

The Jailbreak (by BettyHT)

SUMMARY: Joe has talked Hoss into another scheme although for a good cause, and Ben confronts Roy about it in this sometimes serious, sometimes flippant story.

rating = pg word count = 1064

The Jailbreak

The big man was an inch, or mebbe two, under six feet, but he's powerfully built, and like now, he always come straight at you with them shoulders slightly rounded, his head down and forward, and those eyebrows near covering up them eyes of his. He looked like he was a gonna throw a punch 'cept I knew better. It wasn't the first time I seen Ben Cartwright come a tearing into my office looking like that slamming his hand down on my desk demanding to know why I done what I done.

You see, I know that when he heard them two younger boys of his done broke out of jail, he musta near blew steam outta them ears of his. I gotta tell him now that they probably did it to help that no account Billy Gray get away after they heard his sob story. Those two will believe any sad tale they hear.

Now that oldest son of his approached more like a mountain lion than a charging fighter. Adam Cartwright has got that smooth walk that fools you into thinking that maybe he ain't near as dangerous as his pa, but that's a darn fool mistake to make. This time though, I could see Adam was finding a bit of humor in the whole thing knowing that somehow this had to be one of his youngest brother's hare-brained schemes. Breaking out of jail – no sirree, he woulda known that Hoss would never a done that on his own. Ben shoulda known right off too that Hoss would never have done this kind of thing unless that Little Joe was prodding

him into it. Unlike Adam now, Ben, though, he was seeing nothing funny about any of it, and mostly, neither was I.

“Ben, I’m an officer of the law, and you know it’s my sworn duty to bring them two boys of yours in for breaking out of my jail. Now they coulda just walked outta here free and clear this morning cause they was only in for being disorderly last night, but they chose to conduct a jailbreak, and that’s a serious offense.”

“I don’t believe it.” Ben slammed that sore hand of his down on my desk and I had to hold back a smile. “I wouldn’t believe it if there were fifty witnesses. I wouldn’t believe it if there were twice that many witnesses because I know my boys. They just wouldn’t do it.”

“Ben, I know how you feel.” Except, I didn’t know. I never had sons. I wish I did, and I wish they was just like his sons. Somehow, no matter how bad it looked, those two youngest ones were gonna get themselves outta this pickle, and there was gonna be some kind of story that was gonna explain why they done such a fool thing. It always seemed to work out that way with those two no matter how bad things looked sometimes. Then Ben was gonna relax them shoulders, and his eyebrows was gonna go back up where they belonged. Adam wasn’t gonna have to be hiding that grin he was doing his best to hold back.

As much as I knew it would work out, for the time being, I was the sheriff, and those two boys of his had to be brought in to face the music. Best thing I knew to do was that I should let Ben go off to get them. I figured it was the right way to go and the smartest way to go too. Seeing him come at them was gonna scare them a whole heck of a lot more than any posse. Hoss knows this country better than anybody hereabouts ‘cept maybe Adam anyhow. Only family gonna find that one ifn he don’t want to be

found. Once those two are back here with that Billy, we can get the whole durn mess straightened out.

As Ben sucked in some air about to let loose with another tirade, there was quite a lot of noise outside the office door with yelling and then the door burst open. No one was more surprised than Sheriff Roy Coffee unless it was Ben Cartwright himself seeing his two youngest sons standing there grinning with Billy Gray standing behind them and off to the side a bit as if he was terrified of what might happen next.

But wouldn't you know it? Right about the time I was gonna have to calm ole Ben down and send him after his boys, them two walked in with Billy and the money. The Gray boy admitted that it was his pa who done stole it and he had been hiding it for him. He didn't want to turn on his pa. I could see that and understand it too, but I did have to tell him that it was wrong and the only way to set things right was that he was gonna have to be cooperating from here on in. He said he would. He didn't give me no back talk neither. I could see too that Hoss and Joe had got him to do the right thing and changed his way of thinking while they done it. It's kind of funny too seeing Ben there not knowing what to say. Does my heart good to see them boys do that to ole Ben now and then. Adam ain't holding back that grin of his no more. My bet is that someday that boy is gonna write some books, and his younger brothers is giving him plenty of material to make them stories pretty darn entertaining too. Kinda wish I could be there later out on the Ponderosa after Ben gets a chance to think things through. I do wish I could hear what he's a gonna say about all of this. I surely do.

“Roy, if there’s no further business with Hoss and Little Joe, can we leave now? There’s lots of work to do on the ranch, and this has kept us away too long already.”

“No, nothing more for you all to do here. You can go on your way.” *Now I got a pretty darn good idea what’s facing them younger two when they get on back home.* “Say, Adam, a word with you before you go?”