

Family Matters

My first day back at work was pretty nice. I found out that Amanda had quit for reasons unknown, and they were deliriously happy to have me back. Don had decided to take a vacation of his own and for some reason the boss wouldn't tell anyone when he was coming back. Not that I can blame Don, he had apparently won his dream; a trip to Equestria. Needless to say, things had gotten bad, and the company was more than happy to leave me to tackle the tech work in peace while the newb floor monkeys ran interference to keep the customers away from me. It was a good day.

After the shift was over, I had handed things off to some new hire they had me training, and I was in high spirits on my way home. Things had worked out well for me and Pinkie; I gave her plenty of hugs and cuddles, and she was working on her jealousy issues. She had even started sending letters to her old flame back in Equestria. As an added bonus, she was no longer trying to jump my bones. Life was good again.

As an even better bonus, she had started to pick up on my need for a clean and orderly home, and became quite the domestic little housekeeper. I didn't care if it was only an effort to make me happy, She seemed to enjoy it, and I got my house cleaned for free. Win-win, baby!

So as I entered the house, I felt like a 50's sitcom husband coming home to his loving wife. I almost had the urge to pull out a pipe and wear a smoking jacket. I was not at all surprised to hear Pinkie happily vacuuming the rugs, although how she did it on two legs kind of baffled me. Even the song she sang was strangely fitting, if a bit creepy.

[“And it's hard to learn,
And it's hard to love,
When you're giving me such sweet nothing.
Sweet nothing, sweet nothing!
You're giving me such sweet nothing!”](#)



The techno beat thumped through the house, making me grin as my perky pink pony pranced, leading the purring machine around the couch. What sat on the couch, however made me stop dead. Grinning happily were the two people I least expected to see, and a mix of emotions ran through my mind as I realized I had no idea how to react. As my parents watched my roommate dance around, they were nodding their head to the music, not noticing me at all. I pondered for a moment turning to run, thinking of a way to explain everything that had been going on. It had been years since they visited, and I had totally forgotten to tell them about getting a roommate, let alone that she was a pony. Hell, they might even be one of those pony haters. Goodness knows, my dad was a hard headed bastard, despite marrying a black Jamaican woman, and had his share of prejudices.

But that all came crashing down as Pinkie turned to me and gasped. “Hiya Louis! Welcome home! You’re never gonna guess who stopped by for a visit!”

I shit you not, I heard a needle scratch across a record as the music came to a halt. I don’t even own a record player, but even without magic, one grows used to the unexpected happening when Pinkie is involved. Quickly, I managed to plaster a smile on my face as I turned to see the reaction of my parents, but was met with genuine smiles in return.

“Hey Louie! Come over here and give yer old man a hug!” My larger-than-life father threw his arms wide waiting for said hug as he stood up, my mother behind him.

“Louis, my child. I have missed you so much!” My mother’s islander accent rolled over me and brought back memories of her singing me to sleep, and was a mellow counterpoint to my father’s brash redneck accent. Suddenly all my worries flowed away, and I felt a tear come to my eye as I rushed forward, feeling like a kid fresh home from his first day of school.

“Mom, Dad!” I rushed forward and hugged them both, getting a kiss on the cheek from my mother, while my father pounded on my back as if I were choking. “I missed you guys so much!”

“Well we keep telling ya to bring yer ass down to visit, but you are too good to take a break and

see yer folks.” My dad gently smacked me in the back of the head as a rebuff.

“Honey, leave ‘im alone. He’s all grown, an ‘as a life to live.” My mother kissed me gently on the forehead and gave me another hug.

“Ooh, is it time for hugs! ‘Cus I’m a world champion hugger, in two worlds!” Suddenly we were all crammed together as a pair of pink arms wrapped around us.

“Pinkie, leggo!” I squawked

“Oh, sorry, was that supposed to be a private hug? I sometimes have trouble telling the difference.” Jumping back, Pinkie managed to look abashed while still grinning madly.

“Ahem. Mom. Dad. I would like you to meet my roommate, Pinkie Pie of Equestria. Pinkie, this is my mom and dad.” I waved by way of introductions.

“Oh my, you *have* grown up, kid. And it’s good to see you finally got over Darci. And with a pony, no less?” Wagging his eyebrows at me, my dad chuckled.

“Aww, is so romantic! My little boy has gotten himself a pony girl! I am soo ‘appy for you, though we were ‘oping for some grandchillin.” My mother pulled pack to look me over as she beamed proudly.

“What? Wait, no! It’s nothing like that!” I sputtered, taking a step back. “Pinkie and I are just friends. I needed some extra money, it’s a big house, and she needed a place to live. We are definitely not dating!”

At this my father’s face started to cloud over, and he balled his fists. “Boy, you know better than to lie to us. We both heard how that girl talks about you, and iffin that ain’t love, then yer a fuckin idiot. And we didn’t raise no idiot!”

“Daryl, leave the boy alone. I’m sho he has something to say bout it.” My mother put a hand on my dad’s arm, and I saw the anger flow away like a punctured balloon. Turning to me, she smiled gently and encouraged me to continue. “Go on, child. Tell us erryting.”

“I’m sorry, Mister and Mrs Louis’ parents. I didn’t mean to get him in trouble.” Pinkie stepped in, standing between me and my parents, who now wore skeptical expressions. “I really do love him, and he loves me, but not in the same way.” Looking up at me, I couldn’t help but kneel and give her a hug. “It’s complicated. We had some rough times, but it just made us closer friends, and that’s far more important than anything.”

