

Luna vs Videogames

A side story to the "Progress" story arc

Written by Baron Von Zakary

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"Hey Sundance? I can't find the hot sauce, think you could help?" Hoyden's voice rang out from the kitchen.

Every time I'm about to beat his score, Sundance thought scathingly. "Sure, be out in a second." She called back, putting down the controller.

Walking into the kitchen, she fixed him with a mock death-stare. "You know I was doing really well that time, not far off your lap record." Sundance teased

"Really? I hadn't noticed, been looking for some mayo for my sandwich."

"Mayo, I thought you were a hot sauce stallion?" A look of guilt flickered across Hoyden "And I guess it's just chance that with the door open like that, you could watch the whole living room from the reflection on the microwave."

Hoyden grinned guiltily. "Well... can I be blamed for wanting to gaze upon thee?"

Sundance chuckled and nuzzled him gently. "No, but you can be blamed for finding all these new ways to stop me beating you!"

"Sundance? Hoyden?"

Luna slowly opened the door and peeped into the living room. No one was around, but she could hear voices in the kitchen. Quietly she slipped into the room and went over to the TV.

"Now then, how do you work?" She said to herself, looking at Hoyden's latest toy.

About a week ago Hoyden had brought home a Game-station, whatever that was. Since then

he'd spent every night glued to the TV, and now Luna was going to find out why. She probed it with a short blast of telekinesis.

Central core, capable of data processing. Multiple memory units linked into the core and separate graphics resources. Receives data from a disk and changes the output signal depending on a remote input. She deduced, but why would this interest Hoyden?

Sitting down, Luna picked up the remote at arms length and examined that. Noting a little button that said "Start", she nudged it carefully and eeped as the screen blared into life.

The screen showed a race track, with a cartoon colt in a carriage. Several more cartoony figures in carriages zoomed past. Luna looked dumbfounded.

Glancing round the room, she saw a small box bearing the same cartoon pony. Levitating it in front of her, she opened it and extracted an operation guide. The pages flickered as Luna read the whole document in seconds.

"I see," Luna muttered to herself. "Tilting the remote acts a set of reigns, that button works the speed control and this fires weaponry. Interesting." She thought for a moment longer and then came to a realisation.

"Of course, this is some kind of training simulator from Hoyden's work! He must be bored by cannons and be considering a switch into another branch."

Pleasantly pleased that she'd figured out the Game-station without asking anyone, Luna picked up the remote and worked her way back to the main menu. She glanced at the kitchen door, Sundance and Hoyden were still talking out there. Surely Hoyden wouldn't mind if she gave it a quick go, would he?

"So we'll meet at the restaurant tomorrow at 8?"

"Yep, I'll book it after work. Hang on, we've got a new type of fuel in the cannon today, I'll book it before I clock in." Hoyden went off into his own world for a moment, a contented smile drifting over his chops as thoughts of explosions filled his head.

"Just come back in one piece this time" Sundance said, only half joking. "Oh, and we need to fill in that tax return form this week, Luna can help with that."

The word "tax" dislodged Hoyden from his daydream. "You know I don't like that word," He said with a shudder. "And where is Luna anyway?"

An answer arrived very quickly in the form of an outburst from the living room.

"CONFOUND IT ALL! YOU CHEATING RUFFIANS!"

"What the hay?" Sundance and Hoyden said in unison.

Glancing at the microwave, they could see a reflection of Luna on the sofa, she was holding a controller. A closer look saw that her carriage had just been thrown into the air by an electric blue mushroom cloud.

"Luna? Playing Game-station?" Sundance asked, her tone somewhere between amazement and bewilderment.

"Likes games does she?" Hoyden replied, his happy smile slyly creeping back.

"Back down to Equestria Hoyden, quickly now. Why is she doing that?"

"Well, she did move in to learn how normal ponies live. Perhaps she's finally getting the hang of it?"

"I don't know," Sundance chewed her lip a bit "She's hardly got the best track record, does she?"

