

The Inventor's Son

By DragonWingedGirl

Submitted: April 1, 2009

Updated: April 1, 2009

The inventor's son was a quiet, curious boy...a glimpse into the story that came before the events of Drawn to Life.

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1 - The Inventor's Son

The inventor's son loved to watch his father work. He would stand on the bench in front of the table and watch the inventor's rough, practiced hands work the tools which the boy so admired. The inventor's wife had died when the son had been too young to remember. It had always been his father and him, and he was happy.

He was a quiet, curious boy, who channeled his limitless energy into exploring the village where they lived and taking apart anything he could get his hands on. The first time he got into the toolbox, he climbed to the top of the village clock tower and had nearly dismantled the works by the time his father found him. It was the only trouble he ever caused, and after that he knew better than to take apart such big, important things.

When he was six, the inventor's son met the mayor's daughter. She was five years old and had just lost her mother. She wasn't old enough to understand death, but she did understand that her mother wasn't ever going to wake up. She was crying in the woods when they met. The inventor's son gave her a hug and a dandelion and made it better. She was his first friend and the only person, apart from his father, he was ever close to.

The inventor's son was proud of his father. "When I grow up," he told the mayor's daughter, "I'm gonna be just like him. I'm gonna make new things and make the stuff we have better. Then bad things won't happen so much. Everyone can be happier and safer."

The mayor's daughter, his best and only friend, smiled and nodded. She believed every word he said. She listened to him every minute of the day, let him vent his frustrations and boast his triumphs to her. They became inseparable.

The inventor's son became the inventor's apprentice when he was nine. He learned to use every one of the tools he'd coveted as a child. He watched and listened eagerly to his father's instructions and guidance in how to find out how things worked and how to make them better. The mayor's daughter, too, was growing up. She was beginning to learn manners and etiquette and what to do to stop and argument.

"Do you think we're gonna have to stop being friends?" she asked him one day. "Cause we're so different. My daddy's the mayor, and yours is just the inventor."

"If we're gonna have to stop being friends, I'll fight it kicking and screaming," he said defiantly. "They can't *make* us grow up. I'll stay a kid forever if I have to."

She bit her lip and looked at the ground. He found a dandelion and put it in her hair and made it better.

The inventor's son was twelve when his father died. He knew that twelve-year-olds didn't cry, but he did anyways. He ran out of the house and into the rain, curled up under a tree and cried and cried and cried. The mayor's daughter found him and sat down beside him and put her arms around him. She didn't tell

him to hush or that it would be okay, didn't say a word. She just held him so his face was pressed into her shoulder and let his tears run into her dress with the rain.

When he quietly stopped being the inventor's son and became just the inventor, she helped him repaint the sign over his father's door to display his name instead. She made sure he had the time he needed to recover, but enough work to do to keep him from grieving too long. He was glad of her company in his workshop when she came to watch what he was doing. It was harder to be sad when she smiled at him and made it better.

The inventor developed more of a taste for adventure. He had never been beyond the village borders. He kept up with his work, fixing things that needed fixing and making better what he could, but sometimes he climbed up the hill and looked out into the forests or across the sea, and sighed. The mayor's daughter would come and find him then, and she would stand beside him while they both dreamed of lands far away from home.

When the inventor was fifteen, disaster struck. When the last light they had went out, the village's whole way of life crashing down. A dark time came upon the village. The inventor and the mayor's daughter kept each other's spirits up and their heads above the water, leaning on each other while the world fell apart around them.

Sometime between the beginning of those terrible few months and the annual Festival, he fell in love with the mayor's daughter.

Then there was a hero, and adventure at last, and then the festival, where the mayor's daughter made a speech and the inventor gave her a book and the most beautiful flower in the world.

The mayor died when the inventor was sixteen and the mayor's daughter was fifteen. Everything they'd won was lost again. He put his arms around her as she cried, letting her sob into his shoulder and listening to her wailing laments and choked apologies. She rocked back and forth and he held her and whispered in her ear and knew this time there was nothing he could do to make it better.

At last, the sorrowful time for the village passed, and the mayor's daughter wasn't ready to become the mayor, but she was ready to move on. He finally got to see her smile again, and he knew everything was going to be okay.

But the inventor was still an explorer in some part of his heart, and a ship had come into port. The open sea called him away from home, and he was torn between his love for the mayor's daughter and his longing for adventure.

"I think you should go," she told him, and smiled. He had to smile too.

"I'll bring you back something good," he told her, and then sailed away with a band of pirates across the endless blue sea.

The mayor's daughter was sixteen when her adventurer returned at last from his travels. He had brought back a shining golden shell and a single, simple question, which he whispered in her ear as they stood together in their secret hidden cove, where the waves swished gently against the sand and the

moonlight shone down through the trees. She looked up at him, smiled, and gave him the answer he'd known he would hear all along.

The inventor had found his home.