

I can't write short stories to save my life. But I wanted to write something especially for this Anniversary Celebration so I gazed into my writing crystal ball and came up with this scene. It's for a yet-to-be written novel set in Western China, northern India, England and occupied France before and during World War Two. This scene takes place in Wiltshire at Sasha's home. He is reunited with Adam, an Army officer while they are both on leave from their duties.

Enjoy!

Interlude

By SA Meade

It took everything I had not to run along the platform when Adam stepped off the train. He waved, smiled and walked towards me. I took a deep breath, shoved my hands into my pockets and waited while other passengers filed onto the platform. My heart hammered against my ribcage in a way it never did when I was airborne. He walked with an easy grace, the sun caught in his hair. While other couples were embracing each other the most we could do was shake hands.

"Hello." He shook my hand, his fingers trailed slowly away, brushing my wrist.

"I'm glad you made it one piece. It's good to see you." I didn't know what else to say other than the ordinary niceties. Train doors slammed all the way up and down the platform. We stood in the middle of a shifting crowd and all I could do was look at him.

"It's good to be here." Equally stilted and polite. He shouldered his bag. "So where to, now?"

"I managed to scrape enough petrol together for the car. It's parked nearby."

We walked toward the exit. Adam's hand brushed mine once or twice. "That's good. I didn't fancy walking much. Is it far?"

"What? Home? No, not at all."

The crowd propelled us toward the station entrance, to the street.

"I can't wait to get there. I need this break." He walked alongside, squinting in the brilliant morning sunlight. Fantails of creases framed his eyes, making him look older than his thirty years. It didn't matter, he was still beautiful. He was still the man I fell in love with a lifetime before.

"Here we are." I opened the passenger side door. "I'm sorry about the mess. The farm manager uses it to pick up bits and pieces."

Adam tossed his bag onto the back seat. "It looks like he's had animals in here."

"He probably has."

The car grumbled into life. Adam settled into the seat beside me. He covered my hand with his when I put the car into gear. "It's good to see you. I've been counting the days."

"So have I."

I eased the car out onto the road. He kept his hand on mine. It felt right and I knew that I would forever remember his touch whenever I drove that car again. The fact that we'd managed to score several days of leave at the same time was a miracle I intended to hang onto. For once, I could forget about flying, and dog fights.

It was good to escape Swindon and the reminders of war – the posters advising us to keep calm and carry on or warning us that careless talk cost lives. It was easy to forget England's troubles as the car laboured up toward the Downs. Adam rolled his window down and rested his arm on the door. The breeze ruffled through his hair and I was hard pressed to watch the road rather than enjoy the simple pleasure of watching him.

"It's beautiful up here."

The car crested the top of the hill. The Ridgeway rose away to the right where the grass-covered remains of an ancient earthwork stood sentinel over the countryside. "Yes it is." I changed gears again when the road levelled off. "The best news is that we have the house to ourselves. Mum's gone to stay with my sister and help her with the baby and Dad's in London. The only people around are my Uncle and Alexi but they live in the cottage behind the house. We probably won't see much of them unless you fancy meeting a pair of cantankerous old Bolsheviks. They keep themselves to themselves."

He laughed. "They sound...interesting."

"They are. My Uncle led quite an interesting life." We passed beneath the avenue of horse chestnuts, now a dappled, shadowy tunnel. I stopped to let a farmer drive his sheep across the road.

Adam shifted his hand to my thigh. "I think I'd rather be selfish with our time together."

I looked at him and covered his hand with mine. "So would I." Heat and promise rose in me. I wanted nothing more than to be alone with him.

The sheep tottered into their new pasture and I drove on.

Adam left his hand on my thigh. I was grateful that I knew the road well. We cleared the avenue and the car chugged slowly up another hill. I turned off by the farm house onto the narrow track that led to Endersley.

"You weren't fibbing when you said you lived in the middle of nowhere." Adam gazed out of the window.

"That's not a bad thing, I hope."

"Not at all. It's beautiful up here."

The breeze brought the scent of gorse and grass into the car. Sheep grazed beneath the shifting white clouds and it didn't seem possible that we lived in a country that was at war.

"Here we are." I eased the car onto the long drive. The oaks cast barred shadows across the gravel. Endersley always looked its best in the summer, with the grey stone softened by sunlight. The leaded windows glinted gold beyond veils of ivy.

Adam inhaled sharply. "It's...big."

"Too bloody big." I parked the car at the foot of the steps. "Most of the rooms are closed off and covered in dust sheets. The only rooms we use are our bedrooms, the study, sitting room and dining room."

He climbed out of the car and gazed up at the façade. "Bloody hell."

