Macintosh
By TotalOverflow, '11

Chapter 7

While not incredibly heavy, Blues wasn't exactly what one would call a lightweight. Macintosh found his face pressed into the road, weighted down by the blue colt's upside down body. After a moment of untangling themselves the two colts stood to their hooves.

"Sorry Macintosh," Blues muttered, "I didn't see you."

"S'okay," Mac replied, brushing himself off, "where's the fire?"

"Huh?" Blues' eyes seemed unfocused, "Oh, um, I was just looking for Cherry. I was supposed to help her with her fruit stand today. Have you seen her?"

"Nope, but Ah jes' met with Rose an' the others; maybe they know where she is?"

Blues frowned. "Is Daisy with them?"

"Eeyup."

"Oh," the blue colt sighed, "I'll just look for her myself, then," he began a light canter down the road. Tilting his head in confusion, Macintosh followed.

"Is there a problem with Daisy?"

"Um," Blues thought for a moment, "I dunno, she and Cherry don't get along."

"Why's that?"

"Fillies," he shrugged, "how should I know?" Macintosh nodded as they kept an eye out for Blues' fillyfriend. Their hooves clattered along the street, the morning sun warm on their hides. *I've got a bit of time before I should meet Lightning Bolt,* thought Big Mac. He wanted to get to know Blues a little better, and besides, he was curious.

"How long have you an' Cherry been together now?" inquired Mac.

"Since the last Winter Wrap Up," he replied, "actually, it was Ms. Cheerilee who introduced us. We were all on the plant team, so Cherry and I got to know each other." Macintosh saw a small glint in his eye. "She's quite the mare. Although I wish she wouldn't make so much fun of my music."

"Oh yeah, about that," Macintosh stuttered, "Ah wanted ta say sorry fer bringin' it up last night."

"Eh, don't worry about it," sighed Blues as they turned a corner, "Lily was bugging me all day about it anyways. I don't know what's up with that filly. Sometimes it seems like she can see right into your soul. She's a little creepy," he chuckled; so did Mac as he recalled her supposed 'psychic powers.'

"Y'know," Mac said after a second, "Ah wouldn't mind hearin' some o' yer music sometime." Blues stopped in his tracks.

"Really? Uh, well," he stammered, looking around nervously, "I guess I could show you sometime. You might not like it, though. If you didn't like the music at the party last night then my stuff probably wouldn't be up your alley."

"There you are!" The two turned to see Cherry, her blonde mane bouncing over her disgruntled eyes as she trotted across the road to them, "I've been looking everywhere for you, Blues!"

“Hey!” he smiled, nuzzling her to her indignation, “I’ve been looking for you, too! You know I’d never skip out!”

“Well, now that you’re here let’s get the stand open,” she pulled him back towards her cherry cart on the other side of the street, and without turning back she flatly said: “nice to see you again, Big Spartan.”

“I’ll catch ya later, Macintosh!” Blues shouted back, waving a hoof.

“Spartan?” Mac repeated, waving dumbly. *I can kind of see why Daisy wouldn’t get along with that Cherry girl. I wonder what Blues sees in her.* Macintosh couldn’t imagine spending quality time with somepony so...stuck up? No, that’s not the right word...Somepony like her, anyway. *Sure, she’s a looker, but that doesn’t mean much if she’s a...Dang, where’s a dictionary when you need one?*

Macintosh shook his head and began a light canter through the increasingly busy roads of Ponyville. Like the day before shops were open and ponies were shouting proclamations of their wares and inventory to others. Breathing deeply, he set out for Lightning Bolt’s place which was out on the other side of town, past the school. Luckily, he had committed the directions to her place to memory, and he was still a little ahead of schedule, so he walked slowly, letting his mind wander.

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I kicked. Nothing happened.

“Macintosh?”

I kicked again. Nothing.

“Macintosh?”

Kick. Nothing.

“Macintosh?”

“What, Applejack?”

She was still really little but her eyes were big.

“Yer doin’ it wrong.”

“Ah am not.”

I kicked really hard. Nothing.

“Yeah ya are!”

“Go away...”

“Want me ta show ya?”

“No! Ah’ll do it mahself!”