“Yeah, we are not a couple in the traditional sense, but we are closer than friends now.” Chiming in, now that my parents were starting to look less aggravated. “We finally agree that we can be close, but still have our own romantic and physical lives. Well, as long as she gets her daily hug therapy.” I grinned at my pink partner, and she started to giggle.

“So you haven’t fucked yet?” My dad managed to reply drolly.

“Daryl! That was quite uncalled for!” My mother scolded him, slapping him hard on the arm. Being on the receiving end of those slaps, I didn't blame my dad for wincing.

“What? It's a perfectly valid question for a concerned parent to ask. And I notice he hasn't answered yet.” Glaring at me pointedly, he crossed his arms.

“No dad, I haven't slept with her, or any other ponies. It's not that kind of relationship, and I'm just not sexually attracted to ponies.”

“Not for lack of trying!” Pinkie chimed in, forcing me to facepalm. “He really sticks by his standards, even when ya get him drunk!”

This broke the ice, prompting the three of them to laugh, while I slowly died of humiliation.

“Yeah that's my boy, such a stickler for having things just right. Dunno where he gets it from. Get a few shots in me and I'm stupid enough to do anything.” Grinning like a fool, my dad plopped back onto the couch.

“Oh, like the time you took a bet and asked da bar owner's daughter out on a date?” My mom poked him in the arm with a wicked grin.

“Well damn. It didn't take gettin liquored up to wanna do that. She was the prettiest thing on the island. The booze was to get up the balls to get ask her knowing I was gonna git rejected, and then have my ass kicked by her three brothers.” My dad rolled his eyes, getting into the story. “You shoulda seen em, every one looked like they were linebackers carved outta coal, and they had a reputation for kicking the shit outta tourists that messed with their sister.”

“They were pussycats! I was the one that used to beat them at any sport they tried, but my Da never let me go out witout dem.” She rolled her eyes. “He was raisin a proppa lady, he says. Bah! Why ya think I say yes? It was to piss off mah old man.”

“Ahh, and in that act of rebellion, I got my chance at the second most beautiful woman alive.” Grinning like an idiot, my dad set up the joke, while me and my mom rolled our eyes having heard it a thousand times.

“Ooh, if she was the second, who was the first?” Pinkie predictably rose to the bait.

“Why her mother, of course. Too bad she was already married. But I was charming enough to talk her into letting me have the second prize, and she had her husband wrapped around her finger, so he didn't even get a chance to say no.” Slapping his knee, my dad guffawed at the old joke, while Pinkie laughed way harder than was necessary. Then again, this was Pinkie.

“Like I dun have you wrapped round my finga? Ain't that right?” My mother raised an eyebrow at my dad, daring him to disagree.

“Yes dear.” he responded sullenly, still grinning.

I looked between them, the old chemistry flowing that made them such a happy couple, and

made me feel part of a loving family, no matter how dysfunctional. Pinkie was laughing along like she had grown up with us, and they seemed to treat her no different despite her species or origin. Finally I felt the tension that had been balled up inside me let go, as I discovered they were not going to reject my closest friend.

“So, you guys are alright with this?” I motioned between myself and Pinkie. “I mean, her living her and all? I know some folks aren’t so happy about it.”

“Son, stop bein stupid. I’m a poor white redneck from West Virginia. My grandpappy was a member of the Klu Klux Klan, and I’m pretty sure if you shook our family tree, some Nazis would fall out. And yet I went and married the blackest woman on the planet, and then told my own pa to go fuck himself if he didn’t like it!” Once again, my father bellowed, as his face turned red, and then with a touch from my mom, it was all gone in a blink. “You go on an live yer own life, son. We gave you this house to do with as you please. Live with who you want, love who you want, and don’t let *anybody* tell you otherwise. Not even an old bastard like me.

“So is grandpop still trying to sue you for the mountain?” I asked, quietly. My recent trip had brought the subject closer to my mind lately.

“Hell yeah he is. And the fucker can keep on tryin, cuz my lawyer is more expensive than his. He had his chance.” This time he didn’t calm down at my mother’s coaxing, but instead stood up. “I think I need a drink. Is the bar still open?”

My mother and Pinkie looked at him and then at each other, and finally at me. I saw the silent pleading in my mother’s eyes and nodded. “Yea dad, they still keep a seat open for you. Joe says it’s the least he can do after you saved the place.”

“Damn straight. Good to see he took my advice and didn’t run the place into the ground.” With a huff, he headed for the door. “You ladies, be safe, I’ll be back in a few.”

“I’ll go too, Dad. We got some catching up to do, and we can leave the ladies to their gossip.” I grinned, and received a pair of tongues stuck at me in response, while my old man just laughed and slapped me on the back. He turned away just in time to miss the smile and thankful nod from my mother.

Joe’s bar was a local landmark, one that almost didn’t survive the recent economic downturn. It was my dad’s favorite watering hole, and when Joe ran into some financial trouble, my dad used his contacts to swoop in and buy the place from the bank. Then he promptly turned it back over to Joe, after extracting a promise to fix the place up and stop being an idiot with finances. Joe took it to heart, turning it from a shithole dive bar, into a rather nice sports bar that had even been featured in several newspaper articles. He even went so far as to date and marry an accountant, who kept his ass out of jail, and the bar’s accounts in the black. I heard rumor he was thinking about starting a family night, since he had a kid himself now. Yes, family, fun, and free drinks for the kids! Non-alcoholic, of course.

“Heya Joe! Glad to see the place hasn’t burned down yet!” My dad waved to the bartender on

duty, getting a shocked look in response. The comment wasn't entirely in jest, as there had been at least one incident when Joe passed out behind the bar with a lit cigarette.

