

In 1691, a privileged French noble is forced to go to America. Jean-Marc is taken prisoner, sold into servitude, becomes a brewer, and falls in love with Abigail. They escape into the wilderness after he kills their master defending her and survive with the help of a Lenape warrior.

## The Fourth Son

by Brien Brown

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First Edition

### Chapter Six Beer

# "It was a wise man who invented beer." Plato

*He smiled. This is good, no?* Jean-Marc dropped his spoon and watched Goodman Adams. *I cannot go back to that dungeon. I must understand him.* 

"Today we work on malting, John."

He talks to me, no? What does he say?

Adams turned to the girls, "Abigail, show him around while I eat. See that he knows the brew-house and kilns. After I'm done eating I need to roast so see that he has a good fire ready for me."

"Yes, Goodman," one of the girls answered.

Adams went into the dining room.

The girl he called Abigail crossed the room and leaned close to Jean-Marc. Her voice was quiet but firm. "You finish double fast. After I serve the family, I'll walk you around. But pay close attention. My chores keep me busy enough. I'll not wait while you finish, and I've not the time to show you things twice. Do you understand me?"

Jean-Marc thought he understood, nodded that he did and hurried to finish his meal.

Abigail placed a large white bowl of porridge on a tray with bread and a pitcher of beer. She carried the tray through a swinging door out of the kitchen. Moments later she returned. "Put your dishes by the wash tub and come with me."

Jean-Marc jumped from his seat to follow.

"The dishes. Get the dishes." She pointed at his bowl and mug. "I'll not pick up after you." Then she pointed to a large tub half filled with water. "Put them in the wash tub over there."

He put his dishes in the tub and hurried to follow the girl out of the house.

She led him into a large, brown-painted building between the house and barn. "This is the brew-house." She opened the door into a

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large room dominated by kilns. "Here's the malting room. You'll do most of your work in here. Malting'll keep you busy."

"No comprends, malting?"

"The Master'll show you that. Pay close attention. Now follow me here." She led him to another room. A firebox, stone chimney, and two large brick ovens formed one wall. Rows of oversized buckets lined the opposite wall. Between them, against a third wall, there were three large racks filled with shallow trays.

"The barley sprouts and the malt's dried and toasted in here. Goodman Adams'll see to that, but 'twill be yours to build the fire and keep the heat right. You know where the wood is. Easiest to bring out some coals from the cook fire and build yours from those. Be sure 'tis ready for the Master."

Jean-Marc turned to get in front of her. He looked concerned. "I have not start fire before."

Abigail put her hands on her hips and looked at the ceiling. "Good Lord preserve us! The Master's bought a simpleton." She looked at Jean-Marc but pointed in the direction of the ovens. Without realizing it, she raised her voice, as if talking louder would make him understand. "By the oven is a box of kindling, small pieces of wood." She pointed.

"Small wood, oui," he nodded.

"Splittin' it from the bigger pieces is your chore. You understand?"

"Make small wood, *oui*."

"You bring coals from the kitchen fire and put them in here." She pointed to the oven's firebox and picked up a bellows made from wood and leather. "You use this to blow the coals into flame and then, little by little, add bigger wood."

"Coals?"

"Watch me but watch well. I'll not show you again."

He followed the girl to the lean-to where she piled wood on his arms. "Bring that to the brew-house then meet me in the kitchen."

"Kitchen *oui* ... yes." He carried the wood into the brew-house and hurried into the kitchen. The girl used a set of tongs to pull several coals from the fire and dropped them into a small iron pot. "See that my pot comes back from the shed. I've no need to be chasing after you for the things I need."

"Pot back. Je comprends, oui."

Abigail led him back into the brew-house. Using her apron, she tilted the pot into the firebox, dumped the coals, and put the pot on the floor. She took some wood from the kindling box and piled it on the coals. "You watching?"

"Oui, yes, I watch."

She pointed the bellows at the coals and pumped. As if by magic, the coals burst into flames. She pumped a little longer, then picked up some of the smaller pieces of wood and added them to the fire.

"A fire's built slow. Wood's added bit by bit, little pieces then bigger. Understand?"

"*Oui* ... yes, yes."

"Tis easier to keep a fire than start one, so keep it burning even when's not needed."

"Yes, keep fire."

"The fire mustn't be too hot when Goodman Adams is drying the barley to malt but needs be hotter when he roasts. He'll show you the fire he wants when he's ready for it. Keep adding wood to this. If you run out, go get more."

Jean-Marc nodded.

"You tend to the fire. The Master'll be out soon. I've work to do." She wiped her hands on her apron, then used it as a potholder to pick up the iron pot and hurried back to the kitchen, talking to herself.

Jean-Marc managed to build a large fire by the time Goodman Adams finished his breakfast and joined him.

"Good, you've a fire." He reached a bare arm into the oven, counting to five before pulling it out. "Ovens'll soon be hot enough. First chore you need learn is to soak barley. Come with me."

Adams led Jean-Marc to the malting room where he described the process of soaking barley so it would sprout before being spread on shallow trays to grow. Jean-Marc spent much of the day drawing water and carrying it thirty yards from the well to the brew house, where he poured it into buckets filled with barley. It was hard work on a hot day.

When this was done, he had to stir the barley, pour off the chaff floating in the water and refill the buckets. His injured shoulder throbbed. His hands blistered. At last, he put the water bucket back on the stool beside the well. Wiping the back of his hand across his forehead, he walked to the ovens where Goodman Smith was roasting sprouted barley.

"I done, Master."

"Good. The fire's cooling. Bring in more wood and build it up again. I'll be back to show you how to spread the barley for germination after it's soaked."

Adams left the brew-house and went into the cook kitchen. Jean-Marc walked to the wood pile. With blistered hands, he carried wood into the brew-house and built up the fire. Then he dropped on to a stool and waited for Goodman Adams to return.

"I see a roaring fire and plenty of wood in the box. Nicely done, John. I know you're just learning, so little's done today but I see you're trying."

Did he just say little was done? No, I could not have understood him.

Adams continued. "I can see you'll do much better tomorrow. Follow me."

He walked to a series of wooden racks. Some were filled with trays of germinated barley that was to grow until the sprouts could be roasted to make malt. Adams poured water off of a bucket of barley. He explained each step as he brought a bucket to one of the racks filled with empty trays. He spread the sprouted barley on the tray, covering it with a wet cloth. He put the empty bucket against the far wall.

