

Runaways

By

Phoebe A. Johnson

It was a windy night, the storm outside never-ending. Bree was fast asleep until she was jolted awake. Someone was shaking her. As her eyes focused, she saw it was her mother. “Run!” she heard her whisper. “What’s happening, Mama?” Bree asked. “G-” her mom started, but she was cut off. Blood was seeping through her silk nightgown. Behind her mom, she saw a man. He was tall and wore a black hood, now stained with blood from his most recent murder. Bree darted out the window. She hurt all over from the fall from the second floor but got up and started running. She couldn’t let him catch her.

Chapter 1

It had been ten years since her mother’s murder. 10 years and that horrible image of her mother’s death still replayed in her dreams. Bree was walking on the streets of New York. She stopped at a Forever 21. Now or never, she thought. Bree had committed many crimes since her mother’s death. Mostly petty crimes like stealing a burrito or taking a shirt. She was a runaway. What else was she supposed to do? Bree walked into the store and looked around. She went over to the jeans section, and then something caught her eye. It wasn’t jeans or a shirt or even a dress, but a reflection. Her reflection. She was now around five foot six. She was wearing ripped up jeans and a brown sweater. Her messy dark brown hair was just past her shoulders, and her dark brown eyes looked...sad.

She was sad. She was tired and.... scared. Bree had done this for years now, yet she still felt scared. Not because she was stealing things but because she would constantly wonder: what

does my future hold? Will I still be on the run when I'm 40? Surely not....right? Suddenly she heard sirens. She knew what to do next, hide!

Bree walked out of the store, snuck through an alleyway, and hid behind a trash can. After around half an hour she heard the sirens getting fainter and leaned on the back wall in relief. To her surprise she, fell through the wall and found herself lying on the floor of a white room. She froze with panic. "Where am I?" she thought and more importantly, "what is going to happen to me?"

Chapter 2

The walls were sound-proofed so she didn't even bother yelling. A few minutes later a man walked in wearing a suit and sunglasses that prevented her from seeing his eyes. "Mrs. Smith would like to see you," the strange man said. ``Why?" Bree asked. "You'll see," he replied.

She followed the man through long hallways with white walls and signs that said things like meeting room or experiments. The strange man stopped at the end of the hallway. The sign above the door said "Mrs. Smith". "Here we are," the man said, "Go on in." "You're not coming with me?", Bree asked. "No," he said.

He opened the door and she walked inside. The door creaked closed. The room was big. It had a fireplace on one side and had gold embroideries on the walls. In the middle of the room was an oak desk with a matching chair. A woman sat at the other end of the desk. She was skinny and had blond hair. Her hazel eyes pierced Bree, as if she was solving a puzzle. She wore a red dress that went down to her knees.

"Hello", the strange lady said, "take a seat." Bree did as she said and sat in the leather chair across from what she presumed was Mrs. Smith. "Why hello there", the lady in red said cheerfully. "Hello," Bree replied. "Bree do you know why you are here?", the lady said. "How do you know my name?", Bree asked, ignoring the question. "We have been watching you", the

woman replied. "Why?" Bree asked. "We are looking for a new recruit," the lady said. "Recruit for what?" "All your questions will be answered in a minute," Mrs. Smith said.

"Now let's try this again, but this time answer my questions and I will answer yours in a moment". "Hello, I am Mrs. Smith but please call me Lila. I am the head of this organization. We know all about you. You are resourceful and independent, and that is why you are here. We would like to recruit you to be one of us," Mrs. Smith said.

"And what exactly are you?", Bree asked. "Spies," Lila replied bluntly. "WHAT!?" Bree yelled. "You probably have a couple of questions," said Mrs. Smith. Well that's an understatement. Bree thought. She picked her first question carefully. "First of all what do you do here?", Bree asked. "We are one of two organizations. The other organization tries to END the world and what we do is prevent them from doing so." "Why do they want to end the world?" Bree asked. "We do not know the reason. Their leader is named Gabe." "He sounds troubled," Bree said. "He is." Bree was tempted to ask about Gabe, but she remembered she only had one question left. "Why should I help you?", Bree asked. "I thought you might ask that," Mrs. Smith said. "Gabe killed your family, now it's your turn to kill him."