"Daryl! You bastard, you never return my letters, and you blocked all my calls!" Joe hopped over the bar with an athletic fitness that was out of place for someone his age.

"Yea, well I told you last time that we were through, after I caught you cheating on me with that pretty wife of yours..." Affecting a false gay voice, my dad ribbed his long time friend.

"I can't help it, she gives better head than you. And she doesn't need to shave before she does it!" With a laugh, the two friends hugged, beating each other on the back like vikings after a mighty battle.

"You remember my son, Louis?" My dad put his arm around me.

"Is that little Louie? Where ya been, kid? My little dive not good enough for you these days?" Punching me in the arm, he grinned getting one in return.

"Naa Mr. Joe, I just turned into a beer snob and started hanging out at the brewery. The scenery is a bit nicer there." I waggled my eyebrows at him, not needing to elaborate on the walking decor that was the mainstay of my favorite place. Tits and Ass were complimentary with every meal at The Station. In fact, I couldn't remember ever seeing a male server there.

"Yea, can't blame ya there. Nice view, good brew. I lost a few of my better servers to them too. But people come here for other shit." He waved an arm across the room, where low lights were interspersed with neon and TVs showing various sporting events.

"Yea, like dark booths, cheap booze, and cheaper beer." My dad quipped in.

"And don't forget, the cleanest bathroom in town! No piss on my floor, nosirreebob!" Hopping back over the bar, he pulled out a rag and wiped a spot clean. "So what can I get ya? Anything you want, on the house!"

"Bah, damn straight! Deed's still in my name after all. Although, I may sign it over to your kid for her graduation gift. Then you can work for her!" giving a toothy smile, my dad had that look that made you wonder if he was really joking or not. It was usually a bad idea to call him on it.

"Yeah, yeah, rub it in. Not that I would mind working for the little scamp. Five years old, already smarter than both her parents, and had her eyes on a master's degree in business. I still wanna know who my wife cheated on me with so I can thank him, 'cuz them smarts sure as hell didn't come outta my pants!" Rolling his eyes, Joe pulled a pair of beers with practiced ease, sliding them across to us.

"Recessive genes, ain't they a bitch? But I got my smart changeling outta the deal. Gimme a bottle of whiskey, and rum for the kid. He has his mother's taste." Turning to me with the beers, he handed me one and we toasted. "To honor! If ya can't cum in her, cum on her!" And with a laugh, we downed the brew.

After we had retired with our bottles, and several shots had been downed, we settled in for the much needed talk. I was not entirely sure I wanted to have it, but when my dad wanted something, he eventually got it. It was usually less painful to just accept it and get it over with.

“So, what’s the real story with you and the pony girl? Last I heard, you were still bawlin yer eyes out over that whale of a girl, Darci. You finally get over that bitch?” My dad’s bloodshot eyes bored into me like a laser, and I felt like a little kid being scolded for being naughty again.

“I got over her long ago. I moved on, but things got a little tight. I guess I may have been a little lonely too, so I decided to rent out my old room. It’s a big house, and it costs alot to run.” I shrugged.

“I fuckin know what it takes to cool and heat that place. I fuckin built the damn thing, remember?” He grunted, taking another shot of whiskey, and chasing it with beer.

“Yea, well. Retail sucks, and even with a bachelor’s, its all I could get for now. I didn’t plan to have a girl move in. It coulda been a guy. I sure as hell wasn’t expecting a damn pony, of all things.” I returned his shot with one of my own.

Holding his next shot up to the light, he feigned gazing into it’s amber depths, as if seeking enlightenment. “I sense a ‘but’ thar, son.”

“Buuut... She kinda grows on ya. At first she annoyed the piss outta me, always spazzing out and wrecking the place, but she was so cute and innocent. It felt like having a little kid sister, always underfoot.”

“Buuut?” he intoned.

“But shit got serious. Seems all the ponies turn into nymphos when they are in heat. She tried to jump me, and I wound up locking her in my room.” At the look my dad gave me, I quickly amended, “Alone! By herself! It’s not like that dad, honest!”

He just grunted, drinking the shot. I reciprocated, starting to feel the booze kick in.

“Well after that, things got weird. She started chasing after me, acting all jealous and shit. I started dating this girl at work...”

“Never a good idea, that.” He nodded sagely, motioning me to continue.

“Yeah, well. She kinda lost it, wound up splitting us up. It was for the best, since the bitch I was dating was a golddigger. But it all blew up in our faces.”

“Hah! Found out yer old man had all the money, eh? Now you see why I did that?” he chuckled darkly.

“Yea, well after things calmed down, I spent some time with a friend of hers. Turns out most ponies just live off hugs and shit, and that was all Pinkie wanted. So we are just good friends, we hug, hang out, but that’s all. I’m just not that into ponies, not that she seems to care. But she

keeps her hooves to herself now, and we are doing fine.” I finally wound down, taking another shot to cover the awkward silence.

“Seems to me yer just bullshitting yerself, son. Pony or not, she seems like a sweet girl, and she genuinely cares for ya. That’s hard to find, and even harder to hold on to. Try not to fuck that up.” He grunted, and got up to head to the restroom, leaving me to stew.

I had some time to think, and it kept coming back to the fact that I just could not get past seeing her as a furry animal, no matter how close we got. Did that make me a bigot? Was I no better than the bastards that treated me like shit because of me skin color? It didn’t feel the same. Racism was bullshit, we were all human. But what about different species? Wasn’t there some bible thumping shit about that? Not that I believed any of that religious nonsense.

