

*The Queen of the Rain
Was in Love with
the Prince of
the Sky*



Eugene Mirabelli

Spring Harbor Press

Copyright © 2008 Spring Harbor Press
All rights reserved. But you can read the story to anyone you
like. The more, the merrier.

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 978-0-935891-08-9

Library of Congress Control Number: 2007940950

Published by Spring Harbor Press in 2008

Book design by Seagull Graphics

Graphics by Berg Design

Spring Harbor Press is part of Spring Harbor, Ltd.,

Box 346, Delmar, New York, 12054

Visit us online at www.springharborpress.com

A thousand thanks for buying this little book.

for Alex
& Sylvia
& Serena
& Raphael
& Niccolo
& Lucas
& Madeleine
& Chelsea
& You

The Queen of the Rain was in love with the Prince of the Sky. But the Great North Wind wanted the Queen for himself.

The Great North Wind was Emperor of the Arctic, Commander of Storms and Blizzards, a harsh man with a hard fist who banged and battered to get what he wanted.

The Prince of the Sky was a young man, as handsome as the day is long. He was amiable, light hearted and inconstant — never the same from one day to the next — but mostly he was sunny and fresh. And the young prince was as much in love with the Queen of the Rain as he could be. If you know what I mean.

That really *angered* the North Wind

The Queen of the Rain was a beautiful woman with black, black hair and light gray eyes. She wore a silver crown with six bright points and silver bracelets covered with fanciful designs which she herself had made. Some people thought it was wrong for a Queen to be in love with a younger man, or for a Prince to be in love with a woman older than he was, but the Prince didn't care and neither did the Queen. They cared a lot for each other.

That *angered* the North Wind even more.

The Prince of the Sky and the Queen of the Rain wanted very much to be together. They wanted to be side by side and to press tenderly, one to the other, so there was no space at all between them.

They wanted to be together completely.

But the North Wind was always coming between them.

Like a dark page between two other pages.

One day when the North Wind was busy freezing the stars and turning everything black, the Queen and the Prince ran away together. They dashed to the East and rushed to the West and fled far away to the warm, warm South.

The Prince found a tropical island with a white sand beach and green palm trees, a perfect getaway. He flew here and there, painting the sky light blue, bright blue, dark blue and shining blue. When he was finished he turned to the Queen, saying, “Reign over this land, reign over this sea. Reign, reign, reign over me.”

The Queen overflowed with love for her prince. She showered him with affection, she poured out her heart. She was wildly happy and happily wild, and for the first time in her life she threw away all restraint, singing, “Should I rein in my heart, could I rein in the sea? O, my Prince, my sweet Prince, I have no reins on me.”

Of course, the North Wind heard about this. He stormed around the North Pole, howling, “I’m the Great North Wind, Emperor of the Arctic, Commander of Storms and Blizzards! I hammer and bash things!” Everywhere he went he turned the sea to ice, locking all the fishes and seals and whales inside.

The Queen of the Rain and the Prince of the Sky were happy together. Their island had blue heavens above, warm water all around, and a lush forest in the middle. “I’ve never liked anything very cold or very dry,” the Queen confided to the Prince, lying back to gaze tranquilly at the sky.

“Me neither,” said the Prince. “Give me something warm and humid any time.” He sat up and looked this way and that, rather restlessly.

Far from the Queen and the Prince, the old North Wind had grown tired from storming around and had to sit down to rest. But he never stopped being angry and cold. He was so cold he had icicles in his white beard. He glared at the fishes and seals and whales he had locked in ice, and he began to think how to get the Queen of the Rain all to himself. He planned and he plotted and grew quiet and very cold.

The Queen of the Rain loved being with the Prince of the Sky, and the prince loved being with the queen, mostly, though he was a bit infatuated with change. As they walked along the shore the prince gazed at other islands and the far away place where the warm sea ever so gently touched the sky.

“I wonder what’s out there,” he said. “I’m sure it must be different from what’s right here.”

The queen smiled. “You want to go everywhere between here and the horizon,” she said, putting her arm through his.

“All the places between here and the horizon are different and no two alike.” The prince was clearly exhilarated by that thought.

