

The run - contest entry

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By : [animefreak77L](#)

A girl with long black hair wants out of her little town, little does she know that that task will turn out harder than she thought.



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Today was her 18th birthday; she only had one wish, something she's wanted ever since she developed the ability to think for herself. She just wanted to get out of this hellhole of a place. She was tired of all the gowns and make up. She'd lived in this nightmare like so many others, forgotten by the future. She knew exactly what to expect of her life, no surprises. Pretty soon she'd have to get married, have kids, and take care of them and her never sober husband. It was pathetic but that was the only life she had ahead of her. She couldn't take it anymore. She didn't want to have the same fate as everyone else; no she was going to be different. Maybe the future gave up on her but she sure wasn't just going sit there and watch, she was going to go out here and make her own future, get her own life but how? She needed to escape; she needed to get as far away as possible from her home. That was highly improbable; Girls were never allowed to leave the village unless with their husbands and even that rarely occurred. The only thing she could think of is getting married but what good would that do? "If only I was a boy" she thought to herself, "everything would be solved." She started combing her long black hair, it was her trade mark, and everyone in the village called her that. She is now and always will be "Black haired" no one even knew her real name.

"Darling, it's time to get to the part." Her mom yelled. A showdown had occurred a couple days ago and they were celebrating her neighbor's victory. "Don't these people have anything better to do than killing each other?" but the answer was obvious, no, no one had anything to do in this beaten down town. All the more reason to leave. She put on her puffy black dress then went to meet her mother outside. "Darling, when did you go and turn so pretty." Her mom smiled a gap between her teeth. Her sky blue eyes stared out on the dessert land, searching for anything to diverge her attention to, nothing, not even a cobweb. She sighed, if only she could change everything. All of a sudden she heard the pitter patter of horses coming their way, minutes later there ride was ready. She pulled up her dress and stepped onto the carriage followed by her mother.

"Now honey, you're old now, pretty too. You can't expect your father to protect you from this forever." "Ya ma, I know but mother it's my 18th birthday could we not talk about this now, I wanna be happy." "You're gonna be happy darling." Yeah like that was remotely possible. She nodded and smiled, she understood that she didn't want to talk about it. Time went by and before they knew it they had reached down town. Everyone was dancing and singing but once Black haired walked up they all froze. She was one of the most beautiful girls in the country if not the prettiest; if it wasn't for her father, the sheriff, she would have been long gone. "Oh darling, you pretty." Some random guy said as she walked past him. She smiled pretending to enjoy the compliment. "These people are so simple minded."

"Why did we put this party to a halt? We're all here now." Said some cowboy. Instantly everyone jumped back to what they were doing. She sat down hoping no-one will come up to her, but unfortunately that was too much to hope for.

"Hey little lady, care to dance?" a not so bad looking guy asked her. With her mom beside her there was no way she could refuse. She got up and curtsied then went along with the square dance and to her surprise she did have some fun. Hours later all the guys were drunk and the dancing came to a halt, that's when she found her father on the wooden stage. "Gather 'round everyone," he yelled, instantly everyone was standing before the platform waiting to see what the sheriff had to say, including Black haired. "Listen up, this fine man here just asked for my gorgeous daughters hand in marriage, and I had no choice but to agree." She stood there dumbfounded, what was one of the best days of her life just turned

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inside-out. No, this couldn't be happening.

Suddenly a group of girls came up to her, congratulating her. The person that had asked for her hand was Jack Smith, only the richest and most handsome man around. To everyone they made a perfect couple. People started saying things like "took you long enough", and "ye ha pretty girls finally gonna stop being a virgin." Then she heard a voice calling her, her father's voice, the voice that just a while ago she loved to death but now she despised him for doing this too her. Her father knew that she hated Jack, so why would he do this to her? "Câmon darling, come meet your fiancée."

