

“April Sunset”

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English II – Period 1

Mrs. Sant

Sequel to April Morning

Thursday, January 12, 2006

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Ruth Simmons

Flashback to approximately six years after April Morning

Six years. That's how long I had been waiting for him. That's how long Adam had been gone, and I have waited for him all of this time, ever since that day in April when he finally signed the muster book, kissed me goodbye, and walked into the sunset.

I remember how much his mother cried before he left. I know I must have cried at least three times as much. Goody Cooper loved him, I know...he was her oldest son, and he was leaving so soon after the death of his father. However, I loved Adam in an entirely different way. Before he left, I promised him my entire heart and soul.

Now I stood there, outside of my household, waiting for Adam to return. A rider had arrived the day before with news that Adam was returning to our village after years of war. I moved to the edge of the village where Goody Cooper stood along with the Reverend and a few others. Suddenly, Levi, now a seventeen year old young man, ran out of the Cooper household.

"Mom! Mom! Ruth! Something is coming down the main road!" Goody Cooper and I craned our necks to see as far up the main road as we possibly could. I saw nothing at first, but then, slowly, a figure on horseback appeared, riding out of the sunset. It was a man, riding quickly and using the last rays of sunlight to guide him into town. The figure was older, with long hair and a five o'clock shadow. He was definitely a man, a veteran of war. He was Adam Cooper. He was older, but he still had the boyish features of his fifteen-year-old-self. Against my better judgment I burst into a sprint to meet him as he dismounted his horse at the edge of the common.

"Adam! Adam! Oh, Adam, I missed you so much!" I said, throwing my arms around him. Adam kissed me on the cheek and turned to face the rest of the village. His mother was crying, standing in the shadow of the Cooper household. The Reverend and the others gave up a cheer as Adam's face came into view. "Yeah," he said, "I missed you, too. I missed everyone, the whole village."

We walked towards the sizeable crowd that had gathered in the common to greet Adam. A sea of people flooded him, crashing around him like a mighty wave. Handshakes were exchanged, tears flowed, and all the while Adam had the brightest smile on his face. After all of this time away from home, he was certainly glad to be back.

About an hour later, I found myself in the kitchen of the Cooper household seated around the table with Adam, Levi, Goody Cooper, and Adam's grandmother. Adam and Levi were talking animatedly, while Granny stood up to check on the candles she had just dipped. Their mother and I sat quietly, both of us taking in the fact that Adam was really here. I did not know what his mother thought, but my thoughts turned to relationships and marriage.

Suddenly, my thoughts were interrupted by the sound of hoof beats coming up the road. Adam heard them, too, and jumped up to look out the window. "Who's there?" Levi inquired. Adam beamed as he replied, "There's someone I would like everybody to meet. I'll be right back."

The rest of us sat in confusion as Adam walked outside. From where I sat, I could see Adam walk out to greet someone, most likely one of his friends from the war. There was someone else riding with him, but I could not see who it was. As his friend rode away, I heard the sound of several pairs of feet approaching the door.

"Well, everyone, here they are!" In walked Adam, carrying a boy of no more than three years old, followed by a young woman. I felt my heart fall out of my chest and shatter as he said, "This is my wife, Elizabeth, and my son, Moses."

Instantly, Levi, Goody Cooper, and Granny rushed to greet them all.

"I'm a Grandmother!" Goody Cooper cried as she lifted up young Moses into her arms. She was overjoyed, as were her mother and son. She offered Elizabeth a seat, and I immediately stood up and moved to the corner of the room. I attempted to take everything in, but I simply couldn't. After all these years of waiting for Adam, after all the nights I spent worrying about him, he went off and married some other woman. I spent the best years of my life waiting for him, and he had moved on without me.

I suppose that after six years away, Adam had forgotten my promise to him, and thought that I would move on, too. After all, we were just kids, I guess. Yet, still, I felt betrayed and heartbroken. My mind was filled with a thousand questions for Adam. It burned with hateful ideas of murdering Elizabeth, taking her place. As I watched them, though, I saw that there was love. We had love, too, I suppose, but it was laden with confusion and doubt. I saw no doubt in Adam's eyes

as he kissed Elizabeth and held his son. Their son. My rage was swelling, but I could not bear to ruin this happiness.

It was then that I knew I had to leave. Not just this house, but the entire village. I had been so foolish, and I couldn't take another day in a town full of memories of what we once had. I quietly slipped out of the house, not even bothering to say goodbye. As I left, I heard the family making plans to baptize little Moses and maybe even hold a ceremony to celebrate their wedding. I took one last look at Adam through the window, and then I was gone. I would never see Adam or anyone else from the village again. I moved on to a different town in a different state, and I never looked back.

It was for the best, I told myself that day. To this day, every time I gaze into the sunset, surrounded by my own children, I tell myself that it was for the best. Even if I don't believe it entirely, I will keep on telling myself that it was for the best.