Chapter 3

"Do we have a deal?" Mrs. Smith asked. "Yes," Bree replied. "Splendid," Mrs. Smith said, smiling. "My it's already 4:50! You should go with Charles to your dorm."

Bree got up and headed to the door. She stopped in her tracks "Wait, who is Charles?" Lila chuckled, "He's the man who brought you here silly." "Oh," Bree said and headed out the door to see Charles standing there waiting. "Let's go," he said. Bree tried to memorize the layout of the building, but it had too many twists and turns. Soon Charles stopped in front of a door that said dorm 113. "This is your dorm."

"Thanks," Bree mumbled.

She opened the door and saw two teenagers that looked about the same age as her. One of them was a boy with blond hair and sky-blue eyes. He seemed fairly strong and was good looking if you cared about stuff like that. He was wearing jeans and a white T-shirt. Next to him was a skinny girl with chestnut brown hair and freckles. She had dark green eyes and long lashes. She wore black leggings and an I heart NYC shirt. The two of them were playing some sort of video game. Once the girl saw Bree she squealed. "OMG, Hi you must be one of our new roommates!!!! I'm SO excited to meet you! My name is Ally, what's yours?", Ally said. She was peppy that was for sure. Bree smiled. "I'm Bree. Nice to meet you." "Bree, that's such a pretty name!" Ally said. "This little nut brain is Alex." "Nice to meet, Bree," he said, standing up. "One more roommate is coming next week! I think her name was Mary or something," Ally said. "Okay," Bree said.

"Let me give you a tour!" Ally insisted. "Alright," Bree said. "Well this is our living room," Ally said. There was a door on each of the left and right walls. There also was a leather couch and a matching chair with an oak coffee table with four gaming controllers. "We play this awesome game called forest adventure. I'll have to show it to you later," Ally said. "Sounds cool," Bree said. "It is!" The two girls went through the door on the left of the room. "This is where all of us will sleep."

In the room, there were two bunk beds. There were also bookshelves in this room, with random things like mini-figures and unicorn statues. On one side there were string lights and a hammock. Bree guessed that side was Ally's. The two girls walked to the room on the other side of the living room. "And this is our bathroom," Ally said. "Alex wakes up at four AM so he can do his hair before everyone else wakes up," Ally giggled. "I HEARD THAT ALLY!!!!" Alex yelled from the other room. "Big baby," Ally said. The two girls giggled. "Look at the time! We're late to dinner!" Ally said. "Let's go I Am NOT MISSING TACO TUESDAY AGAIN!!!! ALEX LET'S GO!!!!" Ally yelled. "Coming!" The three of them left the dorm and went down a hallway to a room with two metal doors. There were around 150 kids there. But before Bree could look any longer she felt someone pulling her shirt. "COME ON I WANT MY TACOS!!!!!!" she heard Ally yell in her ear. Ally started running toward the taco making station. "Don't mind her", a boy suddenly said from behind her. It was Alex. "She would probably rather throw me in a pit of lava than live without tacos." "Got it! Don't get in the way of Ally and her tacos," Bree said, smiling.

Alex smiled right back at her. They were the most amazing tacos Bree had EVER TASTED. They seriously put all other tacos to shame. An hour later the three of them made their way over to their dorm and went to their bedroom. "I call top!" Ally said. "I'll sleep under you I guess," Bree mumbled. "I guess I'll leave our new roommate the other top bunk," Alex said. "What a gentleman," Ally said sarcastically. "Alex since you're such the "gentleman" you wouldn't mind turning off the lights now, would you?" Bree said mockingly. Alex bowed and said, "Of course my lady," obviously holding back his laughter. They waited a moment in silence and then started cracking up. "Night guys!" Ally said. "Night!" Alex and Bree replied. As Bree drifted off to sleep, she didn't think "I hope the police don't find me or "that rat looks like a small cat."

