

[Where did we come from?](#)

Conversion Bureau:

A Mare's Tail

Part II

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Original Concept by Blaze

The lights were dim inside the Conversion Bureau, and not a soul could be seen inside, pony or otherwise. Violet's head against the glass, she hit it with a dull thud as she weepishly looked on inside as she stood there. Woebegone, Violet felt her knees buckle under her as she slammed against the ground, her face betraying no pain as the impact bloodied her knee. "Too late..." She breathed. Casting another forlorn glance toward the Bureau, she felt a hot anger consume her, but it fluttered out in the very second it had appeared, replacing it with feelings of helplessness. Tears flowed freely, but she made no whimper. She felt nothing.

Weighted down, Violet spun around, her head glaring down at the sidewalk around her. She wanted it to be an angry stare, but all she could muster was the intensity - none of the feelings. Passersby, Earth pony and unicorn, gazed at her with dull surprise toward the human girl, the tears on her face staining her cheeks with a salty residue. The wind blew briskly around her, the tides of Autumn chilling her slightly, but provoked no movement, a dense fog enveloping her, holding her still.

Violet didn't know how long she sat there, how many ponies past her saddened shape. She didn't care. Everyone was gone, anyway. Soon she would be to, she guessed. There was no reason to return to her home, if she could even call it that. It was more of a place where she ate, slept, and whittled away the day before repeating the process ad infinitum. She had hoped that moving to where the last vestiges of man would remove her from the creeping grip of loneliness she had succumbed to prior.

Nothing flowed for her. The only remnants of her long forgotten life had left long ago, the feeling of connection with other people... A stallion walked by, casting a strange look to the female before him. Pausing, the pony stopped. "Um... 'Scuze me miss, but uh... Aren't you going to... party like the rest of them?" He asked, every word he said a squeeze on both himself and his listener.

Snapping up, she eyed the red pony intensely, causing him to take a few steps away. "Look, I don't want any trouble from your organization, I was just asking-"

“Organization?” She echoed accusingly, before catching herself. The colt was about to bolt, that much was obvious, but his eyes scanned her face. She didn’t let herself see it much with Alfred, but ponies had gigantic eyes. Large, imposing... caring eyes. “I-I’m sorry.” She choked, her head leaning back. She was never like this. Never so much of... well, a bitch. Maybe to her friends when she wanted to elicit a laugh for an overreaction, but to yell with such- malice. “I’m so sorry...” New feelings of shame reigned inside. Who was *she*, anyway? What *right* did she have to be angry? The entire reason she was here was her fault - never choosing to become a pony like her friends. Her family. Her entire race. *What* was she?

The colt shook his head a moment, taking the picture before him in. “Whoa, whoa, hold on lil’ girl, it’s alright,” he cooed, walking alongside the human. “Calm down - I’m sorry to have assumed you were in league with them.” He started.

“*With who?!*” Violet’s voice cracked, holding on to the end of her rope. “I-I...” she paused. The last month, Alfred was her only human friend. Before that, she had been the only human remaining in her apartment complex. So she had moved somewhere more posh; more high class for humans. Humans. She kept coming to that distinction. The stallion in front of her probably wasn’t a pony for more than a year - she was sure of it, with a human hacksaw adorned on his flank. Human... Violet choked for a moment, holding a hand to her mouth. She hadn’t seen a single human in all of Albuquerque in more than three months outside of her new complex. It’s why she had left her old one. “I’m the only one...” She breathed, a panic in her voice.

“You’re not... the only one,” the colt sighed, drumming his hooves on the ground. “I’m sorry, I thought you were with some of the HLF. They’ve been having a big party on the other side of town, I don’t know much - no reason to be in that area. The Conversion Bureau closed because the last couple of humans that came through mentioned that they were the only ones they knew left, really. Well, one with funny hair seemed sad - he said there might be one more-”

“Alfred...” Violet breathed. She wasn’t stupid - it wasn’t hard to come to terms with the idea that he had wanted her to follow. Reaching into her pocket, her hand ripped out a small note that the now-pegasus had wrote her. “What all did you write...?” The colt beside her leaned over, but Violet didn’t mind. The action reminded her of the way things used to be with her friends.

Dear Violet,

Heh. Dear. I sound so... Shakespearean. Or something. Thouest Violeth, I am betrothed... um... thee Hamlet, forsooth! Crazy how things change over time. Although I guess that's why I've come to this place I am. I got a letter in the mail today - the pegasus who dropped it off said she had almost given up looking for me, seeing as she couldn't get in to my mailbox - Ol' Fred never left anyone the keys. Probably took 'em to the grave, the old bastard.