Applejack went away. She looked sad.

I didn’t like seeing her sad.

I kicked as hard as I could.

An apple fell on my head.

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To get to his destination Mac walked past the bakery, down a road he hadn't yet

ventured. One shop in particular caught his attention: 'Fanatical Breezy's Fantastic Fanitarium.' *Strange place,* he mused. Just then the door opened and a portly stallion sporting a green golf hat and vest stepped out, waving. Mac looked behind himself but saw nopony around. *He's not calling for me, is he?*

"Macintosh!" said the fellow as he approached.

"Uh, howdy?" Macintosh replied, "sorry, do Ah know ya?"

"I worked to help clear the snow under your command during Winter Wrap Up, chap. Well, perhaps I should say I attempted to do so, but found my physique to be rather unsuitable for the job," he chuckled, an unidentifiable accent pervading his speech, "Archibald Breezy's the name."

"Oh, okay," said Macintosh, trying and failing to recall ever seeing this pony before, "what can Ah do fer ya?"

"Well, I'm afraid your little sister Apple Bloom - she is your little sister, correct? She spent a lot of time around you during Winter Wrap Up, and I never forget a name or a face, most certainly not a face as darling as Apple Bloom's! The family resemblance is uncanny!"

Macintosh raised an eyebrow.

"Er, right. Where was I? Right! Mayhaps you've seen an out of place fan at your residence? I'm afraid Apple Bloom must have forgotten to return the fan she and her compatriots borrowed from me a few months ago." He paused and fiddled with the red tie on his vest. "Now, don't misunderstand me, dear boy, I have plenty more than enough fans to go around, but I'm sure you can understand the principle and proper etiquette of borrowing and lending another's property, don't you?"

"Eeyup."

"Bravo! Good lad! I knew you were a true gentlecolt! Now then, if you wouldn't mind doing me the curtesy of returning said fan to me tomorrow morning, I would be ever in your debt. Perhaps you should write that down. You won't forget, will you?"

"Nope."

"Excellent! Well then, I await your return on the morrow! Cheerio!" Archibald tipped his hat and returned to the depths of his strange shop. *So that's where that fan came from,* Macintosh muttered to himself. With a sigh of relief to be away from the strange pony, he set off again to meet with the pegasus for brunch.

"That whole thing jes' sorta came outta nowhere," he grunted.

A few minutes later, Macintosh stopped in front of Lightning Bolt's home. It was a very beautifully built house, almost picturesque with its columns and archways. While completely unlike anything Big Macintosh had ever stepped hoof in before, he could imagine getting used to living in a place like this, and was looking forward to seeing the inside.

Too bad it was a hundred feet above the ground.

"Oops," he muttered, craning his neck upwards. *Looks like we overlooked something.* It shouldn't have come as a surprise, really; he knew that pegasi lived in custom made cloud homes, but it never occurred to him (or Lightning Bolt, apparently) that it could pose a problem. Just as he was about to turn and leave in hopes of getting an idea, a voice called down from the cloud home.

“Macintosh!” it yelled. He strained his eyes and could just make out the white coat and blue mane of Lightning Bolt as she waved down to him. Disappearing inside her house and momentarily reappearing with a basket, she flew down to meet him.

“Hi Macintosh!” she smiled, placing the covered basket at her hooves, “how are you this morning?”

“Ah’m fine, thank ya,” he chuckled, “Ah was a mite confused there for a bit on how Ah was supposed ta get up there.”

“Oh, yeah, I guess I forgot to mention our cloud home,” she grinned nervously. Just then another pegasus flew down to meet them, his red hair and tan hide accentuating his blue star cutie mark. “Oh, there you are, Cool Star!” Lightning said, nuzzling the colt, “Macintosh, this is my husband, Cool Star.” Cool Star nodded, his expression made of stone.

“Pleased ta meet ya,” Macintosh smiled.

“So you’re the one who saved my daughter,” the colt said, his voice incredibly even and calculated, “Thank you. I’ve seen things that would make your head spin, but when I heard about what you did, I was sorry I missed it.” The pegasus’ eyes were steady, hardly ever blinking with almost no emotion showing, save for a faint glimmer of excitement and gratitude.

