

Chapter 13

The rest of breakfast went by almost too quickly it seemed as Xam and I sat and continued to talk about nothing in particular and yet everything important, like most friends seem to do. She would inquire to how I was adjusting to life here and in return I would ask if her and the other girls had gone on any new adventures. Honestly, it felt good to be able to sit and enjoy a good meal with one of the ponies who had become one of my closest friends in this new world that, for the moment, I called home. Plus her being smart and smokin' hot to boot didn't hurt either.

But before we knew it our meals were done and the steady trickle of arrivals of the members of my team meant that it was time to start getting to work for the day. Xam decided to hang around for a little bit longer so that she could watch the unveiling of the engine components from their crates. Being as the rest of the woodworkers had yet to arrive in Ponyville the rest of the plane would be on hold until then, so it was all hands on deck for the unpacking.

A drop cloth was laid on the hanger floor so as to have a designated area that we could lay out the parts and do an inventory to ensure that everything had arrived prior to assembly and was in good condition. My shop foreman, Alvirg Lieh, was a gruff old unicorn stallion with grey fur, short white hair and an attitude as rough as Clint Eastwood on a bad day. He had been working in construction since he was young, and through long years of hard labor he had learned not to take shit from no one and ran a tight ship on the job. Which was one of the first things that I noticed about him and got me interested. So after a more in-depth conversation at the local bar over a few drinks... alright maybe a lot of drinks that ended with me waking up the next day with one hell of a hangover amongst other things. Needless to say he got the job, by the way best wingman ever.

Alvirg barked some orders to the rest of the members in his rough voice and they jumped immediately into action, prying open the crates with their crowbars and removing the parts inside before laying them on the cloth where I directed them to. Meanwhile Xam, with the help of my translator Wipziv Sykri, compiled the inventory into a accurate and concise checklist, must have been a librarian thing I suppose; either that or that mare really loves

checklist, like **REALLY** loves them. Anyways, because these ponies knew their fair share of engine components from the steam motors that they used in their construction equipment, it didn't take long to get everything unpacked. The last part being the engine block, which was levitated out of its crate by a pair of unicorn mares and placed on the cloth besides the other pieces.

Even though the parts were in a bare state still showing casting marks that would require further machining before they were ready to be assembled, I could already see it all together firing away and it made me about as giddy as a kid on Christmas morning. That's when I thought to myself that this was it. It was finally real for me now, I was actually going to do this. I was going to build an aircraft of my own design from scratch and hopefully, when it was all said and done, watch it fly, or watch it go down in a ball of flames. Hopefully without me on it.

Xam must have noticed something because I felt one of her wings brush across my shoulder. Startled a little I looked towards her she gave me a reassuring smile.

"I can't wait to see it fly Eric." she said as I returned her smile.

"Thanks Xam. To be honest I'll be happy if it just gets off the ground. Working on one that someone else has already designed and built is a lot different than actually doing it yourself. I know how all the systems work and what parts make up each one, but I never thought that I would use that knowledge to help a group of alien pony-people build their first airplane. Lucky for me I guess, that your people already have a natural ability to fly and already know all of the math and aerodynamics that really makes one of these things fly.

"So in the end this is more of an accomplishment for your people than me really. I'm just here to ensure that everything goes smoothly and give my advice whenever we may run into a problem." I told her as I crossed my arms and tried to envision the plane in its final form.

"Don't belittle your contribution so much Eric. Who knows how long it would have been before we came

up with an idea like this on our own, could have been years or possibly never even.” She said as I felt the tip of her feathers brush against my back again in a comforting manner.

“Thanks again Xam,” I told her again before focusing back on the task at hand. “Whelp, back to work I suppose, we have a lot to do if we hope to keep this project on schedule.”

“Well don't let me keep you then,” she said as she took a step away from me, “I have a job of my own that I must get back to.”

“Yeah I imagine that running a country has to take up a lot of time, especially if it keeps three alicorns busy.” I told her as she gave me a wave before disappearing in a flash.

After Xam had left I went back to examining the parts laying in front of me, but not before I felt Alvirg tap me on the shoulder.

“(So) me (and some) of the (others) have a (bet going) on,” he whispered just loud enough for me and Wipziv to hear, *“(Are) you (and) the princess (courting)?”*

“Wait... what?” I whispered back to him, not understanding the question, so I turned to the yellow coated earth mare with blue hair next to me, “What did he ask me?”

