

Despite living for thousands of years, Celestia sometimes made mistakes. Same as any other pony, sometimes she learned from them and never, *ever* did anything so foolhardy again, or she’d repeat the error in a whole new way. As much as Celestia hated to admit being wrong, she was big enough to tell herself if nopony else.

“He really is a sweet boy when you get down to it,” the mare sitting on the couch said. “Can you blame him with the rabble that you’re forced to deal with on a regular basis? Just last year at the Gala, this *abominable* mare had the nerve to tell my son...”

After she’d messed up so horribly the first time the mistake had been made, Celestia thought she’d found the wisdom to catch these kinds of things and prevent them. But such was not the case. If anything, the first time had been so jarring that she’d become blind to anything but the signs only seen in hindsight. The same happened here; looking back, how could she had not seen what was happening? All these years, all this time, and another monster had been made.

The stallion opposite Celestia scoffed as he listened to his wife. “That isn’t the first time some charleton of a mare came up to my son expecting a ticket to the high society life. We taught him well. If it isn’t a noblemare we found for him, they’re nothing more than hoofmaidens in waiting. Honestly, with all those *county* ponies that come in, my son would never need to be punished. That was the same year the Mayor of Manehatten was invited, wasn’t it? No wonder the Gala was a disaster with ponies like him on the guest list.”

There were several key differences between this monster and the old one. Perhaps that was why Celestia hadn’t picked up on it until now. It wasn’t the same. In the end, though, that just meant a different kind of monster from a mistake that was the same as the last one. The last result of a situation like this had been with a pony much, much closer. Her sister, in fact. Not paying attention to Luna had allowed a nightmare to fester and consume her precious sibling. If only Celestia had paid just a little more attention, said an extra *I love you* once in a while.

Here, it was a relative. Somepony that had some of herself in them. The philosophical part of her mind wondered if that said anything about her in a deeper way. Was this new monster born directly from her somehow? Perhaps it didn’t matter anymore. There was a new monster to be dealt with, and it had to be dealt with right.

“So...” Celestia began. “This mare that was talking to your son...”

“One of the stewards,” the stallion huffed. “Didn’t know a serving spoon from a soup spoon. Help is so hard to find these days, isn’t it?”

“Finding ponies to take jobs is a simple task.” The much older pony sipped from her tea, wishing she’d put in more sugar when she had the chance. “Getting them to stay is another matter. Seems a lot of them can’t quite meet your standards.”

The mare turned her nose up. “My son only deserves the best, and the best he shall have. Surely you know how that is, do you not?”

Celestia thought back to the best slice of cake she’d ever had, or the best piece of music she’d ever listened to. Both were in places these ponies had never even set hoof in. “I know all about that, yes.”

“Excellent,” the mare said with a smile Celestia couldn’t believe was sincere. “So you understand where our son was coming from, then.”

So many signs. The time one of the cooks spent several hours preparing a dish and didn’t even get a thank you, the time a mare was used as a stepping stool to reach for something on a high shelf. The time an elderly stallion had been screamed at for spilling some sort of drink on his coat. The way he carried himself, the way he disregarded any rule that wasn’t about being prim and proper. All these things and so much more, and Celestia hadn’t thought it meant that much until now.

“Yes, I’m starting to see *exactly* what my nephew was thinking.” Celestia set up cup down and smiled at them. “You’ve truly spared no expense in taking care of him, have you?”

The stallion bowed his head. “Thank you, Your Grace. If one is to be royalty, one must be treated as such. Our son knows everything there is to know about running a town, a house, a business, a great many things. Trained since he took his first step. I have no doubt in my mind he’ll be more than ready to join your council when the time comes.”

“Oh, he most certainly will,” Celestia said, extending her smile so wide it forced her eyes closed. “That’s what I’ve come to check on, after all. And I’ve seen how much you love and adore him. There aren’t many with an upbringing such as his.”

Husband and wife exchanged glances of satisfaction before the mare said, “All for you, our Princess.”

Celestia thought back to when she’d first met her nephew, or this one, at least. Such a small colt, timid, stumbling over every word as he struggled to talk like an adult. That should have been the first sign, but Celestia just assumed it was nerves. Where had that little colt gone? Where was the little prince that would hide her crown under her bed or ask what the giant map hanging in one of the libraries was? The colt that asked her to scare the monster hiding in the closet away so he wouldn’t wet the bed?

“May I ask, though, what sort of measurements do you use when discipline is in order?” the alicorn asked.

“Discipline?” the stallion asked. “What do you mean?”

“All fillies and colts misbehave once in a while. Even colts as old as yours. They make mistakes and must be taught a lesson.” Celestia opened her eyes, brow raised. “Maybe it’s as simple as carrying a two instead of a one the account books and losing a few hundred bits, or there’s the possibility he’s let his temper get the best of him and yelled back at you.”

The mare smiled once again as she said, “You’ll be happy to know our son is perfectly well behaved now. Of course you are right about discipline, though. Sometimes he needed to remember not to buck the hoof that feeds, in which he is locked in his room and made to think about what he had done.”

“I see.” Celestia’s gaze floated around the tea room they sat in, looking again for any sign of family photo or painting. After the twentieth time, one still hadn’t appeared. “And that is all?”

“That is all,” the stallion repeated. “Shown to his room and told to think, that was all. Our son needed nothing else growing up. Any sort of incivility left him when he was younger. Now he is perfectly behaved and worthy of your court,” he stated matter-of-factly.

Celestia thought he’d just grown up, that all his playfulness and desire to explore had left the same way it leaves any child growing up. And he had grown up, in fact. He’d grown up the way a plant without sunlight grew. Reaching up, higher and higher, searching for a solitary ray and finding nothing but more darkness.

“Be that as it may, I have reason to believe my nephew has been performing actions that would reflect negatively not just on himself, but my entire court.”

“You do?” both ponies across from Celestia said.

With a nod, Celestia continued, “Nothing so terrible that ponies are being hurt. Directly, at least. But I fear if I allow this to continue, my nephew will become something I do not enjoy thinking of. This must be stopped now before it is allowed to progress any further.”

Both parents looked at each other, this time with worry. “We understand, Your Majesty,” the mare said. “The issue shall be dealt with instantly. Please, send him to us and we will take care of the rest.”

