

“Everyone Needs an Ally”

In the hall between the lockers, she flung her reply over her shoulder with her hair. Her words stung me like a slap. I held back all day — I didn't cry — until I could slam the car door and drive out of the parking lot after school. I let tears leak from the corners of my eyes until my tires hit the farm's gravel lane.

His head popped up from the grass when he heard my car. My heart lifted when he walked toward me.

He waited for me by the gate. Sun gleamed on his shoulders. I pulled a chunk of carrot from my pocket, cupping my hand to his tender muzzle. His breath warmed my palm. His whiskers brushed my wrist. He blinked long lashes over the agate of his brown eyes.

I forgot every word she said.

- Susan Thornton Hobby

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