYSTEM, going from sun-drenched St. Tropez to cloud-shadowed Balmoral. I vaguely remember that shock, though I can't remember much else about our first week at the castle. Still, I can almost guarantee it was spent mostly outdoors. My family lived to be outdoors, especially Granny, who got cross if she didn't breathe at least an hour of fresh air each day. What we did outdoors, however, what we said, wore,

ate, I can't conjure. There's some reporting that we journeyed by the royal yacht from the Isle of Wight to the castle, the yacht's final voyage. Sounds lovely.

What I do retain, in crisp detail, is the physical setting. The dense woods. The deer-nibbled hill. The River Dee snaking down through the Highlands. Lochnagar soaring overhead, eternally snow-spattered. Landscape, geography, architecture, that's how my memory rolls. Dates? Sorry, I'll need to look them up. Dialogue? I'll try my best, but make no verbatim claims, especially when it comes to the nineties. But ask me about any space I've occupied—castle, cockpit, classroom, stateroom, bedroom, palace, garden, pub—and I'll re-create it down to the carpet tacks.

Why should my memory organize experience like this? Is it genetics? Trauma? Some Frankenstein-esque combination of the two? Is it my inner soldier, assessing every space as potential battlefield? Is it my innate homebody nature, rebelling against a forced nomadic existence? Is it some base apprehension that the world is essentially a maze, and you should never be caught in a maze without a map?

Whatever the cause, my memory is my memory, it does what it does, gathers and curates as it sees fit, and there's just as much truth in what I remember and how I remember it as there is in so-called objective facts. Things like chronology and cause-and-effect are often just fables we tell ourselves about the past. *The past is never dead. It's not even past.* When I discovered that quotation not long ago on BrainyQuote.com, I was thunderstruck. I thought, Who the *fook* is Faulkner? And how's he related to us Windsors?

And so: Balmoral. Closing my eyes, I can see the main entrance, the paneled front windows, the wide portico and three gray-black speckled granite steps leading up to the massive front door of whisky-colored oak, often propped open by a heavy curling stone and often manned by one red-coated footman, and inside the spacious hall and its white stone floor, with gray star-shaped tiles, and the huge fireplace with its beautiful mantel of ornately carved dark wood, and to one side a kind of utility room, and to the left, by the tall windows, hooks for fishing rods and walking sticks and rubber waders and heavy waterproofs—so many waterproofs, because

summer could be wet and cold all over Scotland, but it was biting in this Siberian nook—and then the light brown wooden door leading to the corridor with the crimson carpet and the walls papered in cream, a pattern of gold flock, raised like braille, and then the many rooms along the corridor, each with a specific purpose, like sitting or reading, TV or tea, and one special room for the pages, many of whom I loved like dotty uncles, and finally the castle’s main chamber, built in the nineteenth century, nearly on top of the site of another castle dating to the fourteenth century, within a few generations of another Prince Harry, who got himself exiled, then came back and annihilated everything and everyone in sight. My distant kin. My kindred spirit, some would claim. If nothing else, my namesake. Born September 15, 1984, I was christened Henry Charles Albert David of Wales.

But from Day One everyone called me Harry.

In the heart of this main chamber was the grand staircase. Sweeping, dramatic, seldom used. Whenever Granny headed up to her bedroom on the second floor, corgis at her heels, she preferred the lift.

The corgis preferred it too.

Near Granny’s lift, through a pair of crimson saloon doors and along a green tartan floor, was a smallish staircase with a heavy iron banister; it led up to the second floor, where stood a statue of Queen Victoria. I always bowed to her as I passed. *Your Majesty!* Willy did too. We’d been told to, but I’d have done it anyway. I found the “Grandmama of Europe” hugely compelling, and not just because Granny loved her, nor because Pa once wanted to name me after her husband. (Mummy blocked him.) Victoria knew great love, soaring happiness—but her life was essentially tragic. Her father, Prince Edward, Duke of Kent and Strathearn, was said to be a sadist, sexually aroused by the sight of soldiers being horsewhipped, and her dear husband, Albert, died before her eyes. Also, during her long, lonely reign, she was shot at eight times, on eight separate occasions, by seven different subjects.