Another way her blindness this time was different than before was the lack of a pony to blame. Before, Celestia could say it was her fault for not paying attention when her sister needed a hug. This time, Celestia didn’t have the proper authority to handle the issue, and those that did were coldhearted. Not monsters, but frighteningly close to the line that separated ponies from creatures that had no care for life. They clearly loved their son and did what they thought was best. There were all in a conga line of heritage where each generation became more and more deluded about the world and their place in it.

It was time to stomp on the problem before it could roar into a fire of destruction. Start fresh and new before this monster could become anything worse. Restart, back to the beginning.

“If it would please you,” Celestia said, “I would like to take care of the situation myself.”

“Princess, please, you needn’t trouble yourself with our affairs anymore than you already have,” the stallion said. “Our son is our responsibility. Let us handle moulding him into a pony worthy of you.”

“I’m flattered that you’ve put so much thought into grooming my nephew to be the perfect councilpony—truly, I am—but this is a matter I wish to take care of myself.” With as sweet a smile as possible, Celestia added, “Think of it as a test of sorts. I want to see what your training has done and how he’ll respond, while at the same time adding my own influence. With your blessing, I will take care of the problem and instruct him in the ways needed to suit my council’s needs. Do you disagree with this?”

The challenge had been set. These nobleponies never said ‘No’ to Celestia. The ones that did often found themselves as Celestia’s personal advisors, and the pair were sorely lacking the backbone others like Kibitz possessed. Or, perhaps, it was merely them not caring for much of their son’s development, as they had for the past few decades. Either way, the couple caved instantly.

“Naturally, my Liege,” the stallion said.

The mare added, “Do as you will, our son is yours to command.”

Celestia heard the quiver in their voices and entertained the idea of trying to help these ponies change their ways. Perhaps another time. Or perhaps their son would be able to show them how to treat ponies once she was done with him.

“Thank you. These things are always easier when all parties are in agreement.” Celestia stood up, looking at her unfinished cup of tea. “With that settled, I must be off. Things to get done, country to run, celestial bodies to move, the usual fare. He will be called soon enough and the lessons can be taught properly. Have yourself a pleasant evening.”

“You as well, my Princess,” The stallion said before clapping his hooves together. “See the Princess to the door.”

A butler pony stepped forward, bowed to Celestia, and trotted to the front door with Celestia following after.

With a sigh, Celestia trotted out into the open air, heart heavier than it had been when she’d entered. “Thank you, Mr...?”

The butler blinked and took a moment to respond. “Jives, Princess.”

Celestia raised a brow. “Are you alright?”

“Forgive me. No guest of the Master has asked for my name in such a long time. Have a good evening.” With one last bow, the butler closed the door and left Celestia to her thoughts.

Amidst the planning going on in her mind, thinking of the room she’d need to have emptied out and the cost of materials needed to make this perfect, Celestia felt a few more pangs as she realized two things. The parents had forgotten to ask what was wrong with their son, and not once had they ever used Blueblood’s name.

Prince Blueblood trotted through the halls of Canterlot castle, eyes set forward and looking no other direction. The sun told Blueblood the time, as it had since he’d been taught to use the sun as his clock. A pony such as himself had no need for a watch, not when he could prove to Celestia how far he took her word as law. The sun told the time, and so did Celestia.

And as the sun climbed through the sky so did he make his daily trot like clockwork. It was the duty of a Prince to be on time for the good of his subjects, his country, and his Liege. Long ago, the servants had learned to stay out of this path or else face Blueblood’s wrath. Princes didn’t scream any more than princesses did. The wrath of royalty was quiet, quick, and to the point. With the same pleasantries used to declare a cloudy day a bother, jobs were lost and ponies were torn to shreds and told how lucky they were that the dungeons were in disuse.

By this point, Prince Blueblood had come to expect his walk to whatever meeting was next on his list of things to get done would be devoid of life. A walk that only a prince would go along, with no other pony by his side. So it was a surprise when another pony stepped out of another hall and bumped into him, the clatter of porcelain cups and dishes falling to the ground ringing in his ears.

Blueblood’s first instinct was to chew out the dunce that dared to get in his way and make a mess they’d have to cleanup. Anypony lower than him needed his guidance, after all, as it was required of the noblepony to direct the foolhardy that could not properly act of their own accord. “You blithering fool, look at what you’ve done? My coat is stained and it shall take the groomers hours to get this clean!”

Were it a simple servant Blueblood had run into, they would have bowed, apologized profusely and offer to pay for the damage done to his regal coat, which Blueblood would deny, knowing said bits had been touched by their filthy hooves. Then he’d warn them to do better and make a mental note to dock in their pay for what they’d done. Common ponies needed the lesson, as mother and father would say.

This was no castle servant, though.

“That’s not a particularly nice thing to say, Nephew,” Princess Celestia said, shaking the tea from her hoof. “It’s just a little Earl Grey, you know. Nopony's ever died from it, and I've lived long enough to know whether such would occur.”

The Regent of the Sun, the ruler of Equestria, the pony that could move bodies in the cosmos and turn a pony to ash with a thought had crossed Blueblood’s path. He’d crashed into her and ruined her afternoon tea. Worst of all, he’d called her a fool. If any servant had dared to call Prince Blueblood anything less than His Highness, that pony would find themselves thrown out of Canterlot so fast that they might have discovered what it was like to make a Sonic Rainboom.

“Princess, f-forgive my insolence!” Blueblood cried, knees shaking as though he could collapse at any moment. “I had not realized it was you!”

“Really, now?” Celesia raised a brow, demeanor cool and calm as whenever she spoke to those attending her court. The look of calculation as she thought about how to solve the problem before her. “And who, may I ask, did you mistake me for?”

It might have been hidden behind a smile, but Blueblood knew that gentle look was to disarm the pony and make them feel safe. Blueblood felt anything but secure at the moment. “One of the servants, my Princess. O-one does not normally carry their own drinks when they have help to do it for them. A simple misunderstanding, yes?”

“That is an error one can easily make,” Celestia replied as she lifted the tea set back up, minus the tea now. Then she turned to her nephew with the look a spider might give to a fly in its web . “After all, I am a servant as well.”

Blueblood blinked. “Pardon, Princess?”

Celestia peeked into the teapot and grumbled at the lack of warm drink still available to her. Pouring what remained into a cup, she said, “Of course. I serve all of Equestria, day in and day out. Quite literally, as it were.” A giggle escaped the ages-elder pony as she offered the teacup to Blueblood. “Tea?”

