

VAGABOND
PART 4

“Wow! He might be able to out eat me!” Pinkie Pie said.

Vagabond had devoured three bowls of fruit salad ravenously and was working on a fourth with equal gusto.

Pinkie Pie leaned over and whispered into Big Mac’s ear,
“It’s a good thing I’m a baker or else he would eat Fluttershy out of house and home.”

Big Macintosh grinned slightly,
“Ayup.”

Vagabond’s ear’s had picked up on the exchange but he carefully hid his reaction. He cringed inside, *‘I’m so hungry.’* he thought, *‘But I absolutely will not abuse anyponie’s kindness.’* Vagabond raised his head, maybe a little too quickly,
“I’m finished. Thank you Fluttershy.” In truth he was still ravenously hungry, but he refused to misuse Fluttershy’s hospitality, hungry or no.

Vagabond felt bad,
“I need to find some way to repay you for everything Fluttershy. Let me see if I have anything in my saddlebags.” he said.

Vagabond knew it would hurt terribly to reach so far, but he was willing to endure it.

“Oh, that’s quite alright Vagabond. You don’t have to give me anything. I’m just glad I could help.”
Fluttershy said meekly.

Vagabond couldn’t help but to stare at his hostess,
“You’re so kind. I feel I need to do something for you, anything.”

“Just get better. That’s all I want.” Fluttershy said earnestly.

Vagabond was deeply touched. He vowed that if there was anything he could do for Fluttershy, he would do it gladly.

Somepony was knocking on Fluttershy’s door yet again.

Pinkie Pie, acting as butler, bounded over to the door and flung it wide,
“Hi again Rarity!” Pinkie said letting Rarity in.

“Hello again Pinkie darling.” Rarity said stepping into Fluttershy’s cottage.

Vagabond’s memory jogged to the last thing he heard Rarity say, ‘Imagine! A killer among the

good ponies of Ponyville. He should be banished immediately.”

He remembered Rarity’s previous words as he was feigning sleep. Vagabond suppressed his frustration, ‘*At least she was paying attention. She is Fluttershy’s friend and I won’t make a scene.*’ It was difficult not to say anything. Rarity’s words were so similar to those of his own village. That memory would forever be burned into his mind and Vagabond couldn’t think of anything that would lessen the pain. He forced his expression into neutrality as Rarity looked him over.

He thought he was doing well until he heard a trio of tiny voices call, “Rarity! Wait up.” and three adorable tiny fillies bounded inside the cottage.

“Sweetie Belle!” Rarity scolded, “What are you doing following me? It’s dangerous here! Go home at once!” she said dramatically pointing out the door with a hoof.

Vagabond couldn’t help it, Rarity’s words echoed in his mind, ‘It’s dangerous here!’ ‘It’s dangerous here!’ ‘It’s dangerous here’.

Vagabond’s mind suddenly snapped back to reality when he heard one of the fillies say, “Whose that?”

Vagabond opened his eyes and saw the three fillies standing right in front of him, not two feet away.

One of them, a cute little Earth pony wearing an over-sized bow peered up at Vagabond, “Are you sick?” she asked.

“No silly he’s hurt.” said a tiny pegasus.

The third, a white unicorn, asked, “How did you get hurt? Did you fall down?”

“Girls, I’m sure he’s very tired.” Rarity said with a nervous smile.

Vagabond took the hint and yawned loudly. The three fillies hung their heads and turned to leave.

The tan pegasus suddenly turned around, “Can we see his cutie mark before we go?”

Vagabond realized his saddlebags were covering his flank, which was a good thing. He shifted trying to make his flank inaccessible and wound up laying directly on his still-healing wing stump. The pain hit him like a tsunami. He turned his head away. There was no way he could stave off the tears of pain. His body shook slightly with convulsions and he broke out in a sweat almost instantly.

