

## IN HER SHADOW

Diana wasn't deliberately listening to her mum talking on the phone but she couldn't help pricking up her ears when she heard her own name mentioned.

"I'm sorry to say that Diana is totally eclipsed by Princess in everything she does."

Diana was mortified. How could her mother say such a thing? It was bad enough calling the twin sisters Princess and Diana, but did she always have to be comparing them in this way?

Yes, it was true that Princess, who had been the elder by ten minutes, was taller and more attractive but she, Diana was the brighter of the two.

The sisters were close but Princess was better liked and had more friends. The twins weren't identical but Diana often wished they had been.

Princess was pretty with a slim, attractive figure. She was blessed with naturally straight hair whereas Diana had to artificially straighten hers. Even so, it always went frizzy in the rain.

Boys were always more interested in Princess. Diana realised when she was in her early teens that the boys she met simply used Diana by way of an introduction to her better looking sister. "Oh, so you're Princesses' little sister," they would say.

Little sister. Huh!

In the end Diana decided that it just wasn't worth trying to compete with Princess. She wrote in her diary, "I'll just have to find something else in which to excel."

Diana persuaded her parents to let her enrol for drama school. Lessons were in the mornings and the rest of the time was taken up with singing, dancing and acting, all of which she loved. She found she had a talent for mimicry and that she could make people laugh. Away from Princess, people saw her as an individual and Diana was able to develop her own personality.

Performing at open mic events, Diana discovered that audiences appreciated her self-deprecating humour. Soon she found she was being asked to appear at local comedy clubs. And then, joy of joys, whilst performing in a night club, Diana was asked to appear on the radio where no one cared about her looks or her frizzy hair. As time went on she began to make a real name for herself as a comedian.

What about Princess? She ended up marrying young and having children early. With all the stresses and strains of bringing up a young family, her looks soon faded. Although she felt happy and fulfilled, she never achieved the fame that Diana enjoyed but was very proud of her sister's success.

It's possible you may have seen Diana when last year she received the National Comedy Award. In her acceptance speech she said:

"I owe a great debt to my mother. If I had not overheard her saying I was eclipsed by my sister, I would always have stayed in her shadow. But my mother's remark spurred me on to make something of myself and for that I will be forever grateful."