

The Potter's Horse

By Daniella Rushton

There once lived an old potter named Gabriel, who, now in his nineties, could still make every pot imaginable, in every colour of the rainbow. Gabriel had been born into a family of potters and guarded closely his vast wealth of knowledge and experience. Widowed, he lived with his nephew, for he hadn't any children of his own.

For generations, his family had served the Kingdom of Goodness, one of several Kingdoms in the vast, never ending 'Spirit Valley.' Almost every subject, including royalty, in this Kingdom, proudly possessed at least one of his pots.

Gabriel had been blessed with a long, settled, and secure life and his reputation was held with high regard. He lived in the same house his parents had, worked in the same workshop his grandfather had and loyally kept his great grandfather's kiln in pristine condition.

And so it happened that one day, that this profound stability was to be rocked and put to the test and Gabriel's normally composed demeanour, somewhat shaken. His nephew, Nico, had received news from an Eagle gram, of a forthcoming visit from a distant cousin, Elizabeth, who lived in The Kingdom of Joy. The message securely delivered in the beak of a multi-coloured eagle, told of Elizabeth's forthcoming visit and her desire to introduce Gabriel to her metal animal sculptures, in the hope they could feature in the family business.

Her sculptures were also held in high regard and in her Kingdom, royalty had commissioned Elizabeth to create forty fancy horse sculptures. Twenty to line either side of the carriageway to the palace. Elizabeth had ambitions to share the joy her sculptures brought and wanted every Kingdom in the land to have access to the art she so lovingly created.

The news troubled Gabriel. He didn't want the family business or his life changing in any way. He had nothing but well wishes for Elizabeth but thought it best if each kingdom kept their creativeness separate. Whilst Elizabeth, wanted to collectively combine each kingdoms originality.

As the time for Elizabeth's visit fast approached, Gabriel became increasingly anxious. One night he had a dream. It was an experience that would change the Kingdoms forever.

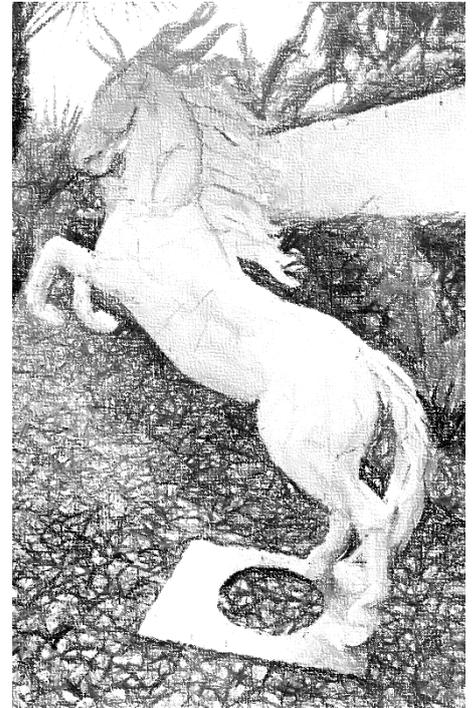
In the dream from fields afar, a horse could be seen pulling a trap towards his workshop. In the trap stood the small cream coloured metal sculpture of a horse. As the trap drew closer the sculpture came to life and rearing up, developed wings becoming a Pegasus and clearing the trap in an elegant jump, made its way to Gabriel's workshop window.

"Do not be afraid of change anew." Said the horse gently.

"Much is yet instore for you."

"How can this be, a man in my old age?" Gabriel said, quivering at the dazzling sight of the winged beauty.

Upon delivering its message, the Pegasus became dazzling white, its wings whiter than the brightest of lights.



When Gabriel awoke his head was smothered in beads of moisture and a great anxiety, that he had never experienced before, swept over him.

In the days to follow, he pondered his dream as well as the Pegasus's words.

'What change could behest him?' he wondered at such an age.

Elizabeth's arrival on a similar horse and trap to that in Gabriel's dream, brought a welcome distraction, for he hadn't understood that such a change would incur her.

Her trap had more metal tools than all the Kingdom's Blacksmiths combined, as well as a cream-coloured sculpture of a horse, like the one Gabriel had dreamt about. Her joy was as dazzling as the Pegasus's wings in his dream and in no time, she had made herself at home, much to Nico's delight.

Elizabeth soon acquainted herself with the town folk and when she wasn't talking about her sculptures, she was busy making them.

Gabriel began to develop feelings he had never felt before, which, at a grand old age he felt ashamed of possessing. Envy poured into his soul like a tin of paint spilled in his studio. It seeped everywhere, making his old eyes more wrinkled and mean. With it, he developed a stoop that seemed to nurse his preying green eyes.

Nico welcomed Elizabeth's fresh energy and could not understand Gabriel's lack of enthusiasm, for their pots were selling as much as the sculptures. Before long, Elizabeth had raised enough coins from the sale of her sculptures to help purchase more paint and materials for extra pots. She wanted to be able to have ample pots to take back to The Kingdom of Joy to sell for Gabriel.

But alas, as quickly as she had arrived, Elizabeth fell very ill and would never return to The Kingdom of Joy and she sadly passed away in The Kingdom of Goodness. Nico and Gabriel cared for her night and day and there was much wailing from town folk about 'how the bright light from Joy was going out.'

Worst of all, Gabriel felt distraught, and guilt shrouded him as tightly as his envy did. His health deteriorated and soon too came Gabriel's demise.

On his deathbed he uttered to Nico,

"Change has come anew. Be sure to carry Elizabeth's work on and a bounty you will accrue."

And so, it was.

Nico did exactly what Gabriel said, as the messenger foretold him in his dream.

For change isn't always easy but resisting it is harder.

And so, the moral of the story is, no matter how old you are, be open to change and try not to assume everything will be so. For, in the middle of the night, wings may glow, new paths open and beckon you to go.

THE END