"Live and let live. It's only a Game-station, what's the worst that could happen?"

Once more an answer arrived very quickly, this time by the soft tinkle of breaking glass, followed by the quiet voice of Luna.

"Oh, so that's what the hoof strap was for."

Sundance sighed. "Stop by the glazier as well, we should get frequent flyer miles by now." She poked her head round the kitchen door.

"We're off now Luna, have a good day"

Luna jumped slightly, she'd obviously been focusing intently. "What? Oh, right. Have a good day." She smiled and then returned to the screen.

New lesson learned, and only one window broken. Maybe she is getting the hang of modern life. Sundance thought to herself as she trotted out the front door.

The weather was fine that morning and the sun shone through the shattered window onto

Luna's face. Mildly irritated, she got up to close the curtains and did a double take as she saw the clock.

"That can't be right!" she said aloud.

According to the clock, she'd spent over 4 hours training on the simulator, but Luna would have sworn, on pain of another thousand years on the moon, that only 15 minutes had passed.

Drawing the curtains, she sat down again, wondering if she was ill. Then a memory surfaced, from the other night; Hoyden shouting to Sundance that "He'd be up in 5 minutes", and yet he was still sat there an hour later. Luna knew how she could sometimes lose herself in her work, and it was logical that Hoyden would react the same. But why was she getting so engrossed in a simulator for crash test ponies?

Failing to divine an answer, Luna went to turn off the Game-station and get on with her reading. As she lent in to switch it off, another box bearing the GS logo caught her eye. Pulling it out from under the videos Hoyden had left scattered about, she scrutinised it.

It was clearly another simulator program, but this one had cartoon colts with over developed muscles and what appeared to be their manes on fire all over the cover.

"Dragonball P: Budokai 5," Luna muttered as she read the title. "What in Equestria is this about?"

Thoughts of her book forgotten, she took the old disk out and slid this new one in. After a moment a copy of the cover art appeared on the screen. Luna went back to get the remote when the image changed. A huge stallion with every muscle toned was floating in mid-air, his mane was sticking everywhere and a light green glow surrounded him. The word "Demo" was blinking at the bottom of the screen.

Luna stared at the image, still trying to work out what this simulator was supposed to achieve. Suddenly the strange pony lunged forward, yelling "DIE KAKACOLT!". Luna screamed and jumped behind the sofa.

A quick mental note told her that it was only a simulator and therefore couldn't hurt her. A more urgent note arrived soon after to remind her that she was a princess of the realm and really shouldn't be cowering behind furniture any more. What sounding like fighting was coming from the TV. A quick peek round the sofa showed the giant fighting another smaller stallion.

Luna picked up the box and read the blurb. "Join Goki and friends as they fight against Brony, the Legendary Super Stallion." Another set of realisations hit Luna.

It's a martial arts simulator, but since when did Hoyden get into unarmed combat? She frowned

thoughtfully.

I wonder if I could learn anything from this?

Celestia was sat in the throne room, a look of polite interest perfectly masking her sheer boredom.

"And that brings us onto the reform needed on paragraph 47/B part 5."

Shut up! Shut up! Shut up!

She'd always been patient with the citizens of Equestria, and their petitions. But this was taking the hay. Apparently Luna's work over the last few weeks had stirred a fire in this lackey from the accounting department, and he was riding this new found wave of support to push his bill through.

The result being that for the last 5 hours, 47 minutes, 3 seconds and you could trust that time, because Celestia had been counting since 2 minutes in, he'd been boring the court with his ideas for improvement.

Send him to the moon! Now! No, can't do that...done it before. Perhaps a star, a really far away one.

Celestia tried to ignore the mare on her shoulder and focus on what he was saying.

Luna is going to pay for this

Now there was an idea with merit.

"So what I feel we should, and by I, I mean all of us in accounting..."

"I hate to interrupt, but I'm feeling a little faint. I think a short break is in order, meeting adjourned for one hour."

