

QUIET PATIENCE

A MISTY RIVERS SHORT STORY

CHIC SCAPARO



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Introduction

Many readers have reached out to me after finishing *Misty Rivers*, asking about Bobby and Roscoe. Truthfully, I missed them too.

For the dog lovers, the hopeless romantics, and those who simply weren't quite ready to leave this world behind, I felt it was important to write this short companion story as a gentle bridge between Book One and the early beginnings of Book Two.

While *Quiet Patience* can be enjoyed on its own, I highly recommend reading *Misty Rivers* first, as many of the emotions, relationships, and memories in *Quiet Patience* are deeply connected to the original novel.

Some stories never really leave us.

Thank you for reading and supporting independent storytelling.

— Chic Scaparo

For updates on future releases and the continuing journey of *Misty Rivers*, please visit:

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Roscoe padded through the grove, sniffing the grass and letting out soft whimpers of familiarity and loss while Bobby cleared weeds and broken branches from around the grave sites. Mikey did his best to hold his tongue, exerting near-superhuman effort not to irritate his older brother in the sacred quiet of the grove. Though nearly impossible for the boy, he understood that moments like these deserved silence.

Taking his time to look over the area, Bobby allowed a faint smile to cross his lips, knowing Misty always appreciated the care he showed her beloved family. His love for her had never weakened. If anything, the distance between them only seemed to deepen it, and Misty expressed much the same in the many letters they exchanged over the past year.

The wind stirred through the grove as it always did, cool beneath the canopy and sharp against the heat of the sun-soaked farm surrounding it. The Rivers farm had slowly begun giving itself back to the wild. Native grasses swayed where rows of corn once stood, tangled together with stubborn weeds reclaiming the neglected soil.

Where the house had once stood was now little more than a charred scar upon the earth. Blackened boards, collapsed beams, rusted cookware, shattered glass, and the warped remains of furniture sat buried beneath soot and ash. Even after all this time, the faint smell of smoke still lingered whenever the wind shifted just right.

The old red barn still stood, though not proudly. One of its doors had finally given way months ago. Bobby and Mikey had managed to nail it back into place, but neither knew enough to make it swing properly again.

“Heck, Gamba could’ve fixed this in no time,” Bobby had muttered while hammering the crooked boards into place.

“And with one hand,” Mikey added with a laugh.

Inside, everything remained much as it had the day Misty left. Dust and windblown sand covered nearly every surface, thick cobwebs stretched across the

corners, and the silence inside the barn carried an odd heaviness that never quite sat right with Bobby.

Whenever the boys visited the grove, Bobby would eventually find himself wandering back to the barn. Standing there now, a familiar chill crept down his spine and raised gooseflesh along his arms. He remembered the firelight, the trembling silence between Misty and him, and the long embrace they shared before dawn finally forced him to leave. He remembered the dirt smudged across Misty's cheeks from crawling through the tunnel for her safety and the way her bright blue eyes held his before he reluctantly made his way home.

The memory hurt every time, but somewhere deep in his heart, Bobby still believed he would see her again.

Roscoe moved beside him and leaned his weight gently against the boy's leg. The old hound sniffed the air and let out a short bark followed by a low, mournful howl that drifted across the farm. Though he could not understand where Misty had gone or why she never returned, some quiet instinct inside him still waited for her footsteps in the grass. Until then, Roscoe remained content with his new family, living as freely as he always had while carrying the memory of his oldest friend somewhere deep inside him.

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Before heading home, the boys made their way to Blossom Creek to cast a few lines and bring back fresh fish for supper. Bobby, as skilled as ever, had little trouble pulling a few fish from the slow-moving water within minutes of arriving.

Mikey, a capable fisherman himself when he cared to be, spent more time skipping stones across the creek and pretending he was stranded deep in some untamed jungle. More than once, he wandered into the water after fish with his pant legs rolled high, determined to catch one barehanded like some wild mountain man.

This sort of behavior used to irritate Bobby to no end, but over time, he had come to appreciate Mikey's wandering imagination. The boy found adventure in

nearly everything, and even Bobby had to admit there was something admirable about that.

Needless to say, Mikey had yet to catch a fish with his hands.

“Ready to go?” Bobby asked, looking over at his soaking-wet brother.

Mikey hovered silently above a smallmouth bass near the creek bank, water dripping steadily from the tip of his nose.

“Just a sec.”

In one quick motion, he lunged into the water and missed the fish by mere inches, sending it darting beneath the rocks.

Bobby chuckled softly and lifted the creel filled with fish onto his shoulder.

“One day, little brother. One day.”

