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## Maxima

by Sho Botham

I've been around a long, long time. I remember King Henry VIII liking me. I still look good for my age despite being a bit delicate. I like to think of myself as full of courage and resilience. My ancestry has endured. Life could be tough back then. But beauty was prized. My beauty was prized.

From the south of England all the way to Scotland was an arduous journey for anyone including royalty. Horses couldn't make the journey without change. My attributes were appreciated sufficiently that it was insisted that I and members of my family make this journey. If I had great beauty then the belief was that they would inherit it from me.

Mary Queen of Scots, adored me. My little Maxima she would call me when walking past. I found Scotland tested my resilience almost to my limit. But I survived the cold, cold winters and the wet, wet summers. Had I been in possession of choice, I would have asked to go back to England where I came from. I was better suited to the warmer climate of the south. My delicate look was easier on my being than the harsher climes of the north.

I remember getting my wish when followers of Mary Queen of Scots took me with them on the long journey south after she abdicated. Soon after one of my family was given pride of place at the new University of Edinburgh. We were never re-united after that. I have no reason to believe that she is anything but thriving in the sheltered walls of the university.

Centuries passed and I'm still here. Not in my original state, of course. But very close to what I looked like then. I've been popular through the ages, my delicate features. But perhaps most of all, it's been my fragrance that has attracted so much love of me. But now, something tells me, I've been about too long - people are getting tired of me.

They want, big, exotic and jungle-like. An ancient old rose like me, Alba Maxima is being forgotten. All my memories could be wiped out if they decide that they no longer want me. I will become a thing of the past and my wonderfully fragrant flower will be forgotten forever.