My inner diatribe was interrupted by the return of my father, sliding into the booth across from me, and pouring another shot. He didn’t say a word as he chased it with the last of his beer, and smiled at me with a rather creepy grin.

“So, did I ever tell you about the time I shagged a pony?” The grin grew even creepier, as I just stared in shock. “She was the cutest thing. I was drunk as fuck, of course, and chillin in a field up home. Suddenly this little mare comes over to me and starts rubbin her head on my hand, so I scratched her ears, all friendly like. Then she started sniffin my beer, and I figured I knew what she wanted. She didn’ have much of a tolerance, but she could chug a beer like a pro. She downed three before I could finish my one, and I just knew I had found a friend.”

“Wait, you gave a pony beer? Is that even healthy?” I gaped at the image of my dad and a pony girl sitting around getting drunk. It was mind boggling.

“Hell if I know, but if a girl wants a beer, you give her a beer! She was really friendly too, kept rubbin up against me an shit. Next thing I knew, she had her ass in my face, and was lookin over her shoulder at me. I figgered, why the fuck not? We were both consenting adults.” Downing another shot, he pointed a finger at my shocked expression. “Don’t gimme that look. It get’s cold at night up in them hills.” He grinned at me lecherously. “Next thing I know, I’m balls deep in pony poon, and she’s the warmest thing I ever had. I swear she was tryin to ride me, instead of the other way ‘round.” Sighing wistfully, he smiled at the memory, as I stared on in horror. “I remember waking up, warm pony still in my arms, and and she kept nibbling on my beard. I never did find out her name, or see her again.”

“Dad, that has got to be the single most fucked up thing that you have ever said to me. I honestly could have went the rest of my life never knowing, and been far happier.” I had a sudden thought, “Oh fuck, does mom know?”

Laughing uproariously, he slapped me on the back. “Of course she knows. My dumb ass got drunk and told her. She made me sleep on the couch for three days after that.”

“Wow, that’s all? Three days and she forgave you?” I was baffled. My mother’s temper could be just as hot as my dad’s, and she could be just as unforgiving.

“Of course she forgave me! It happened long before we met, after all.” He rolled his eyes, a

habit I had picked up from him.

Suddenly the gears in my head ground to a halt, and a chill came over me. "Wait a moment, that has to be bullshit, dad. You and mom met before the portal to Equestria opened, so how did you fool around with a pony before then?"

"Well, fuck son. I never said it was a damn Equestrian pony." Throwing up his arms, he leaned back as the full impact of what he had told me hit home.

Suddenly I was far too sober for this shit.

After a leisurely stumble home, having years of practice avoiding notice while intoxicated in public, we rolled through the door stinking drunk. Talks had thankfully steered away from my life, and interspecies relations, in favor of lighter topics such as what total pricks tourists were. Even up north I had my share, mostly immigrants off cruise ships, or day laborers with cash burning their pockets. Florida, however, was far worse, according to my dad. It wasn't just tourists, it was rich, pompous tourists, and the snow birds that owned half of the state. Yea. Fuck those people.

"HONEY I'M HOOOOME!" We both sang as we stumbled into the house.

Leaning against each other, we made our way into the living room where Pinkie and Mom were happily chatting. My dad collapsed onto the couch and I grabbed an arm chair. The two women in the room gave us flat stares, before returning to whatever they were doing. I gazed over, my head feeling rather heavy, and my vision just a little off center, and tried to focus on what had their attention. Sobriety never comes as fast as when adrenaline hits your brain.

"Oh fuck, where'd you find those? I thought I burned them!" I stared in shock as I realized they were pouring over a photo album.

"Aye had copies made, ya lil hellion. I knew it was you dat took dem. And now I kin show yer pretty marefriend as erry motha should!" She grinned and turned the page, as Pinkie giggled.

"He looks so cute when he's naked, doesn't he? Good thing he grew!" Covering her mouth with a hoof, Pinkie snickered and looked at me.

"She ain't my girlfriend! And how the hell you know what I look like naked?" I tried to stand, but was still too drunk to complete the motion, falling back on my ass. "Either one of you!" I pointed in impotent rage. I looked over to my dad for support, only to find him sprawled out and snoring.

"Well ya never wore no clothes as a child, ya little jay bird. I 'memba chasin ya round da house to put yer pants on." My traitor of a mother grinned fiendishly, and turned the page, as she looked at me. "'Sides, Aye know what ya pa looks like, and he's no small ting." This got another giggle from the pony.

"MOM! Stop it. She's bad enough already. Prolly stalks me in the shower and watches me sleep and stuff." I glared at them both and crossed my arms, looking every bit the petulant child.

“Oh I only once saw you in the shower, and I only watch you sleep when you go to bed early.” Pinkie piped in. “You are just so darn cute when you sleep, but I gotta get up early for work too, you know!”

“Oh yea, that’s not creepy at all.” I rolled my eyes, shaking my head.

“Is not so creepy iffin ya make an honest mare outta her. Why don’t ya quit lyin ta yerself and settle down now?” And there goes the Vulcan Eyebrow. Everyone wonders where I get it from, and there it is.

“Seriously? You too mom?” I sigh and let my head flop back on the chair. “I am not attracted to ponies. I only date girls. *Human* girls. Pinkie is just a good friend.” I intoned mechanically. “Why does everyone have such a problem dealing with this? Even Pinkie finally gets it, right Pinks?”

