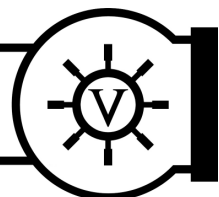


Who Makes the Wind Blow?

Church

PONY FICTION VAULT



The clouds can be located in the sky. It has been that way for as long as I can remember, which is approximately eleven years now. Every day I open my window, I can see them floating on an endless ocean of a blue watercolor, bobbing in that calm sea. I've always wondered what they felt like. Would they be soft to the touch, like a feathery pillow? Would my hoof pass through them as if there were nothing there? Would they surround me and suffocate me if I were to pass through them? I don't know. I've always felt a certain longing to discover the sensation for myself, but I don't have any pegasus friends to assist me in that respect. Actually, I can go as far as to say that I don't know what friends are. The word is foreign to me, just like those clouds.

I really want one of those clouds.

Do you think that the clouds could one day roll across the ground with the rest of us earth ponies? If so, do you think the pegasi would let me keep one? I would promise to take good care of it, feed and water it properly. Do clouds need food and water? What would clouds eat, if anything? I don't know. I suppose that I should brush up on my cloud owning. My mother always told me that owning a pet was difficult, so I never had one. But I think that having a cloud for a pet would be a different story entirely. It won't bother you when you don't want to be bothered. It won't interrupt you when you're trying to sleep. It's very quiet. It's the perfect fit for me.

Perhaps one day I will have a cloud. I certainly hope that one day I can have one, for if not, my journal of exactly 568 names to name a cloud will not be put to good use. Could you imagine a worse fate? The thought of it freezes my blood and sends chills through my body. If anything, I would at least like to meet one, so that I may give it a proper name. That is, as long as it does not already have one. Do clouds come with names? What are their names like? I don't know.

In any sense, for now, owning a cloud will be a part of my imagination, as I will be forever shackled to the ground. These hooves are made for walking, and that's just what they'll do.

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Today's weather is very nice. It is approximately 73 degrees outside, not humid and not chilly. Balmy, I'd say. There is a slight breeze coming out of the northwest, I can only faintly feel it caressing my mane. Perhaps most importantly, it is sunny and dry. My hooves feel sweet and lightweight as I swiftly trot down the street, like I could be walking on air. I wish. My imagination gets the best of me, and I glance up at the sky as if I were drifting through it.

There are only two clouds that obstruct my view of the heavens. I have decided their names are Carter and Kip.

This lovely day had obviously not gone unnoticed by the inhabitants of the place I live, a place called Ponyville. I recognize a lot of familiar faces along my way, they are refreshed and giddy, ecstatic to be out in the open air. It is contagious. I feel the corners of my mouth curve, twisting to form that which is most commonly referred to as a smile. I do not know these ponies very well, but I can't help myself from feeling a bit more marvelous as I pass them. Something about them just electrifies the air, and elevates me to a better state of mind. They appear whimsical and off, but I feel that is only appropriate.

I pass those ponies with the stellar grins on their faces. They do not wave to me. I do not wave back. They are like bees to me, they will not bother me if I do not bother them. I find that to be a good thing. It helps me to feel more secure. I may still enjoy their company from a distance, no?

I trot down the street, passing the familiar faces passing me by. I am foolishly grinning from ear to ear, and my exuberance turns a lot of the others features from content to clueless. I do not care. I do not know them. The smell of lilacs lingers in the air, and I inhale the scent vigorously. I pass the tree that wears the scent, and I thank him for sharing it with us. He responds by shaking his branches at me in the gentle breeze. My smile grows wider. I continue to trot down the street.

Carter and Kip have since been moved by a couple of pegasi ponies that I do not know the names of. I do, however, know one thing. They are very lucky ponies.

