When the Ship Sinks but the Real Treasure Was the Friends You Made Along the Way

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before it. Rowan had taken to sitting on the porch when there weren’t farm chores to do. The dragon never sought her company, but she figured that she was providing it.

Three weeks after the dragon arrived, Rowan sat on the porch to paint her nails. It was hard to maintain a manicure under farm work, but she took pride in her hands. It was how she communicated, and she would rather people focused on the language instead of rough callouses and picked nails.

The dragon was watching her intently.
“What are you doing? Some kind of human ritual?” He asked.
Rowan held up her drying hand. She had not realized the dragon was leaning in until its head recoiled backwards in disgust.
“It smells like hell,” The dragon said.
Rowan shrugged. He wasn’t wrong.
It took until her hand dried before he spoke again.
“I know what your kind is like,” said the Dragon. “You fight and kill your own, squabbling over land that is not yours, right this very minute. And you had every reason not to help me. You had no tools, no experience, no plan. So why? Why would you heal me?”
Rowan shrugged again, a shorter gesture than needed for “Because wouldn’t I? What good would I be if I ignored someone who was in pain? I can’t stop every war from happening, but I can at least help those who need it when I can. And I bet if you talked to more humans, they would say the same thing.”

The dragon did not respond. She tried not to worry about whether her heart or soul or whatever was clear enough for him, and turned back to her nails. She jumped out of her seat as she heard the wood of the porch crack as the dragon moved closer, and placed a claw on her table.

“The red one, if you please,” He said. “It would be beneficial if I rejoin my pack looking as if I have slain a great foe.”

The dragon was gone the next morning. Rowan saw it again, as summer began and dragons soared over the valley.