

Free

By Alexa P.

Chapter 1

Willow walked along the fence and sighed. She wished she was on the other side, exploring the mountains and the fields. Her mane and tail flying in the wind, her hooves stomping on the grass, running until she was too tired to stand. “Willow!” her mother called. “Coming!” Willow said as she galloped back. She looked around at the barn, the farmer’s cabin, and the stables in one big yard surrounded by a fence. It wasn’t freedom, but she’d learned to live with it. An old man with a worn-out dirty straw hat came out of the house. He carried hay over to the horses’ stables. The young foal ate all her food as quickly as she could so she could be outside. It was almost dark, so she only had a little bit of time. “Done. Can I play now?” Willow asked. “Already?” her father said. “Fine. But not for too long. Wolves could be out there.” he said. “Thank you!” she said as she ran to the fence. She loved to be outside.

The sunset was beautiful. It was all shades of orange, pink, purple, blue and yellow. Willow admired the view. Then, she heard thudding. She looked over and gasped. It was the most beautiful thing she had ever seen. A group of wild horses ran across the field. They were strong, fast.....free. Their leader, the biggest one, stopped. He neighed and looked over to her as if he were trying to say, *come with us*. She tapped the fence with her hoof to show she was stuck. He nodded and ran back to his herd. Willow watched them until they disappeared behind the mountains. “Willow!” her father called. *I have to see them again*, she thought.

Chapter 2

That night, she dreamed the fence vanished. She joined the herd of wild horses. They ran as far as they wanted and they lived happily. Fences did not exist.

Willow opened her eyes. She wanted to have a taste of freedom. She would come right back. As quiet as a mouse, Willow snuck out of the stables. Her navy blue coat glistened in the moonlight. She couldn’t believe she was doing this. It would be much safer if she’d just turn back.....*No, I can’t*, she thought. *Not now*. She walked along the fence, thinking about how she would escape. A small gap was underneath the fence. She wiggled through onto the other side. She was free! She was so excited. Just then, something moved in the corner of her eye. She turned and saw a big, hairy wolf with sharp teeth as he drooled. Willow backed away. The wolf lunged at her. Willow jumped back and ran as fast as she could. She didn’t stop until she was too tired and collapsed onto the ground.

Chapter 3

Willow woke up in a forest. She did not recognize the place. Then she remembered what happened. She began to cry. She was lost and she didn’t know how to get back. She would never see her family again. The wolf was sure to get her. She wished she was at home. She would never try to

escape again. She wandered through the forest and stopped to rest at a stream. A pile of berries, some weird meat, and some strange syrup lay by the riverbed. She ate the berries and the syrup. It was delicious. She was about to eat the rest when she heard angry roaring. Willow froze. This food belonged to someone else. She slowly turned her head and saw a huge bear. The bear swiped at her and knocked Willow down. She thought this might be the end. She closed her eyes and waited for it to be over. Nothing happened. Willow opened her eyes and saw a wolf pack driving the bear away. She saw a wolf pup walking toward her. "It's ok," he said. "She's gone now." "You saved me," Willow said. "Of course," he said. "How did you get into the forest anyway?". Willow told him the whole story. "I'll help you! Let's go find your home. I'm Sammy," he offered. "Thanks Sammy", said Willow. And the two young animals set off to find Willow's home.

Chapter 4

They walked for a very long time in the sun. "Don't worry, my father and I have been through here many times." Sammy said. That made Willow feel a little better. "Wait. Do you hear that?" Sammy said, perking his ears up. Willow went quiet. "It sounds like...." Willow said. "Water!" Sammy said with glee. He ran ahead, his tongue hanging out. "Wait!" Willow said as she caught up to him by a rocky river. Sammy slid in and lapped up the water. "Sammy! Come back!" Willow shouted. It did not look safe. It was steep and the rocks looked unstable. If one of them were to fall in..... "It's just water." Sammy said. "I'll be fine." "See, I'm ok.", he said as he climbed back. The rocks crumbled underneath his paws. "Help!" he cried as he tumbled into the water. Willow tried to help but she fell into the water. The river was too strong. She could barely breathe. Willow saw Sammy go under the water. "Sammy!" Willow yelled but she was muffled by a mouthful of water. She couldn't stay up anymore. She closed her eyes. And everything went black.

Chapter 5

Willow's eyes flew open. She gasped for breath as she looked around. Luckily, Sammy was okay, and some wolves were taking him home. *Thank you Sammy. I'll miss you.* Willow saw some very familiar mountains. She galloped back to her home. "Where have you been?" her mother asked. Willow told her the story. "Well, I have something to share." Willow's mother said. "What is it?" Willow asked. "The farmer set us free."

Willow now lives with the wild horse herd and visits Sammy every day. She lived her happiest life. Free.