

CHARACTER BUILDING LESSONS

CARL SOMMER

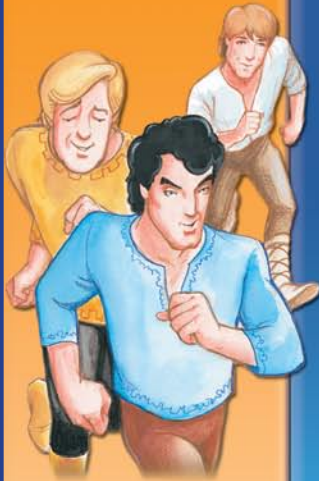
THE GREAT ROYAL RACE

About the Book

It was time for the beautiful princess Elizabeth to be married. Charming Simon and the strong, handsome Thomas came to ask her hand in marriage. And then there was John, the handsome but not-so-flashy commoner whom Elizabeth had first noticed helping an old man get his wagon out of a muddy ditch.

Not sure about the true character of her three suitors, Elizabeth had them run a race to reveal what they were really like in difficult situations. Tempted by distractions planted by the wise king, two of the three runners failed to keep their eyes on their goal. But the commoner John stayed focused on the beautiful princess—he passed the test of the Great Royal Race.

This inspiring story by Carl Sommer shows how goal setting, perseverance, and loyalty will bring success.



Main Virtues

Citizenship/Caring/Community Service

Other Virtues

Appreciation, Assertiveness, Caring, Commitment, Compassion, Courage, Courtesy, Diligence, Initiative, Integrity, Kindness, Loyalty, Obedience to Parents, Patience, Perseverance, Positive Mental Attitude, Purity, Respect, Self-Discipline, Self-Reliance, and Temperance



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Doing Good to All

The day John and the princess first met, he was covered with mud. He was helping an old man get his wagon out of a ditch.

The princess asked those nearby, “Who is this man?”

They said, “His name is John. He is a good man—always helping someone.”

What a reputation to have.

Dating and Friendship

From early childhood Elizabeth’s mother had taught her, “You are a wealthy princess, and many men will want to marry you. Be careful, and choose your prince wisely.”

The queen would explain, “Seek a man of good character—one who will honor and respect you. Such a man will never ask you to do anything wrong.

“You must find the one who truly loves you. Then it will not matter to him whether you are rich or poor, sick or well, a princess or a peasant.”

The princess listened to her mother’s wise advice about dating and friendship.

Seeking Advice from Parents

Elizabeth had a problem. She wondered, “If I choose a prince, how can I be certain he really loves me? Perhaps he wants only to be rich and famous.”

At last she decided, “I’ll ask Father. He’ll know what to do!”

Again Elizabeth made a wise choice by going to her father and asking for advice.

Being Thankful

After Elizabeth’s father gave his advice on how to determine a true lover, she thanked him. We should be thankful when someone does something for us.

Greed

Simon was greedy. When he heard about the race to see who would marry the princess, he said, “If I win, I’ll become a wealthy prince!”

Simon’s main interest was money, and marrying the princess was a way for him to gain wealth.

Pride

Thomas was proud and wanted to show off as a ruler. He said, “If I win, I’ll be famous!” Then he stuck out his chest and bellowed, “For I...will be the next king!”

Thomas’ primary interest was in promoting himself, and marrying the princess was a means to achieve his goal.

Loyalty

John said, “I’ll marry the most lovely and kind person in the world.”

John was loyal, and not like greedy Simon who was interested in becoming wealthy, or like Thomas who was interested in becoming famous. John had the right motive about marrying the beautiful princess.

Working Diligently Leads to Success

Simon, Thomas, and John trained hard for the race. Whether pouring rain or searing heat, the suitors ran...and ran...and ran. They knew that to be successful they had to be diligent and work hard.

Perseverance

Thomas and Simon were much faster runners than John, but John purposed in his heart, “I may not be the fastest, but I’m going to try as hard as I can.”

Learning to do your best and persevering are important traits of the successful.

Keeping Your Eyes on the Goal

When Simon and Thomas saw the valuable gold coins, their hearts beat with excitement as they quickly picked up the gold. But not John. He did not miss a step. His heart was fixed on the kind-hearted princess.

Greedy Simon and Thomas were easily sidetracked from their goal of winning the race to marry the princess. If you desire success, you must learn to keep your eyes on the goal.

Questions

1. What kind of person was the princess?
The princess was kind and gracious—the delight of the kingdom.
2. Name the three suitors of the princess?
The three suitors were Simon, Thomas, and John.

3. What did Simon desire?

Simon desired to be a wealthy prince.

4. What kind of person was Simon?

Simon was greedy. He wanted to become rich.

5. What did Thomas desire?

Thomas desired to become the next king.

6. What kind of person was Thomas?

Thomas was proud. He wanted to show off.