Shaking his head, Blueblood gulped and said, “No thank you, your Majesty.” The gears turned in his head as he calculated Celestia’s words. Years of training gave him the forethought to see where many conversations were going to lead. Already he saw a punishment in his future. Still, what Celestia said next wasn’t exactly what he had predicted.

“I have a deep respect for servants, you know, what with how similar we are. I serve my country so that ponies may serve other ponies, and those other ponies may serve us.” Celestia sipped at the drink. “So if your words were earnestly meant for a servant, well... you might as well have meant them for me.”

“Don’t be ludicrous,” Blueblood said before thinking. It had been a kneejerk response, a practiced one for whenever nobleponies with softer hearts tried to make excuses. His pupils shrank to pinpricks when he realized what he’d said. “I-I mean, you’re not ludicrous, just the notion that you’re one of the servile peons! You’re so much more than anypony could ever be!”

“Prince Blueblood, are you saying I’m wrong?”

The corners of Blueblood’s mouth threatened to drop off his face as he frowned hard enough to hurt. “I... I... I...”

Princess Celestia *tsked* and looked down at Blueblood with what could only be described as abject disappointment. He’d seen it a million times in his mother’s eyes and he reacted accordingly; stood up straight, let any feeling slip away from his face, and prepared for a long, long bout of being alone. No doubt the longest one yet.

“I’ve been watching you for quite some time, Blueblood,” Celestia said with a sigh. “You’ve done things that I’m ashamed of.”

Blueblood nodded. “Yes, my Princess.” What those things were didn’t matter, just that Princess Celestia thought he’d been wrong. What a commanding pony said, one took as fact even if they seemed wrong.

“This is the latest in a series of mistakes, but this straw that’s broken my back has also forced my hoof.” Celestia drank the rest of her tea. “Your parents have been made aware of your misconduct around the castle and have given me permission to administer a suitable punishment.”

Lowering his head, Blueblood sighed. “As you wish, Princess.”

Celestia nodded. “Good. You, Swift Kick.” Celestia turned her head as one of two palace guards standing in front of a door trotted up to the Princess and bowed. “Do you know of the chamber Prince Blueblood was on his way to?”

“Yes, Princess,” the guard said with a salute.

“Please go and inform the delegates that Prince Blueblood's presence is required by the Sovereign Princess of the Sun and he will be unavailable for the duration of today's proceedings. If asked why, it is a personal matter between the two of us.”

The guard saluted and trotted down the hall, past Blueblood who was still looking down at the ground. The prince caught a passing glance of sympathy as he went on his way.

“There is a room just down the hall, prepared specially for you.” Celestia turned and motioned for Blueblood to follow. “You will be staying in this room until I deem it fit for you to leave. Are there any objections?”

Of course there weren’t any objections. What pony in their right mind would ever say no to Princess Celestia? “No, Your Majesty,” Blueblood said as he followed along.

Princess Celestia turned her head back to Blueblood. “I understand your mother and father sent you to your room and locked the door when you had done something wrong.”

“It was what was needed,” Blueblood replied.

“Hmm... well, I hope you don’t mind that I’ll be adding a few things to this punishment. Some rules I expect you to follow.”

“Of course, Princess.”

Celestia stopped in front of an ornate door, same as any other in the palace. Unlike most other rooms in the castle, there were no guards waiting to open the door or protect whatever was inside. “How fortunate I found you so close by to your new room. We can get started right away.”

“Yes, my Princess.”

Clearing her throat, she began, “Rule one, you are not *Prince* Blueblood while in this room. Your title and all the power you possess are stripped from you. None of it matters in here, not one little bit.”

“As you command, my Princess.”

“Rule two; stop calling me ‘*Princess’*. You are forbidden from using that word while within this room.”

Blueblood looked up and blinked, opening his mouth to respond but finding himself stopped as Celestia continued.

“And that includes any other title of importance. No *my Liege* or *Your Majesty* or anything of the sort. In here, I am not your princess.”

“But... but...” Blueblood’s mouth went slack as the simple collection of words whirled in his head and tried to form a thought that made sense. “How am I to refer to you?”

“Why don’t you take a moment to think?” Celestia said with a smirk. “There’s only so many things you can call me, isn’t there? Oh, perhaps some of the names you used when you were a tiny little colt?”

Blueblood’s cheeks turned an ironic color of red as his tail twitched. “I was but a child. The things said back then were of a different time and a different mind.”

Celestia gave a gentle smile, giggling as she watched her nephew blush. “Come now, it wasn’t all that bad. Let me hear you say it, just once.”

“Mmm...” Blueblood hummed, kicking at the ground. Again, though, he was interrupted before he could speak. A hoof was brought to his lips just as he opened his mouth.

Kind eyes met Blueblood’s gaze. Just like the stare she used to disarm ponies and make them believe Celestia had nothing to hide, yet different. Not any more sincere than normal, yet Blueblood couldn’t help but have a sense of déjà vu.

“That isn’t an order, Blueblood. I’m asking you as favor, nothing more.”

Blinking, the stallion found himself lost for words for a moment as, for what must have been the fourteenth time, Celestia’s words tore through his mind and made him wonder what he’d been thinking in the first place. Was this a test? A trick? What was this ages-old master of magic doing? Still, request or not, Blueblood wasn’t going to deny the Princess.

The hoof was pulled away and Blueblood said, “... Aunt Celly. I used to call you Aunt Celly when I was still a colt.”

Celestia rewarded his answer with a warm smile. “Indeed, you did. And you used to hate the fact that a yucky word like *blood* was in your name, so I called you Blooey.”

Blueblood turned his head away. “Princess, please, I was still naive and—”

“Tut, tut, no calling me ‘Princess’, remember?” Celestia poked Blueblood’s nose. “Breaking rules before we’ve even begun. As an addition to your punishment, your name will be Blooey while you’re in this room. Do you understand?”

“Yes, Pr- Celestia.”

Celestia’s smile lost some of its luster, but none of its warmth. The handle of the door turned in a golden glow of magic, followed by Celestia gently patting her nephew’s back. “Come along, Blooey, and let’s get you set up so you can think about what you’ve done.”

“Yes, Celestia,” Blueblood said. Or perhaps he should have started thinking of himself as *Blooey*. Despite the few times he could remember being locked in his room, he’d simply had himself and nothing else. Now there was all this new shame to add to his thoughts. *Blooey*. Could this get any worse?