"Now you do it."

Jean-Marc looked at two rows of buckets filled with water and barley. Adams had taken a bucket from the back row against the wall. Jean-Marc took the next bucket in line.

"Good, John. Each row of bucket's a day's work. The seeds you just set soaking will sit for two days just like these seeds have

already. The row in front'll be ready tomorrow. Now empty the bucket onto the tray and cover it with the damp cloths."

He drained the bucket, spread the seeds out on the tray, covered the tray with a cloth and slid it onto the rack Adams had used.

"Well done, John. Now do the rest of them. When you're finished," Adams took a small wooden rake from a hook on the wall, "take this and rake all the other trays to turn the seeds, then wet and replace their cloths." Adams demonstrated as he talked. "Do you understand me?"

"Do that, too. Je comprends."

"Good. Show me." Adams watched as Jean-Marc repeated the process. When he was certain Jean-Marc understood his tasks, he smiled and said, "You finish that." Then he walked to the larger of the ovens and used tongs to pull a broad shallow pan to the oven's edge. The roasting grain smelled sweet and toasty. He turned the grain with a wooden paddle and examined its golden color. "Not yet," he muttered pushing the tray back into the oven. Adams left the brew-house and went back into the cook kitchen.

A few minutes later the girl who showed him the brew-house that morning came out carrying a tray. Jean-Marc looked up from his chores, wiped the sweat from his face and smiled at her.

"The Master ate a while back, and he's come for more. He said nothing of feeding you, but I'll wager you'd eat a bit." She returned his smile as she placed the tray on a small work table. "There's meat, bread and beer for you."

"Sank you." He wiped his face again then wiped his hands on his breeches as he walked to the tray. His sweat-soaked shirt clung to his chest and back. Abigail noticed sweat running down his neck and arms.

"Take your fill fast, before Goodman returns. He'll not be happy, you eating, instead of working during the day."

"I eat fast." He poured and drained a tankard of beer then took some meat.

"You really French?" Abigail sat on the stool.

"I am." He smiled, bit into the meat and wiped his face again.

"I never met a Frencher before. Your talk's strange, but you look like us."

"Angland and France, they be not so far apart, yes? Zee people, zay be same, yes? Only our kings be different, no?"

"No, I mean, yes ... I guess so." She stood, pulled a cloth from the apron strings behind her back, and walked to him. "You're soaked." She wiped his face and neck with the cloth. He reached up and took the cloth then wiped his hands and arms.

He looked into her face and said, "Sank you."

Abigail's face reddened. She reached for her cloth. "You'd best finish quick or the Master'll have both our hides."

"I eat fast."

They sat in silence while Jean-Marc finished the food. When he was done, Abigail straightened the things on the tray. He reached out, touched her wrist and looked into her face.

"Sank you again. How you are called ... Abigail?"

Her face got redder. "Yes."

He watched her hurry away.

Afternoon turned into evening. Goodman Adams dried and roasted malt while Jean-Marc loaded tray after tray with barley, moved bucket after bucket between rooms and carried water from the well again and again. With darkness nearing, Adams sent him into the yard to split wood and went into the house for his supper. Just as the sun disappeared below the horizon, the kitchen door opened.

"John, come join Abigail and me for supper," Chastity called into the yard. Jean-Marc was sure he understood her. He returned the ax to the tool shed, wiped his hands on his breeches and walked into the house.

The kitchen smelled wonderful. Abigail put a bowl of hot biscuits on the table to go with a plate of roasted ox and root vegetables. Chastity poured beer into tankards. She looked up, "Run those hands through some water before you sit at our table. Splash some on your face and body too. You smell worse than you look."

"Haff you leenins I can use to clean myself? Perhaps some perfume?"

"What need would you have for linen? There's a bowl of water by the tub. Splash yourself with that and wipe with the towel. And where would you expect two indentures to get perfume? We're servants just like you. We was sold for our labor. If we could afford perfume we wouldn't been sold, now would we?"

"You are right—"

Abigail cut him off. "Look at your hands. The blisters are bleeding. Let me see to them."

Taking one of his bloody hands in hers, she led him across the room. She waited while he rinsed off and dried. Then she put a bowl under his hands, made a cup with her right hand and poured water over his wounds. She patted his hands dry and wrapped them in clean cloths. His hands, already much larger than hers, looked immense in their bandages. "Come to the table, John." She led him to a chair and filled a plate for him. "I'll cut your food," she said. "Using a knife will hurt with hands like that."

He smiled at the thought of this girl cutting his food for him. *I* was just splitting and stacking wood with the same bloody hands and no one cared. He reached for a biscuit and winced at the pain in his shoulder.

"What's wrong?" Abigail asked. "Did you hurt your arm too?"

"Mon bras?" He touched his arm. "My arm, no?"

Both girls nodded.

"My arm? *Je me suis blesse* ... I was hurt when I was made the *prisonnier*. *You comprends*?"

Chastity nodded and said, "You were hurt when you were a prisoner."

"Yes. Then when the mens from Wells, they beat me because of the *indien* that killed people at the *taverne*."

"They beat you because Indians killed people?" Chastity sounded incredulous.

"It will be fine."

"It'll be fine after I put a poultice on it," Abigail said. "You two eat. I'll make the poultice now."

Jean-Marc and Chastity ate. They talked with each other as best they could while Abigail boiled an onion wrapped in a cloth with mustard seed and pepper. When the onion was soft, she pulled the cloth from the water, squeezed it dry with a towel and brought it to the table. She loosened the laces in the front of Jean-Marc's shirt and placed her hand on his shoulder.

"Is this where it hurts?"

He reached inside his shirt, took her hand and moved it toward his neck. "Here she hurts."

Abigail placed the poultice on that spot. She threaded the cloth under his arm and over his shoulder, tying it in place. "That should help."

He smiled at her gentle touch. It had been so very long since a woman touched him. Abigail smiled at him, then blushed again. She sat on the far side of the table, looked into her plate, and ate without speaking. The warmth from the poultice felt good on his shoulder.

When they finished eating, he asked, "What do I now?"

"You can go to bed!" Chastity sounded frustrated. "Abigail and I have to clean the kitchen, prepare for the morning's meal and bank the fire. Your day's done. Ours has yet another hour."

