

A Short Story

MINE THE FEELINGS

ALICIA HEPBURN



WILLIAM

In 1858 William Burns was repeating his general routine on his farm. Everyday he worked he became more aware of the fact that he didn't want to farm. In the back of his mind he still wanted to be a miner, but he listened to his family and safely worked at the dull farm everyday. He woke up early one morning to the bright sun gleaming on his face and heard his wife say "Honey, me and Martha are going to San Fransisco for a week". William responded saying "Okay, I'll just work on the farm until you get back". He heard the door shut, and at that time he didn't know he wouldn't be seeing them again for a very long time.

With his family gone he took his rake and cleaned up the side of his little house with dark brown wood and creaking steps. While cleaning up he heard a knock on the door and a man's voice saying in a depressing tone "William are you home? I have some... news.". William started to recognize the voice as he walked to the front of the house. He tapped the shoulder of the man. As the man turned around William saw that it was his friend and colleague, John (a deliverer of William's farming goods). John said in a sad tone

“William, I don’t know how to break this to you, but I’ve gotten news about your family”. William started to panic inside and asked in a weary voice “What about my family?”. John replied “well they...got smallpox and about a day ago and they...died”. William was light headed and everything was a blur and he could hear his heart thumping over the noise of John saying “William? William? Are you ok?”. Then everything went black.

William gained vision again and saw John over top of him. William sat up and placed his hands over his face and clenched into a ball weeping over the extreme loss he just had. After around two days of mourning he was barely eating his food and he heard John knocking on the door. William slowly got out of his seat and opened the door. John paced into the house while saying “William, you don’t have any motivation anymore. You need to do something with your life. What is something you’ve always wanted to do?”. William grumbled “I want to mine again”. John was startled with this reply, but supported him none the less. John said “While that’s perfect, I heard that a few months ago 800oz of gold was sent to the San Fransisco Mint. by James Douglas in New Caledonia”. William replied in a neutral expression “So?”. John said in a confident tone “Well...that means that there is a gold rush in New Caledonia. Which is just the spot you should go to follow your dreams. But, you’ll have to move fast before the goldfields dry out.”. Something inside William caused him to have a hope that his future could change. With this

excitement arising he said to John "I want to go!" but then something inside him held him down and forced him to say "But, what about my family they would never approve of this decision.". John replied "Sometimes you need to follow your dreams, and if your family loved you as much as I know they did they would want you to go. You need to take charge of yourself. Go! Be free...like a bee.". This caused all William's doubt to wash away and tell John "Ok I'll do it, I'm going to go to New Caledonia!".

After the motivational talk from John, William started to pack his different things, such as his mining attire and tools (rubber boots, jacket, gold panning kit, etc.). He went through the various roads and dirt trails through Northern California until he reached the San Francisco port. When he arrived he got onto the boat that would take him to New Caledonia. As the boat drifted away into the unknown land he gazed at the water surrounding the big boat and its many sails. He went into deep thought and remembered his family, seeing his daughter's light brown shoulder length hair with her brown eyes and light pink dress. William also remembered his wife, who looked like an older version of her daughter, but with a white and light blue floral dress walking out the door with her daughter into the world.

When William arrived at New Caledonia he saw many boats filled with eager prospectors wanting to strike it rich.

Once he touched down on land and moved into the commercial centre that had apparently, to his surprise, was up and running. With the buzzing noises, of many men and business clerks, it reminded him of San Francisco. As he was walking through the busy streets he saw different signs and posters saying "You are in newly created British Columbia!". William didn't know what this meant, but after a while he noticed that British Columbia was created by James Douglas because he was scared that the Americans were trying to take over the British land.

William kept walking and saw a man about to settle down in the bar when a another bigger man looked him dead in the eyes and tripped him, causing the man to tumble down and the front entrance of the bar. When the weak man tried to get up William could see that the man who tripped towering over him, chuckling and his display. The other men standing behind this man were chanting "Frank! Frank! Frank!" and the man, who seemed to be called Frank had an evil cunning smile.

FRANK

To Frank this event boosted his confidence from his unsuccessful endeavours during his time on the California Gold Rush. Frank had no family back at his small lonely shack on the hilly outskirts of the bustling commercial centre of San Fransisco. If he felt infuriated in a minimal way he would tend to lash out. This short-fused temper strung from his family life, which wasn't even existent to him. Frank never knew his mother and father, so he had to live with his uncle, Fred and his son Walter. They were always nice and welcoming to Frank, but instead of returning the favour Frank tried to act superior by being rude towards them. Frank would often lash out with any little things that pushed his buttons.

His uncle would always tell Frank to socialize and make friends. To Frank he thought that uncle's advice was some sort of challenge to prove that Frank couldn't make friends. This was irritating to Frank so he finally decided to make some friends. These so called friends just stuck around Frank because they were worried that Frank would bully them if they didn't. Frank didn't realize this, or didn't even

care for that matter because he barely tolerated them anyways and just wanted to prove to his uncle that he was wrong about him. Frank didn't understand his uncle's intentions and this led him to hate his uncle with a growing passion. Whenever Frank was with his friend's he would prove that he was superior by saying snarky comments to any of them if they didn't do what he said. This rude personality caused Frank to be seen as a bully from anyone that he met, except for one time.