And then he walked into the room. At first, he couldn’t comprehend what he was seeing. A total lack of anything to stare at was what he’d been expecting. A bed, at most, if Celestia was generous enough to give him a place to sleep. Expecting nothing would have the effect of making *anything* surprising, and by that metric this was too much to take.

A caricature of a nursery greeted Blueblood as his eyes swept across the room. All the things a pony could expect to find in a room for a foal was here, but twisted into a shape that could be described as *bigger*. Much bigger. From the playpen to the toys to the plushies to the crib, the mobile, the changing table, all of it was much too large for any proper-sized foal to use. The only thing that was the correct size was an ice box sitting in a corner, guarded by a plush tyrannosaurus-rex that looked more interested in a hug than a meal.

Blueblood turned, mouth agape and eyes brimming with a million questions. Alas, the temporary-not-prince had every word stricken from his vocabulary, and the most he could managed was a, “Buh?”

Celestia’s golden regalia, along with her crown, floated onto something of a hat rack as she kicked her royal horseshoes off. Without her garb, the Princess seemed to lose almost everything that came with the title. Perhaps that was the point, as she was no longer a *Princess* while in this bizarre room. She was just Celestia, and Celestia was something Blueblood wasn’t prepared to deal with. Even when completely relaxed, she carried herself with the grace of a swan gliding across calm water. Somehow, that made her more imposing.

“Like what you see?” Celestia asked and followed up with an airy giggle.

Whether she meant her de-clothed form or the nursery, Blueblood couldn’t tell. Mustering all the wits he could manage, Blueblood gave an intelligent, “Muh?” in response.

Not a beat was missed as Celestia said, “There’ll be plenty of time for playing once you’re all dressed up. We can’t have itty bitty foals running around without their diapees, can we? They might make a mess across the carpet, and we can’t have them doing that.” Again, Celestia patted Blueblood’s hindquarters, directing him towards the changing table.

Too stunned to fight back, Blueblood stepped toward the table with his tail curled between his legs. Next to this furniture that seemed so much larger than himself was a shelf with foal supplies such as wipes, powder, cream, and, of course, diapers. Stacks of them, each colored with a tint of blue and emblazoned with an image of a sun that was all-too-familiar. Before his mind could try and make any sense of what was happening, the collar around his neck was pulled over his head and tossed aside.

“No need for that right now. Fancy clothes like those are for *big* ponies. Up, up with you.” Celestia wrapped her hooves under Blueblood’s stomach and lifted him up enough to let him climb onto the table. “Onto your back, please.”

At last, Blueblood’s mind managed to form a string of thought he could say out loud. “Are you to make a foal out of me?”

“Having a hard time with directions, are we? Tut, tut, Blooey, how do you expect to grow up at this rate? Oh well.” Celestia’s golden aura wrapped around Blueblood’s body and turned him onto him back. “Good thing your Aunty Celly is here to make the grown up decisions for him~”

“But... But...” Blueblood said.

“The only one I want to hear about is yours, Blooey.” One of the diapers floated over to Celestia, who plucked the garment from the air and let it unfold. “Here’s a special something I had made just for you. Look, they even have your favorite Aunty’s cutie mark on them! And with all the cush on your tush, it’s an extra big sun. No mooning for you~”

Blueblood turned his head away, trying to direct his gaze to something that would let him forget about whatever was happening to him. Given his surroundings, it didn’t work so well.

“Unfurl that tail, young colt. You can’t have it stuffed into your diaper, now can you?” she said. When he didn’t obey of his own accord, Celestia magically grabbed the tip of his tail and tugged it down while slipping the diaper under his bottom. The garment slid up his back as Celestia pulled his tail through the hole in the back. “Since you can’t follow instructions like a good little colt, I suppose asking you to lift your hiney isn’t going to work in my favor. We’ll just assume my Blooey needs Aunty’s help with everything, shall we?”

Powder and cream were applied to Blueblood’s nethers and he wondered if his cheeks would ever turn back into their proper color. Princesses weren’t supposed to do this, Princes weren’t supposed to be subjected to it, and yet here was the pony he’d been trained to obey like a second mother rubbing him down with rash cream as if he were a foal.

The front was pulled up and over Blueblood, letting him feel how oversized the diaper was, same as everything else in the room. The waistband almost covered his entire belly like a crinkly corset. The wings were pulled around his sides and taped into place, sealing him inside.

“There we are,” Celestia said as she picked him up and pulled him into a tight hug, complete with pats to his now-cushy rear.

Much like his new clothing, his aunt was making Blueblood feel much smaller than he really was. It wasn’t just how big Celestia was compared to him, or the tone in her voice that suggested she was talking to a foal, or even the caress his diaper and back was getting. He’d be darned if he knew what it was, or even what was going on.

Celestia set Blueblood back on his hooves, the diaper facing her. Just like his mother had when she’d seen him in his first tuxedo collar, Celestia cooed as her face split with a smile of pure bliss. “Look at you, all pouty and grumpy. That diaper is so big, your waddles will make ducks jealous!”

The plush article extended far behind Blueblood, far enough between his legs to reach his hocks. Closing his legs was impossible, let alone doing anything close to a proper walk. The stallion still found himself stricken speechless, his only reply to shut his eyes tight and lower his head.

“And look, we’ve got matching suns on our rumps!” Celestia turned to present her cutie mark of a sun, the same one now shining on Blueblood’s butt. “Now everypony who sees you will know whose foal you are.” Smirking, she drove the point into his heart with, “You know how ponies always say ‘I don’t see your name on it’? There’s my signature, right on your tush. You’re *my* foal, and as long as you have that sun on you, everypony who sees you will know it.”

Blueblood’s whole body shook as he turned around. The heavy diaper clinging to him made that process take longer than it should have, each movement accompanied by the crinkle of plastic, the rustles of shifting fluff as his thighs rubbed against their debilitating shackle. “H-How many ponies will see me?” he asked, finally finding another thought in the tornado that his mind had turned into.

Like a cat, Celestia arched her back and stretched, something that seemed far too *normal* for the princess, and he was knocked onto his bottom by the sight. Celestia giggled. “Good thing you’re wearing such a huge diaper, that could have hurt!” The larger pony scooped Blueblood up again, cradling and rocking him. “Then again, you’re such a big foal that it only makes sense you need so much poof.”

“Please, tell me!” Blueblood whined, not quite able to bring himself to push against Celestia to get down. The diaper made kicking nigh-impossible, anyway.