He got up from the table feeling that Chastity expected him to feel guilty for going to bed after his long hard day. He did not. In his cellar, he took off his shoes, stockings, and breeches, allowing his long shirt-tail to drop to his knees. He lay on top of the quilt that covered his bed and fell into a dreamless sleep.

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Jean-Marc's servitude developed into a routine. Every day he got up before dawn and went into the kitchen. Abigail, up an hour before him, would be preparing the morning's meal. He sat at the large wooden table, and Abigail served him an ample breakfast.

She seemed to make a point of sitting beside him, even if only for a few moments every morning. They would sit and talk about little things. Abigail was fascinated when she learned Jean-Marc had been a noble in France. One morning she asked, "What must it be like, from being a noble to being a servant now?" He folded his hands in front of his mouth and thought. Then he said, "In my country there are three *Sociétés*, the *Oratores*, how you say the *Clergé*?"

"The clergy?"

"Oui, yes, those who pray, the Bellatores, these are the nobles, those who fight and the Laboratories, those who work. We were teached, each man, his place was willed by God. In my family, the men, we were to be *Guerrier*, ah ... fighters. The Laboratories, these we saw like oxen, beasts of burden."

Abigail looked shocked. "So am I nothing but an-"

"This is my point. Now, I am a *Laboratore*. Has God changed his mind? I think this is not so. I think men, they are put in their *Sociétés* by other men, not by God, and each does what he can. The boy I was in France, he was not so good as the man I am becoming here. In France you would have been no one to me." He stopped. Tears welled in his eyes, "Now..."

She took his hand and started to speak, but Chastity burst into the room. Jean-Marc lowered his eyes and shook his head.

Every day, soon after he came up from his cellar, Chastity came down from the room she and Abigail shared in the attic. Now all conversation would be about Chastity. Somehow, even as a servant, she found a way to make herself the center of attention. Goodman Adams' customers all noticed Chastity, who did nothing to discourage them.

Somewhat older than Abigail, she was slender, taller than most women, just over five feet two inches with light brown hair and eyes.

This Chastity, she is prettier than Abigail. Why do I resent her when she comes down? She is brash, no? Everything changes when she comes in.

Jean-Marc looked from Chastity to Abigail and thought, *This little one, she confuses me. She sits always in the chair beside mine. It can be no accident her hand touches mine and her leg brushes mine so often. Yet she rejects my every advance.* 

Abigail seemed a bit younger than Jean-Marc. She was about average height at four feet eleven inches and was quite thin. Her dark hair contrasted with her pale skin and blue eyes. If a customer paid attention to her, Abigail would redden and smile. Then she would excuse herself as soon as she could.

Why do I treasure my time with Abigail? Chastity, any man would notice. This little one, who sees her? But she sees things others do not. She had no need to bring me something to drink my first day here ... or to wrap my hands. About her, there is more than meets the eye, no?

More and more he resented Chastity's loud intrusions into their quiet moments.

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Most days, after breakfast, Jean-Marc split wood. The Adams children often played behind the wood pile, while he worked.

This place they play in, it is so small. Why do they not play by the house?

The older girl, perhaps eight, often played dolls with her small sister and brother. The bigger boys ran and wrestled.

*I remember such days. I even played with Francois.* The memory made him smile. *All was not bad when I was a boy. They were better times.* 

Day after day, he would watch the children and smile.

One morning the older boys played sword-fight while the others watched. Jean-Marc laughed at the boys and said, "You must know that is not how to use the *epee*, no?"

The boys stopped their play. The larger boy asked, "What's the *epee*?"

"Epee... sabre? How do you say this in Anglish?"

The bigger boy said, "Sword?"

"Ah, mais oui, sword. That is not how one must use the sword."

"You know how to use a sword?" The boy sounded impressed.

"I do. Does your *pere*, your papa, not show you to use the sword?"

"No," the boy said. "But he has a big one."

"This, I have seen," Jean-Marc said. "Do you see, the sword, it is just a big *couteau*, oh, how do you say it ... a knife?"

"Yes, but you don't fight with knives."

"Oh, but of course you can fight with the knife. But fighting with the knife, is not so very much like how to fight with the sword."

The boys walked closer to Jean-Marc. The older girl stopped playing dolls with the younger children and listened.

"How are you called," he asked the boys.

The bigger one said, "I'm Daniel."

The smaller one said, "I'm Jonathan."

Jean-Marc smiled. Looking at the smaller boy, he said, "Such a big *nom* for such a little boy, no?"

The boy reddened. "And the others," Jean-Marc said, pointing at the three sitting children.

The older girl stood. "My name's Ruth. This is Esther and Ezra."

"Enchante, Ruthy,"

"Enchante?"

*"Enchante*, I do not know the Anglish word. How do you say, by meeting you, I am made happy?"

"Do you mean, pleased to meet you?"

"So, I am pleased to meet you, Ruthy."

"Why do you call me Ruthy? My name is Ruth," the girl said, moving closer.

"Do not come too close to where I work. I do not want that you should be hurt," Jean-Marc said as he put another piece of wood on the block and slammed his ax into it. "I must do my work, too." He picked up the split pieces and threw them to a pile of split wood. "Why do I call you Ruthy? Does not Ruthy sound ... uh ... pretty enough, for such a pretty little girl?"

"But my name is Ruth."

"*Mais oui*, but is not Ruthy more pretty? And your brother, how is his *nom*, Jonathan?" Ruth nodded. "Such a *nom* is too big for him. Him I will call Jon-Jon." Jean-Marc turned back to the boys, "So, Jon-Jon, do you like to learn to use the sword in the fight?

The boy came to him, extending his stick to Jean-Marc. "No, you keep your *arme*. I will use, how are you called, boy?" He looked to the larger boy.

That boy stepped closer, extending his stick. "Daniel."

"I will use Dannyboy's *arme*." He too the stick and twirled it in figure-eights. Then he raised it toward Jonathan and said, "*En Garde*." Jonathan copied his actions. "Now, fight with me." The boy drew his stick back, to swing it at Jean-Marc's. Before he could do that, Jean-Marc lunged forward, pushing his stick into the boy's stomach. "The *victoire*, it is mine, no?"

"No fair! You gave me no chance to hit your sword."

"How do you say this is not *juste*? This is how the sword fight is done. I do not want to hit your sword. I want to cut you, no?"