One day, when Frank was around 29 years old, he went to meet up with his friends at a local bar. His friend, Albert, was seated to the left of him at the bar counter while his other pal, Ed, sat at the other. Albert pointed behind Frank's shoulder and snickered. Frank turned to Ed and said, in an exaggerated loud voice, to Ed "look at that little Gibface!". The short man, who appeared to be ugly in Frank's mind shouted across the bar and said "What are you looking at?!". Frank signalled to Albert and Ed's to follow him as he got up and called in an angry tone "I'm looking at you, Gibface!". The man stood up to defend himself as Frank closed in on him, but Frank and his friends cornered him. The man said to Frank "You can't speak to me that way!". Frank replied in an infuriated tone saying "I can do whatever I want!". Frank lifted up his fist and swung a left hook to the man's face...but it was blocked. Frank's face was filled with surprise and the man smirked and said "I told you not to speak to me that way!". He then took his other hand and nailed Frank in the face, and he fell on the

ground. Albert and Ed were surprised, but they slowly moved towards the man, but were quickly taken down. Frank got up and was embarrassed by the laughter of the other's in the bar and ran back to his house.

This experience caused Frank to want to prove to everyone that he was better than them and he decided to mine the California Gold Rush for a year, until hearing about the gold in the North. He then packed up his things and left his family and went to British Columbia to strike it rich.

Chapter 3

WILLIAM

After William saw the violent display that happened outside of the bar in British Columbia he decided to keep moving. When he was walking he overheard a group of men talking, really loudly, about the huge goldfields in the interior of the mainland up the Fraser River. This quickly processed in William's brain and he looked at a boat about to set sail and ran towards it. After a long sprint William was on the boat slowly catching his breath and he was off to the interior of British Columbia.

After a long travel up the Fraser River William finally reached the interior of British Columbia and made it to the destined Cariboo Gold Rush commercial centre, Barkerville. When he got off the boat he went up to a stranger saying "Get your maps! Only 50 cents for all your gold finding needs!". William walked up to the map seller and bought the map with the little money he had left. He then overheard another man say to the map seller "My friends and I want to find gold, will this map help us?". This got William to realize that he had to move faster because

the possibly of the goldfields drying out were quite high with the amount of people around him. In a fluster from this reality check William ventured off into the land. He climb through many hills that felt as tall as mountain and he faced temperature that made he feet feel like ice. This brutal climate made William coward sometimes, but he kept pushing through and found different calming rivers to seep into while carefully gold panning.

When William went through his generic mining day he accidentally stumbled across a rushing river. William's thoughts caved in on themselves and the rushing river gave him a traumatic flashback about his time in the California gold rush. He remembered the lush forest surrounding the rushing river in the past days of his mining and he was stricken with the dreadfully vivid memory of when he took a step in the cold pricing water it as quickly seeped up his feet. His foot brushed against a slippery rock and he slipped, feeling almost drowned. He gets tossed around in the water and the scene in his mind slowly fades away. He becomes present in the moment and sees that he's in British Columbia starring at the rushing river. He grabs all of his tools and runs away.

With the traumatic experience instilled in his mind he wants to cowards and go back to California and never think about mining again. While he's waiting for the boat to take him back he sees a familiar man walking near him. William

stops the man and asks him "Do I know you?". "No! I've never seen you before." the man replies. He then pushes William and says "Leave me alone you sack of moldy potatoes!". "Wait!" William replies as the man slowly turns to face him. "I *do* remember you! You the man who beat up that poor miner in the bar a few days ago! I even remember hearing your name, what was it...Fred? no... Oh! I know it was Frank!". In an intimating manner Frank says to William "Yeah so! I can beat up whoever I want, especially an old man like you!". Frank storms off in the forest holding the same map William previously bought. William sees this and looks down at his hand, and his map is gone. He tries to chase down Frank, but he was out of sight and William started to get squished into a group of men trying to get onto the boat. When he gets forced onto the boat by the heard of people he thinks about his family, John, and Frank. William thinks he should stay loyal to his family and leave, but something that John said to him creeps into the back of his mind. William hears John's voice in a mystical sound saying "You need to take charge of yourself. Go! Be free...like a bee.". This makes William hope a new, and the passion to become a successful miner is refuelled. William instantly gets off the boat and goes over to the map stand and puts 50 cents into a tip jar and as he's running he marks down all the places that he previously was thinking of looking for gold. After his first spot is marked he makes the journey, once again to look for gold.

Even with the soaring passion inside of him, William doesn't seem to find any gold. When he went to the one of the circled spots on his map he saw Frank already searching for gold in that area. William found this strange because it kept happening over and over. After seeing Frank at almost all of his spots, William remembered that he wrote down all of the places that he was going to look for gold on the map that Frank stole from him. This really discouraged William because every time he seemed close to finding gold, he didn't end up finding anything.

This discouragement really took its toll one day when William started searching the last circled spot on his map. In this spot William was gold panning on a sandy river bank, he expected to see Frank, but strangely didn't. He was curious about this, but he continued with his normal gold panning routine. After an hour of carefully panning William sees a shiny substance in his pan. William examines it closer and sees that it's gold. With this discovery William tries to track down the mother load and looks closer at his map. After looking at his map he sees that he should go farther upstream. As he walks up the stream he walks around a big rock blocking him from his desired destination. When he looks over the rock he sees the worst possible situation, Frank. William's hopes are crushed because Frank has dug up all of the gold. William goes up to him and says "Frank, I know you took my map and found this location because of what I circled. Could you give me credit for this discovery and cut me in for some of the

profit? I would truly appreciate it.”. Frank response in a cocky tone “No! I’m not going to give you anything, you should’ve been faster old man. Now, get away from me!”. This causes William to leave the scene with a lost of all hope and he cowards from his dream. William retreats back to the boat in despair and goes back to California.

When he arrives in California he takes a long journey back to his farm. When he arrives at his farm he cleans up and preps for the long days to come. When he was picking up his shovel he imaged there being two figures in the distance, his wife and daughter. They smiled down on him, proving to William he was doing the right thing. They both faded away into the sunset. With his family’s love in his heart William picked up his shovel and got to work.

The End