

## **My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic The Cutie Mark Clash, Chapter 6**

In a wide-open, unoccupied part of Ponyville, Twilight Sparkle stood opposite her faithful assistant Spike. She stood ready, a technique rolling about in her head. She mouthed the words to herself and her hind legs twitched in anticipation. She consulted a book several dozen times before finally letting it rest and shooting a determined look forward. Spike got the signal and simulated an aggressive charge.

"RAAAGH! I'm attacking you!"

Twilight stood her ground. Her horn glowed with a levitation magic. She lifted off, her body vertical and her legs held close except for an attacking hind leg. "Tastumaki senpuu kyaaaACK!!" Twilight completed a single revolution before hitting the ground on her side. She shook her head and picked herself up, adding a huffy exhale. "If I can JUST get it down by myself, it should be real easy when in the Hoof of War. After hearing about all the strange ways ponies are fighting, I want to get back in there and do some studying! But only after I brush up on this Ansetsuken stuff."

Spike leaned over to take another look at the book. "I know what you're saying... but it still sounds to me like you're asking for pound cake."

"Hold the story!" came a shout. Pinkie Pie leapt in and adjusted what seemed to be thin air directly to her left. She was dressed in a pink muscle gi and her mane was slicked down and tied up oddly thin

Twilight exchanged a look with Spike. "Pinkie Pie, what are you do-?"

"A favor!" Pinkie Pie said back. She thought for a moment, "Um... Twilight. Have you ever read a novel and it has a BIG OL' cliffhanger between chapters? Or even BOOKS?"

"Um... yeah. I've had that happen. That's why I research series ahead of time or pick one that are-"

"Then you'll appreciate when I'm about to do riiiiight... now!"

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Luna, Zecora, Big Macintosh, and Ditzzy Doo looked up to the sky to see a white pegasus as he hurtled at them at a blistering speed. He slammed into the ground in front of them and raised his head purposefully. He glared at all that were not Luna.

"G-Gallanthad!?" Luna stammered in disbelief.

At closer inspection, Galanthad indeed was a white pegasus with a short mane in a regal

blue color. His turquoise eyes scanned and judged every pony and non-pony in sight. His cutie mark was that of a golden shield. He spoke in the no-nonsense manner of a guard, was heroic all the same.

"Worry not, Princess! I will free you from the clutches of these... these VILLAINS."

"They are no-!"

"ALL RIGHT! Which one of you is the ringleader to this operation!? Is it...!? No, accusing the zebra first won't look good on the report even if I'm right. And picking on the wall-eyed one is just asking for indictments- YOU!" Gallanthad thrust an accusing hoof at Big Macintosh. "I knew AS SOON as I spied you from miles away that you were a bad apple! You're RED..."

Big Macintosh reeled back slightly. "Ain't that discriminating against red ponies?"

Gallanthad's eyes bulged with that realization. He quickly composed himself. "You are in no place to judge ME, miscreant!!"

At that point, Luna noticed that the accusing hoof was gilded. "Gallanthad, don-!"

But it was too late. Gallanthad quickly stamped out the Hoof of War. The magic rooted itself and as it spread, pushed away the alicorn, pegasus, and zebra not involved in the called fight. Gallanthad wasted no time in charging for the first attack. "Have at you!!"

Gallanthad spread his wings, letting the passing wind propel him faster. Big Macintosh stood ready and parried when Gallanthad passed by. In that same movement, Big Macintosh stopped Gallanthad with one hooked foreleg and secured a grip on the pegasus with the other. Completing the motion of the parry, Big Macintosh held Gallanthad like a bipedal farmworker would lug around a bale of hay. Also in giving the 'bale of hay' treatment, Big Macintosh just dropped Gallanthad and let the ground do the damage.

"That ought to calm you down."

Gallanthad swerved onto his hooves. He spared a moment to snap the stiffness out of his neck. "I am calm, my friend in the strictly figurative sense. In all my training as a royal guard, I've been taught to know my enemy. Well, that charge was all I need to know you. Now I can... UNLEASH." The white pegasus leapt onto his hind hooves and maintained a martial arts stance. He held one foreleg close and the other extended between himself and Big Macintosh.

