

Portrait of royalty's future

ALEXANDRA SHULMAN



There are moments, rare and hugely memorable, when a photograph captures something far greater than simply the subject in front of the lens. When the story it encapsulates is so much bigger than what we immediately see.

The picture of the Duchess of Cambridge looking out from the windows of the black car taking her to St George's Chapel, Windsor, for Prince Philip's funeral is such an image — potent and fascinating. We can see the future.

Royal photographer Chris Jackson has captured an unusual degree of engagement from the Duchess who rarely, apparently on the advice of Philip himself, looks directly at the camera so the emphasis is on what she does, not what her eyes tell us.

Jackson's portfolio is filled with numerous (generally happy) pictures of the Cambridge family at home and abroad — on their tours of Canada and India, and countless touching moments with the children.

Intriguingly, he is also the husband of Natasha Archer, the Duchess' long-time fashion adviser, who has helped her find a modern and increasingly distinctive signature style.

Of course, funerals are not fashion shows but an occasion as important and emotional as this ceremonial farewell to the Duke of Edinburgh — watched by millions across the world — was not the time to throw on any old black thing, grabbed from the back of the cupboard.

Once the Duke was hospitalised, Catherine, along with the whole family, would have suspected that such an event might sadly be looming and would have had plenty of opportunity to consider what she would wear when the day finally arrived.

Her outfit bears all the hallmarks of the look that she has made her own. A chic, black Roland Mouret dress, narrowly tailored to emphasise her slim



Picture: Chris Jackson

figure, long-line, which her height allows her to carry off, softened by the asymmetric bow at the neckline.

Accessorised with some of the staggeringly beautiful jewellery she is able to borrow from the Queen's Collection — in this case the Japanese pearl choker, featuring four strands of pearls and a diamond clasp, and Bahrain pearl diamond drop earrings — she looked, well, perfect.

Black became the colour of mourning only when Queen Victoria adopted it after the death of her beloved Albert.

Because she was grieving for so many years, and since, in those days, the Court followed her lead and what the Court adopted was then followed by the general public, it became practice to wear black across the empire.

But it remains a shade that can be drab and draining — pitfalls Catherine spectacularly avoids. Instead, she looks powerfully full of life, clear of purpose and duty as she travels alone to the church while her husband walks behind his grandfather's coffin.

It is now some years since she and I first met, when I was

editor-in-chief of British Vogue and she was a recently engaged Kate Middleton.

At the time I remember being impressed by her height and poise as she stood in front of a fireplace at Clarence House, smiling and friendly but even then with unusual grace.

We were talking about what she might wear for her wedding and I was struck by how eager she was to listen to what I had to say and process it — asking intelligent questions and then offering considered replies.

That willingness to inquire and engage has been a marker of her behaviour during her life with Prince William and has no doubt been one of the qualities that have led her to become the extraordinarily adept and compelling wife of the future king that she is today.

In this picture we see the years of experience she now has of being a member of the royal family.

Not someone born into the strictures and structures of that clan — in fact, quite the opposite — but someone who has made it her business to learn how to deal with the demands that will be made and expectations that will be had, no matter whether

she is seen larking around with the children and a puppy or, as here, on an occasion of historic solemnity.

A death in anyone's family is difficult and upsetting. Previously ingrained roles shift, an unfamiliar emptiness appears in a place once filled.

No doubt over the weeks since the Duke's death, as well as coping with her own sadness, she would have been trying to support her husband.

And explain to their children, George, Charlotte and Louis, that they will no longer be able to see their great-grandfather, with whom they would frequently spend time around the Sandringham estate.

And, of course, the Duchess would be having to deal with the presence of Prince Harry for the first time since he and his wife threw the family under the bus in the Oprah Winfrey interview — not least with Meghan targeting her personally.

This picture shows the Duchess taking on board the responsibility not only of her place in her family but of her royal role, a responsibility which has become just that much greater as the family

adapt and move on. What is striking here is the strength in those clear hazel eyes, as always immaculately made up with her favourite deep brown shadow and liner, beneath strong dark brows.

The lower half of her face is covered by her mask (an unusually attractive one that reveals her sculpted cheekbones) which just meets the small net veil through which she looks. The combination both conceals and attracts in a potent mix that adds to the image's allure.

But, as appealing as the jewels, the veil, the make-up and the glossy chignon are, they are not the story of this picture.

No, that is something quite else. The coming of age of our future queen.

A glimpse of what is ahead for us as a nation.

We see a woman confidently in possession of a unique space and destiny.

She is very clearly no longer a young royal like the others present on the day — Beatrice and Eugenie, Zara Tindall or Louise Mountbatten-Windsor — nor a member of the older generation of women represented by Princess Anne and the Duchess of Cornwall.

The woman looking out from that cream leather back seat appears a different figure from the one I worked with in 2016 to shoot a cover for the centenary issue of Vogue.

That Catherine saw herself as a young mother nesting in the country as she learnt how to hold the royal reins.

She didn't want to be seen in ballgowns and tiaras.

The cover shows her smiling unaffectedly in a trench coat leaning on the handlebars of a push-bike.

Of course, those photographs showed what she wanted to show and were the result of a collaboration between a magazine team and the Duchess and her advisers, and so in their own way they were a fictional construct.

This picture here, despite the grandeur of the surroundings, the clothes and occasion, is far more real.

It's both a snapshot in time and a portrait of the future of majesty and monarchy.

Real reason they refuse to say why you didn't get the job

GARY MARTIN



It is the most frustrating part of the job search. Rejected candidates want to know why they did not land a job yet employers do not want to tell them.

More often than not requests for feedback will be met with flaky platitudes — or worse, silence.

The question is: why do employers shy away from giving feedback to unsuccessful applicants?

The reasons for their silence might surprise you.

Most employers want to avoid

discomfort associated with passing on negative feedback.

Some argue candidates try to use feedback sessions as a "second go" interview even when another candidate has been announced to fill the role.

Other employers claim rejected candidates become defensive and emotional because they do not want to hear negative feedback.

And some employers are happy to share feedback but will not respond to requests that appear to question the validity of a hiring decision.

But the overwhelming reason why employers keep their thoughts on job applicants to themselves is a fear of being

accused of discrimination.

Giving feedback that a candidate is too experienced, for example, may be interpreted as age discrimination.

Providing feedback to the applicant who wore a hijab to an interview that they may lack the personal presentation required for the role could be viewed as discrimination on religious grounds.

And telling the applicant who talked openly during the interview about her four children that she was unlikely to have the flexibility required for the role may be discrimination on the basis of the individual's family circumstances.

While the process of refusing

feedback or ghosting unsuccessful applicants causes considerable angst for job seekers, it causes problems for employers, too.

Failing to provide at least some useful advice can portray an employer as heartless, cold and lacking a people focus and may trigger unwelcome and unflattering workplace reviews.

The advice for those seeking feedback is to ask targeted questions including how to improve interview techniques, the types of experience that could make them a stronger candidate and whether the list of referees should have been stronger.

On occasions where feedback

is offered up it can be useful. "Avoid swearing during interviews", "you should not read from your PowerPoint slides during a presentation" and "make eye contact with the panel members" are all good tips that employers may provide.

Most importantly, though, the way applicants portrays themselves throughout a feedback session may leave the door open for another vacancy with the company — or completely kill off any future consideration.

Professor Gary Martin is chief executive officer with the Australian Institute of Management WA