“Well, since you said please.” Celestia nosed his cheek and hugged him to her chest. “The only ponies that know about that sun on your diaper are you and me. But which other ponies need to know? You’re *mine*, and the amount of ponies that can see your adorable bottom won’t change it.”

Blueblook whimpered as he felt himself move, Celestia standing up and carrying him with her.

“This is your punishment for any and all misdoings from now on. Whenever I find out you’ve been naughty, you’ll be brought here. Any prior engagement will be canceled, you will be watched over by me and treated as a foal. Diapered, not allowed to make any decisions without your Aunty Celly first ensuring you don’t hurt yourself or others.” Celestia set Blueblood in the playpen and she leaned over the railings. “That’s what a good aunt does, after all.”

“I... but...” Blueblood looked around at the various toys littering the pen, when another thought flew out of the mental storm and made itself known. This thought, though, calmed the fury in his head and slowed his beating heart down. “Are you... are you going to stay?”

Celestia smiled as she leaned down to place a kiss on his forehead. “Of course, Blooey. I wouldn’t dream of leaving a foal like you all by your lonesome. Foals need to have somepony to watch over them, to keep them safe.” A star twinkled in her eye as she pulled away. “Somepony to love them.”

Blueblood looked down at the fuzzy floor, face as blank as a newborn foal’s as he digested this. While in here, he wouldn’t be alone. Celestia would be nearby, keeping an eye on him when he’d done something wrong.

“No big pony things to worry about, princely or otherwise,” Celestia added, horn lighting up as a blue-colored bear floated in front of Blueblood. “You won’t be allowed. Just you, me, and all these plush toys. Look, here’s a special one. All foals need a good teddy bear, right?”

Dumbly, Blueblood nodded and took the bear in his hooves and hugged it tight, blinking once in a while as he rocked on his diaper. “I... as you wish, Celestia.”

Celestia took a breath and sighed. It was a good first step, him not fighting back about it, but the prim response proved there was yet a ways to go. “We’ll get you into a proper grown up pony soon enough. For now, how about we build ourselves a castle?”

With nothing better to do, Blueblood nodded and allowed a colorful arrangement of wooden blocks be spilled out before him. Happy to have a distraction from the confusing feelings coursing through his chest, Blueblood worked with his aunt to make as grand a tower as they could with foalish building blocks. The teddy bear wasn’t put down until his first day as a foal had come to an end.

The nursery got its second use only a few days after the first of the Prince being made into Celestia’s *foal*. The mistake wasn’t all that different from the last, Celestia couldn’t help but note. The irony was completely lost to Blueblood, not even noticing the fact that both Celestia and the butler he’d run into were carrying tea trays. Just as he had with his aunt, Blueblood chewed out the servant and threatened his very livelihood if his act, and his liege’s sullied coat, wasn’t cleaned up.

This was to be expected. Celestia knew that mistakes could be repeated and one wouldn't learn a thing from them.. Canterlot wasn’t built in a day, and her little Blooey wouldn’t become a noble prince in even a month. There would be several soiled diapers before even a little progress was made.

The punishment *must* fit the crime, of course. If Blueblood acted like a spoiled colt, Celestia would turn him into one. Blueblood treated one of the palace butlers like a mess that needing cleaning up, so Celestia would give him a taste of that mess.

To that end, a table a pinch too small for her had been dolled up, almost literally. A fine table cloth stitched with ABC blocks and a few plush toys sitting in chairs, doilies and the like set up in front of each. All that was missing from from the tea party was the tea.

Celestia glanced over at a screen that was hiding a corner of the room and called, “Blooey? Is everything alright? You’re taking an awfully long time to get dressed.”

No sound came from behind the screen.

“You know full well I’d hear you crinkle if you tried to waddle away. Then I’d tackle your rump and cover you in kisses. Unless you *want* another visit from the kissy monster.”

Several plastic rustles filled the air as Blueblood stuck his head out from behind the screen. “Please, Celestia, this is most undignified. May I go back to the butler outfit? Please?”

Celestia smirked, eyes half-lidded as she rested her elbows on the table. “Weren’t you the one saying that you *weren’t fit for the demeaning job of a butler*?”

“Yes, but that was before you gave me this wretched costume!” Another several rustles resounded, the faint shadow he cast on the screen allowing Celestia to see him bouncing from hoof to hoof. “I beg you, don’t make me serve tea in this!”

“First it was being too good to serve tea, then it’s too good to be a butler. If you have to get changed one more time, we *could* dress you up in something pinker.” Celestia giggled. “How about a tutu? Then we can skip to lessons in poise, yes?”

Blueblood whimpered and pulled back behind the screen. “Th-that won’t be necessary, Pr- Celestia. Tea and biscuits will be served shortly.”

Some part of Celestia cursed that Blueblood wasn’t just a little more stubborn, but she found herself pleased to see her nephew submit. “Need any help with the ribbon, Blooey? I know how hard it is for teeny tiny colts to get themselves dressed~”

“I’m still an adult, I can do it!” Blueblood squeaked. Several more crinkles from his diaper and the sound of cloth articles rubbing together later and the space behind the screen once again became still. “Okay. I’m dressed, now.”

Celestia rolled her eyes. “A lot of good that does you from back there. Your party guests are still waiting for their drinks, and they can’t be expected to serve themselves.”

With one last sigh of defeat, Blueblood dragged his hooves from behind the only thing keeping any other pony from seeing his current attire, even if only one pony would see him at all. The prince-made-foal closed his eyes tight as if to hide from the frilly black and white skirt he’d been forced to wear, complete with a bow around the waist and an apron over his chest. Blueblood looked the part of a maid ready for work.

“Mmm, aren’t you just the most adorable little servant girl in the whole castle?” Celestia said through a coo.

Blueblood whimpered and struggled to close his legs. Foal powder blew from his diaper’s leggings as the air was squeezed out. “Celestia, I implore you. *Please* do not have me trot around in diapers and a servant’s outfit meant for a mare. The shame I feel is enough to make the ends of my mane frazzle.”

“Good, you’ve been properly humbled.” Celestia clapped her hooves together. “Now, servant, please turn around and present your hindquarters. Aunty Celly needs to make sure you pass the cuteness inspection.”

“Mmmph... A-As you wish, Celestia.” Blueblood pivoted around and pointed his bottom at Celestia.

“*Awww*, would you look at that? Your skirt perfectly frames the sun on your hiney~ It’s as if you were always meant to be in poofy padding and pretty dresses.” Celestia grinned and waved her hoof. “Come, give your Aunty a wiggle. You know you want to...”

