

Blind

It was the most uneventful sunrise she had ever seen. The sun rose groggily over the slight hills of her families ranch. It colored everything a light, pastel grey, but what bothered her was that even the birds weren't chirping their morning abodes. She was awake before the old, cranky rooster. He was probably still nestled nice and warm, only dreaming of cawing at the sun. She pulled the wool shawl over her shoulders and winced as she put her weight on her right knee, the memory of her accident still etched in the sinews of her nerves, and even though she knew that it had healed almost completely, the shadow of trauma was still there. Hobbling down to the chicken coop; careful not to put all her weight on her leg, she opened the beaten down door and reached in. The hens, all curled up with their beaks tucked under their wings blinked their eyes against the sunrise as the door creaked open, and while some of them squawked at her when she stuck her hands in their plumage to grab an egg, most of them shifted aside like they were almost bored of the daily errand. She closed the door behind her, now squinting against the early morning sun, but she wasn't surprised when the roosters over-eager call sounded through the ranch; It was only minutes before the animals began to stir. Checking off items on her mental daily checklist, she came down to her last couple of chores, feed the cows, and take care of Shadow, she gulped. The memory of her coming down on those barrels flashed through her mind and she shivered against the warm sun, working hard to calm her heartbeat, she stumbled towards the pasture with a bale of hay tucked under her arm.

Shadow lived in a quiet log cabin on the East side of the ranch. There was a little wooden fence that dotted around the area, with a loaded paddock filled with bedding. she stood there, staring at the cross-tie pole and the reigns hung up on the metal latch, afraid to come any closer to the cabin. But she lurked towards the barn door. In the corner of the stall stood Shadow, his black coat was matted and the braids in his main were tangled into dreadlocks. His cut on his shoulder healed nicely, and where there was once a bloody gash, only a scar remained.

He looked up at her with a sprout of hay sticking out of his mouth, his ears pricked in her direction in a curious manner. Her hand rested on the wooden board with

his name, and everything happened at once. The door made a low creaking sound, like wood being pulled apart. She jumped back, the shift in the position of the door forced her to put a significant amount of weight on her bad knee which sent a jolt of pain through her leg to her spine, and she cried out in pain as she stumbled back. Shadow jerked his head back in surprise at the noise, but her reaction of jumping back scared him and before she knew it, he was rearing in front of her, his hooves inches away from her face. When he landed, he dropped his head and bucked out from behind causing him to slam on the wooden backboard of the stall with a loud *boom*. She dropped to the ground outside of his stall and tried to calm her racing heart, but among the despair and pain she felt of seeing her horse freak out like that after such an accident brought her to tears. She pulled her arms over her knees in a fetal position and began to sob while Shadow, her horse, trotted back and forth in the stall, occasionally bumping his neck against the sides of the walls. The accident had only hurt her knee, but it blinded Shadow.