Jonathan looked down, "I suppose."

"Here, Dannyboy," he handed the stick to the other boy. "You try with Jon-Jon. Do not try to hit *epees*. Try to cut him when you fight."

The boys raised their sticks and hit them together, as they did before. Then Daniel swung his stick toward Johnathan's, but pulled it back, missing his brother's stick and slammed it forward, into his stomach. Jean-Marc smiled and cried out, "That you did nice, no? You do not win by hitting *epees*. You win by cutting the other. But, you make another mistake."

"I did?"

"You did. The *epee*, the sword, it is just a big knife. You remember, no? When cutting meat at supper, do you hit the meat with the knife, or do you pull the knife on the meat to cut it?"

"I pull it. 'Tis how meat's sliced."

"What is the man you fight but meat that tries to give you harm. When you hit that man with the ... the sword, you must push the sword on him, but also you must pull the sword to you. That is the way you will cut him. Hit him with the sword and he will say *aie*, but you will no cut him. You must hit him and pull on the sword, if you want to cut him."

He picked up another log to split. The boys resumed their fight. That day, Jean-Marc showed them how thrust, parry, and block a strike with a sword. He also spent more time playing with the boys than Goodman Adams ever had.

"Now, I must carry this wood into the brew house. You must fight with the sword each day. You must learn to do this, so you can defend your *belle* sister, Ruthy. You must never let someone do harm to you sister. That is *une obligation*, I think the word is the same in Anglish, no? It is an obligation of honor for the gentleman to protect his sister."

Jean-Marc tousled the boys' hair, then started tossing wood into a wheel-barrow. The children went back to their play. But every day, the children came to play near him. The boys became skilled at sword fighting with their sticks. Ruth was thrilled by stories about the beautiful women in King Louis' court. In return, the children taught Jean-Marc English.

After several weeks, Daniel hit Jonathan on the hand with his stick. The smaller boy dropped his stick and began to cry. Jean-Marc knelt and hugged him, rubbing his sore hand. He said, "The real sword, it would have the hand-guard, so your hand, it will not be hit. You must not cry my little—"

"Why are you hugging my son," Goodman Adams demanded, walking toward Jean-Marc. The children looked startled and moved away from the men.

"His hand, it was hurt when they played the sword-fight."

"And for this you hug him?"

Jean-Marc stood and lowered his eyes. "I am sorry Goodman, if I should not hug him, I will not."

"You must not!" Adams looked down on the smaller man. "Children are not to be hugged. It spoils them. How will I break their wills if people go about hugging them?"

"You would break your childrens?" Jean-Marc sounded incredulous.

"Tis a parent's duty. Children are born willful. We have to break their will to make them better people."

"I do not understand. You would break your childrens. Do you not love your childrens?"

"I would break their will. I must make them learn to do as I would have them, not as they would please. Because I love them, I must break them of their willfulness. Children are born sinners. If I break not their wills, they'll be damned."

"It is not my place to question, Goodman," Jean-Marc said, looking down, "But I do not think little Jon-Jon, he will be damned. He is a good little boy."

"And many a good little boy's damned."

"I am sorry. I do not understand, Goodman. Why would God damn a good little boy?"

"God damns most. He grants salvation only to the elect few."

"Did God not make these childrens?"

"Of course, He did."

"Again, Sir, I do not understand. If God, He makes the childrens, would he not make childrens He likes?"

Adams went to speak but stopped. He thought for a moment, then said, "I've seen you play with them. At first it troubled me, but it seems there's little harm to it. So long as your work is done, I'll not stop you playing with them. This hugging bothers me, though. I'll think on that."

He turned and went into the house. He found his wife sitting before the fire, in the parlor. "I've waited to say something on this. The children like John."

"I see no harm there," she said, looking up from her needle-work.

"They go by him while he works, and he plays with them."

"He what? He needs to attend to his work, not play with children."

"That he does. His work gets done, but he finds time for the children. I'm not sure 'tis a bad thing."

"I'll not have them spoiled—"

"Nor I, but they are happy by him." He glanced back toward the yard.

"Better unhappy, better beat, than damned." Estelle put the cloth in her lap and moved in the chair, as if trying to find a more comfortable position. "Is he improper?"

"Today, Daniel hit Jonathan's hand with a stick and Jonathan cried."

"Did you beat Daniel?"

"No. There was no intent. 'Twas done in play, but John hugged Jonathan to soothe him."

Her head snapped back. "Did you beat John for that?"

"I did not that either. I know you speak often with your sister, but beatings are needed less than she would have you think. And the boy was soothed. I think he liked the hug."

"You spoil those children, Jeremiah."

"And there's those that tell me I spoil you. Would you have me beat you more?"

"The circumstances are different. My will's been broke. Theirs not."

Adams sat in the wooden chair opposite hers. "Mayhap their's broke enough. I think God may be pleased with that which He made."

Estelle just looked at her husband. She could think of nothing to say.

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The children played near Jean-Marc while he worked every day. When his work was done, they came to be with him in the kitchen, while he ate, or while he sat with Abigail and Chastity. The women taught them how to cook or mend. Ruth particularly enjoyed needlework. Abigail and Chastity began baking special sweets for the children to eat while they visited them in the kitchen. The servants enjoyed the children's company. The children enjoyed the kind attention the servants were happy to give them and their stern parents did not.

Goody Adams was not sure this was good. She often complained to her husband, who ignored her.

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Seven months passed. Jean-Marc chopped more wood and drew more water than he would have believed possible. He also learned much. Adams trusted him to soak the barley for malting, although he always roasted and raked the malt himself. Jean-Marc knew how to make the malt mash and boil it to make the liquid, sweet wort. He

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could identify, collect, and dry the hops that grew wild in the woods around Boston. He knew roughly when and how much hops, or if making ale how much of each spice, to add in order to bitter the wort. Still, hopping or spicing was another task Adams always did himself. Jean-Marc also knew how to measure out and freshen the sour dough that turned the wort into beer or ale. He knew how to cool the brew to stop the yeast. He was becoming a brewer.

But most of all, he learned English. He had to think when he spoke and had a heavy accent, but people now understood him with little effort. And he understood almost everything said to him.

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A bitter winter wind blew through the yard. Goodman Adams came into the brew house wearing his heaviest coat, a scarf around his neck and another under his hat covering his ears and tied under his chin. "John, is the barley soaked for malting?"