Walking over to the door, she held it open as the other members of court had a mini stampede to get out. More than one muttered "Thank you," as they passed. Celestia's horn glowed briefly as she sought out Luna. As expected, she felt her sister's energies deep in the library.

Floating serenely, and, more importantly, silently, Celestia entered the library. Her natural glow was subdued and amongst the rafters, she was nearly invisible. There, in the inner depths, as always was Luna. She was hunched over a book, Abacus in the chair next to her.

"Boo!" Celestia shouted as she lunged down, a premature look of glee on her face. That look quickly turned into confusion as her arms struck against thin air.

"KIYAH!"

Celestia turned in time to see a hoof appear inches from her face. A look of terror mixed with anger crossed her, before she took in who the hoof belonged to, and fell to the floor laughing.

There was Luna, standing on one leg, the other out-stretched at head height. She was wearing a set of orange overalls and a piece of white cloth tied round her head.

Gasping for breath, Celestia looked up, tried to speak and gave up as another wave of giggles burst out. Luna lowered the hoof and looked confused. Eventually she got to her feet, wiped the tears from her eyes and spoke.

"I knew karma owed me something good, but I never expected this. What *are* you wearing?"

"It's a gi, what one wears when practising martial arts."

Now Celestia looked confused "Since when were you interested in martial arts?"

"Well, I was trying Hoyden's simulator, and I found a fighting program. But I don't seem to be doing too well at it, so I thought reading the theory might make me better. I've already mastered the afterimage technique thanks to these books and some practise"

"Simulator?" Celestia said, only half listening. She was checking out the books on Luna's desk, and trying not to laugh as she saw Abacus was wearing a little gi as well. Tai Chi for Beginners, Home Learn Bushido, Teach Yourself Kendo. She frowned at one title.

"Dragonball P, the complete first season?"

"Well I figured that since that was the series the training program came from, I might be able to learn something from it. It's confusing though, they seem to know some powerful techniques, but I can't find any reference to them in the other books."

A penny dropped, and Celestia smiled. "This simulator Hoyden has, what make is it?"

"A Game-station, why?" She didn't like that grin Celestia had now, she really didn't.

"Luna," Celestia said gently, pulling her into a hug. "Have you ever looked up the word 'videogame'?"

Once more, Luna was sat on the sofa. This time, glaring the console before her. She had looked up videogames, the penny had dropped for her as well, and Luna felt like such a fool. It hadn't been made easier by her sister laughing as she looked at the dictionary.

But, she supposed, aside from a minor misunderstanding she had learnt what normal ponies did in their spare time. She'd also learnt the basics of martial arts, it was quite calming really, once you knew the motions.

All in all, it could have been much worse. Feeling a bit better, Luna picked up the controller and turned the Game-station on. A few rounds before she went to raise the moon wouldn't hurt. Starting the fight, she saw an opportunity and drew the remote back, reciting the mantra her favorite characters used.

"Kame-Hame..."

On the other side of town, Sundance was pleasantly surprised. In spite of the new cannon fuel, Hoyden was alive, in a single piece (minor singe marks overlooked) and had chosen a nice place to eat. A family owned establishment, overlooking Canterlot.

Hoyden was gazing out at the city, wide windows giving a beautiful view. Sundance took his hoof and looked out with him. It was a perfect scene.

"You know Hoyden, it's at times like this that I'm...what is that?"

A streak of blue light was racing across the fading sky, lighting up the dusk. Everypony in the place had turned to watch as it covered the length of Canterlot and sped off into the distance. Sundance looked along its length.

"Hoyden, isn't that coming from my house?"

Hoyden too was staring at where the light was coming from, he choked slightly on his oats as he realised that Sundance was right.

"I don't know what that is, but why do I feel that it's somehow my fault?"

"It's not your fault yet." Sundance said, tucking back into her salad. "It can wait until after the bill arrives."