“He's asking if Princess Xamspona Tevopi and yourself are courting?” she said absently as she seemed more focused on writing down whatever it was she writing in her notebook, “Apparently there is a wager amongst the workers that you're courting either the princess or one of the other Element bearers. As deplorable as I find it, to be betting on the private lives of others.”

“Am...I ...what?” I asked her in utter disbelief at what she had said and she didn't miss a beat as she

continued on.

“Courting, or I guess the more common term is are you da-”

“I know what courting is,” I said as I cut her off mid sentence, “what I don't understand is why y'all would think that I am. Sure they're all nice enough and highly attractive, even by human standards, but dating?”

“Well for one thing, that gesture she did with her wing to your shoulder is a physical display of affection among pegasi, and while it can be used amongst dear friends when used on a member of the opposite sex most of the time it holds a more intimate meaning.” Wipziv explained as she brought her notebook to her chest and finally fixed her eyes on me.

“Well to answer your question no, we are not courting,” turning back to my foreman I replied in English so that it would be translated by the magic in the air clearly to him. “Princess Xamspona and I are not courting. We are just friends.”

Alvirg gave me a small grin that was almost unnoticeable as I heard him give out a single chuckle that sounded more like him clearing his throat as opposed to any actual sound of happiness. “*(Could have fooled) me colt, but if you (ask) me she's (prime) and in (season). (Wouldn't pass) up that (offer) when it was (presented) to me if I was you.*”

“Alright he lost me again,” I confessed to Wipziv as she walked up beside me.

“He basically said, in much cruder terms, that she is in estrus and you would be an idiot to pass up an offer if it was presented to you,” she said as I heard the jingling of coins. Looking down I see that Alvirg is handing Wipziv a bag of bits.

“Wait one fucking minute here,” I interjected as they both looked at me. I pointed an accusing finger at the yellow mare, “I thought you said you found betting on people's private lives deplorable?”

“I do.” She simply answered like she didn't see what my point was.

“Then what the fuck is this?” I said as I pointed to the bag in her hand causing the mare to sigh.

“Mr. Broussard, what I said was true, I do find the act of betting on other ponies lives deplorable and would never do it. However, what you fail to realize though is that the word 'betting' implies the risk of losing, and that is something I can not do. Yet in situations like this if one is to look at the facts presented before them the choice becomes quite obvious, and at which point it no longer is betting and instead turns into a sound financial investment.” She explained to me like it was the simplest thing in the world as she placed the bag of coins into the satchel that hung from her hip.

I stood there for a moment as I thought about every answer that I could think of to counter her with yet none came to mind better than hers, “As much as I would like to find a flaw in your logic I can't.”

“Of course not it 'was' the logical choice,” she replied as she kept her passive face.

'Great, now she's the female pony version of Spock.' I thought to myself before another came to mind, “Are there any other 'financial investments' that I should know about?”

“Yes, I am waiting to collect on you mating with one of them if and when they present the opportunity.”

I really couldn't believe the cojones on this one, “Wow, so you don't think that I would date one of them, but you do think that I would mindlessly fuck their brains out if they asked me to?” I told her as I heard Alvirg chuckle again, but the mare was not impressed.

“Of course,” she said bluntly, “It is in your nature as a male to mate with and impregnate as many willing female partners as you can so as to advance your bloodline.”

“Maybe on your planet, but not where I come from.” I said to her hoping she couldn't read my mind as well, as she simply raised an eyebrow at me. Although it may have also been primitive human nature as well and I'm not saying I sure as hell wouldn't be tempted if one of the girls or the princesses bent over and started begging for it however slim the odds, but I sure as hell wasn't going to let Wipziv know that.

“We shall see,” was all she said as she turned and walked away back into the main office at the base of the stairs.

“You know,” I told Alvirg who was watching her go as well, “I'm not sure I like her.”

This earned a silent nod from the old stallion as he patted my shoulder in an understanding manner known only to males, no matter the race, “*Mares.*”

I nodded my head in agreement before we went back to work and the rest of the day went by without so much as a hitch. Each part was identified if work needed to be done to it, starting with the block, as they were loaded onto carts and wheeled on over to the machine shop. The rest of the day the pegasus engineers and myself discussed over some changes that they wanted to make to the wing structure that would increase speed while not affecting the overall lifting performance of it.

