

What is the Relationship between Jim and Antonia?

She turned her bright, believing eyes to me, and the tears came up in them slowly, “How can it be like that, when you know so many people and when I’ve disappointed you so? Ain’t it wonderful, Jim, how much people can mean to each other? I’m so glad we had each other when we were little. I can’t wait until my little girl’s old enough to tell her about all the things we used to do. You’ll always remember me when you think about the old times, won’t you? And I guess everybody thinks about the old times, even the happiest people.”

As we walked homeward across the fields, the sun dropped and lay like a great golden globe in the low west. While it hung there, the moon rose in the east, as big as a cart-wheel, pale silver and streaked with rose colour, thin as a bubble or a ghost-moon. For five perhaps ten minutes, the two luminaries confronted each other across the level land, resting on opposite edges of the world.

In that singular light every little tree and stick of wheat, every sunflower stalk and clump of snow-on-the-mountain, drew itself up high and pointed; the very clods and furrows of the fields seemed to stand up sharply. I felt the old pull of the earth, the solemn magic that comes out of those fields at nightfall. I wished I could be a little boy again, and that my way could end there.

We reached the edge of the field, where our ways parted. I took her hands and held them against my breast, feeling once more how strong and warm and good they were, those brown hands, and remembering how many kind things they had done for me. I held them a long while, over my heart. About us, it was growing darker and darker, and I had to look hard to see her face, which I meant always to carry with me; the closest, realest face, under all the shadows of women’s faces, at the very bottom of my memory.

“I’ll come back,” I said earnestly, through the soft, intrusive darkness.

“Perhaps you will.” I felt rather than saw her smile. “But even if you don’t, you’re here. Like my father. So I won’t be lonesome.”

As I went back alone over that familiar road, I could almost believe that a boy and girl ran along beside me, as our shadows used to do, laughing and whispering to each other in the grass.

Willa Cather, *My Antonia*, 1918.

GED as Project, Volume 3, Language Arts, Reading Learning Project 3