

# Any Minute Now

In "Any Minute Now, The Demon of Unrest," we find ourselves situated at Fort Sumter during early April. The atmosphere is fraught with tension as Major Robert Anderson anticipates an order from Washington to vacate the fort. While he is prepared to engage in battle if necessary, he has also come to the reluctant conclusion that abandoning the fort might be the best way to prevent violence. However, Anderson feels he lacks the authority to make that decision alone, fearing that a surrender could impugn his loyalty and equate him with General Twiggs, who had capitulated all federal positions in Texas.

On April 1, Anderson reports the situation at the fort to Col. Lorenzo Thomas, the new adjutant general. Mist obscures the surrounding area, reducing visibility and heightening feelings of isolation among the garrison, which Anderson describes as an "imprisonment." He updates Thomas on dwindling food supplies, stating that unless Governor Pickens allows civilian laborers to leave the fort, provisions could run out by April 8. Tensions mount as Pickens restricts the flow of food supplies, turning the atmosphere increasingly desperate.

On April 3, Captain Joseph Marts, aboard the schooner \*Rhoda H. Shannon\*, mistakenly enters Charleston Harbor instead of the Savannah River due to poor visibility. His arrival triggers artillery fire from the nearby forts, prompting him to attempt to navigate back while under fire. Meanwhile, Captain Anderson remains restrained in his response, sending officers to seek clarification from Confederate officials instead of retaliating. This restraint, while intended to prevent conflict, begins to demoralize the fort's garrison, with some questioning Anderson's leadership.

The day's events inspire speculation among Charleston citizens, as rumors swirl about potential Northern actions and the fate of Fort Sumter. Louis Wigfall delivers a speech at the Mills House hotel, confidently declaring that war with the North is imminent. His dramatic rhetoric captures the anxiety and anticipation running through the city, especially among those like Mary Chesnut, who muses on the unsettling possibility that a naval attack could occur at any moment. The chapter closes emphasizing the prevailing unease as individuals await the inevitable clash, with tension lingering in every interaction.