I look up for a confirmation, and find I am once again being ignored, as the two women giggle over the cuteness of my childhood. “Ooh, he was so adorable in that costume! We should totally dress up together for Nightmare Night!” Pinkie continued to enjoy my most embarrassing moments, as my mother just smiled knowingly. I have to admit, they looked like old friends, and was not surprised they got along so well. My mother long hid a wild streak, which my father had finally unleashed upon the world. I dreaded what kind of parties they would plan together.

“Bah, screw this. I’m goin to bed. When you two cougars are done giggling at my pre-pubescent manhood, don’t forget to post them all over Stalkerbook!” I grumbled as I made my way to my room.

As I was walking away, I heard something that made me pause, “Should I tell em that I posted these months ago?” The response to my mother’s query was a high pitched giggle followed by a snort.

Oh god, I hope she was kidding...

Waking up to the mother of all hangovers was normally the universe telling me kicked ass last night. Waking up to my mother’s cooking, with the mother of all hangovers, was just plain cruel. Not that her food was bad, quite the opposite. But how hungry are you when your stomach is doing backflips and your head is building a three lane highway between your ears? It was torture to smell such wonderful food and have it make you feel ill.

Thankfully my mother was married to my dad, and had learned a few things about dealing with hangovers. Being a voodoo priestess probably helped as well. You can imagine how well my father’s family accepted that, but it made for some awesome home remedies.

“Boy, you look like the coyote after the road runner got done buttfuckin him with a two by four.” My dad, colorful as always, greeted me first.

“Yea, well you look like the shit he took afterwards.” I replied. My parents never told me not to

curse, but they did teach me there was a time and a place for it. When I was old enough, my dad even taught me how to do it properly.

This didn't stop the two women in the room from sharing a look of long suffering. "Child, you should know betta den to try an drink yer pa unda da table. He already got age and stupidity on his side."

"Yea, and you already told me he has a hollow leg to keep his booze in. Although what a human would need with three legs, I dunno. Although with four legs, he could be like a proper pony!" Prattling on, Pinkie was already making my headache worse. "Although there was the time Applejack mentioned her brother having a fifth leg, but she got kinda mad when I asked if I could see it." And there went my coffee, down the wrong hole.

As I coughed, my mother took the coffee mug from my hands and handed me one of her remedies, and patted me on the back. My dad was laughing, and Pinkie just looked confused. "Did I say something funny?"

I just shook my head and drank the noxious brew. In moments my head began to clear, and my mother handed me the coffee back. It was followed by her famous Jamaican eggs and ham, which I thanked her for, and tore into with a vengeance.

"So what you guys got planned while yer here?" I managed to mumble between bites.

"Oh, just checking up on a few things, like our son, who hasn't visited us in two years. Also, we were looking into a trip to Equestria, and wanted to get the paperwork out of the way." My dad leaned back in his chair, toothpick working the last of the ham from his teeth.

"I don't get it dad. I mean, I'm all happy that you don't mind Pinkie staying, but I never thought you would be so laid back about the ponies." I shrugged, and got a nod from my mother.

"Despite marrying mom, you are still a bit of a bigoted redneck, no offense. Hell, all you did was bitch about the Mexicans when I visited you in Boca, when you weren't bitching about the tourists, that is."

"Yea, well... It did seem a bit odd at first, having talkin animals and such, but no different than the cartoons you used to watch. But then yer ma started talkin online to some voodoo pony, and they became friends. Next thing I know, I got some rhymin zebra chick visiting us, and they become best friends." He waved toward my mother, who threw a dish towel at him.

"Is called Obeah, ya ignorant hillbilly. Is the old way of me ancestors, not voodoo. Zecora is a great shaman of her people, and her ways are like the ones lost since the white man beat them out of us." My mother crossed her arms in anger at the old argument.

"Call it what you want, love. It's all tribal voodoo to me. Even yer folks didn't like it none. I remember that was one of the reasons ya wanted to leave so badly." I covered my face with my hands, having heard this argument many times. "I gotta admit though, the zebra chick makes all that hocus pocus sounds sexy the way she rhymes it." I looked up, realizing he was talking to me. "I even tried to talk her into a threesome. Lemme tell you what, getting bitchslapped with a hoof hurts like the dickens." Cackling with laughter, he clapped the table.

"Ooh, so you know Zecora? Me and her are friends from back in Ponyville!" Pinkie jumped on her chair, smiling at my mother.

"Ya, she has been teaching me her people's medicines and tribal ways. Like my stump of a 'usband said, my ma and pa never liked the old ways. My Gran was a high priestess, and took me under her wing to teach me. It made my parents furious!" Beaming with pride, she patted the hyper pink pony on the head.

"Oh, oh! Your granny had wings too? My Granny Pie was a pegasus, and boy was it a surprise! In fact, that's what they named her, Surprise Pie. She was the first Pegasus to be born in the Pie family in like, FOREVER!" Pinkie babbled on, getting more and more animated. "She was alot like me, always happy, and funny, and party, and loved to pull pranks!" Grinning eagerly, she barreled on, caught up in her own tale. "The town I grew up in didn't like that, and they made her live away from everypony. Some even called her a witch, or said she was a changeling! She was the nicest pony I ever knew, and when everypony found out I was like her, they made me go live with her. She taught me everything about everything, even how to have fun and party!" A sad smile brought her fevered ranting to a close. "I really miss my Granny Pie."

Sensing an opening, my mother leaned down to hug the suddenly somber mare. "Is alright child, she will always be in yer heart."

"Actually, she's in Flyami. There's a pegasus retirement community down there, and she got the job as the event organizer." Perking up, she grinned at us.

"That's good to hear, child. But to answer your question, no, my Gran did'na have wings. She was an angel, nonetheless, and taught me a great many things about my people and the world around us. And I am learning even more from my Zebra friend."