Instead, she thought: "This will be an adventure for sure!"

Chapter 4

Bree woke up to someone yelling. "Rise and shine!!!" Ally yelled into a megaphone. "Where on earth did you get a megaphone Ally?" Alex asked. "Brought it with me," she said. "I wasn't kidding, let's GO!!! Today they have pancakes!!!!" Bree got out of bed and grabbed some clothes that had mysteriously appeared next to her. "Charles brought that for you this morning," Ally said, noticing Bree's confusion. "Oh," Bree replied. Bree put on the jeans Charles brought her along with an oversized Blue T-Shirt in the bathroom. She opened the door and saw Alex and Ally waiting for her. "Let's go, I'm hungry," Alex said. They went over to the cafeteria to get their breakfast and came back to see schedules on their beds.

"I thought classes started next week!" Ally yelled in frustration. "Let me see your guys' schedules," Alex said. The two girls handed him their schedules. "I was right!" he exclaimed. "All our classes are together!" "WHOO HOO!!!!" Ally yelled. "Yay!" Bree said. "Let's get going, class starts in five minutes!" Ally said. The three of them rushed down the halls until they found a door that said Knife Handling. "Here we are!" Ally said excitedly. "I love this class!" They walked through the door and saw five other students. There was a pair of twins with red hair and freckles. They wore jeans and black T-shirts. There was also a girl with straight blond hair and blue eyes. She wore shorts and a light pink short-sleeve shirt. She looked like a model or something. There was another girl with brown straight hair and dark brown eyes. She was

wearing blue leggings and a matching shirt. The last boy had dark skin and blue eyes. He wore jeans and a shirt that said: We don't try, we just do it.

Out of nowhere, a man with brown hair and hazel eyes appeared right in front of them. "Hello," he said, "Welcome to Knife Handling! Everyone stand in a circle around me." Everyone did as he said. "Let's introduce ourselves." Say your name and your favorite color. He pointed to the blond girl. "Why don't you start, and we will go around the circle." "Hi, I'm Rose, and my favorite color is red!" The twins were next. "Hello, I'm Jonathan, and my favorite color is orange." The other twin went. "I'm Jake, and my favorite color is Blue."

The boy with the dark skin went next. "My name is Cameron, but please just call me Cam, and my favorite color is...probably black." Alex went and then, Ally. Next was Bree, and then the last girl was the girl with brown hair and brown eyes. "H-hi," she said. "My-My name is K-Kacey, an-d my favorite color is w-white."

"Why is she so nervous?" Bree wondered. "Is she up to something? What could she be doing? I need to find out," she thought...

"You guys can get out early. Tomorrow we will learn the best technique for throwing knives."

Everyone left the classroom. Bree spotted Kacey walking to the dorms. "Hey, wait up!" Bree called. Kacey stopped in her tracks and looked back towards Bree. "O-oh he-hello." Wanna eat lunch with me, Ally and Alex?" Kacey's eyes lit up. "Su-sure." she said.

"See you then!" Bree said.

"Okay!" Kacey said. They went their separate ways.

"What's our next class?" Bree asked, catching up to her friends.

"Gun Shooting class." They came up to a door that said Gun Shooting and went through the door. It was the same people as before. They did the same thing as last time. Introducing themselves.

"After two more classes like that, it was finally lunch. Bree, Ally and Alex got to the cafeteria and saw Kacey. "Hi!" Ally said, in her friendly, likeable way. "Wow your hair is so silky!"