“Well, shall we?” Lighting said, picking up the basket and heading towards a nearby park. Their brunch was a pleasant affair, the meal Lightning Bolt had made was very filling and sweet. They talked about their occupations for a while, Macintosh briefly explained his before pressing them about theirs. Lightning was only a part time weather pony, while Cool Star was actually an assistant manager to one of the weather factories in Cloudsdale, so he made trips between Ponyville and Cloudsdale very often. He started detailing how the weather and clouds are made there (his face never cracking from its stoic expression) when something suddenly occurred to Macintosh.

“Hang on,” he interrupted, “y’all say clouds are made in them factories?” Cool Star nodded. Frowning, Mac continued: “But jes’ yesterday Ah saw li’l Cotton Cloudy makin’ a cloud out of thin air!” The two looked at each other in surprise. Well, at least Lightning looked surprised.

“She’s gifted,” Cool Star said after a moment, “the art of hoof-crafting clouds has dwindled away over the last few centuries, and only a few pegasi have the ability. Cotton is one of those. Neither of us can do it. Well, not traditionally, anyway.”

“How so?” asked Mac.

“Well,” sighed Cool Star, “I used to do this trick that would condense water in the air into a sort of cloud. It was all for show, so it didn’t have any substance to it and was useless, but it still impressed the audience,” for just a second, his eyes glimmered, “somehow, even though Cotton’s so young, she can not only form clouds but also fly really well. She’s very gifted for her age.”

“She takes after her father,” Lightning grinned, poking her husband, “*especially* his carelessness. You need to stop encouraging her to fly! She’s still too light; she was almost knocked out by a cloud!”

“Hey now,” Cool Star cracked a tiny smile, “reckless flying runs in my blood. I can’t help it if she inherited it. Besides, if it wasn’t for my ‘carelessness,’ I wouldn’t have met you during that show!” Lightning Bolt laughed and, as if suddenly remembering there was someone else

with them, turned to Macintosh.

"Cool Star was trying to do some fancy new trick," she explained, "but he was going so fast that he crashed right into the audience. Right into me, specifically," she leaned onto her husband, "not exactly the most romantic introduction, but I guess it got the job done."

"One second," Mac said, scratching his head, "let's back up fer a moment; y'all were a performer?"

"Oh, right," Cool Star replied, a slight chuckle escaping his lips, "I used to be a member of the WonderBolts. I was known as 'Cirro' on the team since I could whip up clouds, but I quit once I got close to Lightning Bolt," he nuzzled her, "I couldn't start a family and be a hot-shot wiz-kid, so I made my choice. And I'm glad I did."

"Wow, the WonderBolts, huh?" Mac smiled. Cool Star nodded.

"Like I said, I saw some insane things while on that team. Not much impresses me anymore. And I tell you, none of the fame or fortune that came with that gig even came close to what it's like to care for a family."

"Again, thank you," Lightning smiled, bowing her head a little (which made Macintosh feel uncomfortable), "thanks for saving Cotton. If there's anything we can do for you, please let us know."

"This meal was more'n enough payment," Macintosh smiled, bowing a little in return, "y'all dun' need ta do nuthin' more fer me."

"Well, if there's anything that you need," Cool Star nodded. Out of the corner of his eye, Macintosh caught sight of something blue zipping through the air, kicking some clouds. A grin crept over his face.

"Well, actually, there is one thing..." He whistled, catching the attention of the blue object. "Hey, Rainbow Dash!" he shouted, prompting her to leave her fluffy perch and land next to him.

"Hey Big Mac!" she saluted, "what's up?"

"There's somepony Ah think y'all should meet," he motioned towards Cool Star, who, despite his stoney expression, allowed a tiny smile to curl the edge of his lip. "This here's Cool Star, but y'all might know him better as Cirro."

The rainbow-maned pegasus squinted, waving to the tan pony.

"Hey, I remember you," he said, waving back, "you were at the Best Young Fliers Competition! Yeah, you saved that white unicorn and my friends!"

"Your...friends?" Rainbow muttered, tilting her head. Suddenly, like a punch to the face, realization struck her.

