



I would not trust those three near any console unless you had a spare system in the back. Just saying.

Pest Control

Main Characters: TWP, CMC, Rarity, Applejack

Cameos: Pinkie Pie, Derpy Hooves

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The Cutie Mark Crusaders are gathered at Carousel Boutique. It is Rarity's day to watch her sister,

and she has locked them out of her idea room for some private time. The young fillies sit around a computer waiting for it to boot up. Sweetie Belle is at the keyboard.

‘Why are we doing this at my house again?’ Sweetie Belle asks.

‘Because Applejack said it would cost too much t’ run the tubes t’ our farm,’ Apple Bloom says.

‘And my dad says that the internet is a tool of the liberal devils out to take our civil liberties and our guns and impose Zebra Law on us,’ Scootaloo replies.

The other two look at their friend and scoot away a little. The computer finishes booting up. The three young fillies stare at the screen wondering what to do next.

‘So what now?’ Appleboom asks.

‘Maybe Rarity has something that can help us...’ Sweetie Belle says, opening folders randomly.

‘What is that!’ Scootaloo says, pushing in front of the screen. ‘What is “ya-o-i?” Open it! It must be important if it is hidden this much.’

Sweetie Belle opens the folder. It is full of images, text files, videos and digital comics. She picks one of the comics and opens it. Instantly, Scootaloo and Apple Bloom turn as white as their friend and cover their eyes.

‘Close it! Close it now!’ Scootaloo screams.

Sweetie Belle closes the file and turns her head to one side. ‘Why were those two male unicorns touching horns?’

‘Sweetie Belle... Those weren’ their horns.’ Apple Bloom starts. She pauses for a second. ‘And Ah ain’t explainin’ the rest t’ ya.’

‘That was horrible!’ Scootaloo thinks for a moment. ‘Let’s try one of those Googles I have heard about!’

‘There is only one Google.’ Sweetie Belle corrects.

‘What are you? A Wikipedia?’

Sweetie Belle grumbles and opens a browser. She goes to the Google front page. The doodle is an 8-bit image of a green pony with sword fighting monsters across a rocky landscape spelling out ‘Google’. It is captioned ‘25th Anniversary of Legend of Celestia’.

‘What should we search for?’

‘Uh... Cool!’

‘And amazing talent!’

‘And awesome ponies!’

‘And best cutie marks!’

Sweetie Belle types in the suggestions. Scootaloo pushes in again and presses ‘Feeling Lucky’ before Sweetie Belle can search.

‘Hey!’

‘What? We want to find our cutie marks fast, right? And I am feeling lucky!’

Sweetie Belle pushes her way back as the page loads. It is a video of some sort.

‘Hello everyone, I’m Electron Jim, and welcome to some more Super Mare-io Bros ROM hacks,’ the video’s host declares.

The Cutie Mark Crusaders watch the video for a few moments with growing excitement.

‘CUTIE MARK CRUSADER LET’S PLAYER! YAY!’

In his bed, The Wandering Physicist bolts upright in a cold sweat.
'I just had the worst nightmare.'

Several hours later, The Wandering Physicist mans his shop, the newly-rechristened The Power Block. He is quite tired from a very rattling dream he had that morning. He could not get back to sleep so he decided to open shop early. Fortunately, it is a slow weekend with no major launches scheduled, and he is able to just take it easy. Very easy. Just three small customers...

The Cutie Mark Crusaders have been scouring the store looking for the perfect game to try to LP. They showed up early and the groggy store owner let them in. Despite hours of looking, they have yet to find a game to their liking. Surprisingly, they have kept their tempers and have not fought once. Well, not too vocally and physically.

'We should totally get this one! Look! The hero looks just like Rainbow Dash!'

'But that is a racing game. And racing games are booooring.' Sweetie Belle complains. 'Besides, it is my allowance.' She pauses to think. 'Why couldn't you get any money from your families too?'

'Ah asked, but mah sister said Ah had t' get a job if Ah wanted money.'

'And my dad said that video games are brainwashing tools that the Neighponese are using to take over Equestria so they can take all of our tax money and give it to their godless emperor.'

Sweetie Belle and Apple Bloom are fairly certain their friend just said something incredibly wrong but choose not to correct her. They go back to looking at games. Apple Bloom spots something higher up. She tries hard to see what it is. Scootaloo notices Apple Bloom and starts looking, too. Seconds later, Sweetie Belle joins in.

'What do you think is up there?' asks Scootaloo.

