

Chapter 2

Brother White was in the shower, scrubbing frantically. He'd gotten splattered with blood, and he still wasn't quite over that shock of seeing somepony murdered right in front of him.

The Fraternity had set up a mission house in the town, but White and Scroll were the only inhabitants – the previous missionaries, Brothers Sky and Shine, were nowhere to be seen.

The mission house was certainly the most modern of the buildings in the town. Fortunately for Brother White, it had a bathroom with a shower, which he had the feeling he'd desperately need on future occasions.

The main, large room had several chairs and a front desk, which had neat little stacks of the Fraternity's most important text, the Book of Friendship.

"Uhh..." Brother Scroll was outside the door. He knocked, "White? You've been in there for a half-hour..."

The water shut off, but not because White had turned it off. "Hey!" White shouted from inside the bathroom. "Who did that?"

"I did," said a menacing voice from the front door. It was a tall, bulky pony, the color of dry earth, and with what seemed to be a crack for a cutie mark. Scroll swore he could feel himself shrinking. The other pony continued talking, "I'm not about to give away all of our water on some horner."

"Horner?" Scroll asked dubiously, as Brother White came out of the bathroom, drying himself off with a towel. The other earth pony gave a snort of disgust.

"I'm General Quake. I run this place," said the earth pony.

"You alright?" Scroll asked White quietly.

"I'll be fine," said Brother White, before turning to the pony who had just used a racial slur against him. "Well hi," he continued, ever cheerfully. Brother Scroll looked at him – he didn't seem intimidated at all. "I'm Brother White, and this is Brother Scr-"

"I know who you are," the general cut them off sternly, "more missionaries..."

"Yeeaaaaah," said Brother Scroll, looking around, "about that 'more' part..."

"Where are Brothers Shine and Sky?" asked White, "We were hoping to meet them here."

“Don’t know, don’t give a fuck,” said the general, “they went off with the other wingers and horners.”

“Huh?” Brother White asked, confused.

“I think...” said Brother Scroll, “he means that Sky went with the pegasus ponies and Shine went with the unicorns.”

“Really?” Brother White asked, “I didn’t hear about that. Wouldn’t they have sent that kind of thing in their letters?”

“Will you two **shut up?**” the general barked, “As far as I’m concerned, good riddance.”

“That’s not a very nice thing to say...” said Brother Scroll timidly.

“Well, I guess I’m not a nice guy, huh?” said the general, walking up to him, which caused Scroll to back into a wall, “You got a problem with that? What, you need your teddy bear now or something?”

“I’m sorry, I, I-”

“Leave him alone,” said Brother White, walking behind the general. The general turned to look at him.

“You know something?” the general asked, “You don’t fucking talk to me. You’re beneath me, and it’s only because I’m so fucking gracious that I don’t kill you right now. So I suggest you stay in line. One wrong hoof, and I’ll-”

“Aaaaaactually...” said Brother Scroll, regaining a little confidence. Quake turned to him. Scroll took a deep breath. “You can’t. Diplomatic immunity... We’re protected.”

Quake eyed both of them, and then circled around to the front of the room, “Sticking up for each other, ain’t ya?”

“It’s part of the magic of friendship, sir,” said Brother White, sensing an opportunity to win over the general, “Scroll and I are the best of friends.” He smiled at Scroll, who smiled back.

“What, are you...” Quake asked, “gay or something?” he looked at the two of them, “There’s no way you two’re straight.”

“Actually,” said Brother Scroll, “the Fraternity doesn’t like to use the word ‘straight.’”

Quake looked at him like he’d heard the dumbest thing in his life. White nodded to

Scroll, encouraging him.

“Well...” said Brother Scroll, “the thing is, ‘straight’ means ‘morally upright.’ And if we were to refer to heterosexuality as being ‘straight,’ that would imply that others were morally wrong.”

“The Fraternity is accepting of ponies of all sexual orientations,” said Brother White, helping him, “be they heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, asexual, transsexual, pansexual...”

General Quake finally spoke up. “Well, that’d be *fascinating* to know if I gave a fuck. The only reason I let you say all that was because it was so stupid I couldn’t think of anything to say.” He turned to leave, “So, you just go around, handing out your fruity little book, but be warned – you’re only here because we’re letting you here. So *don’t fucking push it.*” And with that, General Quake left the mission.

Brother Scroll sank to the floor. “I can’t do this...” he said, “I can’t...”

“Sure you can!” said Brother White, sitting next to him, “You just did. You saw a big scary pony, and you stood up to him.”

“Well, not really...”

“Yes, really! You did great.”

Scroll looked at him. White was smiling that warm, encouraging smile. “You really think so?” he asked.