As the scenery of Ponyville changes from the wonderful flora to the houses that appear alien to me, I realize that I do not know where I am going. I mean, I never do, but on this day I have just now realized it. I still trot by, sidestepping those familiar faces, grinning like a madpony. There is no reason to feel down today. It is beautiful outside. I feel alive. The town pays little attention to me as I knife through it, and I prefer it that way. It takes a lot of pressure off of me to know that nothing is expected of me. I would not trade it in for the world.

I make my way to the edge of town, returning once again to the plantlife and dusty roads that surround the quaint community. I do not know how long I have trotted for. I feel as though that is about as pointless as counting my hoofsteps. I will return home in due time, and only when I am ready. I had made up my mind a long time beforehoof that this

would be an extended trot today, the weather is just too gorgeous. I needlessly swish my lavender mane back and forth. No one is around to watch.

I keep trotting up the dusty road. There is a pegasus pony that dwells near the end of it, in a cute little cottage that I had been jealous of since moving here. Of the few ponies that I know the names of in this town, I know hers. Her name is Fluttershy. She is the bearer of one of the Elements of Harmony. I forget which one. I have not met her. I do not intend to. I have heard that she is very shy. I do not know what 'shy' means, but I can't imagine it to be something worth finding out. I will try to avoid her at all costs. I continue up the road.

The fauna tends to spring up out of nowhere whenever I come down this way. At first, it was unsettling to watch hundreds of tiny eyes follow me whenever I came down this path in the past. Now, I have grown accustomed to seeing them. I know that Fluttershy has a sort of relationship with these creatures. I find it to be weird. Animals are not like clouds. I do not know how I could become so close to something like a butterfly. They are graceful and all, but it pales in comparison to that of a cloud. Butterflies seem too... fragile.

I keep trotting. Fluttershy's cottage is in plain view now. Her abode seems so inviting and friendly, I feel as though I could be tricked into visiting. I always think better of it. I've read the old mare's tales, and I do not want to be eaten. The pony that lives behind those doors is very shy. It is better to be safe than sorry.

I can't help but notice the flora that surrounds the area of her home. It is always by far the most breathtaking the town has to offer. There are daisies and roses and marigolds and tulips aplenty. Really just a plethora of all different kinds of flowers. I can never part my gaze from them. I find it hard not to pluck a few from their roots and stick them in my mane. I almost always do. They bounce around jubilantly in my hair whenever I do, as I toss my mane around so that I may keep them entertained. I probably look weird. I don't care.

Today I decided that I would not pick from the patch of assorted flowers. Instead, I would enjoy them where they grew. I bent down to get a whiff of one of the tulips sticking up from the dirt. He was the one that was growing the tallest, and was craving the most attention. I gave him that attention. It was sort of one of those "I'll scratch your back if you scratch mine" things. The smell was lovely. I let out a relaxed sigh. Never once had I not felt revitalized after venturing down this road. This was my favorite place to be, as far as being on the ground goes.

To my surprise, a small bunny rabbit approached me from behind. I caught sight of him out of the corner of my eye, as he came around and stood next to me, his gaze on the same flower that I had been sniffing. He stared at me, his eyes were like scrawny black holes. It was frightening. Then, out of the blue, he began to stamp his foot at the ground, as if he wanted something. I didn't know what he wanted. I did not know what this rabbit was doing here, or why he had decided to approach me, but I thought it best to get out of his way. Suddenly, a voice piped up from behind me.

"Oh, Angel, if this mare wants to have the flower, then she can have it. They're for everypony."

I froze. I was a block of ice. I could have easily sunk the Titanic. Unfortunately, I was not invisible.

"Oh, gosh, I'm so sorry..." the voice continued from behind me, "I didn't mean to startle you. Are you all right?"

My mind screamed at me, telling me to hightail it out of there, but my hooves could not complete the motions necessary. I just wanted to fade away, or to leap into a hole in reality that I could escape through. Nothing happened. My only hope seemed to be that she would grow bored and pass me by.

"I'm terribly sorry, I understand if you want to be alone," she said. There was a pause that made my heart jump up and flutter away. "Angel, let's go. I don't think that she wants to be bothered."

