

The Princess

and

the Gardener

by
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Chapter 1 The Perfect Day

The crimson sky was glowing like fire, flickering flames reflecting in the still water of the lake. A black cloud moving slowly across the sky was the only blemish. On closer examination, the cloud became a mass of fruit bats leaving the shelter of the tall trees surrounding the lake. These 'flying foxes', with the broad strokes of their huge wings added to the peaceful scene. Walking along the lakeside were two figures, silhouetted against the fiery water. Zooming in on the silhouettes, one of them was a handsome young man in a dark suit with a flower pinned onto the jacket. The other was a beautiful young woman wearing an expensive gown. On her head was a crown and she was carrying a small bouquet of flowers. Danny, for that was the name of the young man, was with his bride. They had been married just hours before. The bride was happier than she'd ever been in all her life. The sun was setting at the end of a perfect day.

It was always like this. Sometimes the sky was a deeper shade of crimson, or the cloud of flying foxes sometimes varied in size and shape. All the rest stayed the same, though. When Danny awoke from his dream, for that was what it really was (perfect days only happen in dreams, don't they?), he had a broad grin on his face. He was also a little disappointed because he never found out what happened after the sun had set. The dream was essentially always the same, though, and always ended when the fiery sun was extinguished by the waters of the peaceful lake.

Danny got up and went downstairs for breakfast. His parents were already there. His mother placed a big plate of eggs on toast in front of him.

'Have you been dreaming again?' his father asked. 'You've got that big stupid grin on your face again!'

Danny had told his parents about the dream. In fact, they got fed up of hearing about it. It happened so often.

'Eat your eggs on toast,' said his mother. 'There's plenty of work to do in the garden today. I want to plant those seedlings so you'll need to do some weeding.'

Danny gobbled down his breakfast, brushed his teeth and went out to the garden shed. He put on his big boots and gardening gloves and started pulling out weeds.

'That boy's got nothing in his head except stupid dreams!, said his father. 'He'll come to no good, you'll see.'

'Don't be so hard on the boy,' said Danny's mum. 'He's still young and it's good to have dreams while you're young. He'll grow out of it in the end. Everybody does.' She thought about the dreams she had had as a young girl. And how those dreams had died as soon as she had married the man she was now talking to.

But Danny kept having the dream. He didn't seem to grow out of it. For the next five years, until his twentieth birthday, he would come down to breakfast with a broad grin. And for the next five years, he was told by his father 'he'd come to no good'. In the end, Danny heard it so often that he started believing it too.

'Oh well,' he thought to himself. 'If that's my future, I can't change it.' But deep down in his heart, Danny knew that, just maybe, he might end up marrying a beautiful, young girl. The stuff of dreams!

Chapter 2 Something in the Air

Danny enjoyed working in the garden. It was hard work but he felt good about it. He enjoyed pulling up the weeds so that the flowers and vegetables could get more water and air. He enjoyed spreading chicken manure around the garden to give the plants a 'special feast'. He put dead leaves around the roots of the plants to keep them cool and moist. He had more worms per square metre than anyone else around. His flower beds and vegetable garden were the best in the village. He seemed to have a special talent when it came to growing things.

'Our Danny's got green fingers, you know,' said his mum one day.

'That may be true,' replied his father. 'But that boy will come to no good in the end. You'll see.'

Danny's vegetables were so good that his mother took them down to the market at the weekend and sold them. She always came back home before noon because she sold his vegetables very quickly. Everyone wanted Danny's tomatoes and carrots. They were the best.

This went on for some time until one day, a police car stopped outside Danny's house. Two policemen got out of the car and walked up to the house. Danny could see them as he worked on his cabbages, spreading a large pile of chicken pooh around the plants. The policemen sniffed the air and looked disgusted.

The two big men knocked on the front door. Danny's mum answered the door and Danny heard the policemen asking something about his father. Mum let them into the house and closed the door. She looked outside first to make sure none of the neighbours was watching. After all, it wasn't every day the police came visiting in this village. Danny wondered what they wanted but thought no more about it as he tenderly cared for the pumpkins, pulling up any weeds which might steal their food and prevent their growth.

After a while the two policemen came out of the house. Danny's father was with them. He was holding his hands together in front of him. A ray of sunlight reflected off the metal handcuffs which held his father's hands together. Danny's mum was crying. He heard something about 'embezzlement', a word he'd never heard before, but it seemed his father had been helping himself to some of the cash from the bank where he'd worked for the last twenty-five years.