“L-lavender.” Bree stuttered. “Yep that’s my name!” Lavender replied. Lavender looked at her with a puzzled expression. Her expression dimmed. “Oh my gosh,” she suddenly cried. “Bree?” “is that really you!!!????” “YES!” “Ok, what is happening?” Alex asked. “Read the room!!!” Ally said dragging him out. “We need to talk.” Bree said. “Yeah...” “I thought you died from the

assassin!" Bree cried. "Well I thought YOU DIED from the assassin!!!" Lavender yelled. "Tell me EXACTLY what happened to YOU." Bree said. "Alright, but you go next!" Lavender said. "You must remember the weather, dark stormy and loud. I couldn't seem to fall asleep, so I went downstairs to get a glass of milk. I was going back upstairs when I noticed the lights in the living room were on. I went over to turn the lights off when I saw dad. He was on the couch, dead. I heard a man's footsteps and bolted out the door. I ran and ran until I got tired and sat down on a bus bench. I was 6, I didn't know where to go. So, I went to an adoption center. When I turned 13 I ran away." "Why?" Bree asked.

"Because when I turned 13 I knew I could take care of myself. I joined a gang of robbers. They were good. We robbed many banks but a few weeks ago we were caught. I was in my cell when a lady wearing red came in and asked if I wanted to get out of jail. I told her yes and she told me all about the organization. And now I'm here right in front of my sister. Weird week. Now your turn."

Bree told her about everything. She told her about their mom's gory death and her falling through the wall. About being a thief. "Any questions?" Bree asked. "Just one," Lavender replied. "Why do you trust these guys so much?" Bree pondered that question for a moment. Then she said, "They remind me of mom and dad. Ally has as much energy as mom. She even did the megaphone wake up just like her! And Alex, like dad, is funny and friendly." "Gosh that's, um deep," Lavender said.

Suddenly Ally came bursting into the room. "Y'all have sad lives," she said. "We know," Bree and Lavender said together. "Wait, you guys were listening in on our conversation!" Lavender said. "You guys live weird lives! I wasn't passing up the chance to listen in on that conversation!" Alex walked into the room. "It's time for dinner!" he said. "Already?" Bree asked. "Yeah today its early for some reason," Alex replied.

They went to dinner. They came back. Everyone sat down on the couch. "Hey guys I have an idea," Lavender said when they got back from dinner. "What is it?" Ally asked intrigued. "Since

you know all about us..." Lavender pointed to her and Bree, "Now it's time for you to tell us all about YOU." "You sure?" Ally asked. "Yes." Bree said. "Alright." Let's start at the beginning."

Chapter 6

"It all started when I was a child," Ally said. "I was around four." My mom was always working so I was always home with dad. He abused me. "He made me cook dinner, sweep, and do all the chores like I was some sort of maid. If I breathed too hard I would have to sleep outside." One day the police came to our doorstep and asked for my father. Apparently, he had stolen 50K in gold from the bank. I realized had that much money and I still had to sleep in a room smaller than our bathroom (or outside). I felt...cheated. I ran to my father to tell him a friend was at the door. He mumbled something that I couldn't hear and went to the door.

He tried to run but the police caught him. I knew I should feel sad that he was arrested but I couldn't. He never did anything nice for me. "Sir!", I said to one of the officers. "I-i've been hurt." "What?" the officer asked confused. "H-he hurt m-me." He did this to me.." I pulled up my pant leg to show him all the bruises he had given me over the years. "My, that just won't do," the cop said. "That's an extra 6 years in prison," the officer told me. "Your mother will take good care of you," he said. "Thank you for telling us, young lady," he told me.

Half an hour later my mom showed up. She was wearing her work clothes. She was a lawyer. Her dark green eyes and hair were unmistakable. I ran to her and hugged her. "I love you honey."

Mom said. "I love you too." I whispered back. The two of us went inside and I told her EVERYTHING. "My you're getting skinny," Mom said when I finished. "Let's get you some ice cream!" We went to the store and she got me chocolate ice cream. We came home and went to sleep.

