

## **FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES**

*by GeodesicDragon*

Three fillies sat under the cool shade of a tree, watching their classmates leaving for the day. One of them soon grew bored with watching them and turned her attention to the other two.

"So," she said, "that sure was one heck of a hard day, right? But at least we get to relax back at tha farm."

Her companions both faced her.

"It was Apple Bloom," one replied, "but given how much homework we got, I doubt that we're going to get much relaxing done."

"I agree with Scootaloo." the third one piped up, "Why do you think Miss Cheerilee gave us so much to do?"

"Because she doesn't want us to enjoy the weekend?" Scootaloo snorted, "That's why."

Sweetie Belle smiled as Apple Bloom suddenly groaned.

"Great," she muttered, "an' just when Ah thought today was gonna be trouble-free. Look who's comin'."

Scootaloo and Sweetie Belle followed Apple Bloom's gaze, which fell upon a couple of other foals. The two earth ponies were sneering at the three Crusaders as they came over and integrated themselves into the group without an invite to do so.

"Look at this Silver Spoon," one said, "it looks like the blank flanks are having yet another hushed little talk with each other. Remind me, what is it you're planning to fail at again? Is it getting your cutie marks, or just life in general?"

Silver Spoon laughed sycophantically.

"I think it's the second one Diamond Tiara," she said, "because we both know these losers have tried everything to get their cutie marks. Maybe they should try and get one in not being so lame?"

"But that would mean..." Diamond Tiara replied as she put a hoof to her forehead dramatically, "that they'd be blank flanks forever!"

She and Silver Spoon both giggled uproariously as Scootaloo stomped a hoof into the ground.

"You've had your fun," she snapped, "now leave us alone."

"Or what, Scootaloser?" Diamond Tiara snarled, "You'll tell on us? Even if you do, which you won't, the worst Miss Cheerilee can do is give us lines or detention. And even if she was to go so far as to expel us, we'd just get home schooled. Which means we'd still be around to have some fun at your expense."

"Yeah," Silver Spoon added, "so you might as well get used to the idea of us always being around."

"Oh we're tryin'," Apple Bloom growled, "but it sure as hay ain't easy. Now why don't ya clear off and bother somepony else?"

"Because nopony else is a blank-flank like you three are." Diamond Tiara huffed, "Besides, it's much more fun to annoy you because at least you rise to the bait. It's fun watching you get angry."

Apple Bloom snorted and opened her mouth to speak when a louder, more authoritative voice cut through the air.

"Is there a problem here girls?" the tone was sarcastic, "Or should I come back after you've beaten each other to a pulp?"

Apple Bloom and the other Crusaders swivelled around and found themselves looking at a leg. They looked up and saw a man looking down at them with his arms folded.

"Oh hi John." Apple Bloom said, "There ain't a problem here. Diamond Tiara and Silver Spoon were just leavin'."

"Really?" John replied, "So you think those two insulting and teasing you isn't a problem?"

"Oh..." Apple Bloom mumbled, "ya saw that, did ya?"

"My dear Apple Bloom," John replied as he knelt down to her level, "you're forgetting about what I used to do for a living. I saw the commotion and sneaked in for a closer look... and a listen."

"We never saw you," Scootaloo interjected, "so either you're like Pinkie Pie, or we were too busy arguing to notice you."

"The second one." John said before frowning, "Now I'll ask you again, is there a problem here?"

Diamond Tiara and Silver Spoon looked around nervously.

"We were just..." Silver Spoon stuttered, "I mean... we..."

"... were being a pair of bullies." John finished her sentence, "Yes, I saw that. Why?"

"They've been teasing us for months," Scootaloo growled, "just because we don't have our cutie marks."

"And then there's the fact we like hanging out together," Sweetie Belle added, "and not with the other foals. They think we don't have any other friends besides each other."

"That's a load of sh— tripe." John snarled, "This morning when I dropped you off I saw you talking to the other foals. And then you all ran off and played a game of hoofball with them."

"But as soon as they were done," Diamond Tiara said, "they retreated to a corner of the playground together and stayed there until the bell rang. They don't care for being friends with others."

"And neither do you two," John replied, "if what I've been hearing about you is correct."

"For your information," Silver Spoon snapped, "we happen to be friends with some very important ponies, thanks to our family connections. The ponies here only want to be our friends because of how important our families are."

"So you think that because you're friends with some hot-shots in Canterlot," John mused, "that makes you better than everypony?"

"At least we have a *variety* of friends," Diamond Tiara snorted, "and don't spend time with the same two ponies every day of the week like these three seem to do."

John laughed out loud.

"Wow," he said, "you two really are clueless, aren't you? You know who Apple Bloom and Sweetie Belle's sisters are, right?"

Diamond Tiara and Silver Spoon nodded.

"Applejack and Rarity," Silver Spoon said, "though family and friends are two entirely separate things."

"Applejack and Rarity," John glanced at Scootaloo, "as well as Rainbow Dash, are three of the Elements of Harmony. If it wasn't for those six mares, your 'friends' wouldn't have anything. What if Discord was still the bad guy? What if King Sombra or the Changelings had succeeded in their invasions? You two little brats don't seem to realise just who you're dealing with here."

Diamond Tiara and Silver Spoon looked shocked.

"Apple Bloom is my sister-in-law," John continued, "and Scootaloo and Sweetie Belle are my friends. The four of us also happen to be *very* good friends with Geo and his wife Twilight Sparkle — although you two would have to refer to them as 'Prince and Princess'.

He folded his arms again and grinned.

"My point is this." he said smugly, "We're friends with royalty, and you're not. So... who's better than who now, hmm?"

Diamond Tiara and Silver Spoon struggled to formulate a sentence, but found themselves unable to. Admitting defeat they bolted from the school grounds as fast as they could. John and the Crusaders watched them leave, the latter with grins on their faces.

"They shouldn't give you any more trouble girls." John said, "But if they do, you let me know. Now come on, let's head back to the farm. Pregnant or not, I just know that AJ will try to buck the trees in the south field. Are you three up for helping me to keep her in the house so she can't do that?"

"You bet!" Apple Bloom chirped, "Ah don't want AJ or mah new niece or nephew gettin' hurt!"

"And after helping us deal with those two snobs," Scootaloo said, "of course I'm gonna help you out."

"And me!" Sweetie Belle squeaked, "It's the least we can do!"

John clapped his hands together triumphantly.

"All right then," he said, "let's get going."

Kneeling down he allowed the three of them to climb onto him so that Apple Bloom was perched on his head, while Sweetie Belle and Scootaloo took a shoulder each. He then began the walk to Sweet Apple Acres, happy that he had been able to help his friends.

And once again, he felt good.