

Adams knew something of Ephraim's youth bound to a shoemaker after his parents died. "Her love for you must have been very meaningful," he said.

Ephraim nodded. "You see, I had never known affection. My older brother was put out to a sea captain years before, and my sister married young and lived in a distant place. My master's wife feared to show me affection. After my master struck me on the head with a hand-spike injuring me so much that I almost lost my life, I knew he cared nothing for me, and I resolved to leave him. I went to Easton, about forty miles distant, and looked for a laboring job. But my master pursued me," Ephraim began to speak with the passion of remembrance. "I had just found refuge at a farm where I could work when I recognized my master's harsh voice shouting at the front of the house. I ran out the back door, but I had gone only twenty yards before he ran me down with his horse. He took me to the barn **land** tied me for the night. He kicked me awake early in the morning. 'We'll learn you to shirk your obligations,' he said. Tying me to his horse's tail with a rope around my neck, he pulled or rather dragged me back the forty miles in one day. At those settlements along the way where I was known, he would call the people out and inform them that he had caught the runaway I was mortified to the point where I no longer cared if I lived or died. Despite my exhaustion, as soon as he released me into the house, I walked through it and out the back door. I escaped and traveled as speedily as I could to Providence to and a ship bound for a foreign country. But before I got aboard, my master's brother and another man, who pursued me, caught me, and took me back bound hand and foot. This final failure completely broke my spirit. I fell into a deep depression and determined to serve the rest of my time, which was short."

"So it was Susanna Randal who made you want to live again," Adams suggested, impressed by Ephraim's eloquence.

"Her and Elder Hunt in Middleborough," Ephraim said softly.