

Twisted Talk

“Ah still think there’s no way you’d be able to keep it up. You jus don’t know how to get the proper inflections.”

“And I say to you, silly pony girl, talking like me would make your head twirl.”

“Why don’t you both try to switch for a day, and see how it works?” Twilight said, trying to settle down the quickly heating situation. “Maybe then you’d see it’s not so easy to try being somepony else?”

“Ah could do that no problem!” Applejack replied, “Ah’ll do so great, ‘cause rhymes, ah’ve got ‘em!”

“That didn’t really work.” Twilight said rolling her eyes. “What do you say, Zecora? Want to give it a try? No rhyming, though.”

“That is far too easy for a Zebra like me. Ah’ll talk like the farmer, just wait and see!”

“I think this is going to make for one interesting day.” Twilight said with a smile. She looked around at Zecora’s small hut deep in the Everfree Forest. She and Applejack had come here for a short visit, and Twilight Sparkle was planning on staying the day to study some of Zecora’s unique books. “I think I’ll be okay now, AJ. Do you want to come back just before nightfall and we’ll walk home together?”

“Sure thing, Twilight. Ah’ll be back at twilight.” Applejack said, pleased with herself at the simple sentences. “See? No problem.”

Twilight slapped her forehead with her front hoof. “Ugh, AJ.” She began, “You can’t rhyme a word with itself.”

Later that afternoon, Applejack was working at the farm with her brother, bucking some of the early-ripened apples from the trees. As was their custom, they each bucked one tree at a time. After the crop had fallen neatly into the wicker baskets placed beneath, they would help each other secure the baskets to their sides and walk back to Sweet Apple Acre’s barn to deposit their horde.

After just a few trips back and forth among the orchard, Big McIntosh noticed his sister was being unusually quiet. During work, she was customarily quite the blabbermouth, going on and on about how lazy Rainbow Dash was or some new thing Twilight Sparkle found out about friendship.

“Are you okay, sis?” Big McIntosh said in his standard slow, southern drawl. “You haven’t said a word all day.”

“Ah’m fine, Big McIntosh, nothing’s wrong.” Applejack began, pausing slightly to consider her next words before continuing, “Ah just hope we’re not out here very long.”

“Well, there aren’t that many trees we have to do today. We should be done pretty soon.” He said. “If yer not feeling well, I can handle this myself.”

“No no, I’m perfectly alright.” Applejack said quickly, followed by a short gasp and then a few ums... “Don’t you think it’s pretty bright?”

Big McIntosh peered quizzically at his sister. “Eeeee-yup” he said, still trying to figure out what in the world had gotten into her. “We may as well get back out there.” He finished, deciding maybe it would be best just to let Applejack be silent for the remainder of the day.

Back at Zecora’s hut, Twilight Sparkle was nose-deep in a book, as usual. She quickly pulled back from it and turned to Zecora, “What’s the book talking about here? I’ve never seen this creature before.”

“That my friend is called a piranha. Go swimming with it? You certainly wouldn’t....desire to do that.” Zecora said, just barely escaping a rather contrived rhyme.

“Oh, I see here it says this is a carnivorous fish that lives in some fresh-water rivers. Yikes, those teeth look scary. Do you know if there are any in the rivers here in the forest?”

“Those fish? They’re from quite far away. This isn’t a place that they would....ever be found.” Zecora said again, biting her lip quickly to interrupt her normal method of talking. “I must say, Twilight, this is pretty tough. Isn’t talking this way pretty r-r-r...”

“R-rrrrr?” Twilight asked as Zecora stopped mid-word. “Rough?”

“No, no, no, I didn’t mean that. Only that rhyming for me is old h...habit.”

“I see. You know, you were supposed to talk like Applejack today, not just stop rhyming.” Twilight said

Twisted Talk

with a mischievous smile.

Zecora frowned and gave Twilight an icy stare. She held that angry look and said, “Ah...suppose...yer right.” She eventually eked out, speaking very slowly, “Ah’ll be better by tonight.”

“See? That’s better. Although, you did end on a rhyme.”

“Argh, what silly rules about how I talk. Goodbye, Twilight, I’m taking a walk.”

Zecora stormed out of her own hut and into the Everfree Forest. She couldn’t believe that Twilight was actually calling her out for a bet she’d made in haste with Applejack. She always talked in rhymes, so what? It had a lyrical quality to it, Zecora told herself. Besides, that was simply how Zebras communicated with each other. It came naturally, and Zebra children were taught at an early age how much more graceful their style of speech was compared to other races. And now these ponies were making a joke of it!

Zecora practically stamped her hooves against the ground with each step as she walked aimlessly through the forest, or so she thought. In reality, Zecora had found her way onto the path into Ponyville. She had advanced quite far down this path before she even realized where she was going.

“Why am I going this way? I’ve no need for Ponyville today.” Zecora said to herself as she stopped and looked around the woods. She was just about to turn back when she saw a small cloud of dust stirring in the path up ahead. In just a few seconds, the cloud grew bigger and Zecora could just barely make out a tan pony at the head of it.

Waiting where she stood for a minute or two longer, Zecora was soon face-to-face with Applejack.

Zecora, having had a few minutes to prepare, said immediately, “Applejack! What’re you doin’ in mah neck o’ the woods?”

“I’m sorry, Zecora.” Applejack replied, out of breath, “I can’t take talkin’ in rhyme anymore. You win, yer way o’ speakin is harder than mine.”

“Well, let that be a lesson to you little pony. Being a Zebra is not for a phony.” Zecora said haughtily, but almost immediately her conscience got the better of her. “Actually, my friend Applejack.” She began again, “Your speaking skills I also lack.”

“Really? But ah heard you...”

“I know, I know, but that success was fleeting. The rest of the day I’ve been, well, cheating.”

“Ah see, so neither of us could keep it up, huh?” Applejack said, rubbing her chin with her hoof while deep in thought. “Well, ah guess we’ll jus have to call it a draw then, partner!” As she said this, Applejack broke into a smile and extended her hoof out toward Zecora. Zecora, for her part, took Applejack’s hoof and shook it heartily.

“I suppose so, my pony friend. But I’ll beat you some day, this is not the end!”

With that, they both broke into a small fit of laughter and walked back together to Zecora’s hut. Once there, they were sure to let Twilight Sparkle hear all they’d learned about friendship before parting ways, each with a little bit more respect for the other, and having become better friends.