

The Mayor of Candor Lied

Harry Chapin

In the little town of Candor in the last year of my youth
I learned the final lesson of the levels to the truth
My father was a farmer he'd go tilling in the ground
My mother was a neighbor she'd go visiting around But I didn't care
For I had found the answer to a plowboy's lonely prayer
She was the daughter of the Mayor The Mayor fought my courtship for he'd made other plans
He saw her married to a better man than a boy with farmer's hands
I said, I hate your father, it's so hard not to strike him
She said, you know I love you because you're so much like him And so I'd go sneaking in the evening
And there she'd stand a crying in the dawn as I was leaving But the Mayor of Candor lied
When he offered me his only daughter
The Mayor of Candor tried
To take her across the water
What a thing to do to a young man in love
What a thing to do to your daughter One day with father on his tractor and mother off again
I go to find the mayor and work out what I can
But he is not at his office, he is not at his home
When I find him in the countryside he is not alone He is holding a woman and imagine my surprise
As she jumps back from his arms, I look into my mother's eyes All my thoughts of outrage, embarrassment and
pain
Were washed away by what came roaring through my brain
The Mayor's at my mercy and I hear my own voice say
Your run for re-election is just one month away And the world will never know of what I've seen here, sir
But I'll be with your daughter, is my meaning clear? My mother looks in horror at the compromise we made
But the Mayor's rueful smile says the piper must be paid
I had a month of joy in heaven from this deal I'd made in hell
What was to happen then my friend a prophet could not tell The day after his re-election and the victory
celebration
The Mayor takes his family on a month long foreign vacation Oh Coleen, you know how much I love you
There is no one I'd ever place above you
Oh Coleen, you don't even know me
To have you there's nothing that's below me But time always passes after all
And as the summer follows spring so does the winter follow fall The day that they return I stand waiting on the
road
I watch the car drive up, I watch the passengers unload
Of course she isn't there, of course I should have known
The Mayor says that she has stayed, the decision was her own I spit out my hatred and my fury at his lies
When he says you tried to blackmail me, you're just as bad as I
He says, go and do your damndest, throw your mother to the streets

You know it's been too many years, I had to be discreet
And as he stands there saying we're just two of a kind
It hits me like a thunderbolt exploding in my mind
As I look into his leering aged wrinkled mirror of my own
face

He laughs and sneers and says, of course dear son
Where do you think you came from in the first place?
The Mayor of Candor lied
When he offered me his only daughter
The Mayor of Candor tried
To take her across the water
What a thing to do to a young man in love
What a thing to do to your daughter

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