"It is, Goodman." Even indoors Jean-Marc's coat was buttoned to the neck.

"Good. There's been little enough business with the harbor froze over, but now a captain with a full hold's convinced he can get through the ice. He wants beer for his trip and he takes all ours that's aged enough. We need to soak double our barley, malt what's ready and roast the malt we've got tomorrow or we'll not have beer ready for others when the ice is gone. Tell the girls to have your breakfast two hours before dawn on the morrow. You need to fire the oven so I can begin the roasting at first light. Tomorrow's to be a busy day."

"Yes, Goodman." He made a short bow and pulled on his gloves, scarf, and hat before going to the kitchen where Chastity and Abigail were cleaning up after supper.

The girls often worked together. They had more freedom and with it more responsibility than most other indentures. Goody Adams gave them almost total responsibility for the feeding and clothing of the household. As long as there were no problems, they did as they thought best. Goody Adams had little interest in the kitchen, laundry, or loom, so she ignored them whenever possible. From their discussions with girls in other households, Chastity and Abigail were sure this was to their advantage.

Jean-Marc got along with both girls although he spent little time with them during their busy days. The three ate in the kitchen every morning before the family rose and every night after the family ate dinner.

Entering the kitchen, Jean-Marc said, "The Master says to have my breakfast two hours before the dawn. I must fire the oven so he can roast."

"Oh, that means I need be up an hour before that," moaned Abigail.

"Mayhap not. Let's think on it. If we start it now, you can get up when John does. That saves you an hour's sleep." Chastity was thinking aloud. "Porridge cooks the night. Build up the fire and I'll start some porridge. It'll be ready when John comes up. The beer and bread's already here. You can build up the day's fire whilst John eats." Chastity thought another moment then laughed. "Fact is, do it this way and I can even sleep a bit later, though I'll scarce be able to sleep there alone."

"I'd kill to sleep later," Abigail said, shaking her head. "We always rise afore the family."

"Wonder why that would be, hussy?" Chastity laughed again. "Our lives are hard. Up before light and busy past dark. But others have worse."

Abigail nodded. "Aye, Goodman's a fair man. He beats us hardly more than his family."

"Look at what Goodman Emerson done last month," Chastity said.

"What did he do?"

"Oh, John, 'twas terrible." Abigail was upset. "He beat one of his boys to death." She left the kitchen to bring in wood for the fire.

Chastity picked up the story. "The sheriff arrested Emerson, but the court ruled he had the right. Said his boy was disobedient and slothful. Judge said Emerson was 'justly angered'. I tell you, John, there be others have it worse than us." "So, it seems," he agreed. He returned to the malting shed and cleaned up for the night. Then he went to bed in his cellar room which he shared with brewing supplies and beer barrels.

Chastity and Abigail finished preparing the porridge, which would cook overnight. Then they filled a large iron pot with hot stones from the fire, and together carried it to the attic. They pushed the pot under their bed.

Their attic was hot in the summer and cold in the winter. Its only heat came from the hot chimney and the pot of stones they brought from the kitchen. In past winters, the girls were able to make do. But this was the coldest winter in living memory. Even with their bed pushed against the chimney, they shivered all night

Chastity went downstairs with the bed-warmer and brought back coals from the fire. She lifted the pile of quilts and ran the bedwarmer under them, then put the warmer on a stone next to the bed. She and Abigail got into bed fully clothed.

"Oh, 'tis cold!" Abigail said.

Chastity snuggled beside her. "Aye, I'd be glad to trade this attic for John's bed in the cellar. 'Tis dark and musty there, but not cold the way it is up here. And in summer 'tis cooler there."

Abigail's teeth were chattering. "Last year 'twasn't so cold."

"Aye," Chastity said. "Goody told me they find someone new froze in the streets near every morning."

"We're able to keep the fire burning night and day, little that it helps. Think about the people without wood enough," Abigail said.

"There's suffering enough to go around. Today Goody told me many a well's froze over. They can't even draw water. That'll try your soul."

"What do they for water?"

"Got to take an ice-bore to the river and make a hole. Goody said the ice is near two feet thick."

"If Goody knows 'tis so cold, why don't she find us a warmer place to sleep?" Abigail asked. "In the morning, I'm asking her agai—"

"Why? We've begged her for somewhere warmer. But she just says there's no room to be had."

The girls shivered through another frigid night. Hours before dawn Abigail climbed out of bed wrapping one of their quilts around her and went downstairs to build up the kitchen fire and finish preparing Jean-Marc's breakfast. Minutes later he came up from his cellar.

"Sacrebleu! It is cold here, no?"

"Not so cold as in our attic."

"Can this be? My cellar, she is not so cold."

Abigail wiped a tear from her eye and hunched over the growing fire. "We're cold all day, even in the kitchen unless right by the fire. Then we go upstairs and shiver all night. We can't sleep. We both be sick."

"Have you told the Master?"

"We cried to Goody." Abigail wiped another tear from her cheek.

"You must tell her again."

At that moment, Chastity, also wrapped in a quilt, came down the stairs. "Tis too cold to stay up there alone!" She blew on her cupped hands and stamped her feet.

"You must go down the stairs to my bed. She is not so cold there."

"I can't go to your bed, John." Chastity sounded amazed at his suggestion.

"Why not? I am no in it, and it is no so cold there."

Without another word, Chastity opened the door to his cellar and ran down the stairs. Abigail stood by the fire trying to warm herself. Jean-Marc wore a coat while he ate a large bowl of steaming porridge and drank a mug of beer. When he finished, he stood and began putting on extra layers of clothing.

"You, too, should go to my bed and warm. The fire, she burns, and the Master will not rise for another hour." He pulled a cap down over his ears, pulled mittens on over his gloves and went out the door.

Abigail thought a moment, threw another log on the fire and ran downstairs to climb into his small bed with Chastity. For the first time in weeks they were both warm.

#### The Fourth Son

Abigail knew she should only stay a short while, but she could not drag herself out of the warm bed into the cold kitchen. When she heard Goodman Adams calling to her from the kitchen, she knew she would be in trouble. She climbed from the bed and hurried up the stairs, apologizing as she went.

"So sorry, Goodman. 'Tis just that we are so cold in the attic and John told us he stays warm at night. I had to be warm for at least a little while."

