

Karamel

By The Unnamed Pawn

Big Mac sat at a booth in the Wandering Ram bar drinking a bottle of cider and glancing nervously around. It was a simple place with a counter bar and a few booths set up next to each other. A gramophone in the corner played calming music and a green neon sign displayed the bar's name. The whole thing was barely decorated at all apart from that. There were a couple of weird paintings on the wood panelled walls, but Big Mac never really like the abstract so he paid them no attention.

It was a new bar that had just opened up in Ponyville. It was supposed to be one of those hangouts specifically for gay ponies, the kind you'd usually find in big cities like Canterlot and Manehattan. Being part of the target group, Big Mac had naturally felt obligated to come on opening night. Besides, Caramel and Applejack had been bugging him to get out more.

The place was weirdly empty for an opening night though. He was beginning to regret not bringing Caramel with him. He checked the clock above the bar. It was seven now. Where was everypony?

As if in answer to his question the bell over the bar door chimed less than a second after he'd completed his thought. He looked over to see a cream colored mare with a stylishly curled pink and purple mane and a cutie mark that appeared to be three wrapped candies. Next to her was a light brown stallion with a puffy orange mane wearing a green vest and a green golfer's hat with a red puffball. He had a fan for his cutie mark.

"That's weird," the mare said, "Nopony's here."

"That's not true," her friend responded, "Look there's a handsome stallion right over there." He pointed toward the red horse at one of the tables. Big Mac took this as his cue to turn back to his cider.

"Don't waste your time, Breezy," he heard the mare say as the pair trotted inside and the door swung closed behind them.

"What you don't think a stud like that'll go for me?" The pair walked up to his table, and Breezy tapped a hoof rudely on top of it. Big Mac glanced up calmly. "Mind if we have a seat?" the brown stallion asked confidently.

"Nopony's stoppin' ya'," Big Mac responded. The pair took a seat on the other side of the table and Breezy grinned smugly at his friend. Mac tried not to pay them any mind and turned back to his drink.

"So, Big Mac," Breezy said, turning his grin toward across the table, "I didn't figure you for a colt-cuddler."

"Eeyup." Big Mac responded matter of factly. After taking another drink of cider he glanced up again and noted Breezy's smile. He hadn't seen the expression often, but it was obvious enough that the stallion

was interested. Poor guy. "Me and Caramel have been seein' one another fer almost a year now," he finished.

The smile quickly left Breezy's face to be replaced by a look of embarrassment. Clearly the message had gotten through loud and clear. The mare that had come in with him started laughing. "I told you," she said between guffaws.

Her friend gave her a playful shove just strong enough to push her out of the booth. "Well you could have told me it was because he was taken, Bon Bon," Breezy said, glaring at the mare. Once she had climbed comfortably back into the seat beside him he turned back to Big Mac. "I'm sorry about that."

"S'no problem." Big Mac nodded and went back to drinking his cider.

"So, if you don't mind my asking, why are you here if you've already got a colt?" Breezy asked.

"He's probably here for the same reason I am," a crashing sound at the end of Bon Bon's statement brought Mac's eyes back up to the pair. The mare had gotten her revenge by giving Breezy a shove of her own. "You're helping out some friend right? Cherilee if my guess is right," she chuckled, smiling back at Mac.

Big Macintosh shook his head. "Nope. Caramel and my sis have been pesterin' me to meet some new ponies. Ah' just thought this might be a good place to do that."

"Well then congratulations," the mare said with a smile, "I'm Bon Bon and this here is Breezy Days." She reached out a hoof and Big Mac gave it a friendly shake.

"Most ponies just call me Breezy. Mr. Breezy if you're being formal," the stallion said.

Big Mac and the stallion shook hooves just as the door rang to announce another customer. "Looks like we've got another one," Bon Bon exclaimed.

Breezy and Big Mac turned their heads to the door to see a dark blue mare with a straight light-gray mane and a blue ball for a cutie mark. "Cud," Breezy mumbled, "Just another filly."

Another playful shove brought his attention to Bon Bon. "Don't be so rude Breezy."

The blue pony nervously approached the group with a weak smile on her face. "Is this seat taken," she asked the mare at the table.

"Go right ahead sweetie." The mare took the seat next to Big Mac. "Nice to meet you. I'm Bon Bon, this is Breezy Days, and that red colt next to you is Big Macintosh."

"Nice to meet all of you. I'm Blueberry Pie." The mare smiled at the colts in the booth briefly before

turning her gaze back to Bon Bon. "So...do you um come here often?"

This line elicited a short laugh from the booth's other occupants. Even Big Mac managed a light chuckle. "This is opening night sweetie," Bon Bon said.

"Oh right!" The filly turned bright red for a moment. "I'm sorry it's just I've never really done this before."

"It's okay," Breezy said, "I'm sure we all remember those awkward first days, right?"

