



Paint the Wind by Pam Munoz Ryan

Book Talk

Maya was eleven before she learned what it was like to live free, outside the prison her grandmother's house had been.

Maya was a prisoner in her grandmother's house in a wealthy neighborhood of Pasadena. She left the house to go to school, but she wasn't permitted to have friends over, her clothes always had to be spotless, her grades had to be straight As, and the only time she left the house on weekends was to go to the library, accompanied by the live-in housekeeper. She wasn't allowed to run, shout or play in the house. She had to be as close to invisible as she could be, and obey every one of her grandmother's strict rules. And her grandmother never left the house, so she was always there to make sure Maya did exactly as she was told.

Maya had lived with her grandmother for six years, ever since her parents died when she was five. Her grandmother - who was her father's mother - blamed Maya's mother for her son's death, and refused to tell Maya anything about her. All Maya had of her mother was a collection of toy horses and a picture of her sitting on a paint horse, waving and laughing.

But all that changed when her grandmother had a stroke and died. The lawyer told Maya about the will, and said that she'd just have to go to Wyoming a little early this year. Wyoming? Maya had never been to Wyoming. But now her grandfather and his brother and sister were her only relatives, and she had to go and live with them on their Wyoming ranch. Within just hours, Maya had packed everything she owned and was on her way to Wyoming-for good. Would her life there be any better than the one she'd had with her grandmother? After all, her mother's family hadn't come looking for her when her grandmother kept her away from them all those years.

Sitting in the airport, waiting for her grandfather, Maya couldn't know how much her life was going to change, or that a paint horse that looked like the toy she clutched nervously as she waited would help her make the biggest changes of all.