

This week, Film Blog is bringing you four true stories about extraordinary people. Their stories don't always end happily, but their journeys will move and inspire you.

A RABBIT-PROOF FENCE

In Australia in 1931, three Aboriginal girls ran away from their white captors and walked 2,400 kilometres to get back home. Their story is told in a film entitled *Rabbit-Proof Fence*. The Aboriginal Protection Act of 1869 gave the government powers over the lives of Aboriginal people, including the power to forcibly remove mixed race children – those born to a white parent and a black parent – from their families.

This story follows three little girls: Molly, fourteen, her sister, eight-year-old Daisy, and their ten-year-old cousin Gracie as they are taken from their family to a camp. Upset at being so far from their mothers and their home, the young girls escape and set off on an **arduous** journey to find their way home, pursued by the authorities. Molly remembered her father once telling her about the Rabbit-Proof Fence which crosses western Australia from north to south. Her goal was simple: to find the fence and follow it home. After nine weeks of walking and hiding, they finally arrive home and are reunited with their family.



B INTO THE WILD

The lonely death of Chris McCandless inspired a book *Into the Wild*, and a film by the same name. Chris McCandless was a young American graduate who grew up in an affluent family in Washington, DC. When he found out about his father's secret second family, he was so upset that he distanced himself from his family. He abandoned his real name and never contacted his parents or his sister again. After two years of hitchhiking around the Northwest, he decided to push himself to the extreme and hiked alone into the **desolate** wilderness of Alaska. He took pride in living simply and surviving with few belongings. He spent the next sixteen weeks completely alone, hunting, reading and 'camping' in a deserted bus. In late July it is thought that he ate some poisonous seeds that made him extremely ill and too weak to hunt for food. Realising that he was going to die, Chris wrote a goodbye message, and a few weeks later some hunters found his body in the bus. This was his message: 'I have had a happy life and thank the Lord. Goodbye and may God bless all!'



D WILD

Cheryl Strayed's surname is not her original name. It's a name she invented for herself. After the death of her mother in 1991, Cheryl's grief caused her to lose her way in life; she felt she had 'strayed'. Devastated by the loss of her mother to cancer, Cheryl turned to drugs. Then her husband divorced her and, finally, she realised that she had lost her own sense of identity.

Cheryl decided to challenge herself by hiking along the Pacific Crest Trail in an attempt to find the person she used to be. This was not an easy task. The PCT runs for 1,100 miles through California from Mexico to Canada and is certainly not a journey for novices. But Cheryl filled a backpack to bursting and set off. Three months later, after struggling through wilderness and crossing nine mountain ranges, Cheryl made it to the end. The journey had been physically and mentally hard for the inexperienced hiker. She had endured 100-degree temperatures, **record** snowfalls and encountered bears and rattlesnakes. The giant backpack was so heavy that she called it 'Monster'! But the journey had done what she wanted. It had healed her.

Cheryl wrote a book about her journey and this, in turn, inspired an amazing film called *Wild*, starring Reese Witherspoon as Cheryl. It shows the healing power of a journey in the wild.