

**The importance of being ready. A modern version of the parable of the wise and foolish virgins.
See Matthew 25: 1-13**

Jim, John, Margaret, Mary, Jerry and Miriam were young teenage friends living in the village of Greater Puddleswish. Mary had been checking up on the fan club page for Victoria Beckham, the former Spice Girl and had noticed that Victoria and her husband David were travelling from their home to a nearby town the next day and thought that it was almost certain she would have to travel through their village. The problem was that although they knew the day of the event and that it was in the evening, they had no idea what time she might pass through their village.

“Wouldn’t it be great if we happened to be by the road when the car comes through”, said John. “She might even wave to us!”

“Yes,” screamed Miri, “Let’s camp out and wait for her”. Everyone thought it was a good idea. But since they had no idea when she would be passing by they decided to all meet up at 8 o’clock the following morning at a place where they would get the best view of cars coming round the bend that led into the village.

So it was that at 8.00 all the girls were there and the boys arrived a few moments later. The boys noticed that all three girls had brought banners they had prepared the evening before with words such as “Victoria we love you” and a big red heart on them. “Why didn’t we think of that”, grumbled Jim.

Hour after hour went by and there was no sign of anything that looked like it might have been a car for celebrities. There were just the usual vans, lorries and local cars. The boys started to get bored and kicked a ball around. After two hours Jerry said he was hungry, and John said he was feeling cold. They noticed that the girls had brought coats with them just in case it did get cold. They had also brought some camping chairs to sit on. The boys hadn’t really thought of anything like that.

The last straw was when Margaret opened a bag and brought out a flask of hot soup and some sandwiches. “Great,” said Jerry, “Food at last, I’m starving”

But Margaret said that they had only brought enough for the girls and that they had prepared everything very early that morning and had expected the boys to do the same.

“That’s it!” said Jerry grumpily. “I’m starving and cold and I’m going home. Come on boys. Let’s see if my mum can get something for the three of us.” And with that they set off, kicking the ball as they went.

About ten minutes after they had left Mary spotted a very posh looking limousine coming round the bend at the far end of the village. Quickly the girls jumped to their feet and picked up the banners they had prepared. As the big car swished past them they saw that the windows were tinted so they couldn’t see in. But then, to their amazement it suddenly stopped and reversed back towards them. Then it stopped and out stepped David Beckham and right behind him was Victoria.

“Hi girls,” she said, “How did you know we were coming or what time we were coming?” Miri explained how Mary had done the research and how they had prepared just in case she came that way.

“Well I think you’re all great. If you have your mobile phones you can take some selfies if you would like to.” Like to! Their phones were in their hands in a flash and each of them posed with Victoria for a photo they would treasure for the rest of their lives. The David and Victoria got back into their limousine and the driver whisked them away, with the girls standing waving as it sped off.

Just then the boys turned up – just in time to see the car disappear round a bend.

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