The draft horse naturally was cautious of the new stance. He kept leaned back mostly out of a sense of awkwardness, especially since his opponent kept emitting a low "Huooooaaahhh..." sound like out of some typical martial arts story.

Finally, Gallanthad beat his wings to jump high and come down for a kick with a hind hoof out. Big Macintosh, used to aggressive aerial strikes, backed up enough so that Gallanthad would strike the ground. Like clockwork, Big Macintosh then whipped around for the buck. As he half-expected, he didn't feel his buck hit. As he didn't expect so much, he felt Gallanthad's hoof strike him in the back of the head.

"Wah-TAHHH!!!" Gallanthad shouted. He completed his planned movements by jumping to Big Macintosh's side and thrusting a forehoof back. The draft horse was sent face-first into the dirt. The spectators groaned at the sight. As Big Macintosh planted his hooves firmly, Gallanthad remarked, "Just so you know, I am not passing judgment on you based on your combat prowess. Everypony has fallen for that the first time and you won't be the last."

Big Macintosh struck during Gallanthad's gloating; a simple charge into the guard's chest. Gallanthad stayed aloft to keep out of reach, which wasn't easy since the 'Big' in Big Macintosh's name was well earned. Gallanthad had to beat his wings to dodge away from a swipe. The dodge brought Gallanthad to a sliding halt on the ground. Judging from Big Macintosh's fervor, he was very keen on forcing his way into gaining the upper hoof. Gallanthad then took to using his wing-dash ability to slide around out of Big Macintosh's reach. When Big Macintosh paused his assault, that's when Gallanthad wing-dashed in.

Gallanthad began with a hind hoof strike that knocked Big Macintosh off his feet. With a guard's precision, Gallanthad followed up with a leap and a spinning strike that spiked Big Macintosh right back to the ground. Big Macintosh only barely got back on his feet before Gallanthad wing-dashed right into him and grabbed him between his hooves, starting on a more rapid form of punishment.

Luna's emotions finished cycling from uncomfortable to worried to shocked to angry. "Gallanthad, you are going to stop this RIGHT NOW...!" She charged toward the fighting ponies, only for the Hoof of War to bring up a wall and repel her with a static discharge. Had Luna been expecting it and tried to break through with all her power, she could have done it. Not this time, though.

In the middle of his grapple strikes, Gallanthad paused. Big Macintosh looked all too glad for the lull. Gallanthad looked to his princess. "Stop this...?" He echoed, "You're... standing up for this lot? Luna, in all her wisdom... How could I have been so short-sighted! This must be..."

Luna smiled. The protective pony was finally getting it that these were her FRIENDS that he was accusing.

Gallanthad finished his sentence. "... Stockholm syndrome! ConFOUND it!! Is it not enough to seize the princess that you must alter her MIND and her EMOTIONS as well!?"

Luna's face fell. A mixture of frustration and worry. Mostly worry.

"I'll show you what happens when hooligans disrespect MY charge!" Gallanthad began with a wing-dash forward into a splits on his hind legs. The splits-kick doubled Big Macintosh back and allowed Gallanthad to pursue into the aerial spinning strike. With a wing-dash into the ground, Gallanthad could repeat those actions and did a few times. When he reached the edge of the Hoof of War, he used a hind hoof strike combined with a gust of wind to pop Big Macintosh into the air, not far. In the short time it took for Big Macintosh to reach the height of the pop, Gallanthad waited below. He leaned on his hind legs. They shook with the effort of storing energy. When Big Macintosh fell level with Gallanthad, the pegasus unleashed the attack. He performed a mighty backflip, slamming a hind hoof into Big Macintosh at vehicular speed.

"K.O.!!!" the Hoof of War bellowed.

Big Macintosh trailed smoke in the meteoric rise from the attack. The other three tilted their heads up to watch, then back down to see Gallanthad turned to them. "Your move, creeps!"

Luna sighed, "You've had your fun, Gallanthad. I am with this group because they are nice and they'll help me with what I need to do!"