"OhmygoshohmygoshohmygoshOHMYGOSH!!!" she squealed, her eyes bugging and wings flapping furiously. Mac, chuckling, looked back to the couple, who laughed and shook their heads, amused. "No, way!" Rainbow bellowed, landing and stepping closer to Cool Star, "No way, NO WAY!! THE Cirro!? Oh, my, gosh! I can't believe it! You were incredible! You were, like, my favorite WonderBolt growing up! That cloud thing, where you spin, and, with the thing, and the stuff, and-and-and, like, it was so cool! I got my own pair of officially licensed goggles and everything!" she was acting like a little filly on her birthday. Cool Star took it all with grace, apparently well experienced with excited fans. After a few moments of Rainbow spouting accolades, Cool Star finally stepped in.

“You’ve got skills, kid,” he said, “that stunt you pulled was pretty cool. ‘Course, it alone wouldn’t be enough to get you onto the team.”

“Star, don’t you dare!” Lightning teased, slapping him lightly.

“If you want...I could give you some flying tips.”

THUD

Rainbow Dash didn’t stay unconscious for long. Once she came to, she and Cool Star began discussing complex flight maneuvers and techniques while Mac stepped aside with Lightning Bolt.

“Ah hope Ah didn’t overstep nuthin’,” he said, looking apologetically at the blue haired pegasus.

She laughed. “Oh, don’t worry about it. Star loves any excuse he can get to show off and do his tricks. I guess you can take the pegasus out of the WonderBolts, but you can never take the WonderBolts out of the pegasus. That was a nice thing you did for that filly, Macintosh. I’m only a part-time weather pony, like I said, so I never actually worked with Rainbow Dash before; I never knew she was so fond of the team.”

“Mah pleasure,” nodded Mac, “Ah hope she enjoys talkin’ ta one o’ her idols.”

“Well, I should probably get going,” Lightning said, heading back towards the others (who were just gearing up to take off and soar), “I’ll see you later, Macintosh!”

Macintosh waved and turned to begin his trot back to town. He laughed; it felt nice to do that for Rainbow. Meeting a lifelong role model is always an incredible sensation. While he had never encountered anyone in that way, he did have a similar experience when he finally met a pegasus pony as a young colt. In a way, they were his role models, although at that time in his life he was still resentful towards his winged brethren, but once he met that pegasus...once he met her, well, he was reminded why he wanted so badly to fly.

Macintosh heard the distant sound of the clock tower strike eleven as he trotted back towards town. In one of the parks on his way he spotted Daisy, rummaging through a flower bed.

“Howdy Daisy,” he said cheerfully, cantering over. She jumped slightly, but relaxed when she saw him and even smiled a little.

“Hi Macintosh,” she said, her hooves full of flowers, “what are you doing out here?”

“Jes’ meetin’ sompony fer brunch,” was his reply, “Ah’m jes’ on mah way back home now. Y’all?”

“Collecting more flowers,” she said plainly, placing her bounty into a basket. She brushed back her green mane and stepped a little closer. “Listen, I wanted to apologize for my over-reaction earlier...I hate it when I get like that...”

“About yer cart tippin’ over? Dun’ worry ‘bout it. We all get a li’l excited sometimes.”

She smiled as they started trotting. “So, hey, Macintosh, it was pretty nice what you did for Rose back there, helping her out with her math. She was always the best at it out of us three, but now we’ll probably be able to properly manage the shop,” her talkativeness caught Macintosh off guard a little. Together, they walked towards town. “But, I am still interested in a

partnership between our businesses. I thought Applejack would be the one to talk to, but I get the feeling you'd be better."

"Eeyup, Ah s'pose Ah would," he grinned, "y'all wanted ta sell apple flowers? That wouldn't be easy, Ah tell you what. Them little things are awful fragile, and wouldn't live long off a tree."

"But they are quite beautiful, and I think maybe they could be a premium item. But I was also considering branching out and selling plants other than just flowers, so maybe apple tree saplings? I could imagine some ponies would love the novelty of growing their own apple tree."

"True," Macintosh laughed as they passed the school house, "but Ah hope that wouldn't cut into mah business! Ponies might stop buyin' mah apples if they can grow their own!"