While the original design called for a fairly basic rectangular style wing with a high-aspect ratio the engineers were trying to argue for one with more of a delta shape with a thinner profile and a lower-aspect-ratio. Their reasoning was that it would make the plane more nimble during flight and the added top speed from a lower amount of parasitic drag would be more than enough to counteract any loss of lift.

At first I tried to argue with them that this was just a prototype, and we should just focus more on getting it up in the air before making any drastic changes like a new type of wing. But like always when told no, they showed me the numbers and in the end I had to concede to the nerds because in the end it would be a better design.

By the end of the day I was greeted by another surprise that this new world had to offer as I checked in on the machine shop shortly after lunch. From the way the head metallurgist, a black unicorn mare named Tivy Siv who hailed from Canterlot, had explained to me is that in Equestria a unicorn that works with metal can use magic to affect the metal down to the molecular level. Meaning that they could change the properties of the metal however they saw fit, whether it be by affecting the hardness or elasticity of the metal, or even by adding other minerals they could create different types of alloys.

The walk up to the machine shop was strange because it didn't reverberate with the usual noises that one would associate with machines reshaping a piece of metal. Opening the door what I saw inside looked more like a pottery studio than a mechanical shop. The pieces were taken one piece at a time where they would be inspected by Tivy Siv as she would look over the requirements for each one before passing it onto another pair of unicorns who would envelop the piece with a stream of magic that flowed from their horns. After which the part would be taken to a work station where they would be worked on by another metallurgist who would begin to shave and mold the metal like a piece of clay. If it needed its composition altered in any way the appropriate amount of minerals would be measured on a scale before being impregnated into the piece before it was taken to the kilns.

The kilns were lined across the far wall of the shop and were attended by a kiln master and her two assistants. She would watch the ovens like a baker would a cake as each part was slowly brought up to temperature, occasionally having the assistants remove certain parts to have the master check on their progress and make whatever adjustments needed to be done. Once they were done the part was removed where it passed onto the first unicorns again, who would return the metal back to its crystalline form with another shot of magic. The metal shining brightly in the afternoon sun without so much as a blemish to be seen. Any parts that needed to be painted to

protect them from corrosion was taken to a ventilated side booth to be taken cared of, before joining the other ones as they were wheeled back into the hanger for assembly. The whole process taking significantly shorter than any human engine shop I had worked with in the past.

This more efficient process allowed us to be able to mount the block on an engine stand and begin to install the lower end before the end of the day. As the others clocked out for the day and went back to their homes for the night, Wipziv and I still had my language lessons to attend to.

These lessons had to be my most single hated time of the day, and Wipziv was quite the ball buster when it came to pronunciation and word usage. No I'm serious, I've had some strict teachers in the past and even had to deal with the random girlfriend on the rag before, but this yellow mare that was assigned as my language teacher had to be the worst. The way she would give me a disapproving stare down the bridge of her nose with those cold soulless eyes of hers, almost made me want to curl in a corner and cry at what a terrible person I was. Almost that is. I never really knew why she was like that though, when I was first introduced to her by Pyre as one of the leading professors in languages at some university in the capital city she seemed very cheery much like most of the other ponies I had met so far. It wasn't until the day after the meeting with Alvrig, where we met up with him at a bar that she acted any different. The day before sunny middle-aged earth mare, the next morning ice bitch mistress from hell.

But even with how much she would ride on me during our lessons, I couldn't deny her results as I was catching onto the language better than I had any of my foreign language classes from high school. It was either that or the fear of what punishment she would deal out if I didn't make the progression that she wanted... yeah maybe that was more it. Because I wouldn't doubt that she carried a portable BDSM kit in that satchel just waiting for an excuse to pull out a riding crop, or maybe a pair of leather straps and chains, or maybe she'd be cruel enough to jab me with the heel of a set of stilettos as she put out a lit cigarette against my skin. Good god I think I have a problem.

"I shall see you tomorrow Mr. Broussard, and I hope that you do not disappoint me more than you did today." she told me just like everyday before she left as she packed her teaching materials into her satchel.

“Yeah see you tomorrow Wipziiv,” I told her as I waved off the verbal jab and watched her leave through the hangar's side door.

