

As the sun gleamed through young Alice's stall window, she breathed in the warm summer air and saw the possibilities of a new adventure arise. As she peeked out of her stall, she saw everyone else was still resting. As the handlers led the colts one by one to the warm pastures, Alice's excitement grew. Today she was going to visit the farthest pastures to find a pet rock. Momma always told her a pet rock would never abandon her and would always listen to all of her troubles. Being the youngest foal at the ranch was often times isolating and Alice was still regarded by many of the other colts and foals as too fragile and young to tag along on their expeditions.

As the handler attached a lead to her halter, Alice was rearing to go. As she tugged and pulled on her lead out of excitement and anticipation, Alice's handler chuckled and broke into a jog to keep up with the playful young foal. The other foals and colts watched with curiosity as they saw her trotting to the farthest pasture. Whispers, wonders, and gossip quietly filled the air. Alice thought to herself "Maybe I'm not ready for an adventure like this. Maybe the others are right that I am delicate and fragile. The farthest pasture gate grew closer and closer. Alice's stomach twisted and turned with doubt and anxiety. There was no one else in the farthest pasture yet. A loud gulp and deep breath and Alice peered up to the arch of pasture entry. The creaking of the gate as it slowly opened spooked Alice. The handler slowly stroked Alice's back and reassured her there was nothing to be afraid of in the pasture. He detached Alice's lead from the halter and closed the gate behind her. It now was just Alice and the environment. The hawks circled high up in the sky where only the sparse clouds and sun lived. She gazed up to the sky and watched the hawks swoop down into the distant forests then resurface back up into the sky. As Alice slowly walked through the large pasture, she inspected the new plants and layout. This pasture had more flowers and vines which intertwined with the fence and barbed wire. Some fence posts and boards were sun-faded and cracked. Others were hanging on barely by a single nail.

Alice slowly walked around the border of the pasture until she found a large mound of dirt and rocks. Ah yes the place where Momma told her to find her anticipated pet rock. Her eyes lit up and smile started to gleam as she scavenged and searched through the large pile of rocks. The dry dust and dirt clinged to her coat as sweat beads began to drip down her body in the scorching sun. The heat did not deter her from her search for the perfect pet rock. Digging deeper and deeper, Alice began to tire out and lose her hope in finding her new best friend. Hours passed and still she kept digging. The heat began to die down as the sun lowered towards the horizon. Towards the bottom of the pile sat a perfectly smooth and round rock. Her eyes lit up with joy as she had finally found the perfect pet rock. Hatter would be his name. The rock was smooth to the touch and small. Perfect for Alice to bring along with her. Alice thought to herself "Now that I have my new best friend, I won't ever need acceptance from the other colts and foals. I have Hatter to play with. Alice raced around the pasture with her beloved Hatter and whinnied and bucked with happiness.

Alice saw her mother walking towards her and she raced over to show her mom Hatter. "Momma! Look at Hatter! I found him in the dirt pile." Momma smiled at her sweaty and dusty daughter and the new pet rock. She laughed and smiled. "Alice you must have been working really hard to be coated in sweat and dirt. Hatter is quite cute and will make a great pet rock." Momma said. They walked back to the bathing station and Alice's handler washed her and

Hatter to make him feel included. When Alice got back to her stall, she set Hatter on the small shelf below her stall window so he could see out and watch the sunset with her. Alice laid down and drifted off into a deep sleep after a long day of searching for Hatter. She went to sleep with a huge smile on her face and a warm heart. For years to come, Alice would cherish Hatter and the new rock friends she would find.