"That reminds me, what the hell do ponies worship anyway?" My dad decided to chime in. "Zecora is always goin on bout ancestors and shit, but the other ponies I've met never talk about anyone but their princess."

"Oh, most ponies are what you call agnostic, although there are still some sun and moon worshipers in the old families. The princesses don't like it though and discourage it." she shrugged. "My family is one of the really old ones, Maneonites, going way back before the princesses, and worship the old stuff. They are all real strict about working hard, suffering alot, and praying. Smiling and having fun are frowned upon, and let me tell you, they do alotta frowning!" Her voice grew very somber as she went on. "That was one of the reasons I had to leave. I didn't believe in all that 'Suffer for your eternal reward' stuff. My Granny Pie taught me that life is precious, and we need to celebrate every moment of it!" Her bright smile returned, and she looked up, beaming at is. "I'd much rather make my friends happy, and enjoy life now, than worry about some silly afterlife."

That brought smiles to everyone's faces, as my dad brought his coffee mug up for a toast. "To family and friendship, may they never interfere with one another." We all cheerfully joined in.

"That was surprisingly deep for you, dad." I grinned at him.

“Well, as I always say, ‘Kin before Clan, and friends above all!’”

“You never said that before.” I looked at him flatly.

“Sure I did, I say it all the time. Right honey?” He turned to my mom with a fake smile.

“I don’t even know you. What you doin in my kitchen?” Raising a frying pan, she pretended to brandish it at him. My dad just rolled his eyes as we all laughed.

So it was decided that the women would spend the day shopping, as women will do, regardless of species. Meanwhile my dad was off to see some old friends and check up on some old business interests. I was left to my own devices, and decided to go see a movie. There was a new trend in hollywood to remake old classic movies with ponies, both for the earth market and Equestria. One in particular was getting rave reviews, so I got to laugh at Ghostbusters from a pony point of view. It was just as good as the original.

We had all agreed to meet up later that night for dinner, with my parents footing the bill at one of the more expensive places that I could rarely afford. My dad insisted that no matter where you were in life, you had to enjoy the good things. But hell, if he was paying, who was I to argue? So off to Blue Oyster I went. Gotta love them cheddar biscuits!

Arriving promptly at eight o’clock, I saw no sign of my dad at the bar, where he would usually gravitate towards. My mom and Pinkie were also curiously absent, which was my second red flag. My dad was never late for a meal, and my mother rarely let him make an ass of himself in public without being there to rein him in. However, the maitre d’ was happy to see me, and said the reservations were in order. He assured me that my parents had phoned ahead and would be late, so I let myself be shown to a table.

“Hiya Louis!” I heard a familiar bubbly voice from behind me, and turned around with a happy smile to see Pinkie.

The smile froze on my face at what greeted me. Gone was the frizzy, unkempt hair, and mostly naked furry coat, replaced with a form fitting red dress that looked like something Jessica Rabbit would wear to the Chinese New Year celebration. Her hair was straightened and braided into an impossibly long plait that hung off one shoulder, sort of like Princess Leia, and her face was only subtly made up, with a touch of lipstick and some eye shadow. She even appeared to have her hooves painted a deep red to match the dress. The entire effect was so unlike the normal poofy, pink furball that I was familiar with that I couldn’t help but stare.

Finally my jawless stare began to take effect, and the normally unabashed mare began to blush. “Umm, do you like it?” Rubbing one hoof along the other leg, she shifted shyly under my gaze.

“Awha?” Finding my voice, I shook my head to clear the shock and blinked. “Wow Pinkie, you look amazing!”

“Aww, thanks Louis! You mom found this really nice salon that caters to ponies, and we both got full makeovers! Then we went shopping and she helped me pick out this nice outfit. It’s a little more snug than I’m used to, but it makes me feel super duper sexy!” Giving a little twirl, she turned and showed the rest of the outfit off.

I saw that her tail was also plaited, with gold and black ribbons woven in, and small flowers peeking between the plaits. Thankfully, I also noticed the dress came down over her rump, and almost past her knees, ensuring complete modesty. Yet another rare sight for the exuberant pony.

“Seriously Pinkie, you look absolutely amazing. Like one of those classic movie star actresses.” I grinned at her, and the smile was returned.

“I’m ready for my close up, Mister Hayville!” Giggling, Pinkie fluttered her eyelashes, which also seemed to have gotten some attention, before she made her way to the seat across from me. Fortunately the staff had fitted it with a bench to be more comfortable for pony guests.

“Really Pinkie, you should dress up more, it looks good on you. You’re not the goofy little sister when you look like that. Now you are hot-to-trot.” I winked and clicked my tongue at her, getting another blush.

“Uhh, yea... Thanks, but I think that means something different back home than it does here.” Suddenly she looked away, before taking a sip of her water.

“Oh? OH! Sorry, I didn’t know.” Now it was my turn to blush, as I guessed the implied meaning.

Again, the giggle and the smile. “It’s fine, but you may not wanna say that about any other mares, unless you are ready for the consequences.” She waggled her eyebrows at me and we both shared a laugh.

“Duly noted, thanks for the advice.” And then the conversation lulled, before the maitre d’ came over and bowed. I mean really, he bowed, like we were royalty. I suddenly got the feeling that my dad may have secretly bought the place, and put the fear of Daryl into them. It wouldn’t be the first time.

“Sir, and Mad’am. I regret to inform you that Mister and Mrs. Morgan have called, and wanted you to know that they would not be able to make it tonight. Mister Morgan assures that everything will be paid for, and to enjoy your night out.” Looking as if he was delivering a funeral sermon, the twitchy little man bowed again and awaited our reply. All I could do was facepalm, before waving him away.

