

19093 PRINCESS MEGAN MARKLE

It has been a good year for a fairy tale. In Britain alone, where Brexit continues to cause chaos, where more and more people are relying on food banks and where a national homelessness problem has spiraled, there has been due cause for escapism. As if on cue, here was a wayward red-haired prince who had fallen for a sweet-eyed American beauty. Here were bright dresses and glorious hats; mugs, flags and magnets to decorate our homes with emblems of their love. They would live happily ever after and eat cucumber sandwiches with Queen Elizabeth.

The lead-up to the wedding was marked by a rampant royal hysteria. On the day itself, a spring Saturday of perfect God-sent weather, there was a hush in the streets that happens only in moments of small-screen global spectacle, millions of people watching \$40 million carefully spent. Like all fairy tales, this story has a familiar arc: the prince, the romance, a ride in a horse-drawn carriage. A significant variation, though, is that our heroine is a self-made career woman and an avowed feminist. The question now seems less about what the royal family might do for Markle, than what she might do for them.

According to a recent survey, Prince Harry is now the most popular member of the royal family, and his new wife likely has something to do with the broadening of his appeal.

Markle has become the epitome of what is popularly described as “the good immigrant”, the newcomer who pleases, aligns with or is of some benefit to the host country. She is what is conventionally presented in the mainstream as the acceptable face of blackness, pale enough to move through majestic luncheons and palace rooms, while at the same time making the 2019 Powerlist of the one hundred most powerful black people in Britain, her African heritage simultaneously acknowledged and celebrated.

Yet any speculation that Markle’s presence in the monarchy heralds a step forward in Britain’s detachment from its colonial past is as ridiculous as the long-quashed idea of Barack Obama effecting a post-race age. She is simply a woman who fell in love.

What seems more at threat, more pressing, is a certain ferociousness of feminism. Is there really space in the British monarchy for a once precocious activist? Is it possible to be a good princess, a good immigrant and a good feminist all at the same time?