Thankfully, the night was finally over and black haired was certain of one thing, she wasn't going to marry that cowboy not if her life depended on it, not for anything. She knew what she had to do and she was going to do it. She was going to run away, she just needed a plan. She went up to her room, slamming the door shut. "Honey, you should be happy" she heard her mom say. "Just leave me alone, ok." She yelled. That would get them off her back for now. She sat on her bed and cried until she didn't have any tears left, then she realized there was no reason to despair. That's when she thought of it, she would become a guy. It was the easiest way out. Yes she could actually do this. She took a pair of scissors and stood in front of the mirror, her long hair flowing. She stared as her hair was illuminated by the candle light, no she couldn't do it, she couldn't cut her hair. The hair that made her her. The hair that she had spent her whole life growing out. She dropped the scissors on the counter, what was she going to do now?

She walked around her room trying to convince herself it was worth it. That's when she remembered; she could use her father's old wigs. He had gone bald early so he always used to wear them, yes but where was she going to find them? She'd have to wait till tomorrow. She took off her worn out dress and put on her nightgown then threw herself onto her bed. She was going to need some sleep.

She was awoken by the nickering of the horses. She looked out her window; her dad was just leaving for work. She already hear her mom in the kitchen, doing who knows what. It was now or never. Black haired slowly left her room, leaving her door slightly open, and then tiptoed to the room next to hers. The door wasn't locked, it never was so she simply entered making sure she didn't make a sound. Once she was in it was merely a matter of finding the goods. She felt so bad for entering her parent's room without permission but she had to do this. She opened and closed closet after closet to no avail. This was harder than she thought, and it wasn't going to be long till her mom came to wake her up. That's when she saw the trunk at the end of the bed. Bingo. She slowly opened it, praying they would be in there. She heard the stop of the water, the clattering of pans, in minutes her mom would be up here. She peaked into it and Walla they were all there. She took the first one she got her hands on, closed the trunk and left the room.

She scurried into her room just in time to hide it before her mom knocked on her door. "Darling, you awake?" "Yes, ma" she said sounding as angry as possible. "You still mad, aren't you?" After a couple seconds of silence her mother realized she wasn't going to answer. "I brought you your breakfast, I'll leave it at the door" She heard the click as the silverware touched the wooden floor. Soon after the titer tattering of her moms boots told her she was long gone.

She looked at the powdery wig that she had just stolen, or was more like borrowed? It was bright blonde, exactly the color of Jacks hair, she despised that color. Oh well it would have to do. She tied her hair into a bun then put the wig on. It was incredibly uncomfortable. "I won't have it on for long" she reassured herself. She searched through her closet until she found some pants and a tee shirt. It had been a long time since shed worn those. She put on her leather boots then opened the window. Her room wasn't that high up, she could easily jump it. "Now or never." She said to herself as she leapt.

She rolled as she hit the floor, praying her fall didn't make that much noise. She quickly got up, and then started walking away as fast as she could without looking suspicious. She was so desperate to get out of here

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that she didn't notice Jack walking up to their house. "First time I see you around here," Jack said as he stopped in front of her. That hoarse voice, she couldn't look up he might recognize her.

"Um, ya im just passing by"

"Oh so you're a traveler, c'mon follow me."

"Why? I really should get going."

"Oh no, no one comes to our town without staying, ill make reservations at the motel down the street. There is no need to worry no c'mon little fellow."

Black haired didn't know what to do, she needed to leave before anyone knew she was gone, but at the same time if she didn't go with him he'd be greatly offended. She had no choice she followed Jack to the local saloon. Luckily for her, the sheriff wasn't there, he would surely know it was her at first glance.

"I wish he's extremely busy today," she thought to herself as she took her first sip of her beer.

"son, what you go by?" Asked the bar tender.

"huh?"

"whats your name lad?"

"oh im, im Jessie." She spilled out the first name that came to mind.

"well jessie your not the sharpest tool in the shed." Jack mocked.

"that's probably why he's traveling got kicked out of his home town isn't that right?" the bartender continued.

"ill have you now, I left my home cuz I got bored of all the idiocy over there, actually it reminds me a lot of this place."

"What you saying boy? Are you calling us Stupid?" Jack asked obviously irritated.

"I'm glad you caught on," she said, if she was gonna stay here for a couple more hours she might as well make it fun.

"Oh that's it, you can't just come around my town and start calling people stupid. You better be ready to put your gun where your mouth is."

"You tell 'em Jack," the bartender said, as he polished the empty beer bottles.

"We'll show him who's really stupid." Jack screamed, "Who's with me?"