“What’s wrong Louis? Are your parents gonna be okay?” Worried, Pinkie reached across to put a hoof on my hand.

I just laughed. Slowly at first, but building into a full on gut laugh, while Pinkie nervously smiled at me.

“GOD DAMMIT!” I ended my revelry with an angry outburst that drew the stares of several

patrons, and prompted one little child to start repeating my words, much to the horror of his parents.

“Louis, you are making me worried, and ponies... err, people are staring!” Whispering loudly, Pinkie looked nervously around, a fake smile plastered on her face as she looked at the angry patrons. With no further outbursts coming from me, they went about their business, while I held my face in both hands.

“Louis, you’re scaring me! What’s wrong?” Real panic colored her words, and the party pony came around to my side of the table in an attempt to hug me.

I shook her off, taking a deep breath. “I’m fine, Pinkie. I’m fine.” Another steadying breath, and the upset mare returned to her seat. “It’s just, I should have seen this coming. It’s my Junior Prom all over again.”

“Your whatnow?” Confused, but calm again, Pinkie began to munch on some biscuits, while she awaited my revelation. Part of my mind was wondering why nobody had come to take our orders yet, but another part knew exactly why.

“This was all a setup, Pinkie. Just be glad I know you well enough to know you had nothing to do with it.” Another sigh, and I looked across the table to my “date”, and then through her, to a distant memory.

“My parents have always been meddlers. They live this perfect little fairy-tale marriage, where the brave knight rescued the beautiful, but forbidden princess, and now they live rich and happily ever after.” I punctuated my statement by biting a biscuit in half. Damn, these were some awesome biscuits! “Bub dew...” I finished chewing, and swallowed, “But they are not able to live their life without trying to “Fix” mine. Every now and then, they pop up and try to fix me up with someone, insisting that I find my true love and settle down like they did.” Shaking my head I looked at the now subdued pony across from me. “I’m sorry they dragged you into this, but they only mean well. I just wish they would leave my love life alone.”

“And your Junior Prom?” he prompted.

“Oh, yea that. Some popular chick I was totally gaga for, but who would never give me the time of day. They paid her parents to talk her into going out with me. I was too young and stupid to realize what was going on, until she blew it and let me know.” Another biscuit, and this time I remembered to swallow. “She wound up liking me after all, but wanted to be honest, and told me how she was bribed into dating me. I was heartbroken, and flipped out. Called her a whore, and swore to tell the rest of the school. It ended in tears for everyone.” I sighed and took a drink from my water. “But hey, I hear she made it through college, became a doctor, and now is married to some television star.” I shrugged.

“I’m sorry Louis. I never would have hurt you like that. You know I really do like you, and don’t ever have to fake it.” She really did sound upset, and that made me feel worse.

“No, no. None of that! This is all my parents’ fault. So, we are gonna have a good time on my dad’s dime, and enjoy our date!” I grinned and picked up a menu.

“So this really is a date?” The hope in her voice nearly broke my heart.

“Why the hell not? You are currently my best friend, you are definitely the hottest looking chick in this room,” This prompted a few boyfriends and husbands around us to get smacked as they nodded in agreement. “and I’ll be damned if I am gonna let my parents’ meddling ruin our night out.”

Smiling, Pinkie began to blush furiously. “Thanks Louis. I really do love you.”

Grinning in response, I grabbed her goof. “I love you too, Pinkie. I just don’t wanna fuck you, okay?” This prompted several plates to suddenly hit the ground, as well as gasps from patrons that were too nosy to MIND THEIR OWN DAMN BUSINESS! I swear I even heard a needle scratch across a record again, despite the fact that there wasn’t even any music playing.

Nearby, the earlier parents were further mortified as their little hellspawn started to repeat the word “Fuck” over and over again. As if scripted, our server finally made an appearance, and we proceeded to order the most expensive items on the menu. The conversation was light and bubbly, and we shared plenty of jokes as we enjoyed our feast. It was just two good friends enjoying a night out, with no strings attached.

Right?

Later that night we arrived home together, a few pounds heavier, and more than a few drinks drunker. Drunker? Drunken? Fuckit... As we swaggered up the walkway to the house, Pinkie kept bumping into me, and we both were giggling like idiots. I happened to spot one of the curtains serendipitously swinging closed as we approached the door, and I leered at my friend, getting a wink in return.

“I really had a good time, Pinkie. We really should do this kinda shit more often.” Crouching down, I looked her in the eye, nearly falling on my ass in the process.

“Yea Louis, we really should! I mean it’s not as much fun as a party with all of our friends, but hanging with you is it’s own special kinda fun.” Beaming back, she swayed into me again, almost knocking me over again.

“Yes indeed, buddy. You really are a party pony, ya know that? Commere!” I grabbed her into a hug, and planted a kiss on her forehead, getting a giggle and a blush in return.

“Stop teasing!” With a tug, the surprisingly strong mare pulled me back to my feet, and we continued to the door.

Once inside, we quickly put on our game faces, and wandered into the living room, where my parents were suddenly very interested in the random magazines they had found. I almost laughed when I saw that my dad had not only grabbed a softcore porn magazine, featuring stallions, but that it was upside down. I made a mental note to talk to Pinkie about leaving those

things out, again. My mother, at least, had the sense to grab a copy of International Photographic to hide behind.