"Nah, that would never happen," she chuckled, "besides, you'd make a decent amount on each sapling sold. It would be nice if our little flower shop could maybe become a full garden center. Actually, if-"

"Macintosh! Daisy!" Cheerilee burst out the front door of the school and galloped up to them, sending up a small cloud of dust. Daisy stiffened and narrowed her eyes at the mare. "I'm so glad I found you! I really need someone to cover for my class for a bit!"

"Can't," Daisy growled, "Busy. See you, Macintosh." With that, she briskly trotted off, tail high.

"What in the hay was that about?" Mac asked, scratching his head. Cheerilee just sighed.

"I don't know, that filly just seems to hate my guts." She fired her gaze back to the red stallion. "Anyway! Macintosh, could you please cover for my class?"

"Um, sure, but what's the emergency?"

"Personal, can't talk!" she shouted behind her, already galloping away, "I left my lesson plan out on the desk! I won't be more than an hour!" And with that, she was gone.

"Crud," muttered Macintosh as he just realized what he agreed to. *Teaching a bunch of kids? This should be interesting...*He stepped into the building, the familiar smell of old wood and chalk dust making him feel like a student again, except he wasn't being teased for being a blank flank anymore. Being a single classroom school, it didn't take long to pass the small office and lunch room and find his old, familiar class. The fillies and colts inside were (thankfully) not as rambunctious as his old classmates were; instead, they were content with chatting it up and passing notes. Once the large stallion ducked through the doorframe everypony froze. The silence was almost physical.

"Um, howdy," he grinned nervously, stepping to the desk, "uh, Cheer-Ah mean, Ms. Cheerilee had ta step out fer a bit so Ah'm coverin' fer her." Nopony moved. Nopony even blinked. "So, uh, mah name's Big-er, Mr. Macintosh. Um, what're yer names?"

Nopony said anything.

"Okay then," his face hot, he stepped behind the desk, "Ah guess we should get started then." With a rush of wind the door swung open again as a small yellow filly with a pink bow in her mane burst into the classroom.

"Sorry I'm late, Ms. Cheerilee! I had to...Macintosh!?"

"Howdy, Apple Bloom," he nodded to his little sister, "looks like Ah'm yer teacher fer a bit. Why dun' y'all take yer seat?"

She didn't move. Her jaw fell open, but other than that she stayed motionless. *This is getting ridiculous.*

"Take yer seat, Apple Bloom," he said sternly, "an' let's begin our lesson, which is on..." he ruffled through the papers on the desk, "'What yer Cutie Mark Means,'" he read.

"AaaaAAUUUugh!!" the class groaned, finally showing some sign of life.

"Cutie marks again?" Apple Bloom pouted, finally taking her seat.

"Well, that's what Ms. Cheerilee left me, so that's what Ah'm goin' ta teach." Clearing his throat he began reading the lesson plan. "Let's see here...'Cutie marks are special and...unique fer every pony, an' they all mean different things," he read, stumbling over some of the words. The students all slouched in their seats, doodling or whispering. "Um...'A cutie mark has a special meanin' that might not be im-immediately obvious but...after enough time it will become clear what it r-rep-represents."

"Isn't that your brother, Apple Bloom?" whispered a filly, snickering. Apple Bloom sunk into her seat, cheeks red. The other students were whispering to each other and generally not paying attention. The only one who seemed interested was a frizzy red-maned filly with glasses.

"Uh," Macintosh swallowed, "um, 'sometimes a cutie mark won't make sense. If ya look at mah cutie mark, ya'll see it's three smiling flowers." The class burst into laughter and Macintosh looked down at his cutie mark which was completely unlike three smiling flowers. At this point, the class had almost completely broken down; nopony was listening to him at all, but he continued regardless. "'It may look like flowers but it's sym-symbolic of mah passion fer teachin' and-'" a paper airplane to the snout broke whatever semblance of composure Big Mac had left.

"All right, that's enough!!" he bellowed. He caught himself, embarrassed at his outburst, although it did have the desired effect: the students sat straight, rapt with attention. Flustered, Macintosh did his best to regain his confidence. "All right, this ain't workin'. Why dun' we go on a field trip, instead?" That seemed to get the class on his side. "Gather yer things an' let's meet outside."