As Danny watched his father climb into the police car, he thought again about the words he'd heard so often: 'That boy will come to no good. You'll see.'

But now, it seemed, it was his father who was 'coming to no good', as they could all see, even the neighbours who were peering out through their living room and bedroom curtains. Danny felt sorry for his mother. He didn't feel much for his father, though.

He got back to the weeding and turned his mind from his father's problems. He didn't spread any more chicken pooh, though. He felt there was enough of that flying around already.

Chapter 3 Time for Action!

That evening Danny put his garden tools in the shed and went inside the house. His mother was still crying. He'd almost forgotten about his father's adventure with the police that afternoon.

When it became clear to Danny that his mother hadn't prepared dinner, he offered to phone for a pizza delivery. His mother looked at him in despair.

'Who's going to pay for take-away pizzas? Don't you understand, Danny? We have no money now that your father's gone to prison. What are we going to do? His mother's sobbing increased in tone and volume.

Danny thought about this question for a while. What were they going to do? Well, Danny knew what he was going to do. They wouldn't starve at any rate! He went out into the garden, gathering a huge armful of fresh vegetables and made a delicious soup for dinner. After they had finished eating, Danny declared:

'I'm going to find a job tomorrow. But I'm tired now so I'm going to bed.'

His mother watched as he climbed the stairs. She cried herself to sleep that night.

The next morning, Danny watered the plants and spread some more chicken pooh around the plants. Then he put on a smart shirt and trousers and his best Wellington boots, and went looking for a job in the town. He didn't have to look very long. In the post-office window there was a big notice:

WANTED

**Gardener to work at the
palace.**

Green fingers an advantage

Apply inside

‘That’s just the job for me,’ thought Danny, and he went inside. There were dozens of people inside the post-office. All of them wanted the gardener’s job at the palace. There were men as old as Danny’s grandfather, who’d passed away ten years earlier. There were young boys just out of school. There were lots of strong, young lads with muscles the size of his pumpkins.

‘Oh dear!’ thought Danny. ‘I’ll never get the job with so many people here.’

When the postmaster saw Danny, he called out:

‘Eh, you laddie! You’re the one with the long carrots and big, red tomatoes. I’ve bought your vegetables from the market many times and they’re delicious. The job’s yours!’

Danny was suddenly surrounded by looks of hatred from all sides. Everyone was jealous, not only because Danny had got the job, but also because his vegetables were bigger and sweeter than anyone else’s.

So Danny was sent to the palace without delay. When he arrived there, the big solid gold gates opened wide to let him inside. He walked along the road towards the king’s home, looking around at the spacious gardens all around. Danny had a strong feeling that he knew the place, that he had been there before. He was surprised, though, that the gardens now seemed in poor condition. The grass was yellow and burnt. The trees were almost leafless and short. The bushes were thin and weak, and the flowers looked as sick as a dog! The worst thing was the layer of green algae which covered the lake, blocking out all light and oxygen. Dead fish floated belly-up on the surface of the water.

Danny noticed a few other people working in the gardens. As he entered the front door of the palace, he didn’t notice the young man who was giving him the evil eye.

Chapter 4 The Princess

Danny was staying in a dormitory with ten other workers. There were two chauffeurs, a cook, three waiters, a cobbler and three other gardeners. They were mostly friendly and Danny liked them very much. All of them, that is, except one of the gardeners, who was about the same age as Danny. Danny had the feeling that the young man didn't like him for some reason. Still, it was good fun most of the time and the food there was really good.

The next morning Danny woke up at five and after breakfast went out into the gardens. He gazed out over the spacious grounds. He felt really sad when he looked at the burnt, yellow grass. All the plants and trees were small and weak. And the vegetable garden? He'd never seen anything so sad in all his life. Long, thin, green cucumbers with black spots all over. Long green beans which were short and yellow. Pumpkins which were hardly bigger than Danny's muscles (and his muscles were really small!!). Cauliflowers with rotting black spots, and cabbages alive with caterpillars.

The head gardener, Ned, called him over.

'Listen,' said Ned. 'Your job is to work on the vegetables. Everyone knows you grow the best veggies in the country. Get working, lad!'