Not one bullet hit the mark. Nothing could bring Victoria down.

Beyond Victoria’s statue things got tricky. Doors became identical, rooms interlocked. Easy to get lost. Open the wrong door and you might burst in on Pa while his valet was helping him dress. Worse, you might

blunder in as he was doing his headstands. Prescribed by his physio, these exercises were the only effective remedy for the constant pain in Pa's neck and back. Old polo injuries, mostly. He performed them daily, in just a pair of boxers, propped against a door or hanging from a bar like a skilled acrobat. If you set one little finger on the knob you'd hear him begging from the other side: *No! No! Don't open! Please God don't open!*

Balmoral had fifty bedrooms, one of which had been divided for me and Willy. Adults called it the nursery. Willy had the larger half, with a double bed, a good-sized basin, a cupboard with mirrored doors, a beautiful window looking down on the courtyard, the fountain, the bronze statue of a roe deer buck. My half of the room was far smaller, less luxurious. I never asked why. I didn't care. But I also didn't need to ask. Two years older than me, Willy was the Heir, whereas I was the Spare.

This wasn't merely how the press referred to us—though it was definitely that. This was shorthand often used by Pa and Mummy and Grandpa. And even Granny. The Heir and the Spare—there was no judgment about it, but also no ambiguity. I was the shadow, the support, the Plan B. I was brought into the world in case something happened to Willy. I was summoned to provide backup, distraction, diversion and, if necessary, a spare part. Kidney, perhaps. Blood transfusion. Speck of bone marrow. This was all made explicitly clear to me from the start of life's journey and regularly reinforced thereafter. I was twenty the first time I heard the story of what Pa allegedly said to Mummy the day of my birth: *Wonderful! Now you've given me an Heir and a Spare—my work is done.* A joke. Presumably. On the other hand, minutes after delivering this bit of high comedy, Pa was said to have gone off to meet with his girlfriend. So. Many a true word spoken in jest.

I took no offense. I felt nothing about it, any of it. Succession was like the weather, or the positions of the planets, or the turn of the seasons. Who had the time to worry about things so unchangeable? Who could bother with being bothered by a fate etched in stone? Being a Windsor meant working out which truths were timeless, and then banishing them from your mind. It meant *absorbing* the basic parameters of one's identity, knowing by instinct who you were, which was forever a byproduct of who you weren't.

I wasn't Granny.

I wasn't Pa.

I wasn't Willy.

I was third in line behind them.

Every boy and girl, at least once, imagines themselves as a prince or princess. Therefore, Spare or no Spare, it wasn't half bad to actually *be* one. More, standing resolutely behind the people you loved, wasn't that the definition of honor?

Of love?

Like bowing to Victoria as you passed?

3.

NEXT TO MY BEDROOM was a sort of round sitting room. Round table, wall mirror, writing desk, fireplace with cushioned hearth surround. In the far corner stood a great big wooden door that led to a bathroom. The two marble basins looked like prototypes for the first basins ever manufactured. Everything at Balmoral was either old or made to look so. The castle was a playground, a hunting lodge, but also a stage.

The bathroom was dominated by a claw-footed tub, and even the water spurting from its taps seemed old. Not in a bad way. Old like the lake where Merlin helped Arthur find his magic sword. Brownish, suggestive of weak tea, the water often alarmed weekend guests. *Sorry, but there seems to be something wrong with the water in my loo?* Pa would always smile and assure them that nothing was wrong with the water; on the contrary it was filtered and sweetened by the Scottish peat. *That water came straight off the hill, and what you're about to experience is one of life's finest pleasures—a Highland bath.*

Depending on your preference, your Highland bath could be Arctic cold or kettle hot; taps throughout the castle were fine-tuned. For me, few pleasures compared with a scalding soak, but especially while gazing out of the castle's slit windows, where archers, I imagined, once stood guard. I'd look up at the starry sky, or down at the walled gardens, picture myself