Macintosh wrote a quick note for Cheerilee and, once the class had assembled outside, did a quick headcount (reminding him of his management duties during harvest and Winter Wrap Up) before they set out for town. Luckily, the kids were compliant and nopony tried running off. They trotted towards town, Macintosh leading the pack who were whispering excitedly about where they could be going.

"Maybe we're going to Sugar Cube Corner!"

"Yay! Cupcakes!"

"Or maybe we're going to the toy store!"

"Or to see a magic show!"

Apple Bloom sidled up to her big brother who marched with determination. "Macintosh, where are we going?"

"We're here," he smiled, looking up to the building before him. The rest of the students stopped in their tracks and stared dumbfounded.

"THE LIBRARY!?" they groaned in unison.

“Eeyup,” Macintosh smiled as he pushed open the door to see Twilight and Spike

huddled over a book.

"Oh, hi Macintosh!" Twilight smiled, walking over, "what can I do for...you?" noticing the crowd of unamused foals outside her door her brows furrowed. "Um, what's going on?"

"Field trip," he grinned, "Ah'm watchin' Cheerilee's class fer an hour." He bowed his head, making way for the students to step inside, which they did, albeit reluctantly, plopping themselves onto the floor.

"Oh, um, ah!" grimaced Twilight, smiling for the group, "uh, hello! I'm, uh, the librarian?" she looked over to Mac, confused. He smiled and motioned for her to continue. On the other side of the room, Spike leaned back and crossed his arms, enjoying the show. "So! Do you kids like books?"

"No," they said flatly.

"I do!" the frizzy maned one chirped. Apple Bloom kept her disgruntled gaze upon her older brother, who cleared his throat and stepped forward.

"Ms. Twilight, why dun' y'all read 'em one o' yer stories?"

"Ugh, story time?" a pink filly with a tiara whined, "how old do you think we are?"

"A story?" Twilight tilted her head.

"Yeah, y'know, a pony tale or sumat," he swallowed. *I hope this works...* "Like that one," he pointed with a hoof to the spine of a familiar blue book.

"This one?" Spike asked, hopping over and pulling the dusty book from its place. Twilight lifted it with her magic raised her eyebrows.

"A pony tale?" mocked a grey filly with glasses, "Seriously? What is it, 'The Little Wagon That Could?'" the class burst into laughter.

"No," Twilight answered plainly, "it's called 'Fortress of Fire.' Really, Macintosh?"

"It sounds cool to me!" Spike boasted, reclining on the floor. A few ponies' ears perked up at the title, but most still let their eyes droop and jaws hang slack with boredom. Twilight shot one more concerned glance at Macintosh, who smiled reassuringly, before opening up the tome, a small cloud of dust erupting from its pages.

"Okay, let's see here. Ahem. 'Mr. Perrywing was an average pegasus stallion. He lived in an average home, on an average street in an average town. He had two average foals: Blaze, an average pegasus colt, and Frost, and average pegasus filly.'"

"Boooooooring," somepony yawned.

"'On one average morning, Mr. Perrywing woke up to find something not so average. In fact, it was by far the most unusual thing he had ever seen. It stood in the street outside his home. It was tall, very tall, yellow like a ripe banana and walked on seven spindly legs. He would have looked at it for a while longer if...' Ack!" Twilight grimaced, "I can't read that!"

"What?" Spike asked.

"What?" the foals sat a little straighter.

"This is not appropriate for young fillies and colts! Or dragons!" she huffed, slamming the book.

"What is it!? What is it!?" they shouted, leaning forward.

"Now, c'mon, Twilight," Macintosh grinned, "Ah think these kids are plenty old ta hear this story."

"Well..." she frowned, drooping her ears.

“We’re old enough! We’re old enough!” the foals chanted. Spike was in on it too.