The next few months were much better. We got a new house, a dog, and I even started going to school! Later my mother died. Someone had put cyanide in her drink. I cried and cried until I

fell through a wall and, voila, I'm here! I've been here for two years. That's my life story!" she said.

Bree noticed that Ally had not gone into much detail. She could tell this was an uncomfortable subject for Ally so she didn't ask questions. Instead she said: "Wow Ally. I didn't know." "Can we just move on to Alex please," Ally said in a rushed tone. "Sure!" Lavender said. "Ok" Alex said unenthusiastically. "I was a regular kid," he started. "Liked sports and had friends, all that jazz."

One day both my parents were arrested for a crime they did not commit. "What crime?" Bree asked. "Arson, but I

know they didn't do it. I was there that night, but the police didn't believe me. They thought I was saying that to get my parents out of prison. After that I lived with my grandma. "It was nice, I guess, but it was boring." The most exciting thing that happens there is people's birthdays or occasionally weddings. One day I fell through the wall and here I am.

"So everyone fell through a wall? Doesn't sound very original to me," Ally said disapprovingly. "There is another connection," Bree said slowly. "Everyone's parents were either mysteriously murdered or captured by the police. What's that all about?" "I don't know," Ally replied. "We should go to sleep," Lavender said, yawning. "I'm tired." "Me too," Alex said. Everyone changed into Pjs and went to bed. Bree couldn't sleep. She stayed awake wondering, why. Why were mom and dad killed.

FIVE MONTHS LATER: It's been 5 months. Over those 5 months Bree has become an excellent spy. It came naturally to her, as if she's done it before. "WAKE UP SLEEPY HEADS!!!!" Ally yelled through her megaphone. "I WANNA EAT SO HURRY UP AND GET READY!!!!" she barked. They rushed to get ready and went to breakfast. As they were eating Charles came over to their table and told them that Mrs. Smith wanted to see them. Charles escorted us to Mr. Smith's office. "Hello children!" she said when we walked in. She was wearing a red pantsuit and an odd lacy hat. "I've been waiting for you," Mrs. Smith said. The four of them took a seat. Mrs. Smith's desk was filled with papers, presumably classified case folders. "I think you're ready." She said. "Ready for what?" Alex asked. "Your first mission. You have trained hard."

Bree looked at Ally who was bubbling with excitement. “What is the mission?” Lavender asked. She handed each of us a file. She stood up and started pacing. “Our sources tell us that the other side is planning to bomb the Statue of Liberty. ”Why?”, Ally asked. “We think they want to make a statement. Show the world what they can do. Their goal in the end is to rule the world. This is just the beginning of the terrible thing they plan to do. Do you think you're up for it?” The four of them looked at each other and nodded. “Yes.” Bree said. “So, what's the plan?”

Chapter 7

Mrs. Smith smiled. “Fantastic.” She said. “Come with me.” Mrs. Smith made her way over to one of the many bookcases in the room, her red heels making a clinking sound against the marble floors. She pulled out a book and to Bree’s surprise the bookcase opened up revealing a room with table and chairs. On the table was a hologram of the Statue of Liberty. We all gathered around the table. “Four agents will come on a helicopter to place the bombs. Each of them will have two bombs. Four will be here.” Mrs. Smith pointed to four areas around the base of the statue. “And four up here”. She pointed to four areas on the statues body: The head, the statues back, her feet, and her stomach. They will be there at midnight tonight. I will give you the rest of the day to plan and prepare. Now, get started!” The four of them were escorted to their dorm room by Charles. When they got to the room they started training immediately. They trained as hard as ever, rarely stopping for breaks. They practiced everything from punches to pickpocketing. Soon enough Bree and her team were entering a helicopter wearing special spy suits and equipment including: a grappling hook, a knife, a few pairs of handcuffs, smoke bombs, and a taser. “You ready?” Charles asked. “Definitely.” Bree said. “This is for you mom and dad,” Bree thought. ”Gabe will pay for what he did.”