“Absolutely,” said White, “and remember,” he placed his hooves on Brother Scroll’s shoulders, “if you ever feel scared, or frightened, or ready to give up, or hopeless, just remember that I’m right here, next to you. I’m here for you, and I always will be.”

“Thanks...” said Brother Scroll.

“Now,” said Brother White, getting up and looking at the stack of books, “let’s go out and do great.”

There was an earth pony family that was sitting down to have lunch. Not a whole lot – just some bread and vegetables. There was a knock at the door. The patriarch of the family went to get it, grumbling – couldn’t they wait until later? Probably just solicitors...

He opened the door, and there were two ponies – one of them was a blue earth pony, and the other was a white-

“Get off of my doorstep, horner,” said the stallion who owned the house.

“Hello,” said Brother White, undeterred by the racism, “are you aware of the magic of friendship?”

The door shut.

“That was rude...” said Brother Scroll.

“Ah well. There are a lot of houses and a lot of doors,” said Brother White, leaving a book on the doorstep.

They went to the next house.

“Er...” said Brother Scroll, “White? Maybe I should handle it.”

“Alright,” said White, stepping back.

Brother Scroll knocked on the door, and then sat down, holding a book between his hooves. An old mare answered the door.

“Hello!” said Brother Scroll, “did you know that there are twenty-seven games you can play with just a pack of drinking straws?”

The door shut. They fared little better at the next household.

“Hi!” said Brother White, “I’m Brother White, and this is my partner, Brother Scroll...”

“So which of you is the top?”

Three hours later, and Scroll was very discouraged.

“Aww, man, what are we gonna do?” said Scroll, “how can we spread the Fraternity’s message if nopony wants to listen?”

“Somepony’ll listen eventually...” said Brother White, “if anypony needs friendship, it’s these ponies...” Brother White ducked as one of the books he’d left on the doorstep barely missed hitting his head, “even if they don’t realize it...” he said, gingerly picking it up and flipping through it to make sure it wasn’t damaged (it was). He sighed. Despite his ever-cheerful attitude, it discouraged him, too.

“Hey! Lemme go!” shouted a voice. The two missionaries ran towards the voice, and they saw a shocking sight – three earth ponies had another earth pony tied up and standing on a chair by his hind legs. One of the others took a rope and threw it over the branch of a tree, and lowered it down to him. The end of the rope had a loop.

“What’s that?” asked Brother White.

Scroll was trembling. “It’s a noose! They’re gonna lynch him!”

“What’s that mean?”

“They’re gonna kill him!”

Brother White stammered for a few seconds as the noose was fitted around the neck, and then he ran forward. “Wait! WAIT!” he shouted.

The earth ponies all looked at him.

“You can’t do this!” White said frantically.

“Why the fuck is there a horner here?” asked one of the earth ponies, irritated.

Brother White had just about had enough of this.

“Hey, see this?” said Brother White, taking the badge off of his chest, “it’s got something written here. Can you read? *Can you?* It says ‘Brother White of the Fraternity of the Joyous Friends of Celestia.’ Now call me ‘Brother White,’ or just ‘Brother’ or ‘White,’ and *not* ‘horner.’”

The other ponies were silent.

“Now then...” said Brother White, calming down, “untie him,” he said, gesturing to the pony on the chair.

“Why?” asked one of the other ponies, distaste in every part of his countenance.

“Because you can’t just... murder people. We should all be friends!”

One of the ponies glared at him. “‘Friends?’ Is that what you think, chucklefuck?”

“I have a name...”

“You know what this bastard did?” he asked, gesturing to the frightened pony who was, quite literally, at the end of his rope. “Well?”

“I... I don’t know.”

“No, you don’t. Well, I’ll tell you. This little bastard’s out hankering around with my daughter, and you know what he does? He gets her knocked up. They panic, and you

know what they decide to do?”

Brother White didn't dare say anything.

“They get an abortion, and my daughter dies!” spat the older pony, “my daughter is dead. And you think I should be ‘friends’ with this sack of shit?”

The pony on the chair whimpered.

“You can't just...”

“Yes I fucking can. Unless you or your missionary fuck-buddy can give your wonderful ‘Friendship’ advice.”

“Wait!” said Brother Scroll, who was frantically flipping through the book, “it, uh, it says here that if somepony does something wrong, then that pony should apologize and... and try to make up...” Scroll's hooves shook as the older pony glared at him, and he dropped the book.

The older stallion bucked, and the chair went out from under the other pony. There was a snapping sound as his neck broke. The pony was dead.

White and Scroll were completely still as the rest of the crowd dispersed, leaving two missionaries and one corpse.