"You belong in the kitchen now, not abed! I should cane you. Chastity does well in the attic."

"Chastity's in John's bed warming, Sir. The attic's so cold. We can't sleep. We're sick, the both of us."

"What?" Angry, Adams stormed into the cellar. "Chastity, get yourself from John's bed. I'll have no such behavior in my house."

"Behavior, Sir? The bed was empty, Sir. We've shivered for weeks."

Adams stopped and looked around. "It is warmer here, even warmer than in my room, with its fireplace."

"Please, Goodman, we meant no harm but we freeze in the attic."

As Abigail told Jean-Marc when he first arrived, Goodman Adams was a fair man. He shook his head. *Guess I can't cane them for trying to get warm. And John wasn't with them.* He looked at his girls. *Cold's taking its toll on them.* 

"I'll talk to Goody Adams about the attic later. But now get me my breakfast."

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After he roasted the malt, Adams gave Jean-Marc directions and returned to the house. Goody Adams and the children were in the parlor, bundled together before a blazing fire.

"I found Abigail and Chastity in John's bed this morn."

"The hussies! I trust you caned them."

"I did not. John was in the brewery. The girls were cold, and his cellar is warmer than their cold attic."

"Jeremiah, the girls do freeze at night."

Adams shook his head. "This winter's hard on all."

"Harder on those in an unheated attic," his wife said.

"They've quilts. Can't they sleep clothed?"

Goody Adams saw her chance. She knew the girls were sick and was afraid they would not survive the winter. They could not afford to buy more girls if these two died. And she had no interest in taking over their duties.

"They do sleep in their clothes and look at their condition. We'll lose them if we don't do something."

Adams shook his head. "They won't run away in this weather." "No, but they might die."

Goodman Adams had not considered that possibility. He paid little attention to the girls, assuming his wife would see to them. He called into the kitchen, "Abigail, Chastity, come to the parlor."

The girls hurried into the parlor wiping their hands on cloths. "Goodwife, they don't look cold to me."

"They come from the kitchen, husband, where there be a fire. There be none in their attic."

"If their attic's cold, can they not sleep in the kitchen?"

"There be room for one of them not two."

"Master, we freeze at night. There must be some other place we can sleep. Having one of us sleep in the kitchen'll not do. The one alone in the attic, would die for sure," Chastity said.

"Oh Master, we do freeze," Abigail said.

"We'll see to this. Wife, come with me." The three women followed Goodman Adams into and through the kitchen, then up the stairs. In the attic, he said, "Bless me, it is cold. Goodwife, how long have you known of this?"

"The girls came to me over a week ago. I brought it to you."

"Did you? I have no memory of that. It matters not. The girls cannot sleep here. Go back to the kitchen's heat."

The women were glad to leave the cold attic for the relative warmth of the kitchen and huddled by the fire.

Goody Adams spoke, "See Jeremiah, one could sleep on this floor but not two."

"So, I see. Could one sleep in the kitchen and one in the parlor?"

#### The Fourth Son

"I'll not have servants sleeping in my parlor." Goody Adams was firm on this point.

"The only other place would be in the cellar with John." The Goodman seemed to be talking to himself. "Men and women share beds at an inn. The young bundle."

Goody Adams interrupted his musings. "That they do, but if they're familiar with each other, the court will at least whip them and make them marry. Then we'd be stuck with their bastard. If they married, we'd not be able to keep them apart and we'd be stuck with all their whelps. And the court could send them to the scaffold. Then you'd lose two servants."

"What then?"

Chastity interrupted, "I know 'tis not my place to speak, but could John sleep in the kitchen?"

The Adams looked at each other. "There you have it, Jeremiah. John can sleep here and the girls below."

"John'll not like it. Even now it's colder here than in his cellar, and there'll be no bed."

"John'll like the roof over his head and meals he gets. There's nothing else to it. John can move the girls' things downstairs."

"There's too much work this day."

"They can't spend another night in that attic."

Goodman put his hands in his pocket and thought. "The girls can set a bed for John on the floor. He can see to the rest on the morrow. I'll go tell him."

"Thank you, Sir," the girls said almost in unison.

Adams put on his coat, hat, and mittens to go to the brew-house. He found Jean-Marc building up the fire so the malting trays would not freeze.

"John." When he looked up, Adams began. "John, the girls' attic has no heat. They can't sleep there in this cold. I've looked for options, but there's none to be had. They'll have to sleep in the cellar. You'll move to the kitchen the rest of the winter."

Jean-Marc straightened. "The girls, they telled me they are very cold. In the kitchen, I will not be so cold. It is good."

"The kitchen will be colder than your cellar."

"But not so cold like the girls' attic, yes?"

"You are right, not so cold as their attic and they do need to be warmer. 'Tis well you understand. Tomorrow they'll show you what of their things need go to the cellar. Some of what's in down there'll need be moved to the attic to make room."

"What must be must be. *Est-ce pas*?"

Adams returned to the house leaving Jean-Marc to his chore. He told the women, "It's decided. John understands."

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Well before supper, the girls brought their quilts to the cellar. Chastity moved John's things to the side.

Abigail asked, "Shouldn't we ask him where he'd like his things?"

"What matters it? This'll be ours. He'll sleep in the kitchen."

"With what for a bed? With the fire, we can't put down straw."

Chastity shrugged. "We can put extra cloths under the quilt. I didn't notice he lost any sleep while we froze."

"He knew not. When I told him how cold we were, he told us to come down here."

"At no cost to him. You can spend your time worrying on him. I'll not."

\*\*\*\*\*

The brewery kept Jean-Marc busy through supper. Abigail bundled herself against the cold and brought a plate of hot food out to the cold brewery.

"I thought you'd be hungry."

"I am," he said stamping his feet in the cold before taking the plate from her and putting it on the workbench. Without sitting he began to eat.

"It saddens me you're to be moved from your cellar."

Jean-Marc chewed and swallowed before speaking. "What else is there? You must not freeze."

"You lose your bed."

#### The Fourth Son

Again, he waited to swallow before he spoke. "I have lost so much since I left France. This thing, it is so little. Do not be troubled."

"We'll set you a soft bed by the fire."

"This would be nice."

