

## Freedom by Sarah Wilson

Your bare feet touch the wet grass in the wide, wide field, the air smells like fresh nectar the bees made, and your breath is slightly waning because of the miles you just ran, but that doesn't matter right now; you're free. Free from the harsh yelling echoing off the cardboard walls, the wretched smell of an intoxicating drink, and the walls that were pounded in. the sunlight bounced off the trees, creating glowing emerald leaves, and a deer, who had a heavy crown of antlers as if that would crown him King of The Food Chain, had chased after a hare as golden and as pure as could be. This is freedom. Freedom was all you wanted, all you *needed*. All this time, you sat and watched the sky from inside, but now you can *see* the sky, *touch* the grass, all the things you missed.

But your freedom has ended. You hear Bobby's truck crunch the sticks on the field ground, animals scurry from its path, and your heart stops for a second as he slams the door to his truck shut.

He caught you.

Like a deer in the headlights.

"Come home." He pleads, and you wonder how he hadn't been pulled over.

You raise both of your hands above your head without thinking, it's become sort of a reflex since this situation had happened so many times before. It's a sign of surrender, but Bobby is like Caesar, he doesn't like things unless he can take them by force.

"Get in the truck, woman." He barks, pointing to the back of his truck like you're stupid, which he probably thinks you are.

Your feet start taking steps towards his truck, and you don't even realize you're doing it. Until you realize.

You don't have to do this.

Your feet halt.

*You don't have to do this.*

But Bobby says you have to, and he goes to the back of his truck and pulls out his shotgun that was meant for killing deer.

Like you.

"Bobby, please don't do this," you plea, "we could go to counselling. We could be like we used to be."

"To Hell with counselling!" He shouts, and then grins. "You're coming with me, woman." But your feet are glued to the ground, and you think maybe he won't do this, maybe he's bluffing.

"This is your last chance." He warns, and the sound of him taking the safety off was deaf defining. "In. The. Truck."

But you don't move. You can't move. You're frozen with fear.

He squeezes the trigger.

And that thing they say, about your life flashing before your eyes just before you die, that's totally true, because once that bullet came out of that gun, you see the biggest mistake you've ever made; sticking with Bobby.

The bullet flows through you like it had butterfly wings. You finally move again after you sink on the field ground like a stone. You roll around like a seal, and you see Bobby grin like he likes seeing you in pain.

He has before.

The last thing you saw was the bright, beautiful sky, the deer, the hare, and the trees.

Freedom.

Then darkness.

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