'Our destiny.' Apple Bloom replies. 'Now give me a boost.'

'Shouldn't we get the clerk to help us?' Sweetie Belle asks.

Apple Bloom looks over and sees The Wandering Physicist sleeping at the counter. 'He seems busy. Now help me up!'

The other ponies come over and Apple Bloom starts trying to climb them. The others shout as their faces get stepped on. Apple Bloom keeps looking, but she still cannot quite see what she is looking for.

'Ah need t' get higher.'

'We can't get any higher.'

'What if ya try stackin' y'all?'

'Why don't you try standing higher?'

'Fine.'

Apple Bloom tries standing with just her hind legs on the backs of her friends, but the action upsets their balance. She can almost reach the game if she can just keep her footing... At that moment, a big yawn fills the shop as The Wandering Physicist wakes. He sees the potentially dangerous situation unfolding.

'What the frak!'

The Wandering Physicist dashes around the counter and runs toward the now teetering Apple Bloom. He reaches the tower right when Apple Bloom falls. He catches her on his back as he safely pushes the other two away from the displays. He dumps her unceremoniously by her friends.

‘Drat. Almost had it.’

‘Just what the heck were you thinking?’ The Wandering Physicist growls, turning to the three young fillies. The Wandering Physicist does not like to admit it, but he has a horrible temper. Once he gets set off, you have to hope that your deity of choice exists and is in a caring mood.

‘Ah jus’ thought...’ Apple Bloom starts.

‘No, you’re wrong. You weren’t thinking. Did any of you even think to ask me for help?’

‘Told you,’ Sweetie Belle says, shoving Apple Bloom.

‘Shut up! You could have broken something very valuable and very expensive. Since I highly doubt you have a way of paying for it yourselves, I am sure you parents would be as pissed as I am to have to pay for what I would assume would be your millionth mistake.’ The Cutie Mark Crusaders are getting a little scared at this point. ‘If you try doing something like that in here again, I’ll save your parents the trouble and take care of you myself!’ The Cutie Mark Crusaders’ eyes grow wide in fear. The Wandering Physicist trots back to his post, still visibly upset. He turns back slightly. ‘Oh and they wouldn’t find your bodies.’

At the last idle, angry threat, the Cutie Mark Crusaders scream and run out of the shop, nearly hitting an arriving mailpony. They keep running and screaming, disappearing out of sight long before disappearing out of sound. The mailpony watches as the girls run away before continuing with her business at the shop.

‘You shouldn’t let your temper get the better of you, Chief,’ the walleyed mailpony says, setting a stack of packages to the counter.

‘Sorry, D-Squared. I just freak when it comes to protecting the older, rarer games.’

Derpy Hooves holds a clipboard out to The Wandering Physicist. ‘Hoofprint here.’ The Wandering Physicist prints the document. ‘And do you have my game?’

The Wandering Physicist gets out a copy of Mass Effect 2. ‘Want the guide?’

The Wandering Physicist and Derpy laugh heavily at the question, the in-joke being that she was a genius at RPGs and could probably beat the game in her sleep. After the laugh, Derpy takes the game under her wing and heads out. The Wandering Physicist yawns, stretches and starts putting away the packages.

Later in the day, The Wandering Physicist has nearly fallen asleep again and is resting his chin on the counter. After the encounter with the Cutie Mark Crusaders and the delivery from Derpy, only a few more customers came to the shop. He considers closing early to take an early dinner and going back to bed when the shop door slams open. An orange mare with a blonde mane stands in the doorway looking furious. She marches over to The Wandering Physicist.

‘Ah need t’ speak with the manager,’ the new pony demands.

‘Yo,’ The Wandering Physicist replies.

‘Well, one o’ yer employees was very mean t’ mah little sister earlier.’

‘I can assure you that whatever was said was completely justified and your sister just needs better

supervision or better parenting in order to fit into society as a decent pony.’

‘Why you... Wait. Y’all were the one that was mean t’ her aren’t you?’

‘I don’t give them hell. I just tell them the truth and they think it is hell. ... Trupony said that.’

‘Ah don’ care ‘bout yer fancy quotes from ponies Ah ain’t never heard o’’. Ya threatened mah sister and Ah aim t’ correct that mistake o’ yours.’

The Wandering Physicist groans as he finally stands up again. ‘Did you happen to get the full story? Like why she was in trouble in the first place?’

‘Uh, no. But y’all threatened mah...’

‘Blah, blah blah. Did she tell you that she was standing on her friends while reaching for a rare game? And that they were about to fall on a display containing discontinued, therefore rare and expensive, consoles? Did she?’