“You’d like to go away?” she asked.

“Just for a little while, briefly,” he said. “To see where no two things are alike.”

“How would you find your way back to me?” she asked.

The prince laughed and squeezed her arm. “My realm goes everywhere from horizon to horizon. So I’ll not get lost. Besides, I love you.”

The queen could never say no to the Prince of the Sky, so she said yes. She had always known he was fond of change and that was part of his charm and, she reminded herself, I love him because he is the way he is. But it did make her sad to see him go, even for a little while, briefly.

As soon as the Prince of the Sky had left the queen, the North Wind swooped down and carried her away. The freezing Wind came and went so fast – *Swoosh! Swoosh!* – he didn't leave even a bit of frost behind. The cruel North Wind imprisoned the Queen of the Rain in a cloud dark as iron and cold as ice. The Wind laughed with happiness at what he'd done, laughed and laughed, but to everyone else it sounded like a terrible bellowing.

The Queen of the Rain gathered her robes close about her and, though she was shivering, she remained calm. She saw that she was in a prison with ice-gray walls and only one window, and that window was hung with icicles as strong as iron bars. She peered between the icicles to the earth far below. She could see brown hills and valleys and black forests and fields and wide oceans and little islands, and she knew her prince was down there someplace, but of course she didn't know where. She sighed in her despair. "My prince will never find me," she thought, and she would have wept, but just then the North Wind began to howl.

The North Wind blew the prison door from its hinges and burst into the Queen's cell. "Queen of the Rain!" he roared. "I get what I want and I want you all to myself! I've locked you in this prison cloud and I won't let you out till you love me and me alone." Every time he spoke the air was filled with the frosty clouds of his breath, and the room grew colder.

"I don't love you," said the queen. "I could never love you."

"But you haven't *tried*," the North Wind bellowed. "How do you know you could never love me when you've never even *tried*?"

“Because I love the Prince of the Sky,” the queen replied.

“But the Prince of the Sky is young and soft and changeable,” the wind said. “How can you love him?”

“The prince may have his weaknesses,” said the queen. “Still I love him, because he is the way he is.”

“Listen!” the North Wind roared. “I can tear up trees, I can knock over houses, I can heap up the sea and smash it to pieces against rocks. I’m old and powerful. Why not love me because I am the way I am?”

The Queen of the Rain looked at him, looked at his frosty white hair and his icicle beard and she thought of her handsome prince.

“Love is something you will never understand,” the queen told the North Wind, turning her back on him.

When he heard that — when he heard that love was something he would never understand — the old North Wind wailed in pain. He howled as he lifted the heavy prison door onto its hinges and sobbed as he turned the big key in the lock. The queen could hear him wailing and sobbing and shrieking and moaning as he blew farther and farther away.

The gray-eyed Queen of the Rain gazed from the solitary window of her cloud and wondered if the Prince of the Sky would ever find her. After a while she wondered if the prince were even searching for her. She grew heartsick and wept and her tears froze, falling to the earth below as drops of ice. “Even if I showered the land with my frozen tears,” she said to herself, “the prince would not notice and would not know I was weeping here in this dark cloud.”