"That's what my father says when he sees the heating bills."

The hall was cool and dark. Mrs Keating had opened the downstairs windows to catch what little breeze there was.

The distant clatter of crockery told me that the housekeeper was down in the kitchen.

"Don't you have a butler or something?" Adam dropped his pack to the floor.

"Not any more. When my grandmother died she left the butler a nice little sum and he retired to a little cottage somewhere on the coast. My parents never bothered to replace him."

"Mister Sasha? Is that you?" Mrs Keating called from the kitchen.

"Yes."

She hurried up the steps. "Annie's done your picnic lunch. You can pick it up when you're ready."

"Thanks." I looked at Adam. "I thought since it was such a nice day, we'd have a picnic lunch up on the hilltop."

"Sounds good to me."

"Shall I fetch it up for you Mister Sasha?"

"Thank you. That would be very kind."

"I found a blanket you can use too. So at least you're not sitting in the grass. And Annie's put some bottles of ginger beer in too. She says not to eat too much because she's got something nice for tea. A bit of fish, I think."

Mrs Keating disappeared once more, her footsteps clattering on the steps.

"It's not really food I'm interested in." Adam leaned toward me and whispered, "I've a lot of apologising to do, haven't I?"

"Yes."

"Four years' worth of apologies."

"Indeed."

He smiled and touched my face. "Didn't I say I'd make it up to you?"

"Yes." It was hard not to tremble at his touch.

More footsteps. Adam's hand fell away. Mrs Keating reappeared carrying a small hamper and folded blanket. "Here we are. You two go and enjoy this lovely weather."

"Thanks." I picked up the basket. "Would you mind putting Mr Randall's pack in the green bedroom?"

"Of course I don't. Go on. Off with you. Enjoy the sunshine while it lasts. Annie's complaining about her bunions so it'll probably be raining by tonight."

We escaped into the sunlight. I stared up at the sky out of habit. The clouds were piling up to the west, rising in billowing white towers that made me glad I was earthbound for a few days.

"So, are Annie's bunions normally right?" Adam smiled.

"Usually."

We walked toward the hill, along the narrow track, past the fork that led to the farm. The grass was waist height, almost ready to be cut for hay. A meadowlark skimmed over the shifting green waves while a red kite idled in the breeze above, searching for prey. Adam's shoulder brushed mine as we climbed the hill in silence.

"I hope it does rain," he said, staring up at the sky. "Because I know what I'd love to do on a rainy night." He looked at me, his eyes dark with secrets and promise.

"I hope it does too." Just the notion of sharing a bed with him made me wish for nightfall.

Adam propped himself on his elbows and chewed thoughtfully on a piece of grass. The end bobbed when he spoke.

"It's nice here, away from the war and ... everything."

"It was a favourite picnic spot when I was a child." I lay on my back and watch the June clouds drift idly overhead. The afternoon was silent apart from the lazy drone of bees. The detritus of our picnic lunch was all packed away in the hamper, one bottle of ginger beer remained, propped up against the basket.

"I can't imagine growing up in a place like this." Adam cast the grass aside and flopped onto his stomach beside me. "All this space. It must've been fun."

"It was." I reached over and brushed a stray lock of hair from his forehead, without thinking. He was so close it just seemed the right thing to do.

He smiled. "I bet you wish you were up there flying on a day like today."

"Not at all. It's good to have a break. Those Gerrys take all the joy out of flying, what with trying to shoot us down and everything."

His smile faded. "Just make sure you stay safe."

"I will. I promise." I rolled onto my side and looked at him. "And you. Whatever it is that you're doing."

Adam placed one finger on my lips, upping the ante. "No, I'm not telling you. I can't."

"So you keep saying."

"It's too dangerous."

"You're telling me. Running around occupied ..."

Two fingers on my lips. "Hush."

I covered his hand with mine and risked kissing his fingertips. Living with war makes those few days of peace more important than most. "All right, I won't ask again."

He closed his eyes and I wondered if I'd gone too far. This wasn't a guest house garden in the middle of northern India. We were older and stuck in the middle of a war that neither of us had any guarantee of surviving.

"Just know," he whispered. "That I'll do everything I can to make it home in one piece. Having found you again, I have no intention of losing you."

"Really?"

Adam edged closer and touched my face. "Walking away from you that morning in Gilgit was far harder than anything I've done since. I should've been relieved that I was walking away from temptation but it didn't feel like that at all." He brushed his lips across my forehead.

The years fell away and we were back in that garden sharing a bowl of yellow cherries while the setting sun turned the snowfields of Rakaposhi to amber. I remembered that first careless kiss and closed my eyes when Adam gathered me into his arms, holding me close until there was nothing between us but clothing. The long meadow grass veiled us from the world. "I missed you, Sasha."