Rarity sent Scootaloo, Applebloom, and Sweetie Belle back to town with Pinkie as quickly as possible. As soon as the door closed, Vagabond rose to his knees to take the pressure off his wing stump. He was panting heavily, his whole coat was covered with the sheen of sweat, tears were streaming down his face, and his whole body began to convulse uncontrollably. He lost control of his legs and collapsed, chest-down, on the couch.

Fluttershy flew over to him,
“Oh dear!” she said quietly.

Vagabond continued to convulse in agony,
“P...pain...medicine.” he stuttered between convulsing breaths.

Big Macintosh walked over and held Vagabond still, his expression vaguely unhappy,
“Dr. Mend didn’t give ‘im no medication earlier.” he said.

Fluttershy gasped,
“He laid right on one of his wing injuries! And you said Dr. Mend didn’t give him anything? Oh, the poor thing! He must be in absolute agony!” she said flying over to where Dr. Mend had left the perscription bottle, “Rarity would you help me look?” she asked.

Rarity couldn’t help but to glance at the royal blue pony laying on Fluttershy’s couch, ‘*He was a pegasus?*’ she thought, ‘*Tis unimaginable, loosing one’s wings.*’

The two pony’s looked and looked but the medication was nowhere to be found. Fluttershy began to panic.

Fluttershy pushed objects around, even knocked over the table before she finally turned around in a panic,
“I can’t find it!” she cried frantically, “You don’t think Dr. Mend took it by accident when he left?”

Big Macintosh growled, realizing what had happened,
“Ayup, he did. He grabbed it right when he left. Ah’m sorry, Ah didn’t think nothin’ of it.”

“I...deserve...it.” Vagabond said through gritted teeth.

Every pony in the cottage just stared at him.

Fluttershy went back to Vagabond’s side,
“Don’t say that!” she said, eyes tearing up, “No pony deserves this.” she turned to Rarity and Big Macintosh, “We have to do something!” she cried loudly.

“You...have...no...idea...how...much...I...deserve...this...” Vagabond grunted.

The convulsions were making the pain worse. The agony combined with the convulsions plus the overwhelming feelings of helplessness and the never-ending flood of emotional sorrow finally broke Vagabond’s will. Everything came tumbling out like a tidal wave.

Vagabond closed his eyes, the pain was just too intense. His head swam, he felt nauseous and his body ached for relief from the agony. He couldn’t stay still, he had to move, had to escape the pain. He struggled against Big Macintosh imposing strength, five years of steady walking had made him incredibly strong for a pegasus.

Big Macintosh fought to maintain his hold,

“Stay back! He’s in Fight-or-Flight mode an’ he’s stronger than he looks.” Big Mac let go so he wouldn’t hurt Vagabond.

Vagabond stood up shakily, gasping,
“Let me die!” he cried, “I can’t take it anymore! It’s too much!” he gasped, “I didn’t mean to! I DIDN’T MEAN TO! Oh, Celestia! I killed her! I killed her! She was my only friend.” Vagabond took a deep, shuddering breath, “I LOVED HERRRRRRRRRRR!” everything overwhelmed Vagabond, utterly.

He collapsed onto the couch. Fluttershy, Rarity, and Big Macintosh were completely dumbstruck. They rushed over to Vagabond. Big Mac settled him gently on the couch, directly on his chest, while Fluttershy and Rarity positioned pillows on either side of him.

“Let me die.” Vagabond whispered as the darkness of unconsciousness enveloped him, “Celestia, if you have any mercy, let me die.”

Vagabond’s words hung in the air. The rest of the cottage was silent.

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Dr. Mend looked up from his desk suddenly. There was shouting coming toward his office, through the clinic.

Fluttershy burst into his office, tears streaming down her normally gentle and serene face, “How dare you!” she cried.

She took to the air charging straight at Dr. Mend. Dr. Mend stood up just as she reached him. Fluttershy reached back and slapped him across the face. the blow was light, like a foal’s strike, but the intent was clear.

