

Beyond the Gates

By Ella Abebe, grade 7

Although I run, although my foot beats the ground repeatedly, I don't seem to get any further. But at least, the sight of the large Barn house was gone. My heart races a thousand times a mile, my breathing is fast and stinging, my legs hurt, and they are begging me to stop. Out of the corner of my eyes, I see a fallen branch, but it's too late, I trip and my face hits the ground with force. My consciousness slips away, and I fight to grasp it back. But the other part of me wants to sink in, close my eyes for an endless sleep, and just like that, my eyes close.

Somewhere out there a voice is calling to me, but it's too far, very very far. Finally the voice comes into focus, "Well the fox lives!"

I groan from the pain on my head as I start to sit up from what looks like a bed. My vision is foggy, I blink one or two times before things come into focus. I'm back at the barn house, my siblings surround my bed, all looking concerned and curious. I let out a frustrated sigh. All that for nothing! This place is not my home. I do not belong here. I'm meant for greater things. Or that's what I tell myself. Mama Dove's barn is for those without hope, those with no futures. And I strictly tell myself I'm not a part of that group! One day I will get out of this house and prove them all wrong, my parents (who left me here in the first place! Thanks alot guys,) Mama dove and all my siblings. They all look down at me with sympathetic faces. I roll my eyes, they worry too much.

"Hey, I'm fine!" I tell them. Well really, my body feels fine. But my ego? Not so much. This was not my first attempt at an escape...in fact, I can't even remember my actual first one. I am Alex Rano, mischievous, sly and clever, just like a fox. I've outsmarted the wisest of the adults, the most educated teenagers here in the house, but yet... I haven't gotten even close to the gates that locked me in this house. I'm known as "fox" that's

what my siblings call me. Because really, there is no difference! As I walk away from the crowd, I'm already thinking.... Next escape (attempt at least). See that's the thing about me. I'm hard-headed and don't give up easily. Now that I think about it, I haven't given up for 7 years now. (I started my famous runaway attempts at age of 6) Of Course I'm angry, of course I'm bitter. Believe me, all the rage inside of me...I worry what happens when the day it finally explodes. But all of that won't do me any good. I don't even know, but it definitely won't help me and I won't let it beat me. Oh.... another thing you should know? I. never. Ever. like. To. lose. Of Course no one likes to lose. But me? I take it personally. To survive this world, you need to be first, in. every. Single. Things. Great! Now that we've covered the ground rules, you readers are ready to join me for my last and final escape.

I walked the cramped, dark hallways, wracking my brain for something. Then an idea hit me. In 3 moons the delivery man is supposed to come to deliver the letter from beyond the gates. It's very rare that anyone comes from the outside. You know being an abandoned child and all, there isn't really someone out there that would send you some christmas cards or one of those get better soon cards. Anyway, the mail man was supposed to arrive in a carriage pulled by horses... if I could get on the back trunk of one of those things, I could literally be shipped out of this chaos! As I walk I add little springs, showing my excitement. I find Dan staring at me curiously, head tilted sideways. I give him a great wave. He waves back, looking startled. I mean it's not everyday, Alex the fox, even smiles at you, forget waving. I swift by Dan, and suddenly I buckle, pain shoots through the back of my leg. I don't let it beat me tough, I wince and stand right back.

As I continue my unusual happy skips Dan calls out to me, "Hey, Fox, you alright?" I freeze. Was it that noticeable?

I turn sharply, my long curly hair slapping Dan in the face, “Yes, I’m fine. Mind your own business,” Dan doesn’t peep a squeak, but he looks down at my long tan legs and frowns. When I look down I notice what he’s staring at, a long red gash, still in the middle of recovery. I snarl and walk away. If he dares tell Mama dove...

Finally! I’ve waited three moons for this. Through the window, I watch as a brown carriage, pulled by two white horses, rolls into the front of the house. This is my chance..! I thunder down the stairs, eager to get on with the adventure.

When I’m finally down the stairs, a short, red haired man is already making his way back to the carriage. I gasp, and quickly, without hesitation, dive into the carriage. Backseat of course.

I’m not sure how much time has passed. Hours? A day? But finally, the carriage halts to a stop. I don’t quickly get out, afraid the mailman might still be there. I wait for about 2 minutes before I finally peek around. I frown. The carriage hasn’t crossed the gate yet. In fact, we were right beside it! I checked around, making sure no one was around. Though I was pretty sure, no one would be here, in the middle of a green field, surrounded by the outer walls, and finally the gate. I jumped out of the carriage sly as a fox, hung over my shoulder was my pack, for survival. I stand in front of the tall black towering gate.

Taking a deep breath, and half closing my eyes, I connect my hands with the gate. I swung it open...slowly- but the view laid before me was nothing like the “bigger world” I imagined. Just more and more fields of depression. I stood there, shaken with sudden realization. A hot, bitter tear slides down my cheek. All my life...for this? This whole time... I was so blind. The “bigger world” I’ve dreamed of, this whole time..I’ve been living in it.