

# Princess Barbie

## by Paul Arinaga

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Helena had a little problem.

She was the only girl in her neighborhood, and she had two big brothers. She so wanted a little sister to play with.

“Let’s go outside,” said Michael, her older brother.

“Yeah, c’mon,” said Ethan, the oldest.

“Bring your Barbies, and we can have a Barbie war!” said Michael.

Helena brought her Barbies outside, and her brothers started making them fight each other on the mound of dirt by the empty lot near their house.

Michael got a little carried away and one of Helena’s favorite Barbies, California Girl, landed in a pile of mud.

“Oh, sorry,” said Michael, with a sheepish yet mischievous grin on his face.

Helena got mad.

“A-i-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e!” she screamed and stamped her feet.

Then “Wah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah!” she cried as she collected her Barbies and stomped off.

Ethan tried to comfort Helena but she just cried louder and ran away.

Finally he gave up and Helena’s brothers went to play football with the other neighborhood boys.

Helena was alone again.

She rinsed California Girl off in her Barbie swimming pool. Then she took out her most favorite Barbie.

“Come, Princess,” said Helena in a sweet voice. “Tick-a-tuk, tick-a-tuk, tick-a-tuk,” the horse trotted across the room with Princess Barbie in the saddle.

Princess Barbie was wearing a long, flowing gown of red satin and had a silvery crown on her head.

“You’re my best friend,” said Helena to the Princess. And it *seemed* like the Princess smiled in return with a special glint in her eyes.

“I wish you were real,” said Helena to the Princess.

Helena imagined that she was in a story and the Princess came to life and started talking to her. But, even though Helena had a strong imagination, somehow pretending just wasn’t the same as real life.

Then Helena remembered an envelope she’d seen in her father’s waste paper basket. Helena fished the envelope out of the trash and looked at it. On the outside of the envelope it said:

**“Use this New Mind Technology to Get Anything  
You Want in Life”**

She hurriedly opened the envelope and started reading the letter inside:

**“Dear Friend:**

**Discover how you can achieve your goals just by forming a clear picture of them in your mind...”**

Helena read the whole letter and, while she didn’t understand it all, she decided to try out what it said to do.

That evening before bed she pictured a beautiful princess riding up to her on a magnificent brown horse. The princess was wearing a flowing gown of red satin and had a silvery crown, just like her Barbie.

The next morning Helena jumped out of bed and ran outside.

She looked in the garage, behind the willow tree and at the empty lot, but there was no sign of any princess.

“Au gh-au gh,” she said to herself dejectedly.

“What’s the matter?” asked Ethan, who had come outside to play basketball.

“I tried to picture my princess like it said to do in this letter, but she didn’t come,” said Helena, waving the envelope.

“Well, maybe you have to keep on trying,” said Ethan wisely.

That evening right before bed, Helena tried to picture her Barbie princess again. This time she tried so hard that she could see every little detail of the Princess: the fine lace of her satin gown, her golden sandals and the intricate braids of her long brown hair.

The next morning Helena got up earlier than usual and rushed outside.

She looked all over the neighborhood, even checking every place twice to be sure. But there was no sign of any princess.

Helena re-read the letter about “Mind Technology”. In the fine print at the bottom it said: “Results may vary from person to person.”

Helena was discouraged. Maybe she was one of the people for whom “Mind Technology” just didn’t work.

Still, she really wanted to meet her princess so she kept picturing the princess riding up to her on a magnificent brown horse.

As the days stretched into weeks, some funny things started to happen.

First of all, Helena’s picture of the Princess got clearer and clearer. After one week, it was like seeing the Princess on TV. After two weeks, Helena even thought she could smell the Princess’ sweet perfume and feel the soft mane of the Princess’ horse.

Another funny thing was that as time went by Helena started to feel like the Princess and her horse were really there, even though they were only in her mind.

One morning, Helena was poking around in the bushes as usual looking for her Princess. She wasn’t sure how big the Princess would be when she finally did show up.

“Hey, watcha doin’?” asked Ralph, one of the neighborhood boys.

“I’m looking for my Princess,” said Helena without looking up.

“But you’re holding her,” said Ralph, pointing to the Barbie Princess in Helena’s hand.

“No, a REAL princess,” said Helena.

“You won’t find her there,” said Ralph, “but I know where you can see a real princess. C’mon!”

Ralph trotted off with Helena right behind him.

After going several blocs, he stopped in front of a big building. “Shakespearean Festival” read a banner hanging over the open air theater entrance.

Helena and Ralph peered through a hole in the fence. There was a large crowd of people watching actors on a stage. Just then a lady appeared riding a brown horse.

“It’s the Princess!” exclaimed Helena, jumping up and down excitedly. Only this lady wasn’t wearing a red gown and her horse looked a little clumsy.

Helena was excited, but she was too shy to go and talk with the Princess after the show ended.

The next day they went back to see the Princess, and the day after that, too.

But since the Princess wasn’t wearing red, Helena started to wonder if it was really *her* Princess. And the Princess was supposed to ride up to her, like in her daydream.

That evening Helena was feeling a bit discouraged. She’d been waiting a whole month for her real princess to appear. The family was just sitting down to dinner when...

“Ding-dong”

“Who could that be at this hour?” frowned Helena’s dad.

He opened the door.

There, standing in the door was an attractive-looking woman. Helena recognized her as the woman from the theater.

The woman was wearing a long, silky red dress and her long brown hair had streaks of silvery grey in it. Standing next to her was a little girl clutching a big, brown stuffed horse.

“Hello,” said the woman in a silky smooth voice. “I’m Esmerelda and this is Liesbeth. We’ve just moved in next door. Oh, I see you like Barbie’s, too,” she said, pointing to Helena’s Barbie Princess. Why don’t you come over to play tomorrow?”

After a brief chat, Esmerelda said “Bye,” smiling sweetly.

Helena wasn’t sure, but it *seemed* like Esmerelda had the same special glint in her eye as the Barbie Princess.

And what about the Barbie Princess?

Well, she never did appear exactly as in Helena’s daydream. But Helena was happy to play with her new friend and Liesbeth’s mom gave her her all kinds of fancy clothes so she felt just like a princess herself.

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## Learning Guide for "Princess Barbie"

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*Suitable for ages 7-10*

It's said that you don't always get what you want, but sometimes you get something better. Perhaps that's the lesson of this story.

### Discussion Questions

1. What is Helena's "little problem"?
2. After a while, Helena can picture her Princess very vividly (clearly) in her mind. Can you picture anything so clearly that you can smell and feel it?
3. What could be nice for Helena about a picture of the Princess in her mind? What could be nice for Helena about the real Princess?
4. Do you think Helena is silly or smart to keep on trying to get the Princess to appear using only her mind?
5. Does "Mind Technology" (picturing the Princess in her mind) work for Helena? Does a real princess appear?
6. At the end of the story, do you think Helena's happy? Why? Did she get what she wanted?

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