The Underground Railroad

A Fairy Tale

It was a beautiful moonlight evening. The deep blue firmament with its innumerable stars stretched far over a lovely valley, and the silvery moon rejoicing in the silence of the night looked down serenely from its resting place in the Heavens. On either side of the little valley the high hills were covered with noble fields, which waved gently to and fro in the evening breeze. The stately white mansion, with the blooming orange grove, the flower garden, the pleasant walks and shady trees, and the sparkling brooklet, added not a little to the beauty of the scene. Back of the house under a large tree, stood a young female, apparently about fifteen years of age. Her dark, silken hair, which fell in wavy tresses over her shoulders, her sparkling black eyes, noble brow and forehead, well formed features and pearly teeth, told of more than common beauty. Poor Rosa! She was a slave. Is strange that she was unhappy! Torn in early childhood from a kind mistress, from parents and friends whom she had learned to love so dearly, and sold to a cruel mistress in a far distant state. This was the first sorrow she had ever known. She had always been a favorite on account of her beauty and her \_\_\_\_\_. She had played with her master’s children as though she were one of them, and was treated almost as an equal.

When she was about nine years of age, her masters being involved in debt, sold her to a trader. Her agony and that of her parents when they found they were to be parted can scarcely be imagined. She left her childhood home to go she knew not where. At the end of her journey she was sold as a waiting maid.

Her new position was a very trying one. Her mistress was very passionate and uncommonly \_\_\_\_ to her. As months and years rolled on Rosa became more accustomed to her lot. Often was she obliged to submit to the most cruel tyranny of her heartless mistress. She had sometimes thought of escaping to a land of freedom but when she recalled to mind the perils she must undergo and the probabilities of being returned her heart sank within her.

Rosa felt that nothing remained to her but a life of slavery, her sorrow increased till her mistress became so much displeased that she dismissed her to the kitchen to work, and supplied her place by another. This change was regarded by Rosa with pleasure, for she would at last escape the cruelty of her mistress and she might become acquainted with some means by which she could gain her freedom.

She worked steadily and cheerfully the first day, but in the evening – that beautiful evening which has been described to you – as she stood looking at the stars, wondering why she was a slave, and wishing she were free, a feeling of desolation came over her. She felt herself alone in the world. No parents, no friends, none that cared for her were near.

She was interrupted from her meditation by the harsh tone of old Aunt Sarah, the cook, who commanded her to go down cellar after some potatoes for breakfast.

Rosa went slowly down cellar and sitting on a box burst into tears. Was she always to remain a slave? Could she never, never be free? The thought was dreadful and she wept long and freely. As she was weeping a strange sound startled her, she listened. It was a beautiful strain of music which approached nearer and appeared to proceed from under the ground. It ceased and a little trap door flew open at that moment, disclosing a beautiful fairy.

Rosa was surprised and frightened, but the fairy said, “Mortal, why weepest thou?”

“I am a slave,” said Rosa, “a slave for life. I was sold from my parents and friends when very young, and there is now no one to care for me.” And the tears started from the eyes of the poor girl.

“”What is thy greatest wish?” said the fairy.

“Freedom,” exclaimed Rosa with earnestness. “O, if I could be free, and see my father and mother once more, I should be perfectly happy.”

“Thy wish may be granted,” said the fairy, “Will thou become a passenger of the Underground Railroad?”

Rosa looked down through the little trap door where the fairy had entered. Lo! There stood the locomotive, puffing away with its long train in a large cavern, underground.

“Can I go in there to a land of freedom?” said the bewildered Rosa.

“If thou wishest,” said the fairy.

The joy of Rosa can scarcely be imagined, as with the fairy she hurried on board. The cars were filled with passengers and the first who caught her attention were her parents and with an exclamation of surprise and joy she rushed into their arms.

When Rosa had somewhat recovered from her surprise her parents stated to her that when their mistress died, they were sold to a trader and taken to the far south. Here they were compelled to work daily on a large planation under the care of a cruel overseer. In this \_\_\_\_ they were very unhappy, their home was a miserable hut of logs, their associates wretched slaves like themselves. What was to be done? Must they remain in this situation forever?

It was of this they were thinking as they returned from their work one dark evening when their attention and that of their fellow laborers was attracted by a beautiful strain of music which seemed directly beneath them. Not a little surprise did it create. Such music had never been heard before. It was so soft and mellow, so fairy like and enchanting that it at once induced those slaves to dig down and see from whence it originated. After some time they found a little trap door which immediately flew open and disclosed that little fairy who on hearing that their greatest wish was freedom told them how it might be obtained and in half an hour they were all on their way.

These cars often stopped under the cellar of some cruel slaveholder or the master of a large planation, attracting the attention of the slaves by their beautiful music which no slaveholder could hear.

It seemed to Rosa that no wish had been left ungranted. She was with her parents and friends, going to a free country, never more to be a slave.

They passed their journey for some days. One evening they were moved by the distant moaning of a mighty \_\_\_\_. It \_\_\_\_ louder and louder, and they were told they had arrived at the falls of Niagara.

They went out. It was a damp misty evening. All was silent, every one stepped forward a little ways and stood on the bank. The fairy went before and waved her want over the spray and mist. It thickened, it gathered round them, they felt themselves rising from the ground and it took them over the water. O! How frightful did it seem with the waters roaring and dashing beneath them and the mist so thick around them, but they were borne swiftly on and soon arrived on the other side.

Here Rosa and her parents with the others were kindly received and congratulated for escaping from a land of slavery to one of freedom. They still live there, remembering with pleasure of the night when the fairy told them of the Underground Railroad.

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