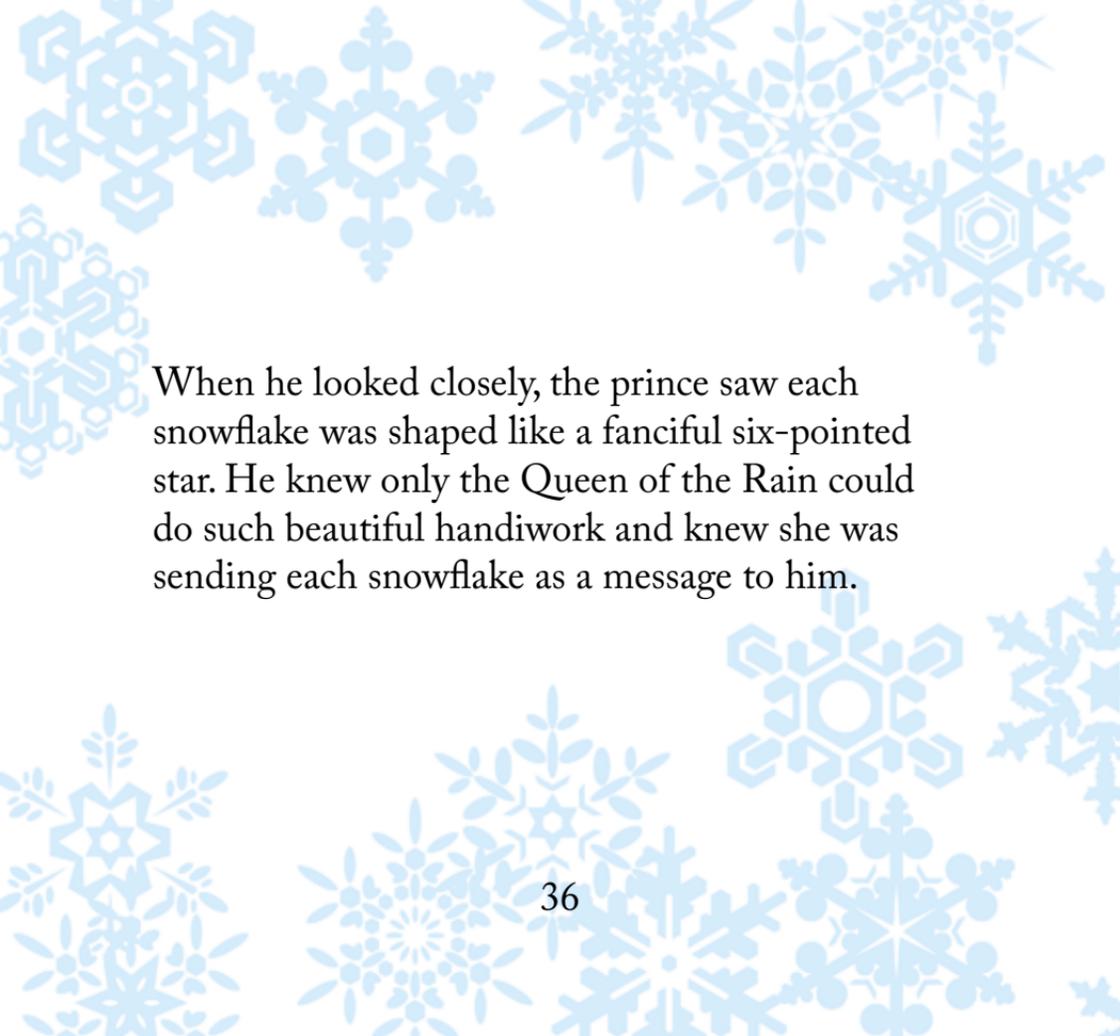
And she was right. The Prince of the Sky did see the falling drops of ice, but he paid no attention to them. Ever since he had been with the Queen of the Rain he had come to like warm wet things, not hard cold things and, besides, every frozen drop was just like every other and not very interesting. He missed his queen — it surprised him how much he missed her — and he went here and there and elsewhere, looking for her.

The Queen of the Rain grew so cold that her falling tears became snowflakes. She stood at the small window of her frigid cloud and watched the snowflakes drift down like white petals through the black branches of the empty trees and onto the brown fields. “If only the snowflakes were larger, I’d write my name on each one,” she thought. “Then my prince would read my name and look up at this dark cloud, and he’d find me.”