"No can do, Luna. The orders from Princess Celestia are very clear: If you show any signs of irregular and/or inconsistent behavior, to keep you to your room until she can deal with it. Compared to the previous year, I'd say you're acting PRE-TTY inconsistent. The PERFECT time for some ne'er do-well ponies and non-ponies to take advantage of one of Equestria's princesses!"

"Will you STOP calling my FRIENDS bad!? If you don't stop being excessive, I will MAKE you!"

"Excessive?" Gallanthad echoed, expressing sincere doubt.

As that moment, Big Macintosh finally hit the ground from his flight. The Hoof of War took its leave.

Ditzy Doo fluttered over to Big Macintosh. "Don't worry! I have first aid!"

Gallanthad looked back to Luna. "Oh. You mean the 'normal' definition of excessive. Speaking of which, I AM prepared to do whatever it takes, even if you oppose me."

The two shared a tense staredown. The power of the night was already flaring up around Luna. The Hoof of War passed underneath Gallanthad... but it wasn't Luna.

Zecora stepped between them. "If you are looking for a fight, you may as well do it right. You took Big Macintosh by surprise before, but that element isn't yours any more!"

Luna was aghast, "Zecora... no!"

Zecora took her place in the Hoof of War opposite Gallanthad. "I know what I am doing. This time... I shall do the s-"

"Hey!" All eyes to Gallanthad. "The... the evil enchantress... The one that Luna read about all those times... Confound it I did not account for this! N- no matter! My conviction for justice shall win over your craft and bewitching looks!"

Zecora gave a confrontational snort. "You brand us as crooks, yet you so quickly- What was that about my looks?"

Gallanthad stammered, "It's not a compliment if your beauty is fact! And you misuse it! AND THAT'S BESIDE THE POINT because you can't distract me either way!"

Zecora looked incredulous at this sudden quirkiness. She lifted her eyes, a plan in mind. "You say you're not at a rise, but your racing pulse says otherwise."

"... I will not be subjected to psychological warfare! Much less fall for it. Have at you!" Gallanthad reared back into his battle stance. He quickly found he wasn't the only one.

Across the Hoof of War, Zecora took her own stance, meditating while standing vertically on one hoof. Her eyes were closed serenely in contrast to how one in a clash should act. "You are not going to accomplish much all the way over there. Come and take your first shot... if you dare."

Gallanthad growled, "Standard takedown maneuvers should be enough for you!" He beat his wings to charge at Zecora.

Zecora leapt over Gallanthad's charge and used her mid-air rush to dodge out of Gallanthad's pursuit. Gallanthad wing-dashed into a splits sweep, but Zecora was all too ready with a hop and a switch of her standing hoof. Gallanthad attempted a kick in a forward somersault, only for Zecora to leap clear over him and land facing him, still on one hoof.

"Confound it!!" Gallanthad shouted, "I was expecting punishment for each missed strike! Why weren't you countering me!?"

Zecora grinned. "If I gave you that satisfaction, you wouldn't be so confused by my actions."

"C... confused!? How did you know!? My mind is an open BOOK to you, isn't it!?"

Ditzy, who was tugging at a bandage on Big Macintosh's leg, spoke up. "Yer did jusht ashk her why she wush doing what she wush doing."

"I... didn't mean... You... You're already in there, aren't you!?"

Zecora beamed down at the pegasus, "Sadly, it is true."

"You're using me in your rhymes now!! My individuality is compromised!" Gallanthad pressed his hooves to the sides of his head. "Wait! That must mean if I get hurt, then you do as well!" To test this out, Gallanthad socked himself across the jaw. He shook his head out and looked at Zecora, who looked just fine if not a little vexed at his behavior. "No... You have a contingency for that. Confound it!"

Aside, in a low volume, a woken Big Macintosh muttered, "Now that's just overreacting..." He then cringed as Ditzy adjusted a splint.

Ditzy grinned awkwardly. "This works better if you don't move your anything."