“What about your oath!” she sniffled, “How could you do such a thing!” she yelled.

“Monster’s deserve what they get!” Dr. Mend yelled back.

“Don’t you dare, don’t you DARE talk to me about monsters!” Fluttershy said emphatically, “Of ANYONE in Ponyville, I know a monster when I see one, and the only one I’ve seen in months I just hit.” she paused to take a breath, shaking with fury, “Give it to me!” she said forcefully, “Give me the medication this instant or I’ll have you arrested! Give it to me!” she said shaking with anger.

Dr. Mend set his jaw,
“Fine. Wait here.” he said leaving his office.

Fluttershy landed, she couldn’t trust her wings right then. She was shaking all over, ‘*I’ve never hit anypony before.*’ she thought sadly, ‘*But poor Vagabond. Hasn’t he suffered enough? I just can’t imagine how I would feel if I was responsible if Applejack or Rarity died because of me. I wonder what happened?*’ she thought.

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Dear Twilight,

That a Vagabond is in Ponyville is somewhat alarming. Use caution, but do not presume to make a judgement call unless you have all the facts. Use discernment and wisdom at all times when interacting with him. Do not become too familiar with him unless he is forgiven. Remember, he has to serve his sentence. I cannot pass judgement on him and neither can you for that is not our place.

*Be safe my student,
Princess Celestia*

Spike read the scroll out loud to Twilight.

Twilight nodded from her position, laying on the floor,
“That makes good sense, I suppose.” she said.

Spike rolled the scroll back up,
“I didn’t know a Vagabond was here. Aren’t they supposed to be dangerous?” he asked.

“Yes and no. Spike, don’t you remember that class we took in Canterlot about crime and punishment?”
Twilight asked.

“Only parts of it, that class was boring.” Spike said dully.

“And that’s why you only got a c+...” Twilight was interrupted by Rainbow Dash walking in boldly.

Dash looked tired,
“Twilight,” she addressed, “I...I’m sorry.” she hung her head, “I lied to you.” she said sadly, then quickly added, “But I had a good reason.”

“I’m sure you thought you did Rainbow Dash, but there is rarely a good reason to lie to anypony.”
Twilight said rising to her hooves, “Don’t worry about it too much, I forgive you. Now, it was about the Vagabond wasn’t it.”

“Yes, you were right, the ghost did speak to me. She said she forgave him, but we can’t tell him yet.”
Rainbow Dash said pensively.

Twilight looked dead serious as she said,
“You need to tell me everything, Dash.”

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Rarity placed a cool, wet cloth on Vagabond’s head,
“He lost his wings.” she whispered, “How horrible. I simply cannot imagine losing my horn. Would be literally losing a piece of yourself.”

“Ayup. Ah think he lost a piece of himself a long time ago.” Big Macintosh said, Something more important than his wings.”

“I whole-heartedly agree, Big Macintosh, but what can we do?” Rarity asked.

“Don’t know.” Big Mac said simply.

Rarity’s attention was drawn to Vagabond’s saddlebags,
“Good heavens, those things are filthy! Why hasn’t anypony removed them? They can’t be comfortable to sleep with.”

“Ah don’t think the word ‘comfort’ has been in his life for five years.” Big Macintosh mused.

Rarity looked sideways at Big Mac,
“If he has to leave when he’s better, we should at least see that his belongings are in good shape. Big Macintosh, darling, would you be so kind as to help me with his saddlebags?” Rarity asked sweetly.

“Nope, Ah don’t touch another pony’s things unless Ah’ve got permission.” Big Mac said.

“But who knows when he’ll wake up. What could it hurt?” Rarity asked.

“Sorry Rarity, Ah don’t compromise mah morals for no pony, an Ah won’t let you touch ‘em either.” Big Mac said.

“I would never dream of asking you to darling. I do have to ask, why are you being so protective of him?” Rarity enquired.

“Do unto others, Rarity,” Big Mac said, “Do unto others.”