

## Silver Wonder - Chapter 2

**By Saintspirit**

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"So! Any ideas of what to try today?" The four fillies sat around the table in the clubhouse. Silver had just finished walking around to get a brief impression of it before sitting down at the table with the others, and she found it quite exciting since it was her first time there. It felt a little as if now she was a crusader for real.

"Hmm", Silver began, "Could you perhaps tell me what you did on the earlier crusades? I mean, so I know what not to suggest." The other three looked at her with a slightly concerned expression. Sweetie Belle was the first to begin to speak.

"...Suppose so, but really Silver, if there's something you want to try that we've already done we won't mind. Right, crusaders?" she asked Apple Bloom and Scootaloo, who both nodded with a smile.

"Yeah, definitely," Scootaloo then replied, "Besides, then we might discover something we didn't notice back then too!"

"Wow," Silver said slowly. She didn't know exactly how to respond. For some reason she was surprised by their generous offer; while it made her happy it also made her feel a little guilty, as if she hadn't been expecting so much from her friends. "Thanks." she then said. Apple Bloom suddenly blinked and then got a huge smile on her face.

"Hey, Ah've got an idea - why don't ya decide what we'll do on the next crusade, Silver?" she said cheerfully. Scootaloo and Sweetie Belle both agreed. Silver, however, was unsure. *Was that really a good idea?* She thought for herself. She wasn't really sure what she wanted to try, and the other three had after all been crusaders for a much longer time than her.

"Um... Are you sure?"

"Yup! What do you wanna do?"

"Well... Maybe we can help the librarian with something?" Silver had only been at the library once, but there had been no braille books there at that time - however, the librarian had said she would try to find some for her. That had been a while ago now, so she thought she might check that out too if they went there.

"Ye mean Twilight? Sure, why not?" Apple Bloom replied. Scootaloo was not very interested in potentially becoming an egghead, but she remained silent, as it was Silver's first crusade. Still, as they walked out of the house after they had called out the Crusader Cry, she hoped inwardly that the next crusade would be something containing more action.

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Twilight Sparkle had just had a cup of tea and a cupcake with Pinkie Pie at the Sugarcube Corner and was now on her way back to the library. As she walked towards it, however, she noticed three familiar fillies sitting at the door, along with a brown one she hardly recognized. *It isn't often they come to the library*, she thought for herself. And it seemed they had gained a new friend... But, hadn't she seen the brown pony earlier? She knew she had, just when and where?

"Hi there, Crusaders," she said to the four fillies as she walked up behind them. The three original ones gave a slight jump but the brown one didn't, almost as if she had known Twilight was there. "Can I help you with something?" The Cutie Mark Crusaders turned around to face the purple unicorn, and they seemed almost more energetic than usual - and that said a lot about them.

"It's more like," Apple Bloom said eagerly, "if we can 'elp ya with something! Silver 'ere just joined the Cutie Mark Crusaders, and she thought we should see if we have a talent connected to books in some way!" Now Twilight remembered who the filly with sunglasses was, she had been at the library a month ago. Twilight recalled how she had felt slightly guilty that she hadn't had any braille book in supply for the blind filly back then, and even more so now, as she had forgotten to get one.

"Um... Yeah! I think you could actually..." She was just about to continue when Silver spoke.

"...Miss Sparkle," she said hesitantly, "I was also wondering... Have you perhaps gotten a book for me?"

"Yes, I have!" Twilight said, forcing a smile. "I was just about to go fetch it! Perhaps you could help Spike with the library and support the customers while I go and get it? Just let me speak with him for a minute first, if you could tell him to come outside." The four fillies nodded happily and rushed into the house. Twilight walked away to quickly take a letter to the princess about borrowing a book or two; the royal library was definitely the best place to find a good braille book. She was pretty anxious about letting those foals free inside her house - she still remembered what Fluttershy had told her had happened when they slept at her place - but as it seemed the newcomer Silver was a little more sensible, and would hopefully lower what chaos the crusaders might make. Yet, she hoped with her whole heart that Celestia would respond quickly...

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*Maybe books aren't so boring after all*, Scootaloo thought for herself. She had now found one book containing facts about the Wonderbolts and one book about all kinds of scary beasts, plus a Mane Jack comic magazine that she decided she would read until Twilight returned. Apple Bloom and Sweetie Belle had served the only customer who had entered the library so far - Apple Bloom had asked what book she wanted, whereupon Sweetie Belle brought it down with telekinesis. It had gone relatively well; it had only slammed into Spike once, and that without

making him particularly dizzy. Silver Wonder had at first been walking around the large room, and now sat down on the stool at the side of the table where the catalog was placed. Spike crawled up on the stool at it while recovering from the hit Sweetie Belle had given him with the book.

"How is it helping the librarian?" Silver asked the purple dragon, who was now checking the bump he was about to get on his forehead.

