

A FArm at Hand

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Jen, a new girl, moves to Mineral Town. New places, New people, will she be able to handle all the problems that come her way?

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1 - A Farm at Hand

When I dreamt of a small place all to my own, I never once realized it would turn out like this. Six months ago my grandfather died, leaving me, his only grandchild, all his belongings. Me, still being young of age, thought this meant money and objects. But I was wrong. My grandfather had left me his farm. This place was no stranger to me, I had just about grown up in the fields of Kanter Ranch, but the idea still came as a shock to me. But my grandfather did not stop there. Not only did he leave me his land, but also he left me a dog, one horse, five cows, three goats, four sheep, and ten chickens along with it.

My parent thought of it as a good opportunity for me, not to mention get me out of their house. But me, I disagreed. Let me explain why I did not agree. I was a seventeen year old girl, who had lived in the city her whole life, and had no idea how to run a farm, other than the quick lessons that my grandfather gave me when I came to visit him. But my parents had made up their minds; I was going.

Three weeks later, I was there. I dropped all my bags in the dark room of my grandpa's cabin. I looked around at my new home. There was a bed, a dresser, and small chest, a refrigerator, a table, and a fireplace.

"Welcome home," I said to myself, trying to smile. But no matter how hard I tried, I could not imagine this shack as home. I put all my clothes in the small dresser and lay down on the bed. "What am I going to do?" I asked myself. Just then I heard someone calling my name from outside. I got up and opened the door. It was an older man, short in height, and plump in size.

"May I help you?" I asked him.

"Why yes! Do you know a young lad named Jay? He should have arrived today." He asked me, looking around for someone.

"Yes... I am Jay," I replied hesitantly.

"YOU?! I'm sorry, that was rude, I just imagined Jay being a young man, not a well... young woman," He replied.

"It's okay, the name does kind of throw you off. My name is Genevieve, Jay for short. And who are you?" I asked the plump man.

"I am the mayor of this fine town of Mineral. And I already know who you are so let's get down to business," He said and bulled out a stack of papers.

"Business?" I asked, "what business?"

"Well if you are going to take over this farm, you are going to have to know the basics about the town, the places, the tools, and even the animals," He replied.

“Okay, I’m ready... I guess,” and the mayor told me everything I needed to know... for two hours! After he left I went back inside the house.

“This is so unfair...” I cried to myself. “Now that I have to stay here, I have so much work to do! Oh, that reminds me. I have to take care of all of grandpa’s animals.” I stood up and looked around the room. “Now let’s see. I need a brush,” I said to myself.

I walked over to the chest in the corner of the room and opened it up. Inside there were many tools including a sickle, a hammer, a hoe, an axe, a small watering can, a brush, clippers, and a milker.

“Perfect!” I said as I grabbed the brush, clippers, and milker and stuffed them in the rucksack that was lying on the bed. “How rustic can you get?” I mumbled to myself and walked outside.

It was already mid-morning and the sun was brightly shining over grandpa’s fields. His fields weren’t much to look at though. All the crops had withered up and died, and there were weeds and rocks and stumps all over the place.

“I have a lot of work to do,” I said to myself, and continued on toward the barn.

When I got there I slid open the barn door and peered inside. It was pitch black, but I could still make out the whites of the eyes of the frightened animals. I set my rucksack down inside, and stumbled my way around until I found a light switch.

“Let there be light” I said and flicked on the switch. The whole barn lit up revealing the twelve animals that were inside. I walked around the stalls and looked at all the names of my grandpa’s beloved animals.

“Okay let’s see... first thing is too feed them” I said to myself, “But WHAT do I feed them?” I walked around until I found a fodder feeder. I grabbed a pile of fodder and started to even it out among the animals. I continued in that manner including brushing them, clipping the sheep, and milking the goats and cows. The milk that I had collected was placed in the shipping bins just as the mayor had told me.

“Well that wasn’t so hard,” I said with content and walked out of the barn. Next were the chickens. I walked to the chicken coop and carefully squeezed my way inside. All the chickens were peacefully sitting in their nests, so I slowly went around and gathered the eggs. Five of them I placed in the shipping bin, and the other five I keep for food. When I finished there, and squeezed myself back outside and headed toward the stable.

I looked inside and saw the most beautiful sight I had ever seen. Grandpa’s horse was a rich chestnut color with an off-white mane and tale. Her eyes were bright blue, and she had a curious expression on her face. I looked at the nametag.

“Epona” I said, “What a beautiful name.” I picked up some fodder and laid it in her stall. I knew it was dangerous to approach an unknown horse, but I couldn’t help it. I slowly opened the gate latch and led Epona out of the stall. All of a sudden her eyes grew wide and she ripped the halter from my hands.

She started to buck, but I was so scared that I couldn’t move. The wild horse reared back and let out a

load shrill, and just when the horse was about to come down on my small body, I heard a voice.

“Watch out!” it called and I felt something push me out of the way. Then I blacked out.

