

## Sleeping Beauties

My Dad loved painting watercolours. He revelled in the freedom it gave him creating landscapes, unbound by shackles of oil and acrylic paint, as his hands grew shakier over the years. Watercolours, he found, were so much more forgiving. And I still have his old tin of watercolours, where the colours are displayed in order; a collection, an array.

I find it and open the lid. Inside, there's a piece of watercolour paper, protected by clear plastic, where Dad had carefully painted shaded rectangles of the colours, named, in order. Vague traces of colours remain on the edges of the palette sections. The rectangles of the watercolours themselves, many lumpy and bumpy where he had refreshed the contents with colour from tubes, are dry, dulled and darkened in their rest, only offering the vaguest of hints of what they could become. What they will become.

Sleeping beauties, they only need waking. Peacefully they slumber, patiently awaiting the kiss of water.

A quick spritz. Kissed by the gentle mist, they rouse joyfully from their rest and spring to life, eager to play in the life-giving water, to swirl and whirl, to blossom and bloom, accompanied by the faintest of traces of fragrant petrichor, the scent of the land after the rain.

The yellows and oranges of lemon groves, hosts of daffodils, and peaches.

The pinks, reds, and scarlets of spring blossoms, poppy fields, danger and blood.

The colours of the lands beneath our feet, shoreline pebbles and sand, ochre, umber, sienna, tan, echoed in soft and silken animal fur.

The blues, the ultramarines and cobalts of the oceans and the skies above, and the vibrant phthalo of a kingfisher's wing, dragonflies and a peacock feather.

The greens, scents of new spring growth and summer meadows, woodlands and the darkest forests.

The majestic purple of an emperor's luxurious velvet robes, which, with more water, will morph into the most delicate mauves of fragrant lilacs and lavenders.

The dusty, musty Payne's Grey of shadows, midnight and hiding places.

The colours focus my imagination, conjuring the memory of Dad in his happy place, relaxing in the joy of painting.

And now, they're moist, and I'm armed with a jam jar of water.

I load my brush with water, pick a colour, and start to play...

*(Please see below images)*

The paint palette (below) belonging to Harry Chandler, Kay's father:





Harry Chandler's untitled painting:

