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| “Sin and Sympathy”  By  Monique McCartha |
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FAde In:

Funeral at Delford

EXT: Day. Sounds of heavy rain pelting. PRIMTON VILLAGE outside of DELAFORD is desolate. The streets are empty. The PRIMTON SHOPS are empty, and so are the fields and the roads. The British Royal Flag is flying half-mast at the Post. The sound of a Bag Pipe being played increases steadily.

Today is SIR CHRISTOPHER BRANDON’s Funeral.

INT: DELAFORD PARISH CHURCH

The CHURCH is filled with mourners. Soldiers and Commoners are standing along the walls.

The BRANDON Family is sitting in the front pew – LADY MARIANNE BRANDON, her son CHRISTOPHER BRANDON, and her teenage daughter MARY BRANDON.

The FERRARS Family is sitting in the pew to the left. ELINOR FERRARS and her 3 sons WILLIAM FERRARS – who’s a Soldier, The TWINS DAVID AND JOHNATHAN FERRARS. William is about the same age as his cousin Christopher. The Twins are about 12-13yrs old.

Mary Brandon turns behind her in time to witness two BLACK GENTLEMEN enter the church. The bag pipe playing has finished.

EDWARD FERRARS, the Vicar and the husband to Elinor Ferrars, stands from behind the pulpit and begins eulogizes Sir Brandon.

EDWARD FERRARS

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing. Christopher Brandon was the best and kindness of Men. He served the Crown faithfully as well as his fellow countrymen. He was the pillar of this community, a faithful husband, loving father…

Edward looks around at all the faces.

Edward ferrars

…He was my Best Friend.

The Church is quiet, only the sound of rain shutters.

INT: Allenham. DAY.

Eliza explores the first floor of the house and finds JOHN WILLOUGHBY in the Library drinking.

WILLOUGHBY

I thought I told you all not to come in here at this hour. You can do your duties after tea.

ELIZA

Surely, I can open a window for you.

Willoughby turns around to look at her.

WILLOUGHBY

You’re a new girl. I don’t need any new maids.

ELIZA

Excellent, because I’m not the maid.

Willoughby sits up and takes a better look at Eliza.

ELIZA

Eliza Williams, Sir. I believe I’m your daughter. (holds out her hand to shake his)

EXT: SHORE. NIGHT.

ELIZA (CONT’D)

The water looks so peaceful.

Eliza hands the bottle back to Christopher. He sits down next to Eliza.

Christopher

Deceptively peaceful.

Christopher continues to drink and occasionally passes the rum bottle to Eliza.

ELIZA

I used to dream of walking out into the ocean and becoming a mermaid, where I could go out to sea, away from life, this world, to create my own world. Be free.

CHRISTOPHER

“To Love is to be a fish. My boat wallows in the sea. You who are free, rescue the dead.”

Eliza looks at Christopher and thru the fire’s reflection, she can see the tear gloss in his eyes.

ELIZA  
 Do you long for freedom?

CHRISTOPHER

Do you need to be rescued?

ELIZA stands up and starts taking off her clothes. Christopher watches her, again speechless.

ELIZA  
 Come on.

CHRISTOPHER

What? Where?

ELIZA

In the water. Where it’s free.

Christopher becomes embarrass and then turns away from watching Eliza.

CHRISTOPHER

You know mermaids have been known to lead Sailors to their death.

ELIZA

And they’ve been known to rescue them.

CHRISTOPHER

Embrace impropriety and increase my penance?

ELIZA

You know what I hear is more improper than this? A Waltz.

Christopher hears her footsteps running toward the sea. He hears a splash and turns around.

Christopher takes another swig from the Rum bottle and undresses himself. He runs into the water.

They swim and frolic in the water.

EXT: BEACH. NIGHT.

Christopher and Eliza come out of the water and settled near the fire. They warm their hands near the fire. As Eliza is warming herself, Christopher approaches her to put his shirt around her shoulders.

Eliza looks at Christopher and then she kisses him. Christopher accepts the kiss and kisses her back passionately. They make love on the beach.

INT: ATLAS. DAY

Mary is exploring the ship. She’s in awe at all the different cultures and people that are on the ship. She eyes them enthusiastically. Most people bow, tip their hats or courtesy when she passes.

INT: ATLAS. CABIN DECKS

Mary is walking toward her cabin. On the way, she passes a tall Black Gentleman – JEREMIAH STROUD. He bows his head down and backs into the wall of the narrow hallway and waits for Mary to pass. She passes him without looking, but when he continues on his way in the opposite direction, Mary watches after him.

INT: ATLAS. NIGHT.

Mary is walking down the hallway and hears voices. She peeks inside to see Jeremiah Stroud teaching Little Jones to read from Robinson Crusoe. Little Jones notices Mary.

JEREMIAH

Keep reading.

Jeremiah looks in the same direction. His eyes lock on Mary. Jeremiah quickly gets up.

MARY

Please. I am sorry to disturb your lesson. I love that story. Maybe when you’re finish you can tell me what you think.

After one last smile at them both, Mary steps away from the Door Post.

LITTLE JONES (in Dutch)

She’s very pretty and polite.

JEREMIAH (in Dutch)

Read!

Christopher looks at Leah, who is all smiles and joyful.

CHRISTOPHER

I see someone is in good temper. Could it be that a certain someone is set to arrive home today?

LEAH

It is a beautiful day. Today is the last day I will let fear control me, and I have you to thank for that.

CHRISTOPHER

Me?

LEAH

Come on. You’ve been a true friend.