\*\*\*\*

After supper, the girls did their best to prepare a bed for Jean-Marc. Instead of banking the fire they built it up as if preparing to cook. Then they hurried through their other tasks, deciding that some of their work could wait until morning after all. They wore their clothes to bed and sound asleep by the time Jean-Marc finished his work for the day and came in.

So, this is to be my bed.

Exhausted, he climbed beneath the quilt and faced away from the fire to avoid its light.

The girls were warm and slept well for the first time in weeks. As dawn approached, they were even too hot and pushed the quilts away from their shoulders. On the hard floor, Jean-Marc slept little.

At her usual pre-dawn hour Abigail got up. This day Chastity joined her in the kitchen. Jean-Marc was not able to sleep while the girls fixed breakfast.

"You should go down stairs and sleep," Abigail said.

Without speaking, Jean-Marc did.

The girls rushed to prepare a special breakfast of biscuits, molasses, and bacon for the family. They selected four of the best biscuits and an ample pile of the bacon for Jean-Marc. Just over an hour later he smiled when he walked into the kitchen and saw the over-burdened plate the girls set for him. He ate well past full, pushed back, and drained his tankard of beer.

"Such a meal. Of this King Louis himself would boast, no? Thank you, ladies. The Master he says I must move some things to the cellar for you, so I must also move some things from the cellar to make the room. You will please show me what I must move."

The girls agreed that Chastity would show him what to move to the cellar while Abigail did double duty in the kitchen. That the larger bed would move was a given, but Jean-Marc was amazed at all the things the girls deemed necessary for a temporary move: along with the bed and mattress, they wanted extra quilts, chests of clothing, shoes, candle holders and small tables, brushes and combs, even some trinkets. Again, and again he tried to protest that they wanted too much moved.

"You must know my other chores for this day, they will not do themselves. And for everything I move to the cellar, there is another thing I must move from the cellar into the attic."

His protests were to no avail. Chastity's list of things to be moved never changed.

He set about moving things from the cellar into the frigid yard. This made room in the cellar for all the things the girls wanted moved from the attic. Between trips to the cellar he drew water, ladled barley, stoked fires, and moved heavy wooden kegs for filling.

The cellar cleared, he began to move things from the attic.

"Stop. You can't move that downstairs yet. I need to clean down there," Abigail said.

"You make sport of me, no?"

"I make sport of you, no. I'll not sleep down there until it's cleaned."

He was mystified. "You did notice that you will be sleeping down there, yes? This means your eyes, they will be closed."

"Eyes closed or no, I'll not sleep there until it's cleaned."

"The floor, it is dirt."

"The rest is not!"

"Did you perhaps notice that you sleeped there last night? It is no dirtier now than it was then."

But again, his opinion did not matter. Moving stopped until Abigail spent several hours cleaning the cellar.

Jean-Marc labored throughout the day. Several times, Goodman Adams got angry because some chore still was not done. He didn't finish until long after dark. The girls prepared another special meal for him of roasted pork and baked apples, but he just drank his beer refilled the tankard, drank again and went to bed. This night, he slept.

Jean-Marc woke when the girls came up to fix breakfast.

"You're in our way," Chastity said, pushing a foot into his back. "Go sleep another hour downstairs. We'll call you when it's ready."

Without speaking he headed downstairs. The cellar looked so different. So much was crammed into the small area. Colorful cloths separated the sleeping area from the brewing supplies. There were small tables with candle stands on either side of the bed. It looked like a bedroom, not his cellar. He climbed between the quilts and tried to sleep.

About an hour later Chastity called him to the kitchen. He climbed out of their bed, put on his shoes and went upstairs. He noticed that the girls had prepared porridge for the family to eat. When he sat at the table for his breakfast, Abigail set a heaping plate of roast pork and baked apples before him. He beamed.

She leaned over, said, "Thank you, John," and kissed him on the cheek. Turning bright red, she made a small noise as if she'd shocked herself and hurried back to her chores.

Chastity laughed out loud. "If our wee mouse Abigail kisses you, you've done well. We know you toiled long yesterday. For that we thank you. We've little enough to give but you do have our thanks."

She returned to her tasks, chuckling to herself. *Look what little Abby's done. Haven't seen that in her before.* 

\*\*\*\*\*

For the rest of the winter, every morning Abigail crept into the kitchen while everyone else slept. She tried not to wake Jean-Marc, but always did. He would get up, roll and store his bedding, and sit at the table with a tankard of beer. They would whisper to each other until Chastity burst through the door. Quiet conversation would be over.

Then Jean-Marc began helping Abigail with her chores. He would carry wood and stoke the fire while Abigail fussed over porridge or biscuits. When the chores were done, they would sit together at the table, at first opposite, then next to each other. One day Abigail put her hands on his as he told her about his day ahead. He could not believe the excitement he felt.

Then Chastity came up the stairs and everything was different. Abigail took her hand from his and jumped to her feet. There was work to do.

All three were friends, but nothing was the same after Chastity got up.

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One morning the servants discussed how they came into Goodman Adams' service.

"My parents, two brothers and sister all died of the pox," Chastity said kneading dough. "It's a hard way to die and hard for a young one to see. They all suffered. I was but a babe, so I was sent to the poor house. There they worked us harder than Goody Adams ever does. The food was bad and there was little of it. When I turned twelve, they said I was old enough to see after myself and turned me out. Many a day I went without food. Many a night I slept under a bridge."

Jean-Marc sat opposite her at the table. He asked, "Could you find no work?"

"Work I found in a tavern for food and bed, but I was sent away by the keeper's wife. She thought that at thirteen I was after her fat husband. It was the streets for me again. I seen some younger than me hanged for stealing food. So, I knew better than to steal no matter how hungry I got. I knew girls who lived as whores—"

"Oh, Chastity, you couldn't have," Abigail said looking up from the porridge she was stirring.

"No. I often seen them in the morning bad beaten by one o' their men and still not paid for the night. I vowed I'd starve 'fore I would do that for food or for silver. I near starved and I near froze. Then at sixteen, when I should be gettin' married, I heard I could sell myself for seven years to work off fare to America. Servants at least eat regular and have a bed. For these seven years, at least I'd eat daily and have a roof over my head."

Abigail nodded. "'Twas good you were sold here. Not all servants eat regular. We do."

"Could you not serve in Angland?"

