



## PROSE FICTION PASSAGE II

In the season when the sun hung low, casting its golden light upon the earth, Eli, a man of great stature and a quick stride, came up from the city of Judah to the town of Sychar in Samaria. He had come for a purpose—to resolve a matter that had weighed upon his heart since his earlier meeting with Miriam, a woman he fell in love with from the town, under the burning summer sun. It was a matter that could not be settled quickly, but he had come to face it, just as the ancient stories taught and the shadow of the resurrected Christ was still spreading through the region.

The afternoon passed slowly as they walked together, side by side. Their steps led them unbidden towards a well, a place Miriam often visited in her quiet moments – for Miriam loved Eli with a very special and protected place in her heart and he has all she wanted in a man. The well, ancient and revered, lay in the shade of a fig tree, and as they arrived, Eli’s gaze drifted over the stones of the place, worn by centuries of use. Miriam, whose heart was drawn toward remembrance and the past, turned to him and asked softly, “Eli, do you ever mourn the past, the things that have been lost in the sands of time?”

“Mourn?” Eli’s voice was steady, though beneath it, a quiet sorrow lingered. “Not in the way you think.”

With that, she moved closer to the well and motioned for him to sit by the edge. “There are things here in this land, things that speak of loss,” Miriam said, her eyes gazing over the horizon, “of lives once lived and people long gone.”

Eli sat beside her, feeling the weight of her words. She motioned towards the small hill beyond the well, where she paused, irresolute, at the humble tombs stood scattered about. “Do you see them, Eli? Those who rest here, in these cold stone tombs. They are the forgotten ones—the ones history has passed over, their names lost to time. But they once lived, just as we do now.”

Eli followed her gaze, his eyes settling on the graves. Each cave opening was simple, inscribed with a name or date, and many had faded beyond recognition. Miriam continued, her voice soft with reverence, “Some of these souls, I believe, lived before the great divides—before the hatred between our people, before the walls between Jew and Samaritan were built so high that we could no longer see each other as brothers and sisters. Perhaps there was a time when we could have sat together here, and no one would have cared from where we came.”

Miriam’s voice quivered, and for a moment, Eli could see the deep well of sorrow in her eyes. She stood and moved toward one of the graves, her hand gently touching the cold stone as if seeking some kind of connection. “I wonder if you could ever grasp my melancholy feelings, Eli,”



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she said, "if any of these people dreamed of reconciliation—of a time when the bitterness would cease, when we could all be one."

Eli stood beside her, his heart heavy with the weight of her words. He had heard the stories of the divisions between their people, how the Jews and Samaritans could not bear to share even the same ground. But here, in this moment, standing side by side with Miriam, he felt the stirrings of something deeper—a connection, a bond beyond the walls that had once separated them.

He turned to her, his voice quiet but firm. "Miriam, I don't know all the answers, but I know this—these divisions, this separation, it does not have to be forever. Even here, among the tombs, there is a possibility of life."

Miriam looked at him, and for a moment, the distance between them seemed to vanish. "Perhaps there is hope, Eli. Perhaps, like those who once lived here, we can choose to build something new from the ashes of the past."

As they stood there in silence, a breeze swept through the air, carrying with it the fragrance of wildflowers. Miriam, in a moment of clarity, pointed to a distant hill where a great gathering of her people gathered for sacrifices. "Those," she said, her voice trembling, "are the sacrifices to God for those who died in battle—unknown men, their names erased by time. But their pain is not forgotten. They gave their lives for something greater than themselves, something greater than the divisions we see."

Eli nodded; his heart moved by her words. "Their sacrifice lives on, though the world may not remember their names. Perhaps that is what we must do—sacrifice the walls that divide us."

Miriam smiled, her face lighting up with a newfound strength. "Yes, my darling Eli. This must be what Jesus of Nazareth tried to tell us when He taught in both of our lands."

They stood together, hand in hand, as the sun began to dip below the horizon. The world around them grew still, and in that moment, Eli felt a deep connection to Miriam, a bond that transcended history, transcended division. It was a love born from a Savior who gave his life not just for the Jews but for Gentiles, Samaritans, and all men and women who would live beyond them for all time.

And as they walked away from the well, their steps in rhythm, the land around them seemed to echo with the promise of peace—a peace that had been long awaited, but was now beginning to bloom, like the wildflowers at their feet.