So Danny started his work. He pulled a few weeds, but even the weeds were weak and didn't need much pulling. He talked to the pumpkins and sang songs to the cabbages. He even told a few jokes to the carrots. In his own garden, the vegetables responded well to these things, but here at the palace, the plants seemed uninterested and sad.

'I must get to the root of this,' thought Danny. 'I have to find out what is wrong.'

At lunchtime he wandered around the gardens and found himself looking over the green lake. It was a sad sight. Suddenly he saw someone at the edge of the

lake. It was a young woman, probably not much younger than Danny. He couldn't see very clearly from where he was, but she looked lovely. She had long, blonde hair, skin as white as parsnips, lips as red as ripe tomatoes and rosy cheeks like English apples.

Danny decided he wanted to get a closer look so he walked down towards the lake, trying to keep out of the young woman's sight. He didn't want her to see him. When he was about twenty metres away he hid behind a small rock and gazed at her beauty. He had never seen anything quite so lovely as her.

When she looked up suddenly and saw the young man staring at her, Danny tried to jump behind the rock, but it was too late. She had seen him. He put his head slowly around the rock again and saw she was still looking in his direction. When she saw the embarrassed face, she smiled a beautiful smile. Danny knew he was in love.

Chapter 5 The First Kiss

That night Danny couldn't get the picture of the beautiful young woman out of his mind. He was haunted by her smile. He had a long sleepless night. When he went down for breakfast, he hardly touched his bacon and eggs and he completely ignored the toast and home-made strawberry jam.

'What's wrong with you?' asked the cook. 'Are you sick?'

'By the look in his eyes, he's sick all right,' said the cobbler. 'Love sick!'

Everybody had a good laugh at this, except the young gardener who had given Danny the evil eye when he first arrived. He just glared at Danny with hatred in his eyes. Danny, though, didn't notice. His thoughts were still elsewhere.

All that day Danny thought about the young woman. At the end of the afternoon, he went down to the lake again, hoping to see her. He wasn't disappointed. She was standing in the same place as before. Once again he made his way down to the lakeside to be near her. This time he didn't try to hide. She saw him and gave him a big smile. His heart melted.

'Hello,' she said. 'You must be the new gardener. I've heard a lot about you. They say you grow the sweetest and biggest vegetables in the country. Is that true?'

'I don't know,' said Danny, lost for words. His face was as red as a ripe tomato.

'What's your name?' she asked. Danny told her.

'My name's Delia,' she said.

Then she looked over the lake, covered with algae.

'Look at those,' she said, pointing to the dead fish floating belly-up. 'It didn't use to be like this. The water used to be clear with lots of lilies on the surface. And the gardens used to be green and beautiful. Then about six months ago, everything started to die. No one knows why.' She sighed deeply as she thought about the way things used to be.

Danny sighed too, but for a different reason.

By this time, Danny was standing very close to Delia. So close that they were almost touching. Then suddenly, they were touching. He was holding her in his arms. Their faces moved towards each other and here cherry-red lips seemed to

draw him near. Before he knew what was happening, he was kissing her. It was just like a dream. The kiss seemed to last forever, but when it was over, it had been too short a time. He knew he was totally in love with Delia.

What Danny didn't know, though, was that this young woman was the king's daughter, his only child. And another thing he didn't know was that there was someone watching them from behind a rock: the jealous, young man who had given Danny the evil eye.

Chapter 6 In Deep Trouble Now

That night Danny was awoken by a loud noise as the king's guards broke down the door of the dormitory. Everyone was afraid. No one knew what was happening. The guards marched over to Danny and dragged him out of bed.

'Come with us!' ordered the chief guard. Danny felt more afraid than he'd ever felt before.

The guards marched him to the king's chamber. There, the King was sitting on his great throne. His wife, the Queen, was sitting on his right. On his left sat the beautiful Delia. There was also a group of other people in the room. Danny recognized one of the people in the group. It was the other gardener who had given Danny the evil eye. The King spoke to the man:

'Is this the man you saw by the lakeside with my daughter?' the King asked.

'Yes, Sire, that's him,' the man replied.

Then the King spoke to Danny:

'What have you got to say for yourself? Speak now!'

Danny was almost speechless but he knew he had to say something.

'I..I didn't know. I lost my h..head,' he stammered.

