

And They All Lived Happily Ever-After

All of us were raised on bed time stories, TV shows, and Hollywood movies that ended with, “and they all lived happily ever-after.” Unfortunately, real life stories don’t always end with such happiness. And what’s even worse is that once the final act has been written, it can’t be edited or done over—it is set for eternity.

Jesus tells the story of a son that rebels against his father’s love, demands his inheritance, and squanders his wealth with wild living in a far country (Luke 15:11-32). Now this part of the story ends happily. Once the son loses everything and hits rock bottom, he returns home where his father welcomes and fully restores him. If we stop right here in the story (verse 24), we could tag on the “...happily ever-after” line. But Jesus didn’t end the story there.

The focus is now switched to the older (good, stable, dependable) brother. He didn’t rebel or dishonor his father. He didn’t squander his inheritance. All of this time he has been in his father’s house and by all appearances faithfully serving him. And he isn’t at all happy that this one who brought disgrace on the family name is being welcomed home, restored, and a huge party is being given in his honor. Sadly, this story’s final act is written and the curtain goes down with the older brother still unforgiving, angry and standing outside of his father’s house.

Remember this: The truest “far country” is a heart that’s not full of God’s love, grace, and mercy.