“Fine,” she sighed, picking up where she left off, “Ahem. ‘He would have looked at it for a while longer if it didn’t snatch him up in its enormous toothy jaws, devouring him in one hungry bite.’” The gasp of the students filled the library, and all eyes were fixed upon the purple unicorn who blushed at the attention. “‘Blaze was watching from his window. He saw the seven legged beast greedily eat his father. Marching through the town the monster went, sending ponies running in every direction and gobbling up any it could reach with its big mouth. Blaze was a strong young colt. He puffed out his chest, and prepared himself to do battle with the monster. He would have tried too, foolish colt, but once he noticed five more of the terrible yellow creatures tearing through town devouring anything and anypony in their path, he suddenly became very wise and chose to instead hide under the bed with his younger sister.

“'They knew, huddled together under the bed, that their average lives were gone. 'What do we do now?' Frost asked, squeezing onto her doll that was missing an eye. On the floor before them lay an advertisement: it depicted a wall of shadowy creatures, their red and yellow eyes shining behind the bars of their cages, in front of which stood a tall, dark and mysterious stallion, titled as 'Renaldo: Creature Catcher Extraordinaire!' And so, their journey began...'”

“‘...Blaze looked over to Frost. Frost looked over to Blaze. Together, they looked ahead to Renaldo, his terrific pitch-black cloak and silky hat fluttering in the wind. From him, they looked up to the creature that stood before them. Now, a bear, while threatening and deadly, could be relatively easy for somepony to capture. Blaze’s uncle had done so once, or so he said. But nopony had captured an Ursa Minor before, which is precisely the creature that stood before them now. It bared its hungry fangs, dripping with saliva. Renaldo drew his blade. Blaze brandished his axe. Frost readied her scythe. With a deafening roar, the great monster leapt upon them, its razor sharp claws slicing through the air towards the group. Renaldo swung his blade with a ‘swish,’ but just as it was about to make its mark-’”

DONG DONG DONG

The bell tower chiming twelve times interrupted the story.

“Well kids, Ah guess we should get back ta class,” Macintosh said, standing and stretching.

“AaaaAAAAAwww!!” the little ponies moaned, “just five more minutes!”

“Please?” Spike begged.

“Sorry, but it’s time ta go,” Macintosh stated.

“Can we come back after school!?” a colt shouted, his body shaking with energy.

“Of course!” Twilight smiled, closing the book, “I’ll be here!” The foals reluctantly stood, regaling each other with recounts of the story they had heard. As they filed through the door, Twilight cantered over to the red stallion.

“Well, that was interesting,” she chuckled, “I have to admit, even I’m a little interested in what happens next. What made you think of all this?”

“Y’all mentioned how ya wanted the library ta be used more, so Ah thought Ah’d help ya out a bit.”

Twilight smiled, blushing a little. “Oh, thank you. That was nice of you. I don’t normally touch those sorts of books, but I guess there’s a lot more in my own home than I expected.” Macintosh followed the last student outside, bowing his head to the unicorn mare.

“No trouble’t all,” he grinned, “even them old books need a li’l love every now an’ again. All right class! Let’s head back ta school!” He lead the troupe through the streets, gathering amused glances from ponies as the fillies and colts began re-enacting scenes from the story. Three ‘monsters’ all chased a ‘Renaldo;’ a ‘Blaze’ jumped on one, tackling it to the road into a pile of giggles. All the students were enjoying themselves, save for two: the pink, tiara wearing filly and the grey filly with glasses.

“That was so, lame, right, Diamond Tiara?” the grey one snorted.

“So lame, Silver Spoon” the other replied, snout in the air, “what a foalish story. Only losers would like it.” Some of the other fillies and colts assumed similar attitudes, a complete switch from the lively playfulness they had a moment earlier. Most of the foals, however, ignored them and continued their games. Before long, the school came into view and the students stampeded down the hill, eager to finish their schoolwork so they could get right back to the library. Apple Bloom grinned at her older brother before rushing through the door, where Cheerilee stood.

“Big Macintosh!” she said, “so you took my class on a field trip to the library?”

“Eeyup. Got ‘em ta sit quietly an’ listen ta a nifty story, too.”

“I heard,” smiled the mare, “they were going on about ‘Renaldo’ this and ‘Blaze’ that while running inside. I haven’t read that book in a long time. How did you know that they’d love that old story?”

Big Mac smirked as he turned to leave. “Maybe Ah’m psychic.”