"Eeyup," Big Mac responded in the affirmative. In truth, he hadn't actually had any really awkward times before meeting Caramel, but he felt it was necessary to encourage the filly.

Bon Bon just smiled. "To answer your real question," she said, "I'm actually taken."

Blueberrie nodded. "Okay then. Um, I think I'll be going now." She made to exit the booth but was stopped by a hoof on her shoulder. Big Mac motioned for her to stay.

Bon Bon and Breezy smiled at the shy mare as she sat back down. "Yeah," the brown colt said, "There's no reason we can't just hang out." He looked around the bar. "After all, it doesn't look like there's anypony else here."

The rest of the table took a look around the bar. It did indeed seem they were alone. The only other pony was the bartender approaching them. He was an older looking white unicorn with a gray mane wearing a full suit and a pair of large sunglasses. "Would anypony here like a drink?" he asked.

"Ah'll just have another cider." Big Mac said.

"I'll take your most expensive drink." Bon Bon said with a smug grin toward her friend.

"I'll just have water," the brown stallion said a bit sadly.

"And Blueberrie here will have your most expensive drink too."

"That wasn't part of the deal!"

"It is now," the cream mare chuckled, "You sure you don't want anything else Big Mac? Breezy here's paying."

"Thanks, but Ah'll stick with cider," the red stallion responded.

"Thank you," Breezy said sincerely.

The bartender grinned as the notepad and quill in front of him went to work writing everything down. "I'll get that for you shortly." He walked to the counter on the other side of the bar and got to work mixing the drinks.

"So why isn't your filly here today Bon Bon?" Blueberrie asked once the bartender had left.

"She's not really into the bar scene. Besides, I'm only here to help Breezy here find a colt." She put her arm around the pony sitting beside her and he hastily removed it.

"Are you and her the only filly-foolers in Ponyville. I don't see anypony else here."

"Don't worry sweetie I'm sure more will show up tomorrow. I mean Rainbow Dash isn't even here for pony's sake."

"Rainbow Dash is a filly-fooler?" Big Mac found himself joining in the conversation.

"I'm almost certain," Bon Bon said, "But either way I'm sure more ponies will be showing up soon." She turned back to Blueberrie. "Don't you worry. I'll help you get a filly in no time."

Blueberrie blushed. "Thanks Ms. Bon Bon."

"So Big Mac," Breezy said turning Mac's attention away from the two mares, "Where is Caramel tonight?"

"He's hangin' out with some of his pals tonight." Big Mac responded.

"I'm surprised he's letting you come here alone. That's a very trusting colt you've got there."

"Please Breezy," Bon Bon interrupted, "Big Mac here probably doesn't even know the meaning of the word cheating."

"Still though, Most ponies don't come to a bar like this just to make friends you know. I used to live in Manehattan, trust me on this."

"This ain't Manehattan Breezy," Big Mac said suddenly angry, "And Ah' ain't no cheater."

"I'm not saying he was wrong to trust you Big Mac," Breezy said in an attempt to calm the stallion down, "I'm just saying it's surprising he did. None of my exes would have ever trusted me that much."

"Maybe that's why they're exes," Blueberrie muttered.

Big Mac calmed back down. "Ah' just don't like the implication is all."

The bartender arrived with their drinks a moment later to a chorus of “thank you” from the table. He just bowed politely and left.

Everypony at the table stared wide eyed at Blueberrie and Bon Bon’s drinks for a few moments after he left. The drinks themselves were pink with glitter rising up from them at a steady pace, and the glasses were shaped like a vortex and decorated with streamers and balloons. Big Mac was half expecting the drinks to start launching fireworks.

“I have got to bring Pinkie here sometime,” Blueberrie mumbled.

“Just how much is this costing me?” Breezy asked, still in shock.

Bon Bon took a cautious sip and her eyes widened with shock and delight. “Whatever it is it’s totally worth it,” she exclaimed, “This thing is delicious.”

Bon Bon passed her glass over to Breezy for a try, and both him and Blueberrie took a similarly cautious drink. Both of them almost immediately spit their drinks out on the table. Moments later Blueberrie was trying to wipe something off of her tongue while Breezy seemed to be having trouble breathing.

“What’s wrong with you two,” Bon Bon said, “This is the most delicious thing I’ve ever tasted. You’ve got to try it Big Mac.” She slid the strange glass over to him.

After the other ponies’ reactions he was naturally worried. So he just decided to dip his tongue lightly in the concoction. The next second his taste buds were overwhelmed by what could only be called a sort of apocalyptic sweetness. All he knew was that he had to remove his tongue, or perish.

He chugged the rest of his cider to remove the taste from his mouth, and amazingly enough, despite its own sweet taste it actually helped. However he was still left breathing heavy afterwards.

“You guys don’t have any taste,” Bon Bon said as she took the glass back and took a hearty swig of its contents. After her company had recovered they all shared a good laugh over the horrific experience.

