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## The Death of Louis

by Sue Hitchcock

She was disappointed both by the weather and by the fact that Louis wasn't there. The family was assembled in the small dining room for what had been planned as a belated birthday lunch for their mother. The flowers were beautiful, chosen herself from the garden, and the table settings were not excessive, but of the prettiest china. They numbered about a dozen and the conversation was subdued.

“My dear family, thank you for coming and making my rather belated birthday a pleasure. You all have such busy lives now, with official engagements. Dear Elizabeth and Philip, it is such a difficult time now, for you Philip, like the loss of a father. Louis and I were exactly the same age and although we saw each other only occasionally, we played similar roles in your lives, as parents and grandparents.”

“It seems almost inappropriate to celebrate in any way, after the monstrous act of terrorism, which took dear Louis and most of his family two weeks ago and so I do not expect any of you to be jovial on my behalf. Let us just remember the things we loved about him.”

“Lilibet, you were only thirteen when he arranged a casual meeting between you and Philip, and how fortuitous that was! Thank you Philip for taking his advice and relinquishing your hereditary role as King of Greece. Without due recognition of your support, I doubt if Lilibet would have been able to assume her role when my husband, George died.”

“And Charlie, you must hurt, feeling the absence of his wise advice. I myself feel a new burden now as the only member of the older generation, your only grandparent. I shall try to give you any help I can, though I cannot guarantee my wisdom. If Louis is in heaven now, and I'm sure he is, please let him send us his wisdom.”

“Now let us try to enjoy this meal, as he would have wanted had he been here. Thank you my dearest, darling family.”

Outside in the rain drenched garden, the sun broke through the clouds and gradually the flowers raised their heads and the world began to recover its colours.