



IT'S IMPO

THE DANCE OF A KING

by Jane Rubieffo

Transfixed, I perched in front of the black and white television with pumpkins, balls, fairy godmothers, and wicked stepmothers filling my world. In 1965, Lesley Ann Warren as Cinderella was the most beautiful person I had ever seen, and she deserved a prince's love. The ermine cape helped immensely too.

But I was just a skinny six-year-old, gawky, shy, and plain. Later that night, my heart pounded and tears squeezed through shut eyes. I knew I would never be beautiful and never find a prince. Muffling my sobs, I cried myself to sleep.

These memories resurfaced this spring while watching my son perform "Cinderella" with a theater troupe. Tall, lean, and gorgeous in black tails and snowy white shirt, he waltzed before a ballroom backdrop, twirling his partner, smiling into her youthful face.

LONGING FOR LOVE

After curtain calls and congratulations, I left to lead a women's retreat. Like tireless dance partners, the lyrics would not leave my head. As insipid as the words may now seem to jaded, technobleary minds, Cinderella's music entered a world hungry for romance and a bit of intrigue. Protests and problems ravaged the sixties, but part of America still longed for the forever-after relationship of their dreams, Cinderella-style.

The lyrics' simplicity points to our timeless and deep-set longing to be loved: "Someday My Prince Will Come." "I have found her, she's an angel . . ."

Prince, princess, or pauper, who wouldn't take the romance of a pumpkin turning into a carriage and mice into horses clip-clopping them in magical finery to a ball where they find true love?

Many women at that weekend retreat lived with broken or breaking marriages, breaking hearts, and broken dreams. Their prince hasn't been real, only a "sweet invention of a lover's dream," and they are heartsick. Some attendees were single—either they'd never married, were widowed physically or emotionally, or were divorced or separated.

Whether male or female, so many of us bear scars from a daddy-prince who abandoned us, a father figure who abused and betrayed us, siblings who wounded us, mothers unable to properly mother us.

Content with pretend ballrooms, men and women spin about

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in the safe world of imagination. We disguise our disenchantment with would-be royalty—loved ones who end up fallible

and full of foibles. We mask our disappointments with all sorts of behaviors, never realizing that there is a Lover who is crazy about us. Tragically, we sing another round of "It's impossible!"

A MIGHTY WARRIOR

Kings and princes didn't just sit around in golden thrones in golden palaces wearing golden crowns. They had countries to defend and battles to fight. Kings and princes were warriors, though in "Cinderella" their sole purpose is advancing the kingdom by throwing a royal ball to find a royal princess.

Cinderella's prince says, "I have found you, and I don't even know your name," but our Prince knows our name, our shoe size, and the number of hairs on our head. This Prince never leaves us. He thinks about us constantly. This Warrior fights for His people and wars against His enemies. This King dances with delight over His beloved, croons love songs, and shushes fears with His love. This is the King about whom Zephaniah writes:

*"The Lord your God is with you,
he is mighty to save.
He will take great delight in you,
he will quiet you with his love,
he will rejoice over you with singing"* (Zephaniah 3:17).

Cancel the casting call. Our Prince has already come. He has been searching for us forever, yearning to make our dreams come true and to satisfy our deepest longings. And "impossible things are happening every day . . ."

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