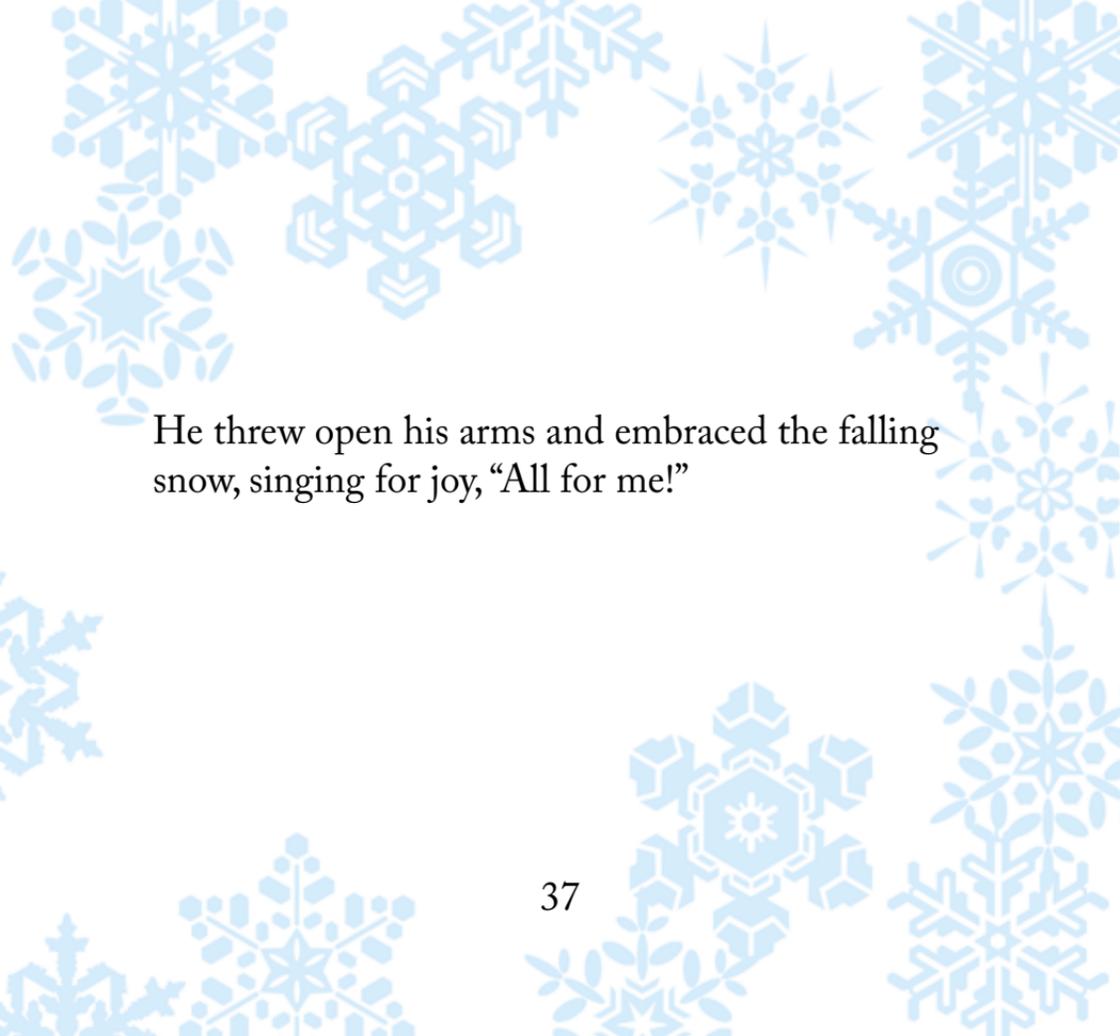
Of course, the snowflakes were too small for the queen to write on, but she had a wonderful idea — she'd make every snowflake different from every other snowflake. No two would be alike, and *that* would catch the prince's attention.

It worked!

The Prince of the Sky looked at the snowflakes falling all around and saw that each one was different. “Oh, wow! That’s a surprise,” he said to himself. Up until then every snowflake in the world had been exactly like every other, but now no two were alike.



When he looked closely, the prince saw each snowflake was shaped like a fanciful six-pointed star. He knew only the Queen of the Rain could do such beautiful handiwork and knew she was sending each snowflake as a message to him.



He threw open his arms and embraced the falling snow, singing for joy, "All for me!"

Then the Prince of the Sky rushed to the dark cloud, turned the key in the lock and threw open the door and rescued the Queen of the Rain.

And even today, so many years later, the Queen of the Rain makes every snowflake different from all the others. The queen still loves the Prince of the Sky and the prince still loves the queen as much as a changeable young man can.

And the Great North Wind, Emperor of the Arctic, Commander of Storms and Blizzards, is calmed by the Angel of Northern Lights who loves him simply because he is the way he is.

The End

