

Chapter 12

Taking Flight

Ginger was deep in thought. Flies buzzed lazily around her, as the clouds overhead ran by swiftly. The weather had been changing all day. One minute it was sunny and hot, the next a cold wind came sweeping through with rain. As Ginger stood thinking, the sun reappeared and beat down on the wet grass.

Buttons strolled lazily down the aisleway, and paused at Ginger's gate. "Do you want to go for a walk with me, Ginger, while it's not raining?"

Ginger looked up, pulling herself out of her thoughts, and smiled. She walked out of her pasture and the two of them strolled out towards the creek and the jump field.

"Unusual weather for June, isn't it?" Buttons asked.

"It's been an unusual spring--and I don't just mean the weather." Ginger sighed.

"Yes, it certainly has. It's had its challenges, that's for sure. But people are coming back now. Things are starting to feel a little more normal, even if all the humans have taken to wearing masks."

Ginger laughed. "Yes! Now they know how uncomfortable it is to have a fly mask on."

Buttons laughed too. "I'm just glad to have some kids around again. I really missed them this spring."

They walked in silence for a few moments. "But we've had some good times this spring too. Do you remember that party we had in the moonlight? With Paddy and Myles head-banging and Wall*E, Forest, and Brushy playing in the band? That feels like forever ago!"

"Yes, it does. And Homer's surprise that Tater-tot ate?" They both laughed loudly at this memory!

"And Little Black's story about his sailing adventures? Ah, I miss Little Black." Button's smile faded as she thought of Little Black. They both felt a dull ache sink into their hearts at the thought of how much they missed him.

"But just think of all the adventures he must be having now! Wherever he is..." Ginger looked over at Buttons, who had started to cry. "Ah Buttons, he's still with us. He lives here at MVRU. He's in the trees, the grass, the creek, and the wind. He's not as far away as it seems."

Buttons wiped her eyes on her knee and sighed. "I know, thanks Ginger."

Ginger nuzzled Button's shoulder as they walked quietly, side by side. They passed through the gate to the irrigated hillside, and then up through the cows to a high point on the hill. From there, they could see the entire ranch. They could see Trav and Paddy playing "bite face" over the fence. They could see Finn and Willy in their Hope Garden by the burn pile. Many of the others were napping, enjoying the warm sun as it dried their damp backs.

They sat there together for a long time. The clouds grew thick again, and big drops of rain splashed off the ground and rustled the leaves in the trees. The wind picked up and blew rain into their eyes and noses, but still they sat there. Buttons closed her eyes and let the rain pound on her body. The sounds and smells around her filled her brain. Ginger sat with her eyes open, looking out through the rain at the ranch. The other horses all ran for shelter when the rain started, Wall*E bucking and squealing along the way. It felt like the world was swirling around Ginger and Buttons, but they were solid and unmoveable: two giant rocks in a turbulent river.



When the rain stopped they stood up, shook off, and continued their walk down towards the back corner pasture. They walked through it, then down past the burn pile and onto the road. Before they were back at the pastures, Ginger stopped, and put a hoof on Button's shoulder. "You know, Buttons, I've been thinking."

Buttons laughed. "You're always thinking, Ginger!"

Ginger smiled. "Well I've been thinking something different. I've been thinking I need to do something..."

Buttons was looking at Ginger curiously. "What do you have in mind?"

Ginger took a deep breath, then said, "I think I'm going to write a book."

Buttons smiled. "What about?"

"Well, I figure I should write about what I know best. And that's--us. Our life here, the things we say, the things we do. The things we dream about and cry about. I don't know if it will be any good, but, maybe it doesn't matter. I just feel a need to write it anyways. Like stories are bubbling up inside me and are going to spill out whether I like it or not."

Buttons took Ginger's hoof in her own, and swung it back and forth like a child as they walked down the road together. "What are we anyways, Ginger? Sometimes I feel big and heavy, like a rock. But other times, I feel like a tiny piece of cottonwood fluff, drifting on the breeze."

"Yes, I know what you mean, Buttons. There is a weight to the Present, a feeling of importance, which takes flight, light as a feather, when it moves into the Past. All we are is a series of memories and stories,

clustered together briefly before we scatter to the winds. I want to capture some of those stories before they take flight.”

A strong gust of wind blew through the pastures, and hit Buttons and Ginger head on. Buttons stood on her hind legs and threw her arms in the air. She closed her eyes and laughed. “Write quickly, Ginger, I’m already taking flight!”

Ginger laughed too, and they both went cantering and frolicing back to the ranch.