All of a sudden everyone in the saloon began shouting and throwing their bottles on the floor. "Oh boy, what did I get myself into?" sweet ran down her face, she needed to end this before it got over the top.

"Calm down ya' all I was just playing." She hesitantly said.

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“No, you’re not gonna get away with something like that so easily, I challenge you to a showdown.” Once those words were spoken it seemed like the world had come to a riot. The cheers got incredibly loud and even a couple of women came in to see what was going on.

“I didn’t come here for trouble, I’m sorry if I offended you. Besides I ain’t carrying a gun.”

“What idiot travels without a gun? I pity you boy, you’re in over your head.” Jack said triumphantly.

“I’ll give ‘em mine.” A cowboy said. Great no more excuses.

“How am I gonna get out of this now?” A dark thought suddenly struck her,

“you’re probably not.”

“I could take off this wig right here and right now.”

“yup, you could but if you do you’ll never get a second chance to get out of here.”

“I have to go through with this.”

“so you ready to take back what you said.”

“I haven’t said anything wrong” she smiled.

“you’re on today at noon, you me havin’ a gunfight. We’ll see who’ll be laughin’ then” Jack said as he stopped out.

“I’ll be waitin’” she said wittily fully aware of what she’s got herself into.

“if this is going to be my last day here I better be proud of it.” She said as she got up and sat on the piano bench. “Who wants to hear some music?” and now the roars were in her favor. “Well I’ll be darned maybe this town isn’t as boring as I thought.” She whispered as she began banging her hands on the keyboard.

Everyone in town had gathered around for this tense moment, a new comer had apparently challenged Jack to a showdown. “Oh boy” black hair thought as she walked the empty streets, “if I die at least I could say I tried”, “but is it really worth it?”, “no time to back out now, it’s time to man up” “ha how ironic.” She debated herself as Jack came on his galloping stallion. “I might have a chance” “oh who are you kidding, he’s a professional and this is the first time you’ve held a gun in years.” She shook her head trying to emit all the negative thoughts.

“You scared sonny?” Jack yelled a smile on his face. “Cuz you ought be, you messed with the wrong man, traveler.”

Black hair stood there quietly trying to think of strategies that might give her the upper hand. Her muscles tense, she couldn’t believe she was going through with this. To her if she died now she would still be saved from that dreaded future. “I don’t want to die” a squeamish voice said inside of her. She took a deep breath, 2 minutes and this will all be over.

“Any last words, traveler?” Jack yelled confidently.

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“ actually I just want everyone here to know I would rather die here persuading my dream than live that endless nightmare.”

“ Brave words.”

Dong, the clock stroke 12 before I could comprehend what I was doing I pulled the trigger, hitting Jack on his leg, and then I shot again. Bang, I heard his heavy body hit the ground. “ What just happened? Was that it? Had I won?” People began to cheer and I turn to find my father standing before me. In his eyes I could see the tears that I wasn’t aware of running down my face, the blonde wig slightly beginning to fall off.

“ Black hair?” His mouth trembled. That’s when I felt it, a small sphere like object pierced my heart. I fell looking down at myself, looking at the blood stained shirt, my blood.

“ This would have never happened if you stayed home”

“ no I would have been prepped up to marry that jerk then lived a happy life, having all the needs I could demand, everyone envying me.”

“ Dying like this is better” she said, “ but I want to die as me.” She slowly moved her hand and with all her force removed the wig, her black hair presenting itself. She faintly heard the crowd gasping; her father was there in front of her, his eyes piercing into hers.

“ no, why did you do this?” he yelled, holding her in his hands.

“ I’m finally free.” Where her last words. Her eyes slowly rotated backwards her heart coming to a stop. Bang Bang he shot her down, bang bang she hit the ground, bang bang he finally let her go. “ you did this to her” and with those words Jack too found his place in death’s way. A single tear ran down his cheek. They were both died. Both freed from their lives in this cruel, cruel world.

Her mother wailed as she stared at her precious daughter, her daughter who would rather die than live this life, she should have done something, she knew she’d wanted to leave. Sorrow was all the village felt for the next months but to their ignorance black hair died with a smile on her face, “ finally something interesting in this town.”

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