

ABSOLUTELY (NOT) SECEDING

by GeodesicDragon

"And so, to commemorate my sixth year as Mayor of Ponyville, I am pleased to announce that I am returning half of my wages for this year to the town I have loved to serve."

A chorus of shouting greeted this statement, punctuated by the flashing of camera bulbs and a sea of raised hooves. Mayor Mare smiled politely at the assembled journalists, taking a sip of water from the glass on her lectern, and pointed at a young mare.

"My name is News Reel, and I'm from the Canterlot Herald," said the mare. "If you don't mind me asking: what do you intend to do with the money, and exactly how much is it?"

The Mayor cleared her throat. "I can't answer the second part of that question due to privacy laws, but I can tell you that the money will be used to provide new equipment for the hospital."

"Good enough for me," News Reel replied. "Thank you."

"You're welcome." Mayor Mare looked out over the crowd, her gaze finally falling on a stallion who looked as though he was fresh out of high school. "You there, what's your question?"

"Since you've been in charge for so long, that obviously suggests you are very good at what you do," the stallion replied. "So, with that in mind, have you ever considered taking complete control of Ponyville and then seceding from Equestria?"

The question took the Mayor completely by surprise; she took a deep breath and let it out slowly, before looking the stallion directly in the eyes so that she could address him properly.

"I don't think I heard you," she said. "For a moment there, I could have sworn that you asked me if I have ever considered taking complete control of Ponyville and then seceding from Equestria."

The stallion nodded. "I did ask that question, Mayor Mare," he replied. "And I would very much like an answer." He looked down at his notes. "Since you became Mayor of Ponyville, it has become a major player in Equestria; the town earns hundreds of thousands of bits per year in revenue and taxes, yet doesn't appear to have even the slightest hint of a deficit. Thousands of ponies visit every year as tourists, and you are constantly winning 'Best Town' awards. So, why not take of all that and secede? You'd do well on your own."

The Mayor chuckled. "What's your name?" she asked.

"My name is Hot Press, Mayor Mare," he replied. "I'm a junior reporter, and I work for the Manehattan Daily Telegraph."

"Well, Hot Press, let me tell you why seceding from Ponyville would be a very bad idea," Mayor Mare said sternly. "For a start, we don't earn as much as you think we do; most of the money we get comes as a grant from the government in Canterlot, which we use for maintaining our roads and services. Given our small size, we only get a small grant, and all of it is gone by the time we get it; whatever we earn from other income – such as taxes – helps to plug up the remaining shortfall. The only reason we don't have a deficit is because of the famous ponies who live here – namely Princess Twilight and the other Element Bearers. Ponies come from across Equestria to see them, and they bring a lot of bits."

Hot Press looked confused. "But surely, with all of that money, you would be making a tidy profit each year?" he wondered.

Mayor Mare rolled her eyes. "This is *Ponyville*," she said. "You're a journalist, so you of all ponies should know what we're in the news *at least* twice a month because a monster/demigod/Everfree creature has attacked. Repairs aren't free, you know." Hot Press opened his mouth to respond, but she cut him off. "So, let's imagine that Ponyville has seceded from Equestria; tourism has ground to a halt, because most ponies would no doubt view us as traitors, and we've lost access to the grant I mentioned. Within weeks – maybe even *days* – of our secession, a hydra or something comes storming out of the Everfree Forest and lays waste to the town. Paying for the repairs alone would send us into the red.

"This, of course, would mean that I – as Mayor – would have to take steps to address the sudden shortfall. Since I can't get any grants or funding from Canterlot, I'd have to resort to the only method at my disposal: raising taxes. This would be fine at first; over time, though, as we suffered more attacks, it would get to the point where taxes would be at one hundred percent. Every single bit a pony made would be going towards paying for repairs... and let's not forget about services – the roads need to be maintained, the school needs to be funded, and ponies will always need to receive medical care. Now, assuming that everypony in town welcomed the decision to secede, they would no doubt be disillusioned with the whole idea by this point. There would be demonstrations, which would probably turn into riots as the anger over my decision – and general hostility towards me as an individual for making it in the first place – boiled over. This would cause, you guessed it, more property damage, thus leaving us back at square one with no end in sight. And if I was ultimately forced out of office, I'd be leaving my successor with a huge mess to clean up, as well as a lot of grovelling to do.

"So, there you have it, Hot Press," she concluded. "That is why Ponyville seceding from Equestria would be a very bad idea indeed. Does that answer your question satisfactorily?"

Hot Press nodded meekly. "Yes, Miss Mayor," he said. "It does."

Mayor Mare smiled. "Good," she replied. "Now, perhaps somepony can ask me a question that is a bit more sensible?" At this, several hooves shot up; Mayor Mare pointed at a random mare. "Yes, you."

The mare stood up. "You clearly won't secede from Equestria, that much is clear, but would you ever consider overthrowing the Princesses and taking over? You could make Equestria great again!"

Mayor Mare's face fell and she rubbed her temples.

This is going to be a loooooooooong conference...