Blueblood groaned as he shook his rear left and right. “Is this sufficient *rump wiggling*, Celestia?”

“Not only sufficient, it was exemplary. If you become any cuter, you may be thrown in the dungeon for giving your aunty a heart attack.” With a wistful sigh, Celestia brought a hoof to her chest. “Alas, as much as I would gladly have you perform endless waggles for my amusement, we have guests who have been waiting far too long for a drink.”

Huffing, Blueblood looked at the ‘guests’ around the table. A raggedy doll that looked to be sewn by a pony who’d never used a thread and needle, the t-rex who protected the icebox, and the blue teddy bear Celestia had given him during his first session as a foal. He rolled his eyes. “They must be dying of thirs-Whoa!”

A golden glow had tugged at the hem of his skirt, just enough to remind him what he was stuck in. “If they wait too much longer, they will,” Celestia said. “A good, grownup pony doesn’t keep their partygoers waiting, do they? Let’s see just how grownup you are.” The elder pony tilted her head toward the ice box. “Itty bitty foals aren’t big enough to use a stove, so Aunty Celly prepared some tea that’s divine when chilled. All you have to do is serve us. Think you can handle it?”

Blueblood thought to scoff, but it was squelched under the snug feeling of so much fluff hugging him. “Yes, Celestia. Tea shall be served momentarily.”

“Excellent. Mmm, and make sure you waddle extra wide on your walk over.” Celestia giggled as her nephew’s face burned and he tried to carry himself with dignity as he made his way across the room. Several *d’aww*s and coos escaped Celestia as she watched him struggle with the hinderance his diaper forced between the legs. “My goodness, you look *just* like a foal, Blooey. You never grew up at all, did you?”

“I did!” Blueblood whined, as if there was any way to convince this madmare that had lost her mind. Or maybe this was how she got her kicks. Was there a secret history of stallions and mares that Celestia dragged into another room to make into foals, he wondered. “How long will you have me toting around in such a foalish getup?” His horn glowed as blue-colored magic pulled the ice box open.

“Worried about diaper rash?” Celestia teased, sticking her tongue out when Blueblood blushed. “Don’t worry, you’ll get a fresh diaper whenever one is needed. After a few cups of tea, that shouldn’t be a problem.”

“That’s not what I meant and you know it,” he huffed, pulling a teapot from the box and setting it on a platter with several other cups. “Princes aren’t supposed to wear garments such as these.”

“Good thing you’re not a prince at the moment~”

Blueblood’s brow furrowed and gave Celestia’s words more thought than he meant to. Circles of argument would be the result of him trying to deny her accusation. What caught his attention was that some part of him entertained the ‘truth’ in her words. *I don’t enjoy this*, he told himself as he took the tray in his magic. *How can I? I’m trapped in a nursery, forced to be a foal with Celestia watching me. With her foalish coddling and teases. Always coddling me. Playing these silly games with me. Reading me that bedtime story...*

“Blooey? Blooey, are you alright?”

“Huh, what, who?” Blueblood shook his head, realizing he’d been staring at a cloud painted on the wall. “Err, sorry, Pri- Celestia. Tea and biscuits are coming shortly.”

Celestia watched as Blueblood turned around with his lumbering waddle, drinking in each crinkle his movements made. “That’s well and good, pretty little maid, but foals are too little to be using magic as advanced as levitation.”

Blueblood raised a brow and glanced at the tea tray in his magical grasp. “Levitation is the first thing any unicorn learns.”

“That is mostly correct.” A smile tugged at the corner of Celestia’s mouth as she looked at some far off memory. “Some unicorns learn how to create roof-destroying dragons, but that’s beside the point. You’re far too little to be using levitation, so you shall hoof serve us.”

“What?” Blueblood looked down at his fetlocks, shorn to the millimeter, and his recent hooficure’s results as if he’d been asked to jump over Canterlot Castle in a single bound. “Surely you mustn’t be serious. A unicorn prince doesn’t use their hooves.”

“*Shirley* wasn’t one of the names you’re allowed to call me,” Celestia said as a muted *whap* came from Blueblood’s diaper, followed by a yip of surprise from her padded nephew. “Celestia, Celly, Aunt, Aunty, or Aunt Celly. And you aren’t a prince right now, remember? You use your hooves like a good little colt.”

Blueblood gulped and raised a hoof up under the tray, the glow of his magic fading. “I... I haven’t done this in a long time, Celestia. In fact, I don’t think I ever have. What if I trip?”

The smile Celestia was already wearing broke into a grin as she noticed Blueblood hadn’t tried to resist the elder pony’s orders this time. Now it was time for the next lesson. “Start serving, Blooey. Standing there and not trying isn’t going to help your situation, although it *will* give me more time to admire your attire~”

The cups and tea pot rattled in Blueblood’s shaking hoof as he tried to find the balancing point that would allow him to walk on three hooves and carry a heavy tea set, at the same time not ruining the hours of work gone into making his hooves perfect. Hard enough for a unicorn that was taught using their hooves was for commoners and earth-pony farmers. It was made even more challenging by the oversized diaper clinging to his hindquarters. Lifting a leg meant shifting a thigh and a whole quarter of his body in a way he never had as the thick garment forced his limbs into a wide sweep. So the poor stallion had to strain against the weight, the diaper, and the embarrassing crinkles and rattles that came with each careful step.

“You can do it, Blooey,” Celestia cheered as she watched her nephew slide his hooves along. The thought to mention how adorable he was while struggling not to fall over passed her by, but she decided he was being tortured enough. Instead she decided to make an offer. “If you can make it over here without spilling a drop, I’ll get you those malt balls you like so much. You know, the ones with the peanut butter center.”

If Celestia’s intention was to help her nephew become motivated enough to get his set task done sooner, she failed. Similarly, Blueblood failed in keeping his balance, only making half the distance between the start and finish of his journey before falling over. Cups and splatters of cold tea scattered across the carpet while Blueblood fell in a heap of legs and fluffy garments.

Immediately, the quivering stallion imagined his fate as Celestia stood up and trotted over to him. A verbal thrashing, being told what he’d done wrong, demeaned further than he already was. Such is what he’d done to countless servants, and this was to be his punishment. “Mercy, it was an accident!” Blueblood said as Celestia loomed over him.