'That won't be the last time, either,' said the King. 'Tomorrow you really will lose your head! Take him away! Throw him into the dungeon!' ordered the King.

'Execution at dawn tomorrow!'

Danny was dragged from the chamber by the guards. In the corner of his eye, he saw Delia. Tears were streaming down her cheeks.

The guards took Danny down a long staircase to a dark place under the palace. It was cold and damp there and it smelled bad. There were rats and lots of other nasty creatures running around. Danny was thrown into a small room, more like a cage, with bars on all four sides.

When he was alone, he had time to think about everything that had happened to him in the last hour. He also thought about his poor mother. What would she do now, with no one to support her? He thought about his father, locked away in a different prison somewhere else. His father had been right. Danny had come to no good after all.

Chapter 7 The Choice

Meanwhile upstairs in the king's chamber, Delia was overcome with grief and despair. She loved Danny as much as he loved her. She didn't want him to die. She couldn't live without him.

'Father,' she said to the King, 'you cannot execute Danny. I love him very much. I can't live without him. If you execute him tomorrow then I will kill myself at the same time. I mean it!'

The King had a problem here. He loved his daughter and he knew she would carry out her threat. She was a stubborn young woman and once she had made up her mind, she would never change it. Just like him! That was the problem: he had already passed sentence on Danny. If he let Danny go, his guards would see him as a weak king. What a dilemma!

Suddenly he had an idea. He remembered the tunnels. His own father had used them a number of times in the past, when the King was just a young boy. He had never used them himself but the secret of the tunnels was something which was passed down from father to son. And, in this case, from father to daughter. Since Delia was his only child, he had told her about the tunnels on her eighteenth birthday, just in case she might need to use them when she became the Queen.

There were two tunnels under the palace. They were long, dark and scary. At the end of each tunnel was a trapdoor. One tunnel led to a safe place outside the palace grounds, but the other was full of unspeakable, nasty creatures and came out near the lake. No one had ever come out of that tunnel alive.

'That's it!' thought the King. 'I'll use the tunnels.'

He turned to his daughter.

'All right,' he said, 'I'll give Danny one last chance. He can choose one of the tunnels. But you must promise not to kill yourself, whatever happens.'

'I promise,' Delia lied, crossing her fingers behind her back. In her mind she was making a plan. She knew what she had to do.

The guards brought Danny back to the king's chamber. The light hurt his eyes. He squinted and caught sight of the beautiful Delia. She had a grin on her face. Danny wondered what was going to happen next.

‘Listen to me,’ said the King. ‘My daughter, Delia, has begged me to spare your life. Since I love my daughter more than my own life, I am prepared to give you one final chance. Follow me.’

The King led the way down a different staircase to a small room. Everyone followed. Some of the older guards were smiling and winking to each other. The tunnels, they thought. That’s a good way to get rid of him!

The King stopped in front of two large, heavy doors. They were identical in appearance. Then he spoke to Danny:

‘Behind each door is a tunnel,’ he explained. ‘The tunnels are long and dark. One of the tunnels leads to safety outside the palace grounds. If you choose this tunnel, you must leave the palace and never return. The other tunnel is full of evil things and leads to a trapdoor near the lake. No one has ever come out of that tunnel alive. If you choose this tunnel and come out alive, you can have my daughter’s hand in marriage. This is your final choice, Danny. Choose a door!’

Danny’s mind was full of conflicting thoughts and ideas. He could picture himself coming out at the end of the safe tunnel, but then he would lose Delia forever. At the same time he could imagine the scary, evil things that lurked in the other tunnel, but that was the only way he could be with Delia again. He had to choose one door, but which one? What a dilemma!

While he was trying to make up his mind, he glanced at Delia. As their eyes met, she winked her right eye. At first Danny wasn’t sure what was happening. But then, sure enough, she winked again with her right eye and Danny understood.

‘She wants me to choose the door on the right,’ he thought.

Just as he was about to choose that door, he faced another dilemma.

‘She wants me to choose the door on the right. That much is clear. But why? I’m sure she knows which door leads to safety and which door leads to the deadly tunnel. Does she want me to choose the door on the right so that I will be free? Or does she want me to choose that door because she knows that’s the only way we can be together again? What to do?’

