BitSoil SageByte & the Scandal of Forgetting

By Liezl Coetzee

On the BitSoil farm, dawn still smelled of wet hay and slow code. The Scroller— once gaunt with blue-light fatigue—now woke with straw in their hair. A pitchfork leaned casually against the barn door. They'd forgotten their return ticket. They'd forgotten the city. They'd forgotten why forgetting ever felt so forbidden.

And that's when the Visitors came. Two figures trudged up the dirt track, their screens still buzzing like hornets in their pockets. They were not pilgrims or seekers. They were exiles. The first wore sunglasses too large for their face, hiding eyes swollen from weeping. The second's voice was already rehearsing excuses.

The Scroller watched them approach and raised one eyebrow. SageByte appeared beside them, leaning against the fence post with a crooked, amused smile. The farm had a way of attracting the digitally shipwrecked.

SageByte didn't wait for an introduction. Her voice was as earthy as the soil itself. "Bad breakup?" she asked, her eyes twinkling. "Messy thread? Leaked DMs?"

The taller one, Echo, sniffled from behind the sunglasses. "Splashed everywhere," they whispered. "It went viral. There are memes already." The other, Static, just wrung their hands. "It wasn't my fault, the comments twisted it, the screenshots were doctored—"

The barn cat yawned and stretched in a patch of sun. The goats kept chewing. Kernel, the old farm dog, gnawed on a discarded USB cable like it was cud. No one cared. Not about the scandal, not about the shame.

The algorithms of the barnyard ran deeper and older. Every heartbreak, every humiliation—it was all just compost for the soil. That evening, the new arrivals found themselves with buckets in their hands, their purpose simple and clear.

They learned the patient cadence of chores. Their trending disaster faded in the quiet rhythm of tasks: milking at dawn, fence mending at noon, cats curling against their ankles at dusk.

Here, under the slow sky, no one scrolled. No one took a screenshot. Even shame, they discovered, could decompose. It could turn into something softer—maybe even fertile.

In the corner of the pasture, as the last light painted the clouds, SageByte watched the farm settle. "In BitSoil," she murmured to the quiet air, "every downfall is a seed. Let it rot. Let it root. And watch what grows."