"I missed you too."

Adam covered my face with light, slow kisses. "I hate this bloody war. I hate that it takes me away from you."

"We'll get through it. We have to."

"I love your optimism, fly-boy." He grinned and slid his finger beneath buttons on my shirt.

Just his touch was enough. My sharp intake of breath earned me a light kiss on the corner of my mouth. "You like this?"

"I think I'd like anything you did to me."

A button gave way at his touch and then another. Adam trailed his hand over my chest. He leaned over and followed that trail with his lips, pausing only to free another button. "You smell of sunlight," he murmured against my skin.

I curled my fingers into his hair when he nuzzled his way down, marking each pause with another light kiss. When the last button gave way, he reached for

my flies and freed my cock from its fabric constraints. My hips rose when his tongue flickered over the tip with the teasing touch of a moth.

Adam lifted his head and smiled. "How's my apology going?"

"Fine." I just about managed to choke out the word.

"I think these need to come off, don't you?" He sat back on his heels and tugged at my trousers. I lifted my arse from the blanket and let him wrench them away. He hurried out of his own clothes, tossing them aside. "That's so much better."

"Yes." I reached for him, anxious to feel his skin beneath my fingers.

Adam settled down beside me and traced a line from my throat to my navel with one, teasing finger.

The long grass veiled us from everything but the open sky. We were surrounded by soft whispers and the distant, hunting cry of the red kite. The world fell away, the war was happening somewhere else to other people. I covered Adam's hand with my own and guided it down to my aching cock.

He wrapped his hand around it and sighed when I did the same to his.

"Ah, Sasha..." His voice trailed away to a long sigh.

I kissed him into silence and thrust feverishly into the circle his fingers made.

Adam tumbled onto me and covered my mouth with his. He curled his hands into my hair. Finally, there was nothing between us, no war, no clothes, just the undeniable heat of skin on skin. His dick was hard against mine.

I clutched at his hips, holding him close, needing that friction.

Adam's soft groans told me I'd done the right thing. He nipped at my shoulders and throat and covered my skin with fierce, burning kisses. His breaths escaped in sharp, staccato gasps. "Sasha." His voice shook. "Dear God, Sasha."

I swept my hands down his back, loving the feel of his sun-warmed skin beneath my fingers. We moved together in an ever-spiralling dance of desperation, grinding against each other, both seeking refuge in each other. The heat of him was enough. After years of longing, every part of me begged for his touch. Whatever shame was meant to be attached was swept away by my need for release. Our hips fused and there was electricity in every sigh, every kiss, every sweep of his tongue over mine.

We quickened together. I clung to him and cried out when I came, falling back trembling and spent. Adam froze, thrust once more and collapsed onto me with a long, shivering sigh.

"Bloody hell." He settled beside me, one leg thrown over mine.

I managed a smile, too shaken and boneless to speak.

"That was worth waiting four years." He kissed my eyelids. "Do you forgive me?"

I looked at him, at his flushed cheeks, at his sun-warmed skin. "How could I not?"

Adam rested his head on my chest, fingers drifting lightly over my skin. "Thank you. I'm glad we found each other again."

"So am I." I kissed his tousled hair. "I just hope we don't lose each other again."

"You'll just have to make sure you shoot down the Gerrys before they get you."

"And you'd better make sure they don't catch you."

He propped himself up on one arm, his smile gone. "We shouldn't be talking about that."

"Whatever 'that' is. I saw you step out of that Lysander. I have a fairly good idea where they go."

Adam sighed and touched the tip of my nose. "You're persistent, aren't you?"

The roar of planes shattered the afternoon silence. A squadron of Spitfires, headed east, cast fleeting shadows across the silent meadow.

I tightened my arm around Adam's shoulder. "Bloody, sodding war. We can't escape it even here."

"Which is why we should stop talking about it." His lips brushed my nipple. "Why waste these days when they may be all we have?"

Before you have to return to occupied France?

The words never left my lips. Adam's life was a tangle of secrets I could never hope to unravel. I lifted his face to mine and kissed him, praying for the sunlit afternoon to last forever.

S.A.Meade lives in deepest Wiltshire and is pathetically happy to see rain after eight years in the desert of south central Arizona. She stumbled into writing m/m by

accident when she realised that her historicals put agents to sleep. Since then she's realised she's addicted to the genre and keeps writing more dirty books. She loves cooking and eating what she cooks and shares her home with a patient husband and son and two heat-seeking cats.

Stolen Summer can be bought here: http://www.total-e-bound.com/product.asp?P_ID=1338

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