



# MARRYING A BRITISH TITLE

or

## So he's not a Prince. Will a Marquess do?

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**"Okay, where's my Prince Charming?"** Haven't you asked that question at least once in your life? But maybe marrying a prince isn't all it's cracked up to be. What's left? Let's take a brief tour of British titles and peerages.

### IT'S GOOD TO BE THE KING.

That may be, but is it good to be the Queen? It is true that Queen Elizabeth is the wealthiest person in Great Britain and Prince Charles comes in second. No sense marrying a prince if he's a pauper. But is money enough? You'd have to go through life as "Your Royal Highness." And if your Prince becomes King, then you've graduated to "Your Majesty." A heavy handle. Not interested in the semi-available Prince of Wales? Is Prince William too young for you? Then check out the next prestitious title, or Option 2.

### THE DUKE.

No, not John Wayne. A Dukedom is the highest degree of the British peerage. If you marry in, you get to be called "Duchess" or "Your Grace." Amazing! According to *The Book of the British Rich*, by Philip Beresford and *The Sunday Times of London*, only ten of the 400 wealthiest people are Dukes. Talk about being in demand! *The Associated Press* states that the sixth Duke of Westminster said, that "he received 500 marriage proposals by the time he was twenty-one." The competition is stiff out there, ladies. Which leads us to Option 3.

### YOU SAY MARQUESS, I SAY MARQUIS.

Let's not call the whole thing off. But what is the difference? For one thing, married to a Marquis, you'd be a Marquise. Wed to a Marquess, you'd have to drag around "Marchioness." Seriously though, Marquis is French for Marquess. Or vice-versa. One nice thing about this title is that you could be called "Your Ladyship" by your employees. Picture yourself sailing into a room under that moniker! "My Lady" also can be used. My Fair Lady has a certain ring, doesn't it? No Marquesses available? Try Option 4.

### AN EARL'S PEARL.

Figure this one out. Married to an Earl, your title would be... Countess? What happened to Count? Hmm, perhaps that explains the strange rank of Viscount. Anyway, as a Countess, you'd follow the same usage as a Marchioness--which is okay by me. After Majesty, Highness, and Grace, "Lady" is a more down-to-earth term. All the Earls taken? Time to use Option 5.

### DOWN FOR THE [VIS]COUNT.

And you thought Marchioness was odd! How about Viscountess--the wife of a Viscount. Pronounced "vi-countess," the "S" is silent. *The Book of the British Rich* lists thirteen viscounts among the 400 wealthiest Brits. Now I'm afraid we've really come a step down here. Instead of your children being known as Lords and Ladies, which is usually the case for the higher titles, your children will have to bear the term, "The Honorable" or "The Honourable" in front of their names--whether they are honorable or not. Heavy burden to place on a kid, don't you think? Marrying a Viscount not for you? Option 6 is next.

### A BARON OF BEEF.

Oh, dear. A Baronage is the lowest degree of the peerage. As a Baroness, your husband still can be called "My Lord" and you, "My Lady." Phew! Your kids are Honorables, though. Bummer. Still can't find your dream man? How about Option 7.

### BARONET OR MARIONETTE?

True, a Baronet is a commoner, the lowest hereditary title. He'd be called "Sir" while you'd be a "Lady." The question here is, would you be a baronetess? Is there such a word? The experts differ. FYI, *Webster's Dictionary* doesn't recognize the word. On the plus side, your kids wouldn't be under any compunction to behave in a commendable manner, i.e., honorably. What a relief! Time's running out. Still unhitched? Consider Option 8.

### KNIGHT AND DAY, YOU ARE THE ONE.

If your knight in shining armor has been a real prince--maybe he performed a special task for the monarchy--he then can be knighted. Call him "Sir," will you? As his wife, you're not a knightess, but a "Lady" again. However, if *you* were knighted, (assuming you're British) you'd be called a... "Dame." Is that a compliment? No knights for you? Run out of British titles? What to do? There's still tried and true Option 9.

### LOOKING FOR MR. [W]RIGHT.

The key word here is "Mr." There are plenty of Misters roaming the globe. The wife of a Mister is, of course, a Missus, or a Mrs., or a Ms, or, well, you get the picture. Say, let's forget British titles. With Mr. Right or Wright, how could you go wrong?