Chapter 8 The Decision

Without further ado, he rushed through the door on the left and entered the tunnel. The heavy door slammed shut behind him. The tunnel was as black as night. He waited a while until his eyes got used to the dark. Before long, he could just see the walls of the tunnel and slowly walked along, using his hands to guide him. The floor was uneven and bumpy and once or twice he almost fell over. In the darkness of the tunnel, time seemed to stand still and he seemed to be walking in slow motion.

He was expecting to meet evil creatures at any time. There were cobwebs which stuck to his hair and hands, and sometimes he felt small insects walking over his hands and on his face. More than once he felt bats flying over his head. But apart from all that, there was nothing.

Nothing, that is, until he saw a pinpoint of light ahead in the darkness. He seemed now to be floating along the tunnel. He couldn't feel the floor beneath his feet and his hands were no longer guided by the walls. He was swimming towards the light, but there was no water there. The light grew bigger and bigger until...yes! He could see a trapdoor in front. He reached the door and pulled it open. The light flooded inside and he took his first step to freedom. He was safe! He was free! He was alive!

He looked all around him. The grass was green. He could smell the fragrance of flowers. The sky was full of birds singing joyfully. He noticed two love-birds sitting on a branch, nestling up to each other. He looked back over his shoulder at the palace in the distance. His feeling of extreme happiness suddenly turned into a feeling of despair. He was free, yes, but what good was freedom if he couldn't ever see his darling Delia again? An emptiness surrounded him. Then despair filled his heart and he knew he had made the wrong decision.

He pulled at the trapdoor and tried to open it. He had made the wrong decision. He had to go back. He pulled and pulled, but no matter how hard he tried, the door would not open. In total despair, he shouted at the top of his voice.

'Let me in!'

Suddenly, as if the scream had woken him from a dream, Danny found himself standing before the two doors. The King and all the people were still there. Danny had only imagined his journey through the left door!

'Come on, Danny,' said the King. 'You have to make your decision now!'

'Right!' he said, and off he ran through the door on the right. Once again, he heard the door close behind him with a loud 'BANG!'. Once inside, it wasn't long before he started to regret that decision.

Chapter 9 The Tunnel

Like the other tunnel, this one was very dark. Unlike the other one, this one was extremely smelly and hot. The air was unpleasant and Danny found it difficult to breathe. He let his eyes get used to the darkness before he started walking. Again, he wanted to use his hands to guide him along the walls. But almost as soon as his hands touched the walls, he felt something disgusting moving along the walls. He couldn't see clearly, but the ceiling and all the walls seemed to be moving. When he looked at his hands, they were full of horrible, white crawling maggots. Danny screamed and shook the maggots from his hands. He stopped and looked around. The walls and ceiling were alive with them. But surprisingly enough, there were none on the floor. They were crawling all over the roots of plants which came through into the tunnel ceiling and walls, sucking the sap and the very soul from the plants.

'Ah', thought Danny. 'That explains that then.'

He decided he'd find his way without the help of the walls. Anyway, the white maggots on the walls and ceiling provided enough light for him to see the way ahead. He hadn't gone far, though, before he stood in a big pile of something hot and sticky on the floor. He bent down to see what it was. The smell was awful!

'Pooh!' thought Danny. 'That's almost as bad as the chicken pooh I was spreading a few days ago. But if it is pooh, I wonder where it's coming from.'

The pile of pooh was huge and no animal could leave such a big pile, surely? Danny continued walking, watching carefully where he put his feet. Every few metres he came upon another pile of pooh. Suddenly, he heard something in front. It sounded like an angry dog. Danny knew he couldn't go back so he walked slowly towards the sound. Then he saw what was aiming the noise.

First of all he saw two small red points of light glowing in the dark. The lights disappeared every few seconds and Danny realised it must be the creature's eyes blinking. He could make out the silhouette. The animal was huge. As he got closer he could see it had spiky green skin, and there was a pool of slimy snot

dripping from its mouth and nose. The noise was getting louder and louder and Danny was feeling more and more afraid. The air was hot and smelly. He could almost feel the creature's breath on his face. Danny knew he had to do something to protect himself from the beast. But what could he do?

Then he remembered something his old grandpa had told him long ago:

'Animals hate their own pooh', thought Danny. 'When a dog poohs in the garden, it tries to bury it and won't go anywhere near it again.'