"...Not bad, I guess," he said to the little brown filly after a moment, "I am not exactly as interested in books as Twilight is, though." As he spoke the doorbell rang, and as he turned to check who had entered a white unicorn with indigo mane walked inside. Spike stopped talking immediately and instead tried to hide his ugly swelling with a spine, without much success.

"Hi big sis!" Sweetie Belle called out as she saw her sister.

"Hi, Sweetie, Twilight told me you were here," Rarity said with a smile. "We need to go, we don't want to be late for dinner with the Onyxes, right?" Sweetie Belle looked up at her older sibling with a sad face.

"Oh but sister, we're on a crusade! And it is Silver's first one, too!" she said and pointed at Silver Wonder, who in turn became slightly self-conscious.

"No no, it is okay... Besides, it doesn't appear as if we have gained a cutie mark from working with books, right..?" The three original crusaders looked at each other's and Silver's flank, but she was right, no cutie mark could be seen there. Apple Bloom and Silver looked disappointed, while Scootaloo had a touch of relief in her face. She thought to herself however, that had she not noticed that some books were actually interesting, the relief would have been much larger.

"All right..." Sweetie Belle agreed. "Bye friends - see you tomorrow at school!" she said then and waved to them as she and Rarity walked outside. Spike had been looking at Rarity with a clouded gaze all the time she was inside the house, but now seemed to regain his consciousness. Apple Bloom looked at him confused. Then the door opened once more, and Twilight came inside. Silver raised her face - this felt like a pony carrying a book.

"Here you go, Silver!" Twilight said happily to Silver. "Mounte's The Divine Comedy, in braille! From the royal library!" Twilight's interest and enthusiasm for classic literature had apparently overruled her common sense; The Divine Comedy wasn't exactly a book written for foals. But even so, Silver didn't look discouraged at all.

"Oh, thank you so much, miss Sparkle... How long can I keep it?"

"As long as you wish - the princess gave me her allowance to have it here. As long as you

return it, of course."

"Understood, and thanks again!"

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Maple stood in the kitchen baking a garlic pie, when he heard the outer door open, and close. While Silver quickly went into her room, Willow walked into the kitchen and sat down at the table.

"Hi, darling," Maple said and kissed his wife on the cheek. "How was your day?"

"Not bad, there was quite a lot though," Willow responded with a tired smile. "Bright Dawn asked for permission to build an aquatic museum, and Varnish reported that he had been robbed of his typewriter... Again." Maple gave a short laugh.

"He has always been paranoid... I bet he just placed it somewhere and then forgot that he had done it."

"Yeah, that's what the mayor thought too." Willow worked at the town hall as secretary for Mayor Mare, and they had over time become good friends.

"Mm, it smells delicious," Willow continued and sniffed in the air. "What is it?"

"Garlic pie. Should be done in around fifteen minutes."

"Yummy. Oh, I almost forgot, guess what braille book Silvie has started to read?" Willow said and looked at her husband with an almost childish face.

"Um... The House on the Other Side?"

"Nope - The Divine Comedy!"

"Really? I am impressed, I must say, reading that at her age. I mean, since it is written as a poem, and all..." He had himself read it a couple of years ago, and he still remembered how it took some serious effort to both appreciate it as a poem and follow it as a story at the same time.

"Indeed... It does contain quite a large amount of aged language too, right? Our little Silvie..." Willow said and looked out of the kitchen at Silver's door with motherly love. "She had really done well..." The two ponies fell silent and watched the door to their filly's room, then each other, both with a happy and peaceful face. Lately, it had felt like most of the concern that Silver would not be able to live her life, without being looked after almost all the time - it had existed inside them since her birth, even if they had tried to ignore it - had disappeared.

"Could you watch the pie for a minute?" Maple then asked Willow, whereupon he walked out of the kitchen to Silver's room and knocked on the door.

"Come in!"

"Hi, honey," Maple said to Silver as he walked into her room. The walls in Silver's room were white, with no particular decorations of any kind. In the corner to the left stood her bed, with a sofa at the opposite wall. Silver was now lying there and reading her book, but sat up when her father entered. "How is the book?" he said and looked at the filly. Silver appeared unsure of her opinion so far.

"Well... I like it, but there are many hard words... And the way Moute expresses himself sounds a bit funny sometimes." Maple smiled. The Divine Comedy was after all a very old book; Moute had written it about seven hundred years ago and it was inevitable for the Equestrian language of those days to not have differences compared to how it was back then. It wasn't strange Silver didn't recognize all words immediately.

"Are there anything in particular you're thinking about?"

"Well," Silver said and turned back a few pages, "this Murgilius who helps Moute says 'sordid' here, what does that mean?"

"Hmm... I believe that means vile, or greedy." Silver got a confused look on her face in response.

"But, why didn't he write that then?"

"You see Silver, Moute lived a very long time ago. And at that time, ponies spoke like this, with words that now are aged. They thought that was just normal."

