

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?

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