

“A Break in the Gloom”

No pony could remember a time when it had rained so hard. It came down in heavy, fat drops, the wind blowing in sharp gusts so that it peppered every building, tree, and pony in sight. Not that there were many of the last one; few residents of Ponyville were foalhardy to venture outside in such rotten weather.

One such pony gazed out the window of her treehouse. Twilight Sparkle normally enjoyed the rain, but not today. Today's storm had kept all of her friends at home. She knew the weather was bad if even Rainbow Dash would not set hoof in it. The one day she really wanted company and she was totally alone.

“Twilight?”

Well, not totally.

Twilight really did not want to be interrupted while sulking, but she sighed inwardly and answered “Yes, Spike?” She turned away from the window and saw the dragon struggling up the stairs, a heavy, crudely giftwrapped package in his hands.

“What on earth is that?” Her horn glowed as she unwrapped the box with her magic, an expectant Spike looking on.

Books. Tall and short, fat and thin, all of them old and very worn. Twilight's sad expression vanished as she examined each one.

“Aww, I loved this one growing up. And this one!” A piece of paper fell out of one book as she levitated it, landing at her hooves. To Twilight's shock it was a library sign-out slip, her name written in neat letters on every other line. Each book had one, forming a nearly complete record of her reading habits as a filly.

“They were selling discarded books at the school library the last time I was in Canterlot,” Spike explained. “I bought everything I could find with your name written in it.”

“Aww, Spike!” she beamed. The two friends shared a long hug, Spike's arms around her neck.

“Happy birthday, Twilight!”