Anyway, um, so - ponies. It's why I'm writing this. I got a letter from a friend of mine today that he was finally going through with it, and wanted to let me know my parents went in for it earlier today. Apparently their old dog died and they felt like nothing was holding them back. Don't know why I didn't get a letter from them myself but - oh geez I'm rambling. It took me three hours to find a goddamn pen that still works and I'm wasting it by whining and complaining.

Look, Violet, I'm going to go become a pony. Maybe today, maybe in a week, I don't know. I'm playing this by ear. I want you to know this has nothing to do with you. Or everything. I mean... Oh, I would scratch that out but I've got nothing to lose. I don't want to go alone, so by the time you read this I'll probably be waiting, or in there already. Please, come with me. I know I'm boisterous and loud, but I'm really quite a coward when it comes to these things, but I've really come to like you, V, and I kinda want to be a pony alongside you. I guess that might be creepy, seeing as we've talked maybe three weeks, but as the last vestiges of man and woman left here in I'll Be Quirky that's not part of the HLF... I dunno, I thought we might have grown close.

So I'm going to go now. Oh shoot, the ink is running out. Um, if you don't come I'll be sad?

*-Love,
Alfred.*

Violet smirked, a tear rolling down her cheek. He could have said as much at her apartment. The hastily scrawled note dropped from her hand and unto her midriff. Even on the blank side of the page, she could see an indent of Alfred's name as he tried desperately for more ink to sign his name in by pressing hard on the paper. Her cheeks felt hot, and her stomach felt... disastrously weak, but really, she was glad to start feeling again.

“Owowow...” She complained suddenly, her hands shooting out to her knees where she had fallen on them before. By this point they had mostly clotted, her joints try and aching from the force of her earlier fall. It didn’t make them any less painful, though.

“You okay then, Violet?” The colt asked, having read part of the note, and gathering her name from it. A couple more ponies that had been passing had stopped to see the human girl conversing in what looked to be a friendly chat with a pony. “I kinda read a little bit of the note and-”

“No, I’m not.” She laughed, wiping away tears. “But maybe I could be.” She sniffed, experimenting her movement by bending her knees. They smarted, but they were functional, as expected. “Do you know where the ponies at the clinic went?”

A pastel pink unicorn, the single one from the bunch of ponies whom had gathered, moved a hoof step forward, craning her neck slightly to look at Violet better. “Why... you want to be a pony?” She asked carefully.

Violet hesitated. It’s why she was here. It’s why she left her apartment. It’s why she had been crying... right? She could feel herself slipping somewhat, so she did the only thing she felt she could do in response, and nodded her head violently. “More than anything.” She blurted out, a strained smile on her features.

Looking at the other ponies, she lifted a hoof, as if asking them to leave. Some did so, glad to have avoided a confrontation with a rogue HLF member too far from the others. “Well, my name is Twinkle. I’m a unicorn from Equestria and... well, up until this morning I was in charge of this Bureau.” She admitted, looking toward the colt next to Violet. “Do you two know each other?”

The colt shook his head, “No, I just saw her sitting here outside. She’s not from the HLF - she’s just human.” He explained, removing the last of any doubt from the pink unicorn’s face.

“For whatever that’s worth.” Violet chuckled despite herself. The girl looked both ways, not entirely wishing to lock eyes with a pony again - their eyes were too happy, too full of life, she didn’t feel like she could take much more of it so soon. She had felt devoid of it for so long. It was like taking a bit drink of water after thirsting for so long - too fast and it was painful all the way down.

Violet leaned back, her eyes closed. The city was quiet. A light fog rolled from the hills down toward her position. There was life - wonderful, moving life, but there was no familiar sound. Construction, vehicles, the angry horns and wailing sirens... there wasn't any of it. How could such a thing be real - that these ponies lived like they needed each other. It was beyond them - the base human instinct.

"Please..." She heard herself say. "If there is any way..."

Twinkle looked about, her single highlight bouncing as she did. The other ponies that had gathered and not heeded her gesture to leave peered at her with pleading eyes. Save the girl. She wanted to, Twinkle really did, but she had no means, not anymore. The sedative, the magic she wasn't capable of...

"I know a way." The colt mentioned, standing up from his haunches. A rushed whisper grew from the other ponies as he stood. "I may have been one of the firsts here, but I remember what it's like to be human." The unnamed pony started to walk around the corner, before flicking his head. "Come on, Violet, you can drive, right?"