'Right,' thought Danny. 'That's it!' And he found a big pile of pooh, took two large handfuls and started covering himself with it. At first it smelled awful, but after a while, he realised it wasn't much worse than spreading chicken manure in the garden. When he was totally covered with the stuff, he walked towards the creature.

Two strange things happened. First of all, Danny slipped over in the slippery pooh. He stopped himself from falling onto the floor by grabbing onto the walls. As soon as his manure-covered hands touched the maggots on the walls, the little creatures started twisting and turning as if they were in great pain. After a short time, they fell to the floor, dead!

'Interesting,' thought Danny. 'I must remember that.'

Secondly, as Danny approached the big, growling creature, it seemed to sniff the air and an awful expression appeared on its face. It was both frightening, but seemed frightened at the same time. It ran like a mad dog towards Danny. He held his breath and expected the worst. Strangely enough, the creature ignored Danny and continued running down the tunnel in the direction where Danny had just come.

'Looks like grandpa was right,' thought Danny, and he walked in the opposite direction. A couple of times he took hold of a few maggots on the walls and put them on his arms, just to make sure he was right. Sure enough, the little creatures twisted and turned in pain before they fell dead to the floor.

It wasn't long before he saw a ray of light ahead. The trapdoor!

He pushed it open and felt the cool, fresh air again. There was no one waiting for him because no one expected him to escape from the tunnel. As he was closing the trapdoor behind him, he noticed a small stream of dark liquid coming from the tunnel. It moved slowly downhill until it reached the lake.

'Ah!' thought Danny. 'Now I understand.'

Chapter 10 The Solution

Danny made his way back to the palace to claim his bride. He hoped the King would keep his promise. On the way to the palace, he washed away the sticky, smelly pooh at a garden tap which he'd used to water the vegetables. It took a while to get rid of, but at last his skin was free of the stuff. When Danny looked closely, he couldn't believe what had happened. The hair on his head and on his arms had grown really long, and it was thick and healthy.

'Wow!' he thought. 'What a bonus!'

When he reached the palace, everyone exclaimed in surprise.

'It's Danny! He's back!'

Delia was delighted. She screamed for joy and jumped up and down.

'I knew you could do it! I knew you'd come back!'

The King was much less delighted but he had to admit Danny had shown great courage. When all the fuss and noise had died down, Danny asked if he could visit the barber.

The following day, Danny wanted to speak to the King, alone. Delia thought it must be about the wedding, but, really, Danny wanted to explain to the King a plan he'd made while he was in the tunnel. The King listened carefully and thought it was a splendid idea. They would start immediately.

The first part of the plan involved the man with the evil eye. His job was to dig a long, deep trench from the trapdoor to the vegetable garden. That way, all the pooh left by the creature in the tunnel could be collected and used for manure for the vegetables. By taking the pooh away from the lake area, the water in the lake would no longer be polluted and they could clean up the water. It wouldn't be long before the fish were able to live there happily again.

But there was also another use for the manure. Danny realized that the maggots inside the tunnel were the cause of the garden's poor condition. They were taking all the goodness and nutrition from the garden plants. If they spread the manure

around the garden, the plants would take it in through their roots. In this way, the maggots which fed on the roots would all die. That was the plan, and it worked!

The King was absolutely delighted with all this. He was only too happy to let Danny and Delia get married. The wedding took place a few weeks after the adventure in the tunnel, when all the gardens and lake were back to their very best. Danny's mum and dad came to the wedding (Danny got a special pardon from the King for his father's embezzlement), and everything went well. Danny wanted to tell his father that he hadn't come to no good after all, but he resisted the temptation. As soon as he and Delia could escape from the wedding crowds, they made their way down through the gardens.

The crimson sky was glowing like fire, flickering flames reflecting the still water of the lake. A black cloud moving slowly across the sky was the only blemish. On closer examination, the cloud was a mass of fruit bats leaving the shelter of the tall trees surrounding the lake. These 'flying foxes', with the broad strokes of their huge wings, added to the peaceful scene. Walking along the lakeside were two figures, silhouetted against the fiery water. Zooming in on the silhouettes, one of them was a handsome young man in a dark suit with a flower pinned onto the jacket. The other was a beautiful young woman wearing a long, expensive gown. On her head was a crown and she was carrying a small bouquet of flowers. Danny, for that was the name of the young man, was with his bride. They had married just hours before. The bride was happier than she'd been in all her life. The sun was setting at the end of a perfect day!