Celestia lowered her head and used her teeth to grab the bow around his middle, picking him up, dusting him off, and patting his diaper when she found he wasn’t injured. “Silly Blooey, of course it was an accident. What pony in their right mind would purposefully drop a pot of perfectly good tea?”

“But... but...” Blueblood looked back and forth between the spreading wet stain on the rug and the serene face of his aunt. “But aren’t you angry?”

“Angry?” she said as if she’d been asked if letting a hydra into gardens was a good idea. “Why would I be angry? Foals make mistakes all the time.”

Blueblood watched as Celestia magically lifted the tea set back up, as he’d watched her do the other day. “This is a mess that could have been prevented, though,” he said. There was a question in his voice as he continued, “If I had been more attentive or kept my concentration, none of this would have happened.”

Ever a pillar of strength and kindness, Celestia merely shrugged. Shrugs weren’t associated with strength very often, but Celestia found a way. “You’re clearly sorry now. Besides, it’s just a spill. Nowhere near as important as making sure you aren’t hurt.” She set the tray back on the ice box and looked over Blueblood again, lifting his hooves up and pulling his skirt up to check his diaper. “Have you been hurt? Aunty will kiss it better and get a band-aid if it’s too bad.”

“That’s it? That’s all you’ve got to say?” Blueblood brought a hoof to his temple and pressed, eyes screwing up as his thoughts resumed their tornado-state from the other day. “What sort of sense does that make?”

“Asking questions on your second day as my foal? You’re making much better progress than I thought you would.” Celestia picked Blueblood up in her legs and carried him to the table, sitting him next to the bear. “Let’s forget the tea. And don’t you worry your pretty little head about the stain, Aunty Celly will clean it up while you have your afternoon nap. For now, let’s have milk and cookies instead.”

A kiss was placed on Blueblood’s cheek, eliciting the latest furious blush from the stallion. “So that’s it, then. The whole debacle is to be forgotten? You’re not even going to have me clean it up myself?”

Celestia trotted to the ice box and returned to the table at brisk place, a plate of chocolate chip cookies set on the table. “Perhaps if we were outside this room, I’d ask if you could clean it up since I have an important meeting to get to. In here, you are a foal, and foals need only worry about snack time and when their diapers need to be changed~”

Reflexively, Blueblood’s magic grabbed the hem of the skirt he wore and pulled the cloth down in hopes of hiding the crinkly garment. No such blessing was given to him, the diaper far too large and the dress far too short to be of any use.

“Now, now, don’t try to hide your diaper,” Celestia said as she placed a sippy cup in front of her nephew. “How else will anypony know that you’re my special little colt?”

“This Discord-cursed outfit says otherwise...” Blueblood grumbled as he gave up on trying to hide his apparent foalishness.

Celestia took her seat next to Blueblood and leaned over to nuzzle his cheek. “It could be worse. I wasn’t kidding about that tutu~”

“*Ech*, please, anything but that.” Blueblood shivered as he imagined the horror of prancing around as one of those ribbon twirling ponies as his aunt cheered him on. No doubt she’d have him bend over and show off his oversized bottom, just to have him fall over. She would laugh every time, that laugh of hers that made the world seem right even though it was so terribly wrong.

Licking her lips, Celestia pulled the plate closer to them and took a cookie for herself. “I’ll keep that ready for another day, just in case you’ve been extra naughty. I’ve even got ribbons you can twirl!”

*I knew it*, Blueblood thought to himself. Another thought nagged at the back of his mind that threatened to become a whirlwind if he didn’t tend to it. “Celestia?”

“Yes, Blooey?” she replied after swallowing.

“Were you... were you being earnest when you mentioned those peanut butter malt balls?”

Celestia smiled and licked the crumbs from her lips. “Blooey, can you think of a single time I’ve *ever* lied to you?”

Blueblood tried to recall if there was such a time. Thinking far, far back, he remembered when Celestia promised the monster hiding under the bed wouldn’t eat him as long as she was nearby and wondered if it counted, since there was never a monster to begin with. Blinking, he realized he hadn’t thought about that point in his life for a long while. “No. You’ve never lied to me.”

“I might have a bag of them sitting around the castle somewhere~” Celestia sang as as lifted her glass of milk to take a sip. “Maybe if you ask in a way that was sweeter than they are, you could have a few.”

The desire to tell Celestia that it wouldn’t be proper since he’d failed her challenge as soon as she issue it was quashed under another thought. “After all this time, you remembered what my favorite confection is.”

Celestia leaned down again, this time to pull Blueblood into a hug. “Of course. What sort of aunt would I be if I didn’t remember everything about my nephew?”

“It’s been years...” Blueblood mumbled as he started to raise his hooves. They fell back down when Celestia pulled away. He’d been too slow to return the hug and found himself disappointed that he’d missed the chance.

“I remember every important thing about adorable little colts.” Celestia cooed as she pinched Blueblood's cheek. “And *everything* is important about my precious little Blooey~.”

Blueblood’s face became blank, much as it had the other day right after he’d been placed in the playpen. Eyes wide, stare focused on something only he saw, Blueblood swayed his hind hooves forward and back. Celestia recalled this expression and believed it to be a sign of the gears in her Blooey’s mind clunking together as they turned. Ironically, it made Celestia think he looked all the more like a foal.

“... Aunt Celestia?”

Celestia paused mid-bite and her ears twitched as the words reached them. Had she misheard or dreamed up that tiny voice? Lowering her cookie, Celestia turned to Blueblood and smiled. “Yes, my little Blooey?”

“May I please have some of those malt balls, Aunty?” Blueblood didn’t look towards her, instead watching his hooves swish as he swung them over the chair.

Patting her nephew’s head, a plain paper bag flashed into existence and fell into Celestia’s hoof. When she opened the bag, a scent of rich chocolate wafted through the air, somehow overpowering the chocolate chip cookies. “You may have a few, Blooey, but we don’t want to spoil your dinner. Hold out your hooves.”

Turning on his rump, Blueblood did as he was told and a few round candies were given to him. He stared at them for a long while before popping one into his mouth and slowly chewing. Turning back around, Blueblood resumed his gentle kicking, eyeing the sippy cup, then the toy bear. Said bear became surrounded in his magic and floated to him, giving it a once over before eating another malt ball and grabbing it between his hooves. The diaper around his waist puffed a cloud of foal powder as his legs tried to pinch together.

“Aunt Celestia?” he said again.

“Yes, Blooey?”