~

The boys made the long trip back home before the sun disappeared beyond the trees, though the journey felt far longer than it had during the adventures of the previous summer. Back then, they would race through the woods without a care in the world, fueled by excitement and the promise of discovery waiting around every bend.

As they walked, Bobby found himself thinking about Aunt Ginny and her stern but comforting nature. He was grateful now for the love and care she showed them, even if she could still be intimidating at times. Bobby understood her far better than he once had. She only ever wanted what was best for Misty, and in that way, they were very much alike.

And Bobby no longer felt the same heaviness when approaching home.

His father, Dwayne, never drank another drop of alcohol after that summer and had become the kind of husband and father a family could lean on without fear. Though still strong enough to throw a man clear across a room if need be, he carried himself with far more restraint.

When the boys stepped into the kitchen, they were greeted by their beautiful mother, Daisy, who welcomed them as she always did — with a warm smile, a treat for Roscoe, and, of course, questions.

“So where’d you boys wander off to today?” Daisy asked lovingly.

“Went to the farm, and Bobby caught a few fish,” Mikey blurted out before anyone else could speak.

Bobby set the fish carefully in the basin while Mikey disappeared out the front door at full speed to chase after whatever adventure had suddenly found him.

“It’s really sweet that you still go there,” Daisy said. “Tending to those graves the way you do... that’s the Lord’s work, Bobby.”

Bobby smiled faintly and nodded as he sat at the table.

The summer of secrets had changed him. Though only a year had passed, there were moments when he felt much older than he truly was. It wasn’t something visible on his face so much as something settled deep behind his eyes. At times, Bobby almost started to feel more like a Robert than a Bobby, but he quickly pushed the thought aside. Misty liked the name Bobby better, and that was reason enough for him.

“Go on and get cleaned up before your father gets home for supper,” Daisy said.

“But I still gotta clean the fish,” Bobby replied wearily.

“Not today, you don’t,” Daisy assured him.

She pulled out a chair and sat across from her oldest son.

“I know going back to that farm means a lot to you, and I also know it carries a heavy burden with it. So you go get some rest, and I’ll take care of the fish tonight.”

Bobby smiled appreciatively at his mother before making his way to his room.

~

Bobby lay quietly on his bed for a while, letting his thoughts wander through memories of that summer and the moments he shared with Misty. After some time, he sat up and pulled a pad of paper and a pencil from beneath the bed before beginning another letter.

Dear Misty,

I miss you too and can't wait to see you again. I just got back from the farm, and Mikey and I went to the creek to catch a few fish. That's what we're having for supper tonight. Mikey tried catching some with his hands again. He sorta reminds me of you sometimes.

Roscoe's definitely put on some weight, and he misses you too. He howls every time we visit the farm. I hope that doesn't make you sad.

School starts soon, and I really don't want to go back. When does school start for you?

I asked Pa when we might be able to take a trip to see you, but he said he'd have to save up to go that far. Do you think you'll ever come back for a visit?

I gotta get cleaned up for supper now. I hear Pa pulling up outside.

*Love,
Bobby*

Bobby tucked the notepad and pencil back beneath his bed before going to clean up and help his mother set the table for supper.

~

When the screen door slammed shut, Ginny shook her head with a faint smile. The sound always carried her back to the Rivers' farm in Arkansas and the wild summer that had changed both their lives forever. Though much quieter now, life in North Carolina had settled into a peaceful rhythm neither of them could have imagined during those dangerous days. Ginny had grown fond of the simple life

they built together. Teaching school in town suited her well, and caring for Misty had become one of the greatest joys of her life.

But Misty was different.

Though she tried to settle into her new life, part of her still wandered the fields and woods of Arkansas. She missed the farm fiercely, along with Bobby and Roscoe. Some days, the longing sat so heavy in her chest it nearly ached.

When Misty stepped into the kitchen that evening, several envelopes rested on the table while Ginny sorted through them.

“Hi, Misty.”

“Hey, Aunt Ginny,” she replied softly.

Ginny glanced up from the table. “Maybe we can visit Mrs. Campbell after supper. She sure has taken a liking to you.”

“Sure,” Misty answered with a small smile.

A quiet silence settled over the kitchen until Ginny lifted another envelope from the pile and revealed Misty’s name written across the front.

Misty’s eyes lit up instantly.

She snatched the letter and hurried to her room.

Several minutes later, she returned to the kitchen holding the opened letter tightly in her hands. Ginny looked up to find something different in her niece’s expression. The sadness that had lingered around her suddenly seemed lighter somehow.

“I reckon it’s about time I go home, Aunt Ginny.”

The End