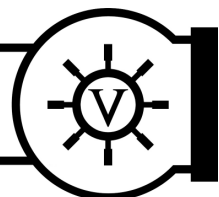


# Firebird

Helljumper117

PONY FICTION VAULT



When I found you, your flames were dim. You had not burned for long, and you were in danger of going out for good. The late winter has never been a friend of warmth and fire, especially to a creature born of fire, and was not about to make an exception for you.

Had it been a few more minutes, the small patch of ground that sucked away at your warmth would have soon become just another frozen patch of snow and ice.

But then I found you.

The details are sketchy and disoriented, but I remember what is important.

I brought you home, fed you, gave you a place to call home. Your flame was rekindled, though it still remained low for some time.

Fire can grow quickly, however, and yours was gathering much strength. In what now seems like mere heartbeats rather than years, you burned brighter until you were more brilliant than a torch and then blazed into your full glory.

As time went on I would find you staring out the window, as if longing for something. You belong in the sky and were aching to spread your wings and leave the ground. It confused me at first, why you did not simply fly off on your own, taking to the sky as you so desired. Then it dawned on me.

You did not know how. When I found you, you were barely a hatchling. You had no one to teach you the pure joy of flight. I couldn't believe that I had never thought about it before. Needless to say, I was quick to fix this problem.

You stumbled and fell many times in trying to learn what came so naturally to me, but you were not one to be beaten. With determination blazing in your eyes, you soon took to the sky with powerful strokes from your wings that would put many a pegasus to shame.

In my vainer years I would sometimes stand and sigh to myself, "Surely there is no pony so magnificent as I."

Not a pony, nor even one of the few remaining alicorns like me, but you would prove me wrong.

Any who looked upon you could stare for hours, captivated by your fire. It amazes me still, the brilliance that followed you across the sky wherever you flew.

From that moment on we would often take to the sky together, allowing an escape from the busy venues of royal life and the conflicts that I had to deal with on a daily basis. We never flew anywhere in particular, just wherever our wings and the air currents would carry us.

I had felt that I had a new friend. It was fun. It was enjoyable. It was peaceful. For a while, at least.

Then you began to dim.

It happened at the worst time possible.

My dear sister was becoming more and more distant. Her desire for love and admiration blinded her into seeing everyone as her enemy. She would even look at you as though you had replaced her.

And at the same time, you became distant in your own way. I noticed, but was overtaken with helplessness of the situation with my sister.

Your fire weakened by the day until you were hardly a shadow of your former self.

Then, you flickered into darkness.

As I dragged into my bedroom, dejected and broken at the loss of my sister, I saw that you were gone. I called your name, searching all around, avoiding a harsh truth. Finally, I looked upon a pile of ash, the base form for all living things, and just collapsed then and there.

How long I laid there, mourning over the loss of my only sister and you, my best friend, I do not recall.

But soon I felt a compassionate prodding that brought me back to reality.

You, wrapped in your former glory, stayed by my side. You defied death and returned to me.

Little was known of your species at the time, and the belief that you could die and rise again from the ashes was considered a tale for fillies.

Was your death painful? Was it painful to return? Did you have a choice to stay in the mysterious beyond, safe from the tragedies that envelop so much of our existence?

Whatever you experienced in your death, your return filled me with hope and a new strength that would guide me through the next thousand winters and springs.

The process would begin its painful repetition many times.

Now that I think about it, you would begin to die when I was on the verge of giving up. Which, to be honest, happened many times. The curse of living so long was too much for me to bear alone.

But you were there to give me hope every time. You would die the slow and painful process of death, but rise again anew each time. For so many lifetimes you did as such, rising more brilliantly than before.

Sometimes I would wonder if this was fair to you. Surely you could simply not return if you wished, and avoid the cycle, be free of the pain. It made me feel so selfish that you would be so loyal.

But, as the clever bird that you are, you put my thoughts to rest.

This memory brings a smile to my face every time I think of it.

When your time was drawing close once more, you poked fun at death. The bearer of kindness, Fluttershy was her name, thought you needed help and took you into her care. In reality, you used to opportunity to turn your experience into a joke. I was shocked that you would do such a thing at first, but I realized that it was your way of saying you were willing to stay.

It was your way of saying you were happy to stay, and remain as my friend.

Then so many years that I do not dare attempt to recall go by...

Many things happened. The world changed around us.

Eventually, the world died around us. Even Luna lost her connection with the moon and moved on, leaving only the two of us behind.

And so we lingered, only the two of us left in a long-dead world.

And now, all these decades beyond anyone or anything else, your flames have been blown out by the winds of death once more. This time, you will not rise to this world. But it is for the best. For now I feel my own flame dying alongside the dimming fires of the

sun. Soon I will join you in the ash from which we all came. Eternity, it seems, is at its final end.

No.

This isn't the end.

You will rise again.

We will both rise again.

And when we do... We will fly once more together in an endless sky. The flames of an eternity and friendship everlasting will burn through the sky.

Forever.