

Escape by Allison L.

“Look, it’s the witch!” Kyle said with an evil grin on his face, he said it so loud everyone could hear. Kyle was a big bully, and right now his victim was Elizabeth. “Kyle!” said Mr. Hirkin, furious, “Stop your blabbering!” Kyle blushed and sat down on his lunch seat. Elizabeth smirked under her breath and twirled her bright red hair with her fingers. Elizabeth looked over at Jake who was frowning sleepily at his sandwich. “Hey Jake, want to be partners in our project later today?” he looked at Elizabeth, trying to remember what she was talking about, “Uh, sure...” Jake was too sleepy to remember anything except that he was tired, and right now that was all that mattered to him.

The rest of school passed by like a breeze, a very *evil* breeze that wanted you to *learn* and be good at stuff. Elizabeth was walking home with Jake and Adalaide, who lived nearby. Jake was in the back of their weird little group, “Hmmm hmmh!” Elizabeth turned to Jake, “What did you say?” Jake looked at her, an urgent look on his face, “Take cover!” A large boom filled the air and fire exploded from the ground, pieces of metal and wood flew in the air, “Elizabeth!” Adalaide screamed and everything went black...

Elizabeth woke up hours later, sputtering and coughing, “Jake? Adalaide?” Elizabeth said weakly. “Elizabeth!?” Elizabeth heard Jake’s voice and tried to get up, she ached everywhere and her legs were covered in cuts. “There you are!” Jake reached his hand out and Elizabeth grabbed his arm, “Where is Adalaide?” Jake hauled her up, “I don’t know...” Jake and Elizabeth worried in silence for a moment before the spell was broken as Elizabeth writhed in pain from her injured leg, “We have to find her, she could be hurt.”

Jake nodded and they started looking for her. Jake moved some pieces of metal, but she wasn’t there. Elizabeth wasn’t having much luck either, nothing but trash, ash, and burnt wood. Elizabeth moved to another area, where she had much more luck, “Jake! I found her!” Jake and Elizabeth moved the metal and ash away, trying to uncover the hidden girl, “Adalaide! Adalaide! Wake up!” Adalaide sputtered and sat up, trying to wipe the dirt off

her face, and just getting more on herself. She got up and looked around at the ashy wasteland around her. Their homes were now piles of burnt wood, their parents were out there somewhere, how much she missed them could not be put in words, but in the tears that sprang from her eyes when she thought about them.

They searched for a place to stay for hours, their school bags leaning heavily on their shoulders and they finally found a place to stay. It was a broken down shack, only a few miles away from the explosion, the ground in front of it was black and white with ash. "Well, at least we have something, let's build a small fire." Jake turned his head to the others, and they nodded in agreement and started collecting sticks.

The sun rose and Elizabeth was sitting outside by the embers of their dead fire, she was looking at the sunrise, her eyes red from crying. "Hey," said Adalaide, "What are you doin' up so early? Couldn't sleep?" Elizabeth nodded, then stood up, "We should head on now." Adalaide went into the cabin and Elizabeth took one last look at the sunset and walked toward the shack. They found some matches, put them in their school bags and headed out the door.

The fresh morning wind wound through the holes in their clothes, sending chills down their spines. They walked for what felt like forever until they found a small IndianOil gas station. Its bright red brim blazing in the morning sun, forcing them to look away. "Let's go in, there may be a map." Elizabeth turned to the others and they walked into the gas station.

The shelves had barely anything on them, some canned food and a few fishing hooks. They searched through the shelves and found a small paper map that had the border of Missouri and Nebraska. They could go to Nebraska, they already live on the border. It would be much easier than going farther into Missouri. Elizabeth made a 'come here' gesture to Jake and Adalaide, "We could go to Nebraska and find somewhere to stay. There are quite a few lakes out there and plenty of materials that we could use." Jake thought about it for a second, "Elizabeth's right, let's take the map with us and head on." They went to the counter and after being reassured that the map was free, they headed northwest to Nebraska. After two miles they stopped for a water break, they were only one mile away from the lake.

“Come on, we're so close!” Elizabeth looked at Jake. He looked exhausted, “Uhhhhh... one more minute...”

“One more minute.” Mocked Elizabeth, pretending to be Jake, but it sounded so weird and squeaky. “*Snort. He he he.*” Adlaide giggled so hard she fell. “*Fine*, just stop pestering me!” Elizabeth let out a chuckle and they headed on. Every once and a while whispering mocks toward Jake.

After walking for what felt like forever, they saw the lake, “Race you to the lake!” Shouted Adalaide. “No you don't!” The girls wrestled and ran toward the lake. Jake looked at the sunset, clouds twirled in the pink and orange sky. Maybe this was their home... maybe this was their family after all.