I'm not sure why, but she seemed to be talking to the bunny, as he responded by stomping his foot into the dirt twice and then strictly pointing to the flower of my fancy.

"No, no Angel. We couldn't. That would be wrong of us."

Her words were dangerously close. I could hear her hoofsteps shuffling toward me. My eyes started to twitch. I grew shaky. My heart raced. I started to sweat. What was she going to do? *Please leave! Please leave!*

She parked herself right next to me, leaning down to face the bunny... Angel was apparently his name. I saw her out of the corner of my eye. The shy one. The element bearer. The one I should have avoided at all costs. She was right here.

I was doomed.

"Angel, please," she said aside to the bunny, "we should leave her be." I saw her glance at me in my peripheral vision. Her cheeks suddenly tinted themselves a rosy hue.

The bunny, Angel, didn't comply to Fluttershy's commands. I decided that the bunny was evil. He grabbed the shy pony by the chin and directed her gaze upward, pointing at something in the air.

"A cloud?" Fluttershy asked, apparently confused. While she was distracted, I furtively adjusted my gaze upward. Sure enough there was a cloud that had been placed overhead. "What about it?"

I don't know what happened next, I was staring at the cloud. I heard some impatient foot stomping.

"Oh, no, we couldn't do that..." Fluttershy said, as if she understood the bunny (Angel). I knew they must have been cooking up some sort of dastardly plan to devour me. Is that what shy people did? Did they eat you? I don't know. I didn't really want to find out.

I dared myself to glance back at the shy pony. I did so, and I must have caught her looking at me.

Our eyes locked for that brief moment.

We both turned away upon the realization.

I died a little bit inside.

"Angel, please, let's go..." Fluttershy whispered to the bunny. She appeared to be very timid, I'm not sure why.

The bunny didn't budge.

"Fine, I'll do it..." Fluttershy stammered. I could see her turn to me, and I started to panic. I needed to get out of here. She dispersed her gaze from my face.

"Excuse me, b-but if we could just have –"

"Please don't eat me!" I blurted out.

By Celestia, what have I done!?

The shy pony shrieked and stumbled backward. Why? I don't know. I must have caught her off guard. I suddenly felt like a hero.

Fluttershy stared at me, wide-eyed. She blinked those wary eyelashes a few times. I didn't know whether to run at that point or just close my eyes and pray I disappear.

"Eat you?" Fluttershy said amidst startled breaths. "Why would I, um, eat you?"

I was not expecting to hear that.

I gathered up the courage to face her. My head deliberately creaked its way around until I had found her. I gulped. It looked as though she did as well. Why? I don't know.

"Really?" I croaked out, a lump lodging itself in my throat.

The shy pony turned her gaze down to the dirt before her hooves. "Oh, yes, um... I would never do that."

I felt slightly relieved. I knew that I couldn't soften up too much though, as this pony was very shy. I wish I knew what that meant.

"Good," was all that I mustered out.

We fell into an eerie silence. I didn't know what to do. I remembered the cloud that was floating around our heads. I knew that I was dealing with a very shy pony... but she was also a very shy *pegasus*.

Oh no no. I could not let my interest get the best of me now.

Fluttershy was rocking back and forth to some sort of invisible music. I wondered what she was listening to.

"I, um, we..." Fluttershy started. She trailed off as she stole momentary glances up at me. She began to back away. "We should, um, go now."

"Have you ever met a cloud?" I asked before my brain could tell me not to. I may as well have just started to dig my own grave right now. What was I thinking?

Fluttershy stopped and looked at me. She looked at me through those piercing blue eyes. They felt like daggers.

"Y-yes... yes I have," the shy pony replied.

I couldn't stop myself. "What are they like?" I asked. I was throwing myself off the deep end now. This was my own assisted suicide.

Fluttershy let out a deep breath. "They're... nice."

That was it? They were nice? I felt insulted. But again, I was dealing with a shy pony. However, she had not killed me yet.

