

Forbidden Love

This is a story as old as time itself about a forbidden love. It all starts with a devout catholic man from a small town in the Finger Lakes. He lived a simple life and never traveled far from home except for the long journey to the regional church for Sunday mass. One day he met a fine lady who he immediately swooned for, but there was a problem. He was Catholic, and she was Protestant, meaning he wasn't allowed to marry her because she was outside of his faith. Left with the feeling of what to do, all he could think about was that they were in love, so they got married. By marrying a non-Catholic, he was no longer accepted by the people and church in which he grew up, was baptized, had his first communion and was confirmed. He remained loyal to his faith just the same.

Every Sunday my great grandmother would walk her children to church, where they would enjoy the community, the gospel and the joy of time spent together. Meanwhile my grandfather would make the 45-minute ride in his old-fashioned car along the dirt roads out of town to attend his Catholic Church.

He would wait until the church bells rang, then slip in through the door to the back pew, where he sat behind strangers, quietly slouched in his seat. He enjoyed each service. He was a devout catholic man. But as the service came to a close, he was quick to slip out ahead of the members of the parish. Following the service, he would stop by the cemetery where his parents and all the other members of his family rest. He paid his respects knowing he would no longer be able to be buried with the rest of his ancestors, since he chose to leave the catholic church to marry his non-Catholic wife. That right had been stripped from him, but his mind was at ease knowing that the love of his life was by his side and god loves all his children just the same. So It didn't matter where he was buried, he had love and faith on his side.

Following church my great grandparents, their children and neighbors all gathered for a Sunday night pot luck. They sang and danced, ate great food and enjoyed each other's company. This is a tradition I continue with my parents and grandparents every Sunday evening to this day. Once a month we visit the grave of my grandmother's parents as she tells us this story and how they rest here. She reassures us that no matter what crazy things are going on in the world around us, love and faith in god lights the way out of the darkness.