

The Rose and the Thorn

... a Story for the Children of Norway, written with help from Eldbjorg and Dieter Paulsen, Arendal, Norway.
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There was once a prince and a princess who lived in a castle surrounded by a beautiful garden. In this garden grew many kinds of flowers, but the most beautiful of all was the rose bush. This rosebush was like no other – it had one perfect red rose that never seemed to grow old. And it had a smooth green stem and smooth green branches without any thorns.

People came from far and wide to look at such perfection ... a rose without thorns that never seemed to die! Every day the prince and princess would walk through their garden and stop to give thanks for the wonder and beauty of this rose.

However, deep in the rose bush, hiding far down inside the stem, there was a long sharp thorn that was bursting to find its way out. It had been living in the rose bush for a very long time and slowly, slowly, slowly, it was making its way to the top. As it travelled up through the green stem it knocked against the woody edges but these were too strong for the thorn to push through.

Then one day the long sharp thorn reached the top of the bush, where the soft red rose sat shining in the sun. Here was an easy doorway for the long sharp thorn! It pierced right through the heart of the red rose and came out into the daylight.

As the thorn broke through the heart of the rose, all the red petals fell off and fluttered to the ground. When the prince and princess were walking in their garden later that day they were shocked with what they found. Their beautiful red rose had died, all its petals had been blown across the garden and the stem and branches were withered and brown. The only thing left shining in the late afternoon light was one silver thorn, pointing high to the sky.

The prince and princess quickly called for the castle gardeners to come and dig out the dead rose bush. Then they returned to the castle to mourn the loss of the beautiful red rose. That night a heavy fog settled down upon the gardens.

However, the next morning, the fog had disappeared, and the day dawned clear and bright. When the prince and princess looked out their castle window a most wondrous sight met their eyes. Everywhere that a rose petal had landed in the garden a rose bush had taken root, had grown tall and strong and was budding with rose flowers.

As the sun climbed across the sky, each of the new rose buds opened their petals to the light. There were many different roses of many different perfumes and many different colours – yellow, orange, blue, purple, pink, red and white. The prince and princess walked out into the garden with joy and hope in their hearts and people came from far and wide to give thanks for the wonder and beauty of the roses.