Back to the clash, Gallanthad stood up. "I must do something that not even I would predict I would do!" He looked around for anything that would give him a spur-the-moment idea. All he could find was a pebble at his hooves. Like the respectable royal guard he was, he grabbed the pebble between his hooves and tossed it.

Despite Zecora's earlier ability to predict attacks, she sure made no effort to avoid getting hit by the pebble. She shook her head from the small strike.

Gallanthad gasped, "THE SPELL IS BROKEN!!" He flew over to where Zecora wobbled on her single leg. She saw Gallanthad approach without actually seeing enough to know what he'd do. Gallanthad managed to pause in mid-flight. A glimmer from his hoof was all the tell he gave before he gave his wings a mighty beat strong enough to strike by Zecora in an instant while leaving a trail of blue silhouettes behind him. Caught up in his upper hoof, Gallanthad turned to the stunned Zecora to deliver some jabs and stand on one hind hoof to deliver a series of kicks with the other. He finished on both hind hooves with a powerful dominant hoof strike that sent Zecora a few yards, backed with a cry of "WHAI-TAHHH!"

Zecora rolled across the ground at varying degrees until her tumbling left her vertically balancing on the top of her head... and then falling on her stomach. She picked herself up. "You think that this fight has only just been engaged... but all you have done is fed into my rage!"

Gallanthad scoffed, "I'm over that now. Your hold on me is no more!"

Zecora in turn responded with her own scoff. "Do not claim victory just yet. Lest you

forget..."

In the time it took for Gallanthad to fly over, Zecora had pulled out her cloak and flung it over her head. The yellow eyes that filtered through the shade of the cloak pierced straight at Gallanthad. He lost his focus when going in for a strike and was easily evaded.

Zecora sang lowly, "I'm an evil enchantress..." Gallanthad struck forward with a series of jabs and kicks, but Zecora weaved through them. "... and I do evil dances..."

Off on the side, Ditzzy looked up from her work to give a curious stare. Big Macintosh craned his neck and lifted an eyebrow. Luna, on the other hoof, knew exactly what Zecora was up to and was practically vibrating with glee.

"If you look into my eyes..." Zecora grabbed Gallanthad's face and forced him to look into the yellow shapes. His fearful and defiant eyes softened. "I will put you in trances... And what would I do...?" She produced a vial from her bag and threw it to the ground at Gallanthad's hooves. Purple smoke obscured him, and then cleared again to show in inside a boiling cauldron. "I'll mix up an evil brew!" She grabbed a hold of her meditation pole and used it to swirl the broth and knock Gallanthad around in the cauldron a bit.

Luna couldn't help but clop her hooves together and emit a little squeal.

"And I'll gobble you up! In a big tasty stew!" Zecora left the cauldron as it continued to swirl and bubble and gather a violent storm. "So... watch out!!"

The cauldron's din reached a breaking point. The mixture inside erupted and spewed out like a volcano. Gallanthad was right in the thick of it.

"K.O.!!!" The Hoof of War Bellowed.

The magic faded, and so did the cauldron and its contents. What didn't get so quickly undone was Gallanthad's unconsciousness. Zecora stuffed her cloak away. "Hurry! While he is down, we must flee!"

Luna was shaken out of her fanfilly daze. "Oh... yes! I'm sorry, Gallanthad..." She sprinted in the getaway direction.

Big Macintosh forced himself and to trot after as well. Ditzzy paused in place, unsure for a few moments. She finally called after, "W... wait!"

When the group managed to find an area concealed by trees, they finally breathed a collective sigh of relief. Big Macintosh arrived third, the sight of him causing a start in Luna. More of his body was covered in bandages than not.

Luna gestured, "Are... you really hurt that much?"

Big Macintosh looked around at himself. "Not really."

Ditzzy entered the area. "You can't be too careful when it comes to treating injury! I learned that the... ahem, the hard way." Right then, most of the bandages and splints fell straight off the draft horse in a big pile. "Aww..."

Big Macintosh was more focused on Luna. "Are we going to get more of that coming our way? I don't know how much more of that treatment a pony can take."

Luna looked to the ground. "I... I'm so sorry that had to happen to you, Big Macintosh... I didn't think... he'd go after me, much less actually find me! I thought I concealed my leave of the castle very well..."