2 - Blonde Hair and Green Eyes

When I opened my eyes I was no longer in the stable. I was back inside the small cottage, lying on the bed. It was still hard to open my eyes because of the blinding light all around me. I pushed myself up and looked around. There was nobody there. I pulled together the strength to stand up. My head was throbbing, but I was determined to find out how I got there.

I slowly opened the door and looked outside. Then I saw him. Outside in the rugged fields there was a boy not that much older than me. His hair was a brown and golden color, and spiked naturally. He was riding Epona! How had he tamed her so quickly? Then he spotted me.

The boy slowly dismounted the horse and whispered something into her ear. The horse retreated back to the stable and the boy walked toward me.

“Hey,” I said nervously, “Are you the one who saved me?”

“I wouldn’t say saved... but if you want to think of it that way, sure,” He replied with a gorgeous smile.

“Well I greatly appreciate it. But I have one question. How did I get to the house?” I asked.

“I carried you,” the boy replied blushing. I also felt my face get warm.

Well then... umm... what is your name?” I asked, still blushing.

“Cliff,” He replied, “And may I ask what your name is?”

“My name is Jay... oh sorry... um... Genevieve,” I replied stumbling over my own words.

“Can’t decide on your own name?” He said with a grin, “How about Jay?”

“That’s good,” I said, still feeling stupid about the name mix up.

“Well it’s nice to meet you Jay. When did you get to the farm?” He asked walking toward the house.

“I just arrived this morning,” I replied, following him back to the house, “I’m still a little bit new at all this, I don’t even know where to start.”

“Well, how about I help you. I’m actually new here to, so don’t feel alone,” He smiled. “Well I think the first thing to do is take care of the animals.”

“Already done,” I replied confidently.

“Okay then, how about we start to clear away that field,” He said and walked over to the toolbox inside the small room.

"We?" I asked. "You really don't have to help me, after all it's not your problem. I don't have any money to pay you," I said, but secretly I wanted him to stay and help.

"No, it's fine, I'll be glad to help," He replied looking straight into my eyes. His eyes were a gorgeous green that made my heart melt. All I could do was smile. Cliff started to dig through the tool chest, and pulled out a sickle, an ax, and a hammer.

"Here," he said, handing me the sickle. It was heavier than I thought it would be, but I was ready. "Follow me," he called over his shoulder as he walked outside. I grabbed my rucksack and followed him out into the field.

"First thing we need to do is clear away all the weed and stumps," He said to me. "You do know how to use that thing?" he asked me with a concerned look on his face.

"Of course I do," I said confidently and gave a good whack at the weed in front of me. It came perfectly off and landed at my feet. "My grandfather taught me a few things the last time I came to visit. Suddenly Cliff got this weird puzzled look on his face, but turned away before I could understand it.

"Well I guess he did. Okay how about you start hacking away at those weeds, and I'll start to clear away these stumps and rocks," he said.

"Sounds like a plan," I smiled in return. Both he and I went separate ways and started to clear away at my field. All these thoughts were running through my head about him, they I couldn't stop. Every so often I would turn and look at him. His golden hair dangling in his face as he chopped away, and his green eyes seeming to shine.

When we finished we met back at the house, and we looked over the work we had done.

"I think we did good," he said looking straight at me. As I looked back, I could see small beads of sweat running down his face.

"I couldn't have said it better myself," I returned in reply. It was almost sunset.

"Thank you so much for your help!" I said to him gratefully.

"It was nothing," he replied, rubbing his hand along the back of his neck. "You know, there is still work to be done.

"Yeah... I know... it's a never-ending job, as my grandfather used to tell me. I'm still so lost as to what to do next," I said and plopped down on the bench next to the house. "There is so much to be done."

"Don't worry... I'll help you," He said. I looked up into his smiling face, and knew it was going to be just fine.

"Thanks..." was all I could say.

“Tell you what... I’ll stop by tomorrow to help you plant some crops,” He said holding out his hand.

“You are more than generous,” I replied taking his hand in mine. He pulled me to my feet and handed me the ax.

“See you tomorrow?” He asked.

“I can’t wait,” And at that he left my farm. I looked around. Everything was so peaceful here. All of a sudden I heard a whimper at my feet. I looked down and saw a small puppy.

“Hello there,” I said to it. “You must be my grandfathers dog.” I looked down at the small puppy, searching for a nametag. It didn’t have one. I bent over and picked him up.

“Well I guess this means I’m going to have to name you. Let’s see,” I said to myself. I looked at the puppy once more and noticed that it had one brown eye, and the other was a greenish-blue.

“I’m going to name you Skop, after a brave wolf in a book I once read,” I said smiling at the little dog. I barked in return. I took the small dog inside and placed him on my bed. I changed into pajamas, and slipped into the covers of my grandfather’s stiff bed. Skop leapt up by my side and curled up in my arms. I closed my eyes, just waiting for the hours to pass until I would see Cliff again.

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