"Really? That's funny - you mean they used these words 'thy' and 'shalt'?" she said and poked at some braille characters.

"That's right," Maple answered with a nod.

"Did they speak in rhyme, too?"

"No... That, they didn't," the brown stallion said merrily.

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"Hi, Silver! Fun ya could come an' visit us!" Apple Bloom called out from the chair where she sat and had lunch. She had been asked by Applejack two days ago to invite Silver to the Sweet Apple Acres, so that they would get to meet her new friend. Silver nodded smiling with her white stick in the mouth. She had explained earlier that she had to have it when she was walking

alone, so that she wouldn't trip on something - noticing immovable objects with awareness was close to impossible.

As Silver walked up to the table she spit out the stick, cleared her throat and then said in a more ceremonial voice, "How art thou today - does the hay taste okay?" It sounded as if she had been practicing the sentence. Apple Bloom looked puzzled. She wasn't eating hay, but she understood Silver couldn't see what she was eating. It was more the odd way she spoke that had confused her. Yet, she did recognize those words in some sort of way.

"...Say what?"

"Um... I was just speaking with older words, and tried to compose poetry." Apple Bloom still looked thoughtful; then suddenly the memory stroked her.

"Ooh! Ah know now where Ah've heard that - Princess Luna said thou, and stuff like that!" She remembered now the strange words the princess had used when she had visited Ponyville; Apple Bloom had however been far too excited by the Nightmare Night to bother pondering them. "Bet she's a bit more traditional, havin' been away for a thousand years and all that."

"Yeah... Must be really hard for her to adjust herself, Equestria has changed so much since she was..." Silver didn't finish her sentence. Being banished to the moon truly sounded like a horrible fate. Neither of the two fillies wanted to think about how it must have felt for the princess when she was imprisoned; not to mention how Princess Celestia must have felt, seeing her sister turn into such an evil being and being forced to imprison her... Apple Bloom shook her head and returned from her reflections.

"So Silver, let me introduce you to the Apple family - at least, those who lives 'ere permanently. Sister!" The door to the house opened and an amber pony with yellow mane looked out from the doorway.

"Huh Apple Bloom, did ye want something? Oh hi, you must be Silver Wonder!" Silver nodded her head by way of an answer. "'Ti's nice to meet ye indeed," the orange mare said as she put on her hat and walked out to shake Silver's hoof. "Hey, yer any hungry?"

"Well... A little, perhaps..." Silver responded sheepishly. If there was something she didn't like it was to be a burden to other ponies; it was mainly because of everything her parents had to help her with.

"I'm Applejack by the way, 'case Apple Bloom din't tell ya. How 'bout some apple pie?" Before Silver had been able to give an answer Applejack had gone inside the house. Silver felt a little hesitant, but she tried to persuade herself that Applejack could hardly think it was that much of an effort to get her a piece of pie, when she had such an amount of enthusiasm. The door opened once more, and a large red stallion with a relaxed look on his face walked out. He

hardly showed any major reaction to Silver being there except a slight nod in her direction.

"Morning, bro," Apple Bloom said. "So Silver, this is my big brother, Big McIntosh." Silver turned towards him; from his movement she could feel he sure lived up to his name.

"...Good day, Mr Apple," she then said after a second.

"Mornin'," he responded and turned his head towards his sister. "Applejack's up yet? Ah heard some rattlin' from the kitchen, or was that you?"

"No, that was probably her." Apple Bloom said. Big McIntosh nodded and looked into the window.

"Nice exploit of 'er, bein' up this early an' all. Ain't like 'er. Silver, yer any hungry?" Silver looked pretty confused. Was everyone in the Apple family really this eager to give away food just like that?

"Um... Applejack said she would get me a piece of apple pie, so..." While she didn't want to give any of the family members too much to do, she didn't want to offend any of them when they were being so generous - however, it didn't seem to matter at all to the stallion.

"kay. If ye want an apple, just ask."

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Silver lay in her bed, still reading the book. It was a little hard for her to concentrate because of what had happened over at Sweet Apple Acres; thoughts and pondering kept swirling around in her head over and over. At first she had thought that Applejack and Big McIntosh had felt compelled to offer her something - now, however, she just felt ashamed because of that belief, that she hadn't understood it was just generosity from their part - friendship. She moved her hooves around on the page. Murgilius appeared as quite a friendly pony, and so did Mounite; however, she had yet to work out how Mounite could have been through all this, with minotaurs, ghosts and three-headed dogs.

*But to that second circle of sad hell, she read as her eyes slowly began to close,  
Where 'mid the gust, the whirlwind, and the flaw... She yawned in tiredness.  
Of rain and hail-stones, lovers need not tell  
Their sorrows. Pale were the sweet lips I saw...* The sweet quilt of sleep slowly fell over the brown filly.