By now the group had it figured out that Luna wasn't supposed to be on her own without supervision. This was the first she actually said anything about it. There was a moment of silence before Zecora broke it.

"Gallanthad mentioned you having strange behavior. I think it's about time you told us more."

A sigh escaped Luna's lips before anything else. She turned to walk out of hiding and on the dirt road towards Ponyville. The rest followed. "I... I'm not sure how to put this. I am SO sure of myself... that I'm right about why I'm out here. But... but just in case... I think I may be crazy after all."

She spared a look to the others. Big Macintosh tilted his head encouragingly. Ditzzy smiled as sincerely as she could. Zecora took the front row with Luna.

"From doubt you should be free. We'll hear your story."

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But enough about that. The Great and Powerful Trixie was lost in her thoughts. She needed something new in order to truly trounce and humble that Twilight Sparkle. Everywhere she went, every mention of her name was followed by Twilight's like a shadow. A shadow that heckled its caster and played coy whenever said caster turned to look at it.

How? How could that amateur without a single ounce of showmareship in her blood have mastered so much of the fabled Ansetsuken fighting style just by **READING** about it? It is an age-old combat style that the Great and Powerful Trixie learned to keep herself safe on the road. Oh, if only those backwards Ponyville ponies could see her just **ONCE** defending herself from a pack of Diamond Dogs or pickponies.



It was an old style... so old and outdated. An old mare's fighting style! And now that Twilight Sparkle has been saddled with it and is practicing it as if doing so would give her an edge! YES! THAT was what the Great and Powerful Trixie had planned for all along! Even if she herself didn't know that's what she was going for! True genius! All she needed was a new fighting style... Something fresh and more refined. In fact, compared to this new fighting style, Ansetuken was just yesterday's news. Sure, she kept at it because it was consistent and she knew no other way... but the new fighting style was just better. It was about time she was honest with herself and switched.

In all her wandering, the Great and Powerful Trixie hadn't been too aware of her surroundings. She was brought back to Equestria by the sound of rustling bushes. The outskirts of Ponyville sure had a lot of these open spaces and convenient patches of trees and bushes. The rustling was accompanied by the cries of two opposing sides... though it sounded like more than two ponies. And judging by the cries, the encounter was very one-sided... brutally so.

The rustling and the cries died down. It was so silent that the Great and Powerful Trixie's ears rang. And then all at once...

"DESTROYED!!!" the Hoof of War bellowed.

The Great and Powerful Trixie had to step to the side to avoid the mint-coated pony that was flung out of the bushes. Said pony crashed into a fence and plopped onto the ground on her flank. She leaned against the fence in a position that bipedal creatures would call sitting upright. Shortly, a cream-coated earth pony ran out from the bush. She clearly wasn't the one who did the attacking since she looked so worried and proceeded to take a towel in her teeth and fan off her unicorn friend.

The unicorn of the white-striped mane groaned in agony and opened her eyes. "There's freaking THREE OF THEM!!!"

The bushes rustled again as the 'three' approached in pursuit. The earth pony's face paled. She grabbed her friend in her hooves, heaved her onto her back, and ran away at a speed only terror could fuel. That left the Great and Powerful Trixie all alone, facing the rustling bushes. The sounds from behind were grunts and snorts, mixed in with... fillyish giggling? The Great and Powerful Trixie considered throwing down a smoke bomb and running away. After all, nopony can discredit her greatness and power if she isn't seen running away in the first place...

No! Why should she run! These 'three' should be running! The Great and Powerful Trixie has new tricks up her sleeve and if they should try anything funny, she'll get Great and Powerful on their flanks!

The rustling became violent. The snorts and giggling was its loudest. Trixie could see individual shaped between the leaves. She quickly lifted her hat, wiped her brow, placed

the hat back. From the bushes, the destroyers of that other unicorn...

