

Breaking Free or The Journey of Bill's Escape from His Family

In the outskirts of Santa Fe lives a young boy in an old beaten house with his older sister and his evil stepdad. One night, sick of all the suffering he has to endure, he sets off in a legendary adventure in search of somewhere to call "home". At the end when he finds his new home, he promises to himself to go and save his older sister one day.

Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA. In the half of the 1800's during the age of pioneers. A corrupt society with few good people and plenty who only think about themselves. The themes are the search for freedom and the joy of adventure.

CHAPTER 1

I was playing in the mud right in front of my house, drawing horrible creatures and ruining even more my old clothes, the ones my late mother bought me a long time ago, before she died, during the long journey from Independence to Santa Fe, more commonly known as the Santa Fe Trail. It was a cool autumn evening; a great orange sun was setting, and leaves were flying in the air. Right when I was to finish the drawing of my horrible monster, I heard both my sister and Richard arguing, Richard being the evil man my mother married after my real dad died of a disease, I can't remember the name of. So, with some precaution, I entered my old, rotten and beaten house (Richard bought for just a couple of dollars). I had always hated that house.

After entering the door that had a broken lock, I looked around. The house had only one big room: in a corner there were some bunk beds where we slept, in the centre a small table with three chairs and in the opposite corner of the room a "bathroom", covered by curtains containing a rusty bathtub and a bucket for your "natural needs".

I immediately saw my older sister Ada arguing with Richard.

"You liar, snake!" said Richard. "I told you you couldn't see any man, but you still did!"

"But that's not true father- responded Ada – Aaron is just a friend that came to help with work, nothing more! -

- She's saying the truth Richard, I swear on my pinkie! - I said, but my stepfather was red with anger and didn't hear what I said, only that I talked.
- Now you will learn what happens when you meddle when adults talk! – At that moment Richard unbuckled his belt and started to beat me. I tried not to cry, but damn did it hurt!

And so, I cried, and it was thanks to my benevolent sister, Ada, that Richard stopped. Ada was a young and beautiful girl, about sixteen years old. She had long straight blonde hair and she was short like a stick. She had strange colours in his body: grey eyes like fog, and black feet, because she worked on the dirt without shoes. Ada was illiterate, and so was I, but she was very talented in manual labours. She was also very funny and helpful, but a bit picky, sad, and lunatic.

At the exact moment when Richard stopped, I ran straight to the door, still open, while my sister was yelling at me to come back. But I didn't come back, I continued to run and run and run. I didn't know where I was going, and frankly I didn't care, I just wanted to run from that hellish place and so I did, I ran and ran. I swiftly exited my block, but I could still hear both my sister and Richard yell at me to come back, but I didn't care. I was sorry for my sister, for leaving her alone but I couldn't do it, I couldn't stay a single second more with Richard, he was a devil. I continued to run and run, until I could breathe no more.

When I stopped, the sun was completely gone, and nobody was in the streets. I found a small space between two buildings and I decided to rest there for the night; but no matter what I tried, I couldn't sleep. I felt so guilty for leaving my poor sister behind, with that evil man and, I felt like I murdered someone, like a snake, a traitor, leaving behind such a beautiful person for my own sake, but whatever I could say to myself I couldn't run back. I was here now, alone, in the cold night, free and caged at the same time. At the end I was too tired and fell asleep.

CHAPTER 2

I woke up early in the morning, when even the sun was struggling to wake up. Although in the early hour, the small street where I was, was full of gentlemen, people with big top hats and shining shoes. I woke up especially hungry and followed the general flow of people into a big square with tons of people and a street market with a lot of food. In the middle of all was a small church, small but notably pretty built with bricks.

I was curious and wanted to investigate, but my hunger got the upper hand and so I tried searching for food. I went first to everyone I could see in the square begging for some spare change to buy something; nobody gave me anything except an old lady with hair as grey as ash who gave me a quarter of a dollar, a generous offer but not enough for even an apple. I then asked the small markets for something, but of no avail. The sun was already going down and I had never been so hungry! In a desperate attempt to eat something at the end of the day, while one of the stall owners had his back against me, I quickly snatched a piece of bread from him. Fortunately nobody saw, except a small man sat at the church's door, but I didn't care about him and just ran away to my place between those two buildings, ate my small piece of bread and then went to sleep, not feeling guilty of anything.

I lived this way for almost a week, walking into a square, stealing something, eating and going to bed. Yes, I was miserable, but I was free, or so I thought. Reflecting now on the actions I did at that time, I feel immensely guilty. Guilty for stealing from those poor people in the square and guilty for leaving my poor sister in certain demise and going to bed every day in the late autumn breeze, but nevertheless I lived like this for many days. I couldn't do much since I was locked: either my survival or my morals! And in the end I decided to favour my survival over my morals. I even started developing different techniques for robbing people. But every time I did it, there was always that man watching me sitting at the door of the church.

CHAPTER 3

One day I was in the square, doing my usual work, that is stealing from another man in the market. I could have even escaped if it wasn't for a man, who ran at incredible speed towards me and stopped me while I was running away.

"Oh no, I've been caught, it's the end now. I will get beat so hard that I will never forget and then I will go to prison and never see the light of the sun ever again!" was my first thought.

"May I have that, young boy?" I was simply flummoxed, I expected a beating, or at least a reproach, but no. He made a simple question with a smile asking if he could get back the apple I stole. It was the man of the church.

My hands moved faster than ever before and immediately gave him the apple. He smiled again.

He then walked to the market owner from whom I stole the apple, who was extremely angry, and wanted to beat me. But he didn't yell back when the market owner yelled, he just responded calmly and defused the situation.

"Sorry for the inconvenience, mister. Here, take back what was stolen from you, here, and take this", said the man while giving the marked owner a dollar.

"Incredible, he must be rich, that man!" I thought to myself.

He then walked back to me and said: "You owe me one, don't you?"

"Well, if you didn't intervene, I may have even gotten away." I said rudely.

"My name is Terrence. Terrence Smith. I am the priest of that church over there, and I have been watching you for several days. And every day you stole something. I hoped some of these days you would have stopped stealing from others, but you didn't, so I decided to intervene."

"Well next time don't, Priest." I said more rudely.

He then held my hand and said: "Come with me, could you?"

For some reason I said yes, and followed him to the church stairs.

"Well, what is your name?"

"Bill."

"Well Bill, first of all, why is a young boy stealing?"

I don't know why, but this priest was so kind and open hearted that if he had asked me to jump off a cliff, I wouldn't have hesitated. So I told him my story, the beating, the

moment I ran and my life in the last few days. I was so sad narrating my story that I was on the verge of crying.

“I see,” said Father Smith. “Well why don’t you come with me? In the church? Don’t worry, I won’t hurt you. There you will learn to write, read and the ways of God.”

And so, this is my story, or at least a part of it, since I am still alive and kicking, and learning things at the Church school. About two years have passed since my great escape from my house. I don’t even know what horrible demise was left to my sister, and frankly I still feel guilty for my selfishness. Nevertheless, my story is yet to end, and maybe one day I will find my sister.