‘Well, no, but...’

‘I know you are well-meaning and that I did lose my temper more than I should have, but would you rather have had to pay for hundreds of bits of damage to replace the damaged or destroyed items?’

‘Well, that woulda been a big hit t’ the farm’s expenses... but she is mah sister, so Ah should be the one t’ punish her if she causes trouble.’

‘I agree. I really overstepped my bounds. Please accept my apology.’ The Wandering Physicist bows a little.

Applejack is confused at the generally conciliatory nature of the stallion. ‘Ah don’ know what y’all are tryin’ t’ pull, but Ah ain’t buyin’ it.’

‘And that is your right as a free pony.’ The Wandering Physicist smiles and bows again.

Applejack backs, away getting a little nervous. ‘Ya ain’t gonna t’ mention wantin’ t’ make cupcakes now, are ya?’

‘Oh! I haven’t eaten all day. Those would be good.’ The Wandering Physicist looks up and starts drooling a little.

Applejack is even more confused by this odd pony. ‘Okay. Fine. Ah won’ be reportin’ what ya did t’ no authorities, but Ah still don’ trust ya!’ Applejack starts leaving the shop. ‘Ah got mah eye on ya!’

The Wandering Physicist checks something on his computer and smirks. ‘Oh. Tell Big Mac that his preorder comes in next week.’

‘Consarn it!’

It is the early evening. The Wandering Physicist has some pizza on his counter from an impromptu Super Smash Ponies tournament with the comic shop owner, Marvel Crystal, and any unfortunate pony who wandered in and dared challenge them. He is still playing and snacking when the shop door opens again.

‘Oh dear. This place is dreadfully tacky.’

The Wandering Physicist pauses and looks over to see a well-groomed white unicorn with a pristine purple mane staring at the displays disdainfully. ‘That “tackiness” is what my customers expect. You can’t really make space mare-ines look too classy.’

‘Hmm... I see your point. They can’t really make them with necks, too, it seems.’

‘Ugh. They locked in one design twenty years ago, and it has stuck ever since.’

‘My word!’

‘Tell me about it. Anyway, how may I help you and do you want some pizza?’

Rarity leans in and sniffs. ‘Eh... no thanks. I am here to talk to you about an incident that occurred at your store earlier.’

The Wandering Physicist groans. ‘Great another concerned sister.’

‘Ah. So you met Applejack.’ Rarity looks around the store. ‘Your store seems to be intact still... Anyway, I heard a really disturbing tale. One that caused my sister to rush home and hide in her room all day. She is still cowering under her bed and refuses to come out. This leaves me with but one course of action.’

The Wandering Physicist grimaces a little. The prospect of being blasted by unicorn magic does not appeal to him. He closes his eyes and prepares for the worst. To his surprise, he is not hit by magic. Instead, he is grabbed by the hooves.

‘Please tell me how you got her to behave!’ Rarity pleads. ‘I have never had this quiet a day since she was born! Please tell me! I must know! I need this peace and serenity to last forever!’

Outside, a pink pony randomly shouts ‘FOREVEEEEEEEEEER!’ as she walks past the store.

The Wandering Physicist backs away a couple steps. ‘I didn’t do anything special. I just yelled a lot.’

‘Hmm... That is normally ineffectual against her. Could it be the contents of your yelling that carried weight?’

The Wandering Physicist nervously laughs. ‘Nothing more than your average death threat.’

‘And that actually worked?’

‘I guess so.’

‘Hmm... I will have to give it another shot. Thank you, good sir.’

‘No problem, madam.’

‘Ooo! Another pony with manners. It is a pleasure to meet you, mister...’

‘They call me The Wandering Physicist, I don’t kn...’

‘Hmm... Unique and mysterious. I like it, despite it being a bit of a mouthful.’

‘I’ll have to work on that.’

‘You may call me Rarity, or Lady Rarity if you prefer.’

‘It is a pleasure, Miss Rarity.’

‘Hmm... I guess that will do too.’ Rarity starts leaving the shop. ‘If you ever need some help making your store more... upscale in the design department, I’ll be glad to help.’

‘Thanks. Peace.’

Rarity takes her leave of the store and returns home, taking a second to recoil in horror at a bespectacled stallion wearing a Pony Arcade t-shirt exiting the comic shop. The Wandering Physicist takes a moment to check the street for any other approaching ponies before returning inside and locking the doors.

‘I don’t know what happened today, but it happened.’