I. Don't. Know.

"Oh," I stammered, a little bit shell-shocked. "Well... I like them. I would like to keep one as a pet one day."

Fluttershy smiled. *She smiled.*

"Oh, really? Well I've never heard of somepony keeping a cloud for, oh, um... nevermind." She shied away from the end of the sentence. She scraped her hoof at the dirt.

Suddenly, I had no idea why this pony was referred to as being very shy. She seemed perfectly normal to me. I decided to push the envelope.

"Yes, but I never got to meet one before..."

Fluttershy looked at me strangely, as if I were some sort of extra terrestrial bug. Maybe saying that was a bad idea. I don't know. We stood at a stand still for some time. Then, she suddenly smiled again (that's right, again!), and she cheerfully shot up to her full height.

"Um, do you want to?"

My heart exploded. My mind buzzed with anticipation and an overwhelming sense of anxiety. Words swam through my head, and every single one of those words was a manic **YES!**

I stood silent in front of Fluttershy. I'm pretty sure that she could hear my heart beating.

"Um, I think that's a yes," she said.

Fluttershy ascended into the air, heading straight for the cloud above. I had forgotten about the bunny. The bunny (Angel) glowered at me as Fluttershy retrieved the cloud. I still didn't understand his presence. I didn't care. Fluttershy was bringing me a cloud. A *cloud!* No, she wasn't just bringing me that. She was bringing me my dreams. She was bringing me my desires. She was bringing me everything.

I think I loved her.

Fluttershy lowered the cloud down. She brought it back over to us, settling it down just out of hoof's reach. It hovered right over Angel, who looked terribly displeased with the matter.

I. Didn't. Care.

This was it. Right here. My cloud was sitting right in front of me, brought to me by the kindest, gentlest, shiest soul in all Equestria, I was pretty sure of it.

"Myriad..." I uttered, completely stupefied by this moment.

"Excuse me?" Fluttershy asked.

"The name of the..." I trailed off, still caught up in the moment. I just shook my head.

Fluttershy only blinked. "Well, um, go ahead."

I looked at her. My eyes asked, *Really? Can I? Can I?*

Fluttershy smiled sweetly and nodded.

My grin must have stretched halfway across the universe. I approached the cloud slowly, savoring every moment that I had to be close to it, to feel its presence, to let it feel mine. Was I beating around the bush? I don't know. I didn't care. I was so close that I could just reach out and –

touch it...

I ran my hoof through it. *I was running my hoof through it!* It was everything that I had ever dreamed it would be and more. It felt like a ghostly vapor, it was cool and tingly to the touch, I just wanted to dive into it. It was invigorating. It was enlightening. I could die, right here, right in this mare's grasp and life would be complete. Life was complete. Life was complete? Hm. A thought suddenly hit me. What was I to do now? I had no

idea. All my life, I had waited for this moment. Now it was here. Don't get me wrong, I was so excited! But, sooner or later, it had to be over. Was there more to life?

I suddenly sort of blanched out. What was I going to do?

"Something wrong?" Fluttershy asked, reading the expression on my face. I was forever in her debt, yet I wasn't showing it. Yes, something was wrong.

"I-I just..." I didn't know what to say. "Is there more?"

Fluttershy looked puzzled. "What do you mean? Isn't this what you wanted?"

I must have looked lost as well. "Um, you see..." the words got choked up in my throat, "I... I've waited my whole life for this." I paused, searching the ground, "Just... what next?"

Fluttershy smiled that innocent smile again, the one that pulled at your heartstrings and made it skip. She didn't strike me as the type of pony that would have the perfect thing to say, but what she was about to tell me would definitely leave me thinking.

"Who makes the wind blow? Why is the sky blue?" she said to me. I just wanted to hug her for some odd reason. "Perhaps we'll never know." She gazed at me through those perfect blue eyes, and the world was a much better place. "You have right now... And right now, you have a cloud that is sitting here and waiting for you to properly meet it."