Three fillies. They burst through the bush acting on top of the world. There was one pony of each type. The orange pegasus was keeping aloft with her wings. The white unicorn's horn glowed with an abundance of magic. The earth pony with the pale olive coat stood dominantly, snorting and digging at the ground. Together they carried themselves with a primitive arrogance. Their expressions were of violent, indiscriminant superiority.

Then all at once, the Hoof of War took its leave with their battle done. Scootaloo's little wings could no longer support her. Sweetie Belle's horn dimmed to its normal pigment, and Apple Bloom slumped over from the loss of raw strength.

"No no no no no nononono!!" Scootaloo stammered desperately, "I just got a taste of real flying! I CAN'T GO BACK TO THE GROUND!!"

Apple Bloom looked around. "Where'd Bon-Bon go!? We need somepony else to clash with RIGHT NOW!" Her eyes fell on Trixie, who backed up a little. "THERE'S SOMEPONY ELSE!"

The Crusaders were all too quick in getting side-by-side to stamp out the Hoof of War. The Great and Powerful Trixie began doubting her decision to stand and fight; but only in the most impressive way that a pony could doubt. Scootaloo flapped her wings until the Hoof of War magic allowed her to lift off. Sweetie Belle's horn once again glowed with magic.

"Yay!" Sweetie Belle cheered airily. In celebration, her horn shot a beam of destructive magic that narrowly missed the caped young mare in front of her.

I'm going to die, the Great and Powerful Trixie thought to herself.

"LET'S GET 'ER!!" Apple Bloom called out and led the charge. The other two followed swiftly.

Yes. Dead. The Great and Powerful Trixie gulped. If she were going out, she would go out as she always does: With a BANG. In the face of death, represented by three fillies shrieking a shrill battle cry, the Great and Powerful Trixie stood tall. Her horn glowed, but not in anything directed at the Cutie Mark Crusaders. Instead, the magic focused into generating a flame on Trixie's upright hoof. Having so many fireworks and sparklers in her acts made Trixie a natural with pyrotechnics. Combining it with her magic was just as natural.

The Great and Powerful Trixie looked to her attackers, and then thrust her hoof at the ground in a sweeping motion. The flame left her hoof and traveled the ground as a giant spark. This spark hovered above the grass and tore its way to the Crusaders. Apple Bloom didn't bother trying to get out of the way and paid for it. The spark rammed into

her and burst, taking the other two with her. Judging by their unhappy shouts, the attack hit. The Great and Powerful Trixie raised her chin. She might have a chance after all!

And then one of Sweetie Belle's beams pierced the smoke. It took all of the Great and Powerful Trixie's cunning and reflexes to emit a high-pitched EEP!! and duck under the beam, hooves on head. When Trixie opened her eyes, she saw the Crusaders on their way to her. She leapt to her feet, but they were close enough now. Apple Bloom stomped her front hooves and ruptures the ground beneath Trixie, sending her back down. Apple Bloom dove under Trixie and delivered a buck right into her stomach. Trixie was sent into the air where Scootaloo could dive under and come up again.

"Scooter-cut!!!"

The pegasus's hoof caught Trixie under the chin and sent her flipping to the ground. Trixie groaned and stood herself up, seeing Sweetie Belle be herself, smiling the most malicious smile she had ever seen... and she'd looked into mirrors plenty! Shuffling to either side alerted Trixie that the other two Crusaders were behind her. The three of them surrounded her at perfectly even triangulated points.

"Is this even allowed...?" Trixie muttered.

With more cries, the Crusaders closed in on Trixie. Once again, the flames circled around her. She heaved her forelegs up and twirled. She spun and leapt with the flames forming a barrier around her. The Crusaders ran into this barrier and all three were knocked back by the spinning uppercut attack. They gathered together and formed a little discussion that broke in a few moments. Sweetie Belle took center point. She raised a forehoof and magically lifted Apple Bloom. As Trixie pondered how funny it would be if she ended up just throwing the earth filly, that's exactly what happened.

Apple Bloom was tossed straight at Trixie and headbutt her. Trixie was dazed and couldn't move to block the follow-up filly when Scootaloo was magically thrown at her and went for a crippling strike to her forelegs. Trixie managed to take the hit and stay standing... for better and for worse. Sweetie Belle sent her fellow Crusaders for a string of hits.

