



A Soul Big Enough

by Dale Fincher

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F. W. Boreham in his essay "Scarlet and Gold" tells us of three tragedies. The first is desiring a thing you cannot have. The second is having a thing and no longer desiring it. The third is having the thing you desire and being crushed under the weight of it.

He tells of a small canary, struggling in front of a cable-car, obviously an escapee from some decorative cage. A cat suns nearby with wickedness in his eyes. But having been in the cage for so long, the canary hasn't the wisdom nor the wings fitted for the outside world. Caged, it would sing of his tribe on the tropical isles, but his dreaming was bigger than his abilities.

The same happened to Anne Boleyn in a different way. She was the second of six wives to Henry VIII, a man well-known for manipulating church and state. According to the documentary *The Six Wives of Henry VIII*, Anne had cunning, appeal, and a firecracker personality. She undercut the former wife of Henry

and eventually won the affection of the throne. But while romance is often ignited by a hard-to-get lover, her inability to grow into a quiet wife, among other things, cost her head. Having a character better suited for wooing than wifing, she could not carry the responsibilities she desired.

Jacob, the grandson of the first Patriarch, Abraham, was also found unsuited for his prize. Taking the lead of his mother, Jacob the Deceiver desired the blessing and the birthright for his own, though it was rightfully his brother's. Dressing up in hairy animal skin, Jacob fools his blind, aging father and receives the blessing.

Jacob suffered from the tragedy of having something he desired but could not shoulder. It took wrestling with the Angel of the Lord before his name (and character) was changed from "Jacob" to "Israel." At that point, carrying the scar of a new limp, Jacob became fitted to be a father of a nation.

Likewise, Ravi Zacharias tells the story of a professor and his chauffeur. Sitting in the back of the room, the chauffeur heard the same lecture through years in the service of the professor. One night they decided something: to switch places. The chauffeur

took to the stage and pretended to be the professor. It was a flawless delivery. But suddenly the moment came for questions. A man rose in the crowd and asked a very difficult question. The chauffeur was dumbstruck. Then suddenly it dawned on him, "That question is so easy, I'll let my chauffeur in the back answer it for you."

You see, if we are given things and opportunities we are not equipped to handle, it can take us down roads we do not want to go. This is what happened to the canary, Anne Bolyn, and Jacob. Rarely is the escape as easy as the chauffeur's.

I think we often dream of celebrity, riches, beauty, and success and rarely give thought if we are capable of handling these things. Sometimes what at first appears to be a blessing is a curse for the unprepared.

But God calls us to frontiers and responsibilities that are still beyond us. Are we equipped for the task at hand? Are we building our house upon the rock, prepared for the winds and storms to blow? Parents, are you practicing God's presence in your life so that your children can learn from you? Future-parents, are you building the kind of character you need to train up children in the ways of the Lord? Student, are you

applying your study skills, knowing that mastering the material, not grades, will take you furthest in life?

The Apostle Peter tells us the importance of growing into our responsibilities. "Make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 5-8).

To return to the beginning, Boreham capstones his remark on the tragedy of the canary. His thoughts turn toward Heaven: "The canary reminds me that, one day, I shall find my cage door open and shall plume my wings for flight. ...It would be the tragedy of tragedies if, when that day comes, my great adventure fills me with nothing but bewilderment and alarm. ...In my present life I must seek so to develop all my faculties and powers that, when the door opens, I may enter into my freedom with confidence and greet the unknown with a song."

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