

THE STORYTELLER

by Sue Glasgow

Gather closely, and I shall tell you the favorite of the long-ago stories... of the time when our world was in its infancy. Of a time before the Peace, when our People still held tightly to the tunnels of Below and feared the light of Above... before we flowed freely from Below to Above and back again.

The Father - a good man of strength and vision - founded the tunnel world. But even greater than the Father was the Golden Prince, who was found as a babe outside St. Vincent's Hospital in the ancient City of New York. The Prince was a being of miracles... terrible and wonderful... and dearly beloved by all the People. And the Prince loved the People in return... but the depths of his devotion belonged to the Lady from Above. Many were the joys, sorrows, and dreams that became their destiny. Great was the strength and courage that they shared through a magical bond, which the People could not understand.

A time of darkness fell upon the hearts of the People, but you must know that the Prince and his Lady survived the darkness and lived to experience many wondrous adventures together. But those are for another story... I tell you now of the later days... when the Golden Prince grew old, and his brilliant mane turned to silver. His Lady remained most exceedingly fair, even into the last of her long life.

But no man can stop the years, and at last came the time when the Lady had fulfilled her days, and she breathed her last oath of eternal love to her Prince. The agonizing roar, that echoed through the width of the tunnel world, filled the People with such great sorrow as they had never known. The aged Prince spoke to no man. His children watched him go in silence, knowing that he took with him the very end of the beginnings. He bore the tender body of his Lady to a place far, far below... a chamber of marvelous crystal dreams. And there he laid the precious form upon a crystal couch.

Many were the days that passed... until the People could wait no longer for the return of their beloved defender. At last his favorite son went in search of his father... far down in the magic chamber. But when the young prince entered, there was no being - alive or dead - within the crystal walls. Only this did he find: two roses... one red, one white... lying intertwined upon the couch of brilliant stone.

The years will pass, even when a world mourns... And the years brought with them a renewing miracle. Children were born, and children grew old... but sometimes a child would be born who was different. A babe with the mark of a golden mane and a delicate split in the upper lip would come forth from the womb and bless the generation in which it lived. Through these children we have come to this time of resolution and peace with Above.

And so it is that, even unto this very age, we can still expect these very special children, who carry the gift of bonding. This is our legacy from the Prince and his Lady... But their story does not end here. You need to know that, through all the decades and centuries, a presence has been felt especially in the happiest of times. At Winterfest... when a waltz is played... the tapestries sometimes flutter without a breeze, and across the pictures two shadows move as

one. There is a story among the children that, as they play, a terrible and wonderful beast of great beauty walks hand-in-hand with a lady of exceeding fairness... and the couple smiles upon the children.

And young lovers who go to the old abandoned entrance at the drainage tunnel in the park have often reported a mysterious tapping upon the pipes... in a code so old it has been forgotten.

And if the young lovers are very still and remain in the shadows, they may see a marvelous Golden Prince come through the rusted old gate and greet the lovely Lady from Above.

And she touches his face and says, "Forever, my Beloved?" And he kisses her gently and answers, "Forever."

END