Leah gives Christopher a hug. Christopher is enjoying it, when Leah suddenly pulls back, and looks at him like she forgot something.

LEAH

Did you ever find what you were looking for?

Before Christopher can respond, the sound of the Post Carriage is heard from the street. Distracted, Leah looks past Christopher toward the window. Christopher also turns around to look. They both break the embrace and head toward the door. Leah grabs the CLOSED SIGN and places in the window.

EXT: PRIMTON Village. Day.

The POST CARRIAGE pulls in at the POST OFFICE. There is a smaller carriage waiting close by. The DRIVER gets off and immediately goes to take the mail bag into the Office.

Christopher and Leah make their way to the POST OFFICE through the street. Leah is walking faster than Christopher. She stops and then takes Christopher’s arm. They both walk more dignified toward the POST CARRIAGE.

Edward Ferrars comes out of the carriage first. He sees Christopher and Leah coming their way, and he approaches them.

EDWARD

Christopher. Leah. Good to see you.

Christopher shakes his Uncle’s hand.

Christopher

How was your trip?

Christopher and Edward have a brief conversation while Leah looks nervously for Will. Will steps out facing the Carriage. Leah watches as a Will extends his hand and takes the gloved hand of a female inside the POST CARRIAGE.

Will helps Eliza out of the POST Carriage. Willoughby disembarks after Eliza is safely out, and begins collecting their bags. A HORSEMAN is unhitching reigns to change horses.

Both Will and Eliza turn toward Christopher and Leah. Christopher and Eliza’s eyes meet. Christopher gives a huge smile. Eliza’s eyes light up and then turn cold.

WILL

Cousin? How splendid of you to meet us. Darling, I want you to become acquainted with my cousin Christopher Brandon of Delaford. This is Miss Eliza Williams, my Fiancée.

Christopher is stunned. Edward watches them both but focusses on Leah who looks like she’s in pain.

Christopher recovers and bows before Eliza. Eliza gives a curtsey.

EDWARD

And this is Leah. Her Uncle runs the Village Shop here in Primton.

ELIZA

Oh, yes. I’ve been to that shop.

Eliza and Will share a brief laugh. Edward and Will get their bags from the POST CARRIAGE.

LEAH

You’re engaged? How? When?

EXT: MONTEGO BAY. DAY.

Mary is riding a horse down the road. She passes fields set on fire. It begins to rain.

She rides through the Market. She is startled by a JAMAICAN BOY with a rifle. Mary stops the horse. The JAMAICAN BOY points the rifle at her. Mary is frozen. He lowers the rifle and runs off. Mary continues on.

INT: BURCHELL BAPTIST CHURCH. DAY.

The church is dark inside. There is a knock on the door. Jeremiah looks at Thomas Burchell, takes a gun and goes to the door. He opens it slightly then opens it fully to let Mary in.

JEREMIAH

MARY! What in Heaven are you are doing here?

MARY

Mrs. Burchell said….

JEREMIAH

Mary, you must go back. It’s not safe for you out here.

MARY

None of us are safe. As long as this Samuel Sharpe is inciting violence, there will be no rest.

Samuel comes emerges from the darkness.

SAMUEL

They’ll be no rest until your people abolish this evil and seize your colonialism.

MARY

You’re Sharpe? (to Jeremiah and Burchell) You’re harboring him? He must be handed over to the authorities immediately. Then all of this will be over.

THOMAS BURCHELL

It’s not that simple.

MARY

(to Samuel Sharpe) People are dying because of you.

SAMUEL

They are dying because you love sugar.

JEREMIAH

I’m taking you back.

There is the sound of horses and voices outside the church. Thomas peeks out a window and sees Militia Men.

INT: DELAFORD PARISH. FERRAR’S RESIDENCE.

Edward, Elinor and the Twins are in the Parlor. Will comes in. The Twins jump up first. Elinor and Edward follow.

ELINOR

Will.

EDWARD

Son?

Elinor

Are you hurt?

WILL

I’m fine, Mama.

EDWARD

CHRISTOPHER?

WILL  
 He’s okay.

ELINOR

I should go see Marianne and makes sure they are alright.

Will tosses his sword and gear across the room. It startles everyone.

WILL

Since I was a child, you’ve been running off after Aunt Marianne. Can you for once tend to your own family and let them be?

ELINOR

Selfish, spoiled, churlish child. You are always only thinking of yourself.

Will

And you are always putting the needs of your Sister over your own family, even over yourself.

ELINOR

Now you’re going to blame your juvenile behavior and your quarrel with your cousin on me? Your Father and I were worried sick about you and Christopher. What this is doing to the family.

Will

Does family behave as if they were in a constant state of repayment? Ever since I was a child, I’ve watched you treat Aunt Marianne as if she would disappear in an instant, ingratiate yourself to Sir Brandon, and wash the feet of every person who served this family, in any capacity. Can you for once not behave like you’re paying off a shameful debt.

ELINOR

Stop it! Stop with your guilt. Ever since it became official that you would inherent, you have conducted yourself as if the opinions of this family didn’t matter. I have always been there, Will, anxiously waiting to provide support. But was I consulted on any of your life choices? You’re feeling awful about your fight with Christopher, I understand that, but don’t villainize me because of your bad choices. I pray you mature and find some respect and humility before pride and fortune ruin you.

A PARISH SERVANT enters the room, holding a letter on a tray. The SERVANT holds out the tray to Will. We see that it’s from Eliza. Will takes the letter and goes to the table. There he opens it and reads it.