After she left I let out a breath of relief, another day was over and I could now relax before having to do it all over tomorrow. Heading over to one of the corners where stood a small fridge that I had placed there for the workers to use to store their foods in if they so desired, but more importantly it was where I kept a small amount of Etpinego's family brew of hard apple cider within easy reach at the end of the day. Because who wants to walk up a set of stairs to get a cold drink, that's just unheard of.

Opening the door I took out a bottle and popped off the cap on the bottle opener that was mounted to the side of it. Taking a swing from the bottle, letting the apple-flavored drink make it's way down my throat, I could now begin to wind down as I made my way up the stairs to my apartment to the old style record player that was there. The sun was just going below the horizon casting the room into darkness, forcing me to turn on a light as I began to look through the selection of records from Vivmay, who had let me borrow them along with the record player when she learned that I liked to listen to music. I couldn't read the titles but she had explained enough about what types of music they were for me to make a selection.

Eventually I decided upon a record with the picture of a cello on the front of the cover. From what Vivmay had explained to me the artist was a very popular earth mare from the capitol, although I forgot what her name was. Placing the other disc back where they belonged I turned the gramophone so that the horn faced a window that overlooked the hangar floor below. Removing the record from the sleeve I placed it gently on the turntable before turning on the player and setting the needle down on the vinyl once it had a moment to come up to speed. After a couple of seconds of static silence the somber sound of a cello began to play the introduction to the first song, the music setting me into a calm mood.

Taking my bottle from where I had set it I made my way back down to the hangar floor over to where the

engine block sat bolted to the stand. Taking another swig from the bottle I sat it down on a worktable within arms reach of the motor. As the music began to settle into an orchestral arrangement I grabbed the first of the four finished cylinders to install on the motor.

The craftsmanship, or would that be craftsponyship... either way it was truly a wonder to behold I wanted to put the motor on display at an art gallery as opposed to possibly blowing it up if this didn't work. Placing the cylinder and a gasket on top of the block I grabbed the two pushrod guide tubes for that cylinder and their seals, positioning them before I tightened down the cylinder. Once everything was lined up I snugged down the assembly with the four bolts needed before moving on to the next one.

It wasn't until I was on the final cylinder for that bank that I felt the presence of someone behind me. How long they had been there I didn't know, but I didn't feel threatened by them so I continued on with my work figuring it was probably Wipziv coming back to grab something that she had forgotten.

"Did you forget something?" I asked to the presence behind me, not bothering to look away from my work as I snugged down the last of the bolts holding the cylinders to the block.

"No," came the reply from a voice I wasn't really expecting to hear for at least a little longer, "I found exactly what I am looking for."

Turning around I proved my suspicions correct as there she stood in all her pure white beauty, Gilzia princess of the day and goddess of the sun, and currently she was giving me a look that would match Wipziv in it's subtle ferocity.

'Crap.' I thought to myself, knowing full well her reason for visiting and also the fact that she could hear my thoughts.

“Indeed,” was her simple reply as a smug little grin formed on her face as she walked closer towards me those long legs and hips mesmerizing me with each step even in the direness of the situation.

She stopped directly in front of me and looked me in the eye, one of the few ones on this planet who could on an even plane, “You know why I am here, do you not?”

“I'm going to guess it's not for a progress report.” I told her, trying to stall for a possible escape route to appear.

“No.” was her reply as she narrowed her eyes slightly and her wings flared apart with a pop and wrapped behind me effectively trapping me in a cage of feathers.

“Well the only other thing I can think of is that I turned down Pyre's request for me to attend that ball thingy.” I said as I laughed a little on the inside, 'Ha, ha, ha... ball thingy.'

Only an idiot would laugh about something like that when facing a being that could possibly destroy me with a solar flare, or give me skin cancer, but I've never really been known for my forethought in sudden situations.

Gilzia obviously didn't think it was very funny as her eyes narrowed more, before she let out a sigh of frustration and dropped her wings, “Why do you have to be so aggravating?”

“Wow didn't think I was that bad.”

“Then you would agree to go to this ball that my sister and I have put on to introduce you to the rest of the world at large.” she replied through gritted teeth as she poked me in the chest with the hard outer casing that wrapped around the last knuckle of her fingers.

“Sorry, but I never asked for you to put on a ball for me. I would rather not be known to the rest of the world, because I don't plan on staying here any longer than I need to.” I told her getting over any apprehension I may have had as she pressed the digit against my sternum.