“I have definitely got to bring Pinkie down here tomorrow,” Blueberrie said.

The rest of the night flew by quickly as the group talked about weather, and farming, and the antics of a certain insane pony. Big Mac only participated a small amount save for the occasional “Eeyup,” but before he knew it the time was nine-o’clock.

“Ah’ should probably head home,” he said. The rest of his party took a look at the clock and agreed that it was probably time to wrap things up.

“Let’s all meet here again tomorrow okay,” Bon Bon said, “Try and bring Caramel next time okay Mac?”

Big Mac nodded and the party left the bar, although not before a small scene developed when Breezy

was forced to pay for the drinks. After that, he waved goodbye to his new friends and went back to the farm.

Applejack was waiting up for him when he entered the farmhouse. "Yer sure late," she said, "Ah' take it tonight went better than expected."

"Eeyup," Big Mac nodded and smiled. "Ah' hope ya' don't mind me going back tomorrow AJ"

"Course not. Just make sure you don't head off 'til the day's work is done. I just wanted to say goodnight to ya' before Ah' went to bed." She gave her brother a quick hug. "That was from Applebloom," she said as she headed upstairs. "Night brother."

Big Mac just nodded and headed upstairs to his own room where he laid down for a quiet nights rest.

However that's not what he got.

The moment his head hit the pillow and he closed his eyes he found himself in a rather bizarre place. He was standing in the middle of a long hallway with new turns every few steps. It looked like he was in a maze. Suddenly he heard a mare's voice say, "Hey new guy, you might want to get moving before you fall."

Big Mac looked behind himself and noticed that the floor a ways behind him was indeed falling. "Just push the walls out of your way if you get stuck," the voice said, "Apart from that you've just got to get moving through this thing. See you on the other side."

He heard the sound of galloping around a nearby corner and decided to follow it. "Wait," he shouted, "What's goin' on here?"

"I just told you what you need to know," the voice said. It sounded farther away this time, "If you want we can talk more on the other side okay. Talking much more now just wastes time."

Big Mac didn't bother talking anymore and broke into a full gallop through the maze. The path was confusing, but not impossibly so. Plus, whenever he managed to make a wrong turn he could usually just push one of the walls out of the way. Navigating the corridors was tiring but little else.

Eventually he managed to move himself to what looked like the end and ran into a door that didn't seem to be connected to anything. The floor was busy collapsing behind him so he didn't waste any time in opening the strange gateway and heading inside.

Once he was in, the door immediately slammed shut and seemed to sink into the floor behind him. He found himself in what looked like a sweet shop. It kind of looked like Sugar Cube Corner, if

the Cakes really liked the color black.

“Hey, I’m glad you made it,” he heard the voice from before say. He turned to see its owner smiling at him. It was a sheep with a pair of ridiculous purple goggles covering its eyes. “For a second there I was worried.”

“So you said would explain what’s goin’ on,” he said.

“I never said such a thing,” the sheep shrugged, “I just said we could talk more when you finished. After all I couldn’t really explain this even if I wanted to.”

“Ya’ mean ya’ don’t know what’s goin’ on?”

The sheep shook her head. “Sorry, not a clue. All I know is that I’ve been coming here for the past few weeks now, and that we don’t want to fall.”

“What’ll happen if we do?”

“I don’t know, but last I heard falling is not fun.”

“Stop talking with her newbie,” a new voice said. This one belonged to a more typical sheep, “She doesn’t know any more than the rest of us.”

The goggled sheep stuck her tongue out at the rude ram. “That may be true, but that’s no reason to go pointing it out.”

“So where do Ah’ go from here?” Big Mac asked.

“Well you can go to the stable if you want to keep running, but if I were you I’d save that for tomorrow night.”

“Tomorrow night?”

“Yeah. You’ll be here again soon, and that last one was a long one. He probably doesn’t expect us to run more tonight anyway, so you might as well-

“WAKE UP!”

Big Macintosh sprang up in his bed in a cold sweat when he heard his sister’s shout. “What’s goin’ on?” He noticed his sister grinning by the edge of the bed. “AJ was that really necessary?”

“Well the first five times didn’t do the trick, so Ah’ thought Ah’d try fer one more.” Applejack punched her brother playfully in the side. “You okay Big Mac? Looked like you were havin’ a nightmare.”

“Did it look that bad?”

“You were thrashin’ around like a hungry Winona. It sure looked bad. What were ya’ dreamin’ about anyway?”

Big Mac tried to think back to his dream. He couldn’t remember any of it. It was pretty scary though come to think of it, but he wasn’t really sure why. “Ah’ don’t rightly know AJ.”

“Well, don’t matter Ah’ suppose,” Applejack said as she made to exit her brother’s room, “Just wash yerself up and git downstairs for breakfast okay. We’ve got a good workload today.”

“Eeyup.” Big Mac nodded, hopped out of bed, and headed to the bathroom to wash his hair before breakfast, just like every other morning.