

## THE CAY

(pg. 75)

After a while, I said, "Timothy..."

He did not answer, but walked over to me, pressing more palm fronds into my hands. He murmured, "Tis verree easy, ovah an' under..." Then he went back to singing about fungee and feesh.

Something happened to me that day on the cay. I'm not quite sure what it was even now, but I had begun to change.

I said to Timothy, "I want to be your friend."

He said softly, "Young bahss, you 'ave always been my friend."

I said, "Can you call me Phillip instead of young boss?"

"Phill-eep," he said warmly.

(pg. 78)

We talked for a long time when the rain began to slack off. Timothy asked me about my mother and father. I told him all about them and about how we lived in Sharloo, getting very homesick while I was telling him. He kept saying, "Ah, dat be true?"

Then Timothy told me what he could remember from his own childhood. It wasn't at all like mine. He'd never gone to school, and was working on a fishing boat by the time he was ten. It almost seemed the only fun he had was once a year at carnival.

(pg. 96)

I brought water down from the hut, raised his head, and ordered him to drink it. With one hand, I found his lips and then guided the cup to his chin. He seemed to understand and gulped it down.

I stayed up by him the rest of the long afternoon while he slept. When he awakened, it was early evening and had turned cool again. He was breathing easily now, and I knew the fever had broken because his forehead was no longer hot. I helped him to his feet, and we went up the hill together, Timothy leaning on me for support for the first time.

(pg. 102)

It rained that night, a very soft rain. Not even enough to drip through the palm frond roof. Timothy breathed softly beside me. I had now been with him every moment of the day and night for two months, but I had not seen him. I remembered that ugly welted face. But now, in my memory, it did not seem ugly at all. It seemed only kind and strong.

I asked him, "Timothy, are you still black?"

His laughter filled the hut?

(pg. 143)

I saw Henrik van Boven occasionally, but it wasn't the same. So, I spent a lot of my time along St, Anna Bay, and at the Ruyterkade market talking to the black people. I liked the sound of their voices. Some of them had known old Timothy from Charlotte

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