“Why? Are we such a terrible race compared to humanity?” she asked as she thankfully removed the offending digit but that didn't help to diffuse the situation any.

“Not at all, but I had a life before I came here,” I growled as I took a step towards her, forcing her to take a step back in return. “It may not have been an overly exciting life, but it was my life! Maybe if it was a terrible one it may be different for me but it wasn't, and every day I have to try and not think about the fact that it might all be gone and this party does not help my situation.”

By now I had backed her up to the worktable as I placed my hands on top of the table trapping her between my arms and was now leaning over her. “Do you have any idea what it's like to be the only one of your kind in the world? With no hope of ever seeing your family again, or no future of having a family or children of your own?”

“Yes” she said softly as she refused to look me in the eye, but when she did I saw them wet with unshed tears.

'Idiot!' I berated myself at my stupidity. Of course she would understand, she was probably the only being on this planet who truly would. Even more so than even myself because she had a country to worry about at the time.

Sighing I hung my head in shame as I stood back up and turned away from her. “I'm sorry Gilzia I didn't mean that. It's just so frustrating sometimes. That's why I'd rather stay here in my shop out of the limelight working on my little projects.”

I heard her come closer to me before I saw her wings and arms out of my peripheral as they wrapped around me as she laid her head against my back, mindful of her horn. "It is alright Eric, it may seem hard now but it will get better."

"That's just it," I said as I turned around and took her in an embrace of my own, tucking her head under mine, "there's a part of me that doesn't want it to get better. Who's to say that by me becoming too comfortable with this situation I wouldn't want to leave if and when there was a chance to."

"Would that be so bad?" she asked quietly.

"Maybe... I don't know." I replied in my own quiet voice unsure of my feelings on the situation.

We stood there for I don't know how long just holding one another. Not as a princess or a tech sergeant, nor as a mare and man, not even as a goddess and a mortal. But as two friends who shared similar difficulties taking strength in the mere presence of one another.

Once we drew away from each other I wiped away the remains of a tear that still had not fallen from her eyes wanting to change the subject, "Sorry again. So I assume it was a rough day at court?"

She laughed lightly at that as she batted my hand away playfully, "A very rough day."

"Well I don't have much to offer except a warm shower, some food, and a friendly ear to listen all about it."

"That sounds splendid actually." she said as she smiled.

"Well I believe that you should remember where the bathroom is, why don't you get started and I'll be up soon to start on dinner. I just need to finish up down here."

“Very well.” she said with a nod and began to make her way up the stairs, my eyes not passing up the opportunity to sneak a glance at her backside. What? If you saw the caboose on her you'd probably fall to the ground weeping and cursing God on why he didn't allow you to see such wonders earlier in your life.

As I heard the shower turn on I focused back to the task I was busy with beforehand. Grabbing a torque wrench and a crowfoot socket, I quickly did the conversion for the torque setting in my head before adjusting the wrench and tightening down the individual cylinder bolts. Once I was done I put the tools back where they had come from and finished the last of my cider, before grabbing another one from the fridge as I made my way up the stairs to the apartment.

I was in the middle of pulling out ingredients when I heard Gilzia's voice come from the shower.

“Eric can you come here for a moment?”

A simple phrase that made a flood of thoughts run through my mind, mainly ones that were accompanied by some funky sounding music or the seductive sounds of Mr. Marvin Gaye. Strange enough at that same moment I heard her let out a whimper and I heard something fall in the shower. Fearing that something had happened I dropped what I was doing and rushed into the bathroom to see that she was okay.

Running into the bathroom I could see her sitting on the floor of the shower stall through the frosted glass door. Not wasting a moment I went over to the shower and opened the door, “Gilzia are you alright?”

She looked up at me in a daze and I noticed that her magenta eyes were dilated and her breathing was coming in short deep breaths. Figuring that she might be having a hard time breathing I quickly turned off the shower and picked her up, not worrying about the fact she was still wet. As I carried her to the living area I felt her body burning up as her fingers lightly grazed against my neck before I sat her down on the couch. After she was

positioned on the couch I went and opened up a couple of windows to allow some air circulation through the room.

Coming back to her I cupped her face in my hands as I tried to get her to focus.

“Gilzia, come on, snap out of it.” I said as panic began to take hold of me.

Her eyes found mine and she cupped my face in her own hands and the look in her eyes growing deeper and almost more seductive.

