

The Gardener's Anger

Once upon a time, as all good stories begin, there lived a gardener in medieval England. He was an old man who kept a beautiful garden, filled with exquisite flowers, fruit trees and shrubs.

One day, the gardener heard a loud, thunderous noise. Instead of being gone in an instant, the noise persisted, becoming louder and louder in time. The gardener finally recognized that it was the sound of horses galloping toward his garden.

As they came closer, the gardener realized that these were the king's knights, who eventually ran over and ransacked his garden, violently plucking away his lovely flowers and chopping off tree branches.

As he was a patient and loyal subject, the gardener let the incident pass, and slowly nursed his garden back to its original, beautiful state. This incident, however, was not an isolated event. It happened a second time. And also, a third time.

After the third destruction of his masterful work, the gardener finally had enough. Fuming with anger, he stormed out of his house and headed toward the king's castle. He was frighteningly furious, with tears running down his face, muscles taut and fists tightly clenched.

Strangely, as the gardener approached the castle, the drawbridge came down as if the king knew he was coming.

As he traversed the drawbridge and entered the castle grounds, his fists immediately relaxed, his tears were swept away, and his anger turned into bouts of joyful laughter. What prompted his sudden change in disposition?

The gardener saw that his flowers and branches were all over the exterior of the castle, and inside they adorned the walls, pillars, floors and the ceiling – even beautifying the king's throne! He felt blessed because he had contributed to the happiness of the king and his court.

As for us, we may sometimes become discouraged as we experience setbacks in our work – perhaps survey results we don't agree with, a family that continues to complain about an issue that we feel we've done our best, and then some, to fix, or we get frustrated with the changes that keep coming in health care.

It is important to understand – and find true joy in our contemplation – that we are engaged in a noble mission. We are children of the King, and we are serving Him by caring for His frail and infirm children.

Our Lord knows. And it makes Him glad.

For the Lord takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation (Psalm 149:4 NKJV).

– Beecher Hunter