Chapter 8

“We’re here.” Charles said from the pilot seat. “Get ready to jump.” The four teenagers cautiously stepped towards the helicopter door. “Lets go!” Ally said, jumping off. Bree and Lavender glanced at each other and nodded. “Lets go.” Bree said and then she jumped. Wind brushed her face as she plummeted towards the ground. Bree opened her parachute. The wind was not as menacing as before.

Bree landed followed by Lavender and Alex. “Right on time.” Alex said pointing to a second helicopter. Bree saw four men parachuting down. “Ally and Alex go to Lady Liberty’s head and ambush any agents you see.” “Me and Lavender will protect the base.” Bree saw Alex and Ally go up the statue’s body. Bree and Lavender jumped down to the base of Lady Liberty. They hid in large crevices in the stone. Suddenly Bree heard footsteps. “She put her finger over her lips. Soon she saw two guys holding two bombs each the size of large milk cartons. “I’ll take the one on the right.” Lavender whispered. Bree nodded. Before the boys had a chance to set the bomb Bree jumped down and punched the one on the left square in the face. Lavender jumped down right on top of the other guy. While she was watching Lavender she didn’t notice her guy standing up. Why, what do we have here he said. The man was wearing a black suit with a red skull painted on his chest. He had black gelled hair and menacing blue eyes. He looked about her age. “If I were you I would walk away.” “You don’t know who you’re dealing with.” He said in a slithery voice. “I don’t see why I should be so scared of you.” Bree snapped. The boy chuckled. “Well I did distract you long enough.” “Hu-” Bree started but was cut off. “Hello.” A girl said, putting a cloth over her, but Before Bree knew what the girl was doing everything went black.

Chapter 9

Bree woke up in a dimly lit room, with only a table and chairs. She was all tied up in rope, her hand feet felt numb. Across from her was Kacey. “Hello Bree.” She said. Fancy of you to show up.” She was wearing a black suit with a red skull painted on it, identical to the boy with black hair. Her brown hair was tied up into a tight bun. Her brown eyes were staring Bree down.

“I knew it.” Bree mumbled to herself. She had been suspicious of Kacey since she first saw her. “Why do you work for these guys.” Bree snapped. “You could be saving lives yet you choose to work for these lunatics. “Well I am the daughter of the man running the organization and taking lives is SO much easier than saving them.” But saving them is the right thing to do.” Bree said stubbornly. “You just don’t get it do you.” Kacyn said. Suddenly out of nowhere a man wearing a fancy suit with black hair came into the room. One eye was blue and the other black. “Run along Alice.” “I would like to have a word with Ms. Bree.” Kacey left the room silently.” Alice? Bree thought. She lied about that too? “Why hello Bree.” The man said. I am Mr. Johnson, but please call me Gabe.” GABE!?!?! Bree thought. She was furious. “Ah you know who I am.” he said, noticing the fury on her face. “Just get to the point,” Bree growled. “Alright then.” Gabe said Bree, we would like to recruit you to work for the other side.” Bree couldn't help but laugh. “What's so funny?” Gabe asked. “Me, work for you?” HA! You wish.” It's not as funny as you think.” “We were able to get your parents to work for us after all. What makes you different from them?” Bree was speechless. Mom and dad? My idols worked for Gabe? “You're lying!!” Bree sputtered. “Mom and dad would never do that!” As she said that a little part of Bree’s brain whispered. “But would they do it to protect me?” Suddenly Bree had an idea. I could be a double agent. That's what mom and dad would do. I will request to say goodbye to my friends, but really I will tell them my plan. Bree let out a breath she didn’t realize she was holding. “Alright.” Bree sighed. “I’m in.”

About the Author

Phoebe Johnson (The author of this book) is ten years old and goes to stevenson school in Carmel. Unlike Bree she has two amazing parents (that are still alive) and also one autistic sister, who is also awesome. In her free time she reads or talks to her friends (Via FaceTime of course.)

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