“Gilzia?” I asked cautiously not having seen this side of her before. Sure she had been playful in her teasing before, but it had always been in a good-natured mood not the look of want she was looking at me with now.

My voice must have finally broken whatever spell was over her as I saw her pupils slowly return to normal and a blush come across her face. She seemed obviously confused over her current situation as I saw her eyes dart around trying to take in anything that would help explain what had happened.

“Are you okay?” I asked as her eyes came back to mine, “ You called me into the bathroom before I heard you fall. When I found you having problems breathing so I brought you out here to get some fresh air.”

“Thank you, Eric,” she said as she withdrew her hands from my face and I allowed her to sit up, “it seems like our bond is affecting me more than I imagined it would.”

“What do you mean?” I asked her not understanding what she was referring to.

“Remember the side-effect that we found out about the bond on that first day?”

“Of course how could I forget,” I said remembering how my emotion of loneliness had also been felt by the

two princesses making them feel the same level of loneliness that I had.

In the months since the bond we had found out a few more interesting developments from it than just being able to talk with each other through our minds. The sisters could hear my thoughts if they so chose yet I could not do the same with them, but they could pick up my emotions in return and I could feel theirs to a certain extent. Although all of this was determined on our proximity to each other, the closer we were the stronger it was and vice-a-verse. So that meant while they were in the palace and I was here the transference of emotions was so minor that it almost couldn't be felt unless it was a particularly strong emotion, but when we were closer to one another...

“Oh...,” I said as I came to the conclusion, but it was only momentarily as I remembered a glaring detail about it all, “But wait a minute, the feeling of our emotions has never been strong enough to actually take effect before.”

Gilzia's blush deepened a little, “That may have to do with me I'm afraid.”

“You? Why?”

“Because I have come into season.” she said to herself low enough to where I couldn't make out what she had said.

“What?”

“I am in heat!” she said a little forcefully as her eyes shone and her cheeks were a deep blush before looking away from me.

“Oh, sorry Gilzia,” I said feeling her embarrassment start to flow over me, “you don't have to tell me more.”

“It is okay. It is just that I have never experienced a cycle like this in the thirty-six hundred years that I have had them. It was not too bad when I was at the palace, but when I was taking my shower I suddenly felt a level of desire that I had never felt before. The next thing I know I was here on your couch. I think it may have something to do with your touch being able to neutralize my magic in addition to that portion of our bond overcoming any restraints I may have put up.” She said as she looked at her hands in her lap and I could feel her emotions change from those of embarrassment to that of uncertainty and even fear at what she had probably almost done.

I placed a reassuring hand on top of hers as I spoke, “It's alright Gilzia you didn't do anything. I'm just glad you're alright, you had me worried there for a moment.”

“Yes I am fine, thank you for your concern and friendship,” she said as she patted my hand before she stood. “I should probably return back to the castle, thank you once again and I'm sorry I could not stay for dinner.”

“It's alright, you're always welcome here Gilzia. Anytime you or your sister want somewhere where you can set down the crown and let down your hair, so to speak.” I told her as she arched an eyebrow.

“Is that how you truly see my sister and I? As just another mare?”

“Of course, why wouldn't I? The crown is just a title it doesn't make up who you are.” as I told her this she gave me one of her warm smiles that I was familiar with.

“Thank you again,” she said as she turned to leave but paused and turned back to me. “And on the subject of the ball ... ?”

I gave a sigh at the subject getting brought up again, “You're not going to let this go are you?”

“No, not until you say yes,” she said with that same smile.

I had to chuckle a little bit at her determination as I finally admitted defeat, “Alright Gilzia I shall go, but I ask one thing of you.”

“What is that?”

“When you tell Pyre can you make it sound like I put up more of a fight about it?”

She let out a laugh that relieved any lingering tension in the room as she nodded to me, “Of course Eric, farewell.”

And with that she was gone in a flash of light as quickly and quietly as she had come. After she had left I made my way back to the kitchen to continue where I had left off on making dinner, just with one less serving needing to be made. As I unwrapped the fillets of trout that I had caught yesterday when I was out helping Paxxila gather some for her animals a sudden realization dawned on me.

I had no clothes for this ball. That meant that I had to go into town to the only source of clothes there tomorrow, Vivmay's boutique.

“Crap.”