“Hey, Kiddo! Sorry we couldn’t make it to dinner tonight, but, uhh, something came up. I had to, umm, take a shit. Ya know, had the runs and all. Sorry!” My dad would have sustained permanent brain injury from the look my mother was giving him right now, if he hadn’t built up a tolerance over the years.

“Classy, dad. Real fuckin classy. And you suck at lying.” I rolled my eyes. “You should know by now to leave the talking to mom.”

“Yes, do be a dear and shut up while the smart people are talking, okay honey?” My mother looked ready to slap a bitch. Well, I knew where my brains came from in this family. This just got a grumble from my dad.

Taking a deep breath, I let it out in a slow sigh as I ran my hand over my hair. “Mom, Dad?”

“Ahem, let me, Louis?” Pinkie interrupted me with a hoof, and I stepped back, puzzled. The look in her eye, however, brooked no argument. I got the feeling that my mother was already rubbing off on her. I knew that look, and someone was in serious trouble.

Suddenly, the room was brighter as Pinkie stepped forward and put on her most stunning smile. I saw my parents visibly relax at the display of extreme goodwill, and instinctively took a step back. I had spent my entire life learning to read people, a skill that paid off in my current career in retail, and all my instincts and training told me that a bomb was about to go off, and I was standing at ground zero. This was gonna be so cool.

“Mister and Mrs Morgan, I just want to thank you both so, so incredibly much for what you have done. You both have taken me in like part of your family, and helped me so much in making me feel super duper welcome. Mister Morgan, you made me laugh like I haven’t in a long time, and I will always treasure that. Laughter and smiles is my special talent, after all.” My dad beamed, looking for all his years and wisdom like a little kid getting praised by his mother. Pinkie let her smile linger a moment longer before turning to my mother, who was smart enough to narrow her eyes a moment with suspicion, before being drawn into the glowing smile of the pink pony of happiness.

“Missus Morgan, I cannot ever thank you enough for what you did. You treated me like a daughter, helped me know Louis better, and made me feel more welcome than I have since coming to earth.” My mother’s skepticism melted under the glowing praise of my roommate, and I took another step pack. “You took me out, helped me to feel more beautiful than I have felt in years, and shared your years of wisdom and expertise with a lowly novice like myself.” Oh shit, she just mentioned age. To another woman. Shit just got real, and yet my mother was completely blinded. “I cannot understate how much this dress, and everything you have done today makes me feel special.”

I shit you not, I was about to look around for a DJ for the beat that was about to drop. Did I say beat? I meant beating.

“However...” And there it is. The total lack of expression, the deadpan voice, and for a pony, the complete flattening of body language. I almost ducked out of the room. I wasn't even a pony, and I could read just how pissed off Pinkie Pie was. Damn, where was the popcorn when you needed it?

“You two should be utterly ashamed of yourselves.” And there it was completely deadpan, with only a hint of righteous fury. “To think that I admired, no, worshiped you both for how well you raised your son. A perfect gentleman, always completely honest, no matter how much it hurts him. And yet you both stoop so low as to meddle in our lives.”

The response was immediate. My dad looked totally confused, having gone from praised to villainized. My mother thought about fighting back, but then had the sense to at least look ashamed.

“And do you two think so little of me as to think I even need your help to win Louis over?” Wait, what?

“He may not feel the same about me yet as I feel about him, but I do not need any help winning his heart. I love him, and it will be me alone that makes him love me the same way. I will befriend him, I will court him, and I will woo him in my own way, in my own time.” Now her tone grew downright icy. I started to grow more than a little worried as her personality seemed to shift so far from the norm that she became an entirely different person from the happy pony I knew. If it wasn't in braids, I was certain that her hair would once again be razor straight.

And through all of this, my parents were speechless. The mighty and powerful Daryl Morgan was in shock, and my mother looked thoroughly ashamed. I didn't even recognize them as my parents, nor Pinkie as the bubbly pony I lived with. I felt suddenly in need of a happy place to retreat to.

And like a switch being thrown, it was over.

“Now, lets all agree that we learned a valuable lesson tonight, and go back to being the bestest of friends!” The smile that once again graced Pinkie's face was like the coming dawn after a long, horrifying night. My parents looked downright traumatized, and even I wanted to hug something for warmth.

“Umm, thanks Pinkie...” I nodded, and raised my eyebrows at my very much subdued parents.

“Uhh, yea. Sorry about all that there, Pinkie Pie. It won't happen again, I promise.” I haven't ever seen my dad that shaken, even after grandma died.

My mom, much quicker to recover, scowled at him. “Ah told ya it wouldn't work, ya big dummy!” looking back at Pinkie, she kneeled down for a hug, and got one eagerly from the pink mare. “We so sorry, Pinkie love. Can ya forgive some old fools for wanting their child to be happy?”

“All is forgiven!” With another grin, Pinkie leaped into the hug.

“Damn boy, you better get some gloves to hold onto them reins. She's got some fight in her!” My

dad slapped me on the back, and I swear I had to say a little prayer to something to keep from punching him.

“Ah tink we were wrong to meddle, but we still chose right for our little boy.” My mother beamed as only a proud mother could.

“Gee. Thanks. Glad everyone gives a shit about my opinion on the matter.” I deadpanned, crossing my arms with a flat expression.

“Now don’t be like that, son. We only wanna see you happy, and we just feel that this little filly would be the best one to help with that.” All I could do was roll my eyes.

“I swear, this shit all feels like a crappy sitcom episode.” For some reason, Pinkie gave me the strangest look when I said that. “I don’t wanna know!” Throwing my hands up, I stalked out of the room to the sound of laughter. For some reason, it sounded like more than three people were laughing, too.