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ON THE ICE

“Put on your skates and follow me,” Demetra called to her cousin. “Hurry!”

The Diamond Princess was dressed in her favorite white velvet skating skirt and jacket. She slipped on her silver skates and leaped lightly onto the crystal pond. Then she skated as fast as she could toward the center of the ice, her hair flying behind her.

“Demetra, don’t skate so fast,” Sabrina shouted after her. “You’re much better at

this than I am. We don't do any skating where I live."

Sabrina was the Sapphire Princess. She lived in her palace at Blue Lake. It was a watery world of weeping willows and lily pads.

This was the total opposite of Demetra's kingdom. Her palace sat in the heart of the White Winterland, a world of ice and snow.

"I have something very important to ask you." Demetra spun around to face Sabrina. "But I don't want any of my people to hear."

"Is it about Winterfest?" Sabrina asked.

Winterfest, which would begin that evening, was one of the biggest events in the White Winterland. The festival was three wonderful days filled with music, dance, and feasts.



“Winterfest is fine,” Demetra said. “It’s Finley who’s the problem.”

Finley was a fluffy white fox who held the important job of being Demetra’s palace advisor.

“What’s happened?” Sabrina asked, catching hold of her cousin’s arm. “Did you two have a fight?”

Demetra sighed. “All we do is fight.”

“Oh, Demetra, that’s terrible,” Sabrina said. “How long has this been going on?”

“Practically since the day I was crowned the Diamond Princess,” Demetra replied. “But it’s gotten much worse since we started planning Winterfest.”

“What do you fight about?” Sabrina asked.

“Everything,” Demetra said, raising her hands in frustration. “This morning we fought over who would judge the ice sculptures.



And this afternoon we argued over where we would serve the hot cider and cookies after the ice show.”

Sabrina tapped her chin with one mittened hand. “I don’t like the sound of this.”

“Me, neither.” Demetra folded her arms across her chest. “I thought Finley was supposed to be my friend.”

“He is,” Sabrina replied. “Just like Zazz the butterfly is my friend and advisor.”

Demetra nodded. "And Hapgood the dragon is Roxanne's friend and advisor."

"And Arden the unicorn is Emily's," Sabrina added.

Roxanne and Emily were their cousins, the Ruby and Emerald princesses. They had all grown up at the Jewel Palace until King Regal and Queen Gemma gave each girl her own kingdom to rule. Roxanne was given the Red Mountains, and Emily reigned over the Greenwood.

"Then what's the matter with Finley?" Demetra asked.

"Maybe the problem isn't just Finley?" Sabrina said, pursing her lips. "Maybe it's you, too."

Demetra looked curious. "Me?"

Sabrina nodded. "Sometimes you can be a teensy bit bossy."

"Bossy!" Demetra gasped.

"When we were growing up," Sabrina continued, "you used to order Roxanne and Emily around all the time. And they didn't like it one bit."

Demetra dug at the ice with the toe of her skate but said nothing.

"Remember, you have to be a friend to have one," Sabrina reminded her.

"Well, maybe I am a little bossy," Demetra finally confessed. "But so is Finley. He thinks he knows everything about Winterfest."

"Finley probably does know a lot," Sabrina pointed out. "He grew up here. And this is your first Winterfest."

"But that doesn't give him the right to call me names," Demetra protested. "This morning he said I was just a pigheaded princess!"

"What!" Sabrina exclaimed in surprise.
"That's not a very nice thing to say."

"Princess Demetra!" a familiar voice shouted from behind them. It startled Demetra so much she nearly fell down.

"Finley!" Demetra gasped when she was finally able to turn around. The white fox was standing on the ice behind her.

As upset as she was with Finley, Demetra didn't want him to know she'd been talking about him. "How long have you been there?"

"I only just got here," Finley replied stiffly.
"I have a message to deliver."

Demetra responded in the same stiff way.
"What is your message?"

"There seems to be a problem at Sparkle Mountain." Finley pointed to the sky in the west. An odd greenish cloud had formed a circle around the tallest peak.



Demetra had never seen anything like it before. She forgot all about being angry with Finley and concentrated on her job as princess.

"This is very strange," she declared. "I had better go see what's the matter."

Finley nodded. "I've already arranged for a sleigh to take you to Sparkle Mountain."

The tinkling of harness bells rang in the crisp air as Rolf the reindeer pulled the crystal sleigh up beside them.

"Sabrina, will you oversee the rest of the Winterfest preparations?" Demetra asked.

Sabrina nodded. "You can count on me."

Demetra hurried to the crystal sleigh, but Finley hopped in ahead of her.

"I'm coming with you," the fox said.

Demetra put her hands on her hips. "I'm

sorry, Finley, but you have to stay here. Sabrina needs your help.”

“You’re the one who needs my help,” Finley said. “The road to Sparkle Mountain is very tricky.”

Demetra sighed. “I’m sure Rolf and I can figure it out. Now please get out of the sleigh.”

