

## A Colourful Story

Josh sits on a bench at the Tulip Festival in Ottawa. He thinks back to when his grandmother brought him here when he was only a little boy. He remembers the story his grandmother told him.

“It’s a girl!” the doctor exclaimed loudly. He passed the crying newborn to her mother, Princess Juliana. She looked down at her baby with a smile: “No worries! You are safe here from the war that is raging near our homeland, the Netherlands, Sweetheart!”

“Please tell me more,” I begged my grandmother who was a nurse in WWII at the City Civic Hospital in Ottawa, the capital of Canada.

“Josh did you know the story of the Tulip Festival started before the Netherlands sent the first tulips bulbs to Canada?” asked Grandmother and continued with her recollection of the past. “In 1940 the Canadian government got a call from the king of the Netherlands, asking if Princess Juliana, her husband, and their daughters Beatrix and Irene, could come to Canada to seek safety while the war was raging in Europe.

“One day in January 1943 Princess Juliana was rushed to the hospital, she would have a baby!” Grandma stopped talking and took a deep breath. “The one problem with that, Josh, was that the baby had to be born on Netherland’s soil to be a royal. The Canadian government found a solution and declared the maternity ward Netherland soil for the birth. I was a midwife. I witness the birth of Princess Magriet!”

For a moment Grandma was silent and then she said: “In thankfulness, the Netherland Royal Family and the Dutch Bulb Association have been sending 20,000 tulip bulbs each year for the Tulip Festival: And that is the story of a war, a new baby, The Netherlands soil in Canada, friendship, and the colourful Tulip Festival!”