Trixie instinctively dodged one attack once and moved in for the comeback. She leapt over the second filly and landed within a foreleg's reach of Sweetie Belle. Sweetie Belle seemed to instinctively throw up a barrier of magic. The barrier blocked Trixie's jab coming down and took the standing chop she delivered after. The barrier kept Sweetie Belle from taking the hit herself, but the effort it took to keep it up drained her energy enough that it might as well have hit. Was it even a barrier? Was it even from the filly? With how impractical it was, the magic seemed more like a box-shaped area where Trixie could land hits since aiming for a little filly was difficult enough.

The Crusaders had fallen back to Sweetie Belle's side, but were caught by the effects of

the hit-box. Trixie finished her combination with a hind leg followed by a kick with the opposite hind leg. The Crusaders were sent up. In the heat of the rush, Trixie had one more trick. She sprinted in and caught the trio in her forehooves, holding them high. The flames snaked up Trixie's forelegs and gathered at the Crusaders. The flames burst, sending the Crusaders crashing and covered in soot.

Apple Bloom was the first up. She glared at the Great and Powerful Trixie like the legitimate threat she presented. When the other two were up, Apple Bloom looked to them and merely called to them, "TEAMWORK!!" They immediately understood. Sweetie Belle jumped on Apple Bloom's back and Scootaloo on Sweetie Belle's. Together they formed the pillar of kicks that had taken them this far.

The Great and Powerful Trixie backed away from the Crusaders. She frowned with determination and lifted a hoof. The flames swirled in coils around her body. "You little fillies pack an impressive fight... You have a good future ahead of you. But you'll never..." The flames snaked up her foreleg and gathered over the hoof. "... have the show-stopping power..." The gathered energy formed a pillar of flame that pulsated and rippled. "... OF THE GREAT AND POWERFUL TRIXIE!!!" She gave a climactic swipe of her forehoof. The flames exploded in front of her and swept the Cutie Mark Crusaders in its might. The Crusaders' formation was broken and the three fillies sent flying.

"K.O.!!!" the Hoof of War bellowed.

The Cutie Mark Crusaders were sent to the ground and spent. The Great and Powerful Trixie stood for a few moments, breathing heavily from all the effort she just put in. Her hind legs wobbled and she fell on her flank. Trixie lifted her forehooves and felt her own face to make sure that she was still alive and not a ghost or something.

Spurred awake by the Hoof of War's magic, the Cutie Mark Crusaders moaned and picked themselves up. Trixie would have to put a rain check on that whole 'still not dead' thing. Just as quickly, Trixie saw that the fillies were now 'normal.' They weren't growling and cackling and their eyes were soft with restored innocence.

Apple Bloom shook her head out. "Well... THAT was kinda scary..."

Scootaloo flapped her wings a few times and willingly folded them up. "Yeah... we sorta got carried away."

Sweetie Belle groaned with effort to make her horn display any magic. It didn't. She looked to her friends. "Sorta? More like 'totally.'"

Apple Bloom brushed herself off, from her head to her flank. At her flank, she came to a sudden realization and cleared it off. The other two realized it and did the same. Blank flanks. The three of them sighed.

"I'm kinda glad that my Cutie Mark didn't appear after I got my blank flank kicked... or when I was being a complete nutso." Scootaloo looked in front to see Trixie. "Hey lady! Thanks! I think."

Trixie huffed. "I do have a name, little one. And that name is..." She ran up to higher ground and stood on her hind hooves like the showmare she was, "The Great and Powerful Trixie!"

The Cutie Mark Crusaders just stared. Sweetie Belle at least showed a little appreciation.

"Well... imagine there's fireworks here and here, sparklers all up here, and a flaming hoof about... here. And you get the idea."

The fillies stared more. Apple Bloom tapped her chin. "Great 'n Powerful Trixie... now why does that ring a bell?"

Sweetie Belle bit her lip. "Me too! It's on the tip of my tongue!" To illustrate, she opened her mouth with her tongue stuck out. The other Crusaders examined the tongue, as if it held the answer.