Looking up, the girl nodded, galvanizing into action. Twinkle followed suit, intent on finding out what this red pony meant, the fog which threatened to roll down had dissipated as just as fast as it had appeared.

"I've never actually been in one of these before." Twinkle called from the bed of the pick-up truck as it cruised down the city streets at a lazy pace. The streets were clean but cracked, the air whipping by, playing with the hair of all those present. Violet relished in the idea of one last road trip, going off into lands unknown. She had never ventured far from the city limits, instead choosing to grow up and live her life in her city to her last breath.

But she had since given up the keys up to that dream. She had a new one, and her eye sharpened as her mind pulled away from the fog that had rolled into town when the Conversion Bureau's did. The road was clear in front of them - free of traffic, people, crashes - the few ponies that were walking along the roads gladly headed to the side, the loud engine of the pick-up giving more than enough forewarning.

Violet chuckled to herself as she caught Twinkle admiring the vehicle. It was clear that despite the multitudes of humans she had seen through her branch, she never much

got out to look at the large metal machines. "It's a relic of a bygone age, Twink. The 2011 Ford F-150. 6.2 L engine, Four-hundred horsepower, over four hundred pounds of torque." The beast shifted gears as Violet let the engine roar a moment, Twink looking a bit frightened as she stuck her head in from the back window. "What that means..." Violet paused, a gratifying smirk on her face. "Is power!" Violet laughed as she added an English accent to the last sentence, a detail that seemed lost on Twink, but the red colt next to her seemed to chuckle a bit. Sure there had been better cars - the American musclecars, the European Supercars... but Violet had a soft spot for the ol' red-blooded pick-up truck, her grandfather owning a ford out in the countryside of New Mexico. Memories of off-roading left Violet with a twinge of longing for her grandfather - a welcome change to the nothingness.

"I'm Rusty, by the way." The stallion called from the side seat, putting his head in from the window. The colt's amiable smile caught on to Violet, who stuck out a free hand to his hoof. Soft skin met with harried hoof as Violet took note of how strange a pony's hoof felt, and made a note to check how it felt after she had one of her own.

"Pleased to meet ya, Rusty. You can call me Violet as you have, but my friend's call me 'V'." Keeping an eye on the road, Violet's eyes caught sight of an exit towards the east. "Where we actually goin'? I don't know where other Bureau's are." She said, a faint glint in her eye.

"Well," Twink started, looking between Violet and Rusty. "I'm sure my report will hold another Bureau open for at least a little while longer. Closest one is in..." She paused, tilting her head. "Colorado Springs, I think."

"Colorado Springs! Hey, my cousin just went in yesterday, finally." Rusty interrupted, catching sight of Violet's expression as Twinkle was talking. "Apparently a lot of folks flow to that one rather 'n local ones for the scenic trip to take before turnin' into ponies. My cuz said that he was the third one that day. Sounded pretty excited on the phone." There was a pause as the red stallion looked out the window. "Didn't know that was the closest open Bureau around out here. This is gonna be a long trip."

Violet's expression molded into something between bliss and apprehension, her mind wallowing in the details of being with... sentients of like mind. Checking her fuel guage, Violet spun unto the entrance toward Colorado Springs. Looking back, she raised an eyebrow toward Twinkle. "So, is this alright? You know, for you to just up and road trip like this?" Violet asked, shrugging her shoulder a bit.

“Oh, yes, like I said, my report explained everything.” Twink said, a smile on her face.

“But... shouldn’t you have waited, for you know, permission? You said you helped run the Albuquerque Bureau. Aren’t you... important?”

Twinkle shook her head, her hair sparkling in the sun. Violet had made mental note to ignore too much about the pony, but was finding the empty road on the old expressway to be lacking. The slight bubblegum smell, the shimmering mane... did all ponies really look so beautiful? Why had she waited? Wh-

“Eyes on the road, V.” Rusty called. “I’m excited to ride in my truck again for the first time in a *long* while, but I’d rather you keep it intact until Colorado Springs.” He stated calmly, staring out the window.

“Can do, Red.” Violet smirked, deciding on her pet name for the red horse. Rusty bleated in displeasure at the simplicity, but said no more.

For a good while Violet and her assorted ponies merely enjoyed the view of Albuquerque go by, Rusty enjoying the sight of the thousands of pegasi which littered the skies, stretching their wings, many learning how to do tricks and really stretch their limits.