He would ride a white horse and parade through the towns. Then all the people would rush from their homes just to catch a glimpse of him.

7. When did John and the princess first meet?

They met as he was helping an old man get his wagon out of a ditch.

8. What kind of person was John?

He was a good man who was always helping someone.

What a great reputation to have.

9. Why is it important to have a good reputation?

People with good reputations can be trusted to do what is right.

People who can be trusted are often the ones who get the best promotions in life.

10. When Elizabeth was a child, what did her mother begin to teach her?

Elizabeth's mother taught her, "You are a wealthy princess, and many men will want to marry you. Be careful, and choose your prince wisely."

11. What kind of man did Elizabeth's mother tell her to look for?

Elizabeth's mother said, "Seek a man of good character—one who will honor and respect you. Such a man will never ask you to do anything wrong. You must find the one who truly loves you. Then it will not matter to him whether you are rich or poor, sick or well, a princess or a peasant."

What wise advice about dating.

12. Why is Elizabeth mother's advice about dating so important?

Elizabeth mother wanted to protect her daughter by telling her to

find a person of good character for such a person will never ask her to do anything wrong.

13. What did Elizabeth wonder about her three suitors?

Elizabeth wondered, "If I choose a prince, how can I be certain he really loves me? Perhaps he wants only to be rich and famous."

What a wise decision. Elizabeth did not let the emotion of dating stop her from examining her suitors. Elizabeth was interested in finding the true character of her suitors.

14. Where did Elizabeth go to seek help?

Elizabeth went to her father.

Elizabeth was wise; she went to her parents for advice. Notice also that Elizabeth thanked her father for his advice.

15. Why is it wise to go to one's parents for advice?

Parents love their children the most, and they want what is best for them.

16. What did Elizabeth tell her three suitors?

Elizabeth told her three suitors, "His Majesty, the King, has planned a race. It is a test of true love. The winner of the Great Royal Race shall be my prince."

17. What did greedy Simon say he would do if he won the race?

Simon said, "If I win, I'll become a wealthy prince."

Simon's main interest was money, and marrying the princess would help him get wealthy.

18. What did proud Thomas say he would do if he won the race?

Thomas said, "If I win, I'll be famous!"

Thomas was proud, and marrying the princess would help him show off.

19. What did kind-hearted John say he would do if he won the race?

John said, "If I win, I'll marry the most lovely and kind person in the world."

Simon and Thomas were selfish. They were thinking about only themselves. Unselfish John was thinking about only the princess.

20. Why would it be unwise to marry a selfish person?

It would be unwise to marry a selfish person because a selfish person thinks only of himself.

To have a happy marriage each partner must love one another.

21. How hard did Simon, Thomas, and John train for the race?

Simon, Thomas, and John all worked hard to win the race. Whether pouring rain or searing heat, the suitors ran...and ran...and ran.

They knew that to be successful they had to be diligent and work hard. If you want to become successful, you need to do the same.

22. Where did the king, queen, and princess sit for the Great Royal Race?

The king, queen, and the princess sat in the Royal Grandstand.

23. It was true that Thomas and Simon were much faster than John, but what did John purpose to do?

John purposed in his heart, "I may not be the fastest, but I'm going to try as hard as I can."

24. Why is learning to do your best and persevering one of the most important traits of becoming successful?

A person doing their best and persevering is not a quitter.

One will find that those are the people who become successful. They work hard and do not give up.

25. What did the first servant do when he spotted the runners?

The first servant threw out three golden coins.

26. What did Simon and Thomas do when they spotted the valuable coins?

Simon and Thomas quickly picked up the coins.

27. What did John do when he saw the coins?

John did not miss a step—he kept running. His heart was fixed on the kind-hearted princess.

28. Why was John able to pass up the coins?

John was able to pass up the coins because he was not selfish and greedy. He had one goal of marrying the kindhearted princess, and he was not going to let anything interfere with his goal.

29. When they came to the final turn, what did the runners see on the ground?

The runners saw three more pieces of gold that were much larger than the others.

30. What did Simon and Thomas do when they saw these large pieces of gold?

Simon and Thomas dove for the gold. Then they wrestled and argued for the third piece of gold.

31. What did John do when he saw the gold that was larger than the others?

John never even looked at it. He kept running and running.

John kept his eye on the goal of winning the race.

32. Who won the race?

The commoner won the race.

33. Why did John win The Great Royal Race?

John won The Great Royal Race because he persevered. He never lost his focus of the prize of marrying the princess.

34. In all the towns and villages, what reputation did Simon and Thomas have for losing the race?

Simon and Thomas were known as the foolish ones.

35. John's friends said to him, "You weren't born to rule." What happened to John in the end?

John became a very wise and great king.

Never let your friends discourage you from your dreams. Set your goals high, and then pursue them. The road may be difficult, but many successful people have overcome many obstacles on the road to success.