Chastity shook her head. "There's indentures in England but more be needed here. When you sell yourself, expect to go to the colonies, Virginia or here. Most be sent to Virginia. I hear thems as go to there have a worse lot than us."

She floured the board again and went on. "The trip from England was torture. T'were over forty other indentures, all but five of them men, stuck in that dark hold, never allowed into the air above."

"Oh, the boat, that was terrible" Abigail agreed.

"That it was. Us women were careful to relieve ourselves in the bilge water. That was foul enough but the men just used any wall."

"Aye, on my boat, too," Abigail said.

"In no time, the hold stunk of sweat and shit. And there we ate, right in our own filth. They gave us nothing to eat but sea biscuits." She picked up the dough she was kneading and slammed it back down. "Nothing like these'll be. And water that was green and full of bugs."

Now she laughed. "I learned to suck the water through my teeth when I drank to keep out the bugs. 'Tis funny now, with all the worms and weevils I was eatin' in the biscuits."

"Some say it was the weevils kept us alive," Abigail said.

"That may be. The biscuits sure couldn't. I was sold to Goodman Adams three years ago, at seventeen, and I've lacked not food nor bed since. This time serving here's been the best o' my life."

"Tis true," Abigail said. "As masters go, he's a good one. I'd want not another."

"In four more years, I'll be a free woman and I'll not go back to the streets."

"What will you do? You'll have no money. That old, without money or family, what man would have you? 'Twould be different were you a rich widow," Abigail said. She swung the arm supporting the kettle, moving the bubbling porridge back over the fire.

"I'll have me a man to marry so soon as I'm free. I've got my eyes on some lonely widowers. Between the pox and birthing, there's sure to be more. I could make a rich old man happy. Then could I be a happy widow myself. I've four years left in this house. Do what I must, I'll not be poor again and neither will I stay some other woman's servant."

"But Chastity, we serve Goodman Adams not Goody," Abigail said.

"Do we? When did you last do a brewer's chore? Does Goody make bread or sit at a loom?"

"She does not."

"But that's my story for you, John. Abby'll have to tell you hers."

Abigail came to the table and sat down. "My father was a rich wool merchant in London's Steelyard, trading with the Hanseatic League cities. Then he lost all. He said changing times caused his losses. Mum said it was his gambling on dog fights."

Chastity stopped arranging balls of dough on a flat pan and said, "Two things I know. Biscuits rise in the oven and gamblers lose their money. He pissed that money away."

Abigail reddened. "By one or the other, mayhap both, my father lost all and was bound for debtor's prison until his debts would be paid. Who pays off a debt while in prison? Men go to debtor's prisons to die. 'Tis punishment for their debt. And their children starve as punishment for being born to such a man. My father decided he'd not go to prison, so he sold me for three pounds and my two brothers for four pounds each. This kept him from prison but bound us for seven years."

"How sells your father you?" Jean-Marc was incredulous.

"He went to a friend who trades in indentures, and we were sold. I was twelve. I've seen neither parent nor brother since. Now I'm sixteen with three years of service left. I've worked off over half of my time but don't know what I'll do when it's up. I'll not have money and nineteen's too old for a poor girl to marry. Who wants a penniless old maid? A rich widow or girl from a rich family'd be different. Mayhap Goodman Adams will let me stay in his service. I'd work for little more than food and bed. But what of you, John?"

Jean-Marc shared his story with them, much to their disbelief.

"So, you know the King of France?" Chastity laughed, as she put his breakfast on the table.

#### The Fourth Son

*"Mais oui.* I have seen him many times." He paused to bite into one of the steaming biscuits. "I do not belief he would know me but he knew my father and knows my mother and brother."

Still laughing, Chastity mocked a curtsey and said, "Should we bow before your grace?"

"You should show some respect to one who speaks the truth."

The three laughed together.

The wind is ill that brings no good. From this cold winter, I have real friends. Had I friends before? Jean-Marc thought as he ate.

In the kitchen, around the table, the three formed a close bond. Chastity had no interest in another servant. Her sights were set on someone old, fat and rich. The relationship between Abigail and Jean-Marc grew into something deeper.

He spent as much time with Abigail as he could. He thrilled at her touch. Just seeing her lifted his mood. He loved the way her face brightened when she noticed him watching her. He loved that she went out of her way to see or to touch him. For the first time he could remember, he found joy making someone else happy.

With Abigail, all is different. But her service will be over long before mine. Will she leave then? Could I live without her? I will not.

Jean-Marc and Abigail realized that they were not their own, yet somehow this wasn't important. They were happy.

#### \*\*\*\*\*

When the winter passed, Jean-Marc was sad to move the girls' things back into their attic.

"What are you doing," Abigail asked.

"Goodman, he told me to move your bed back to the attic."

"Not until I clean up there you won't."

"This again? How did the empty attic get dirty?" He lowered the bed frame on the cellar steps.

"You're just a man," Abigail said walking toward him. "You can't even see dirt."

"But I can see you," he said reaching out to grab her around the waist.

#### Brien Brown

The bed frame slid down the stairs knocking over the barrels and kegs below. Both looked down the stairs and laughed.

"Now we've both cleaning to do," Abigail laughed, poking him in the ribs and running up the stairs.

"Your eyes, they will still be closed," he shouted to her, laughing as he walked down the stairs.

\*\*\*\*\*

Although sleeping in the cellar again, he continued to get up when Abigail did. Their time together was precious to them both. Without realizing it they began talking about a future together, having no idea how they could make it happen.

He dedicated himself to learning the brewer's trade.

With a trade, I could give Abigail a good life. But she will be free. I still owe twenty more years of service...No! That long, I will not serve. Somehow, this will change. I will find a way to free myself by the time Abigail is free. Do not know how it will happen...but it will happen.

In the meantime, he paid close attention to Goodman Adams. He asked about everything. He learned he could add honey or maple syrup to the wort, producing a stronger, sweeter beer. He also learned that he could produce a similar effect using molasses which cost less. He learned that he could use grains other than barley to make the wort and produce vastly different beers.

When I am free, I will be the best and richest brewer in Boston. And I will be with Abigail.



In 1691, a privileged French noble is forced to go to America. Jean-Marc is taken prisoner, sold into servitude, becomes a brewer, and falls in love with Abigail. They escape into the wilderness after he kills their master defending her and survive with the help of a Lenape warrior.

## The Fourth Son

by Brien Brown

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