The Great and Powerful Trixie held a falsely modest hoof to her chest. "Of course you've heard of me. I am only the most talented and powerful unicorn in all of Equestria! Not to mention the land's top performer. Would you three like to see a trick?"

"WOULD we?" The three fillies responded.

For a while, The Great and Powerful Trixie regaled the Cutie Mark Crusaders with her bare-bones school-assembly program of tricks. Fireworks, making shapes in the air with her magic, and fashioning tree branches into the shape of animals. The Crusaders were so starstruck that she even tipped off her hat and reached into it. Her hoof pulled a temperamental rabbit from the hat.

"Ooohhh..." The Crusaders swooned.

The Great and Powerful Trixie pushed the rabbit back into the hat and then lifted her hoof back out to reveal a perplexed owl. The owl was sent back and Trixie then pulled out a toothless alligator. The alligator had time to blink its eyes individually before Trixie sent it back to where it came from.

Apple Bloom and Scootaloo were impressed in a very general sense, but the Great and Powerful Trixie saw an even deeper admiration in Sweetie Belle's glistening eyes. Suddenly, Sweetie Belle's face mellowed with a sudden realization. "The Great Blunderful Trixie!"

Everypony else paused. That was a strange thing to say. Trixie, having had her fair share

of attempted heckling, chuckled. "No, that's 'Great and Powerful Trixie.' You know what an antonym is, don't you, sweetie?"

Sweetie Belle gasped, "You know my name!?"

"I beg your pardon?"

"You said it! Sweetie Belle! Well... the Sweetie part. But you knew it! How did you know...?"

"Because... I am the Great and Powerful Trixie! But please, do tell me where you heard that... phrase."

Sweetie Belle thought for a moment. "Oh! Rarity said it a bunch of times one night. I think she was mad about something... and then laughing about it. That was you!"

Trixie opened her mouth to say something back, but Apple Bloom was quicker. "Hey yeah! Applejack told me to stay away from some big-mouth unicorn named Trixie 'cause she's a bad influence. And the day after that Applejack was so happy 'cause Trixie ended up being a big ol' dud." Apple Bloom looked at Trixie. "Uh... at least, that's what my sister said."

Trixie's lip stiffened in the fact of all these things said about her. No doubt these ponies were the ones around during that... INCIDENT. She looked from filly to filly trying to think of something to counteract what their sisters said. Suddenly, her eyes widened. She asked down. "Wait a moment. Did you two say 'Rarity' and 'Applejack?'"

Apple Bloom spoke up. "Yeah! They're our sisters!"

Scotaloo added, "I don't really have a sister... but Rainbow Dash is all I need!"

"R... Rainbow Dash?" Trixie echoed. From the way her eyes darted from place to place, she was thinking fast. Her heart was racing and her disposition breaking. The Crusaders exchanged confused looks. Finally, Trixie regained her composure. "The Great and Powerful Trixie has an AMAZING idea for you three! You say you want all the help you can get earning your Cutie Marks? Here's an idea... Cutie Mark Crusaders stage magicians!"

The three fillies completely forgot what their sisters and idols had said and beamed up at Trixie.

"Here you all are! Take some of the Great and Powerful Trixie's equipment and practice! You can take turns being the Great and Powerful Trixie and the other two can be the assistants. I will... be RIGHT back!"

Trixie dropped her equipment and shoved her hat onto Sweetie Belle's head. The fillies gathered around the 'equipment.' There was all sorts of neat stuff like rings that could snap together and separate, one of those multicolored puzzle cubes, a box that somepony could make a bit disappear and reappear in... None of those harmful fireworks or anything like that.

Apple Bloom and Scootaloo dug into the toys. Sweetie Belle took a moment to look off as where Trixie ducked into the convenient bushes. She thought on that for a moment until her attention was brought to an origami fortune teller.

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Exclusive to the Google Docs version of the Cutie Mark Clash... the matchup sheet! Quick reference to all the clashes that have gone down and some that have happened in the background. Stay updated!

[Matchup Sheet!](#)