Twinkle, on the other hand, had retreated to the back of the truck bed, enjoying the wind in her mane. She absolutely adored the sights of the human city, even if it belonged to the ponies now. “Such architecture!” She breathed, the howling winds around her stealing her sounds. While she had lived here for the past year, Twinkle was never one to get out much. Cruising down the expressway at a cool and dangerous eighty miles per hour, she picked herself up, her horn glowing slightly as she approached the cabin. Sticking her head through the back window, she looked between the two a moment before smiling. “So, what kind of pony do you want to be, Violet?”

The human in question put a relaxed hand on her chin as she gave the idea mild thought. “I don’t really care, although a pegasi would be neat. To fly all day...” She breathed in deep, but shook her head. “I’d be fine with being a bare bones pony though, like Red here.” She teased, causing the pony to smirk.

“Bare bones, eh? This bare bones pony could buck you to next week and back!” He challenged, which only got a laugh from Violet.

“Not in this car, you won’t, unless you want to go careening out of control.” She warned. Looking about the cabin, Violet had decided the next boredom killer on her to do list was the magic of snooping. However, all she could find from a few casual glances was general repair work - some tools, rope, twine... it reminded her of her grandpa’s old set of wheels, although a little cleaner and didn’t smell of two year old french fries. “Say Red, what’d you do for a living?”

Rusty looked annoyed for a moment, but let it pass. “Pre-pony is the same as newfoal. I work on building things. The scale has shrunk, obviously, and a lot of what I do gets sent to Equestria or more rural areas.” Violet pursed her lips, obviously unamused with the answer, but let it slide. There were other things she could ask.

“So why you letting me take your truck? Or why are you coming along? This all seemed rather sudden - Twink here not included. Y’know, you still baffle me, Twink.” Violet accused, a small smile playing on her lips. The unicorn shrugged slightly as she turned to Rusty, who looked almost relieved that the attention had diverted off of him - until Violet brought it back.

“Well, I told you my cousin went in recently. I wanna be there for him when he gets himself a new pair of legs.” Rusty commented, before chuckling. “Well, a pair of a pair of legs.” Quite pleased with himself, the red stallion turned his head back out the window. “Sure beats walking there, not a whole lot of ponies are into retrofitting vehicles, *as you can see*. Ain’t a job anymore, V, working on cars. It’s a passion. That’s somethin’ you learn real quick when you go pony - not a whole lot is expected of you and everypony is fine with that. Stick to what’s on your flank and you’ll find your way.” Rusty tilted his head expertly, checking on the handsaw that adorned his flank. “Hear it’s even easier in Equestria.” He added, continuing his thought.

“Sounds like a perfect world, to me.” Violet muttered, a bit too darkly for Twink’s taste.

“And what is wrong with a little perfection, Violet? Everypony is discovering who they are, what they love, and pursuing it... I don’t understand where it could go wrong.” She laughed. Her attitude, while helpful, was wearing a bit thin. Sunshine and rainbows. Violet calmed down though, less she return to the fog she was in.

“N-nothing’s wrong with it. Just sounds too good to be true.” Violet stammered, wishing to end the train of thought. “Remember the position I was in, okay? So drop it.”

“Hold on there, V, slow down!”

“Hold on? What do you mean hold on? That I can’t be a littl-”

“No! *I mean slow the hell down!*” Rusty yelled, causing Violet to look forward. A line of cars, trucks, and semi’s were lined up side by side and they were bearing on them. Slamming on the breaks, the pickup stopped hard, the powerful truck coming to a screeching halt. The glow around Twink increased tenfold as her spell took effect, the cause for her glowing horn becoming clear as all three around the vehicle felt themselves come to a comfortable halt. “Cheese ‘n Rice, V! Watch where you’re goin’ next time!”

Violet was trying to catch her breath from the near fatal accident, but Twinkle’s spell had taken most of the physical complications out of the equation. “I’m sorry! I didn’t think I needed to pay much attention! Twink! Are you okay?” Violet spun around to see the tired looking unicorn wink at her. She was panting heavily, but looked fine for what she had pulled off so quickly. “Twink... Thank you.”

“No problem...” Twink breathed slowly, closing her eyes.

Violet spun around in her chair, slamming the sides of the wheel in her hands. “Now just what kind of uncultured baboon would set up a road block in the middle of the goddamn expressway!?” Violet shouted, looking over the vehicles with a critical eye. However, what adorned their vision before them caused the three travelers to collectively start praying.

There, adorned crudely in paint on the side of a semi, was the logo of the Human Liberation Front.