“If... I’m not a prince, can I give the title to someone else who can keep it safe for me?”

Celestia raised a brow. “Who did you have in mind?”

Blueblood caressed the bear and gulped. “... Shushie the Second.”

Bringing a hoof to her chest, Celestia looked ready to melt into her pillow. “Prince Shushie the Second. That sounds like a wonderful title for your bear to, ahem, *bear*.” The collar Blueblood normally wore floated over to the sitting ponies and fastened itself around the bear’s neck, bowtie and all. “There, doesn’t he look dapper? I’m sure Shushie will keep your title safe while you’re busy with important foal matters.”

Quiet reigned over them for several minutes, the only sounds those of Blueblood shifting around in his diaper and the soft noise made when a pony rubbed their nose against fuzzy cloth. “Aunt Celestia?” he said, turning to look at his elder.

“Yes, Blooey?” Celestia replied.

“May I... sit in your lap for teatime?”

Celestia tapped her chin as she looked at the cookies and milk before them. “It really isn’t teatime anymore, is it? More like snack time.”

When Celestia looked his way, Blueblood sighed and said, “May I sit in your lap for snack time, then?”

As if picking up fine glass, Celestia plucked Blueblood from his seat and placed him in front of her. “You’re just *so* huggable, how can I say no?” Celestia then wrapped her hooves around Blueblood’s chest, teasing the tips of his skirt and diaper, rocking them forward and back as if they were in a rocking chair. “Blooey?”

“Yes, Aunt Celestia?”

“I love you.”

Blueblood said nothing, instead grabbing his sippy cup and taking a drink while remembering that his Aunty never, ever lied.

Change wasn’t easy for anypony, a lesson Celestia learned long, long ago. She had not expected her nephew to transform in the course of a week, or even a month. If this were to be done right, it would take several trips to the nursery before her little Blooey grew up into a strong, healthy noblepony she could be proud of. The process might have taken years, had things gone according to plan.

Yet another lesson Celestia had learned; nothing ever went according to plan. Twilight Sparkle was a grand example of that. Every time she set up a test or needed her to save their land, Twilight went above and beyond what Celestia had expected and passed with flying colors. If her faithful student were still being graded, Celestia would give Twilight an A++++, with a gold star.

Perhaps another lesson Celestia had accidentally learned was that ponies were always capable of so much more than ever thought in the first place, or that she couldn’t guess what they might do. Despite how horribly ingrained his destructive mindset was, Blueblood accepted his treatment much better than she could have anticipated. It made her wonder how she’d ever compared him to a pony-made-monster. He was more of an adorable puppy that needed to be told *no* when playing a little too rough, earnestly sweet and playful when he stopped feeling bad and just enjoyed himself.

Blueblood’s behavior had become so much better with each trip to the nursery, each diaper change seeming to take some of his old nature with him. Never again after he’d bumped into the first servant and they made a mess did Blueblood get mad, threaten, or even blame the pony. He even apologized the next time it happened! Granted, he didn’t help clean up, but Celestia wasn’t expecting a miracle. Just the fact that he could walk away and let things be gave the time-tempered princess a sense of accomplishment.

To be certain, there were multiple times Celestia had to bring Blueblood to the nursery. Not cleaning up after himself was one such case, as well as a few instances of insulting ponies in some way. Never intentional, but always hurtful. Yet he didn’t fight or scream or declare anything to be unfair. He’d blush and whimper as he was placed in his diapers and nervously tittered about the room. But otherwise never made things difficult. The ‘punishments’ were accepted and he played well, finding new toys or activities to be entertained with. Much to her surprise, she even caught him wiggling his crinkly rump without being told to do so.

Celestia wondered if he were enjoying this more than she thought he would. It wouldn’t be the first time he’d surprised her, nor the last time she’d surprise herself. She was certainly loving having her little Blooey back more than first imagined, finding their time together the best days in her recent memory barring whenever she or her sister were having insomnia and found a moment to be together.

Even though Blueblood didn’t fight his foal time and went beyond Celestia’s expectations, the process was still slow. In all truthfulness, Celestia hadn’t set her hopes up high, plans prepared to reraise Blueblood with as intense love and hugs as she could muster. While it was pleasing to see that only aunty levels of affection would be needed, Blueblood still had many problems in his day-to-day behavior. The nursery trips were frequent, Blueblood being placed into diapers becoming a part of their routines. Every other day, he’d misbehave in some way, a guard would let Celestia know, and they’d have a day together as aunty and foal

One such grievance wasn’t immediately noticeable. Nopony seemed hurt, and Blueblood hadn’t frightened anypony. The guard only barely picked it up.

“Goodness, who tailored that outfit? You look as though your mother dressed you.”

The pony he’d insulted laughed and explained that, in fact, their mother *had* chosen the outfit and had a peculiar taste in fashion. That was neither here nor there, though, as far as Celestia was concerned. So it was back to the nursery with Blueblood the next time they met, his transgression explained and their playtime settled.

That led to Celestia sitting in front of a tiny theatre, a pair of spectacles on a stick and faux-fur scarf draping her shoulders. A fan was held by her magic, waving air into her face as she smiled. “Oh Blooey?” she called after several minutes of manual air conditioning. “Having any trouble with your latest outfit?”

The curtain of the stage shook as somepony moved behind it. “You really weren’t kidding about this, were you?”

Celestia’s smile became a smirk at the defeated tone of Blueblood’s voice. “Remember, I don’t lie, especially not to my favorite nephew. Now, are you going to come out here and wiggle your hips or is there going to be another timeout for Blooey?”

“And subject myself to another round of *snuggles*? As tempting as that sounds, I’d rather comply and have the torture end sooner.” A hoof stuck out from the curtain, which was slapped back by Celestia’s quickly folded fan.

“Tut, tut, there is a proper way to these things. Runway models need to wait for their cues so the audience can be properly impressed with the right outfit.”

A groan came from backstage. “Aunt Celestia, you’re the only pony here. Not only that, *you dressed me*. You already know what I look like.”

“If we wanted to get technical, I only chose your outfit,” Celestia said. “I won’t know how those frills will look on that adorable bottom of yours until you come out here and show me. Speaking of, places, ponies!”

Again, Blueblood groaned, but grumbled, “Ready,” at Celestia’s call.

“And now, for your viewing pleasure, we present the latest in dance-pony fashions. Framing our lovely model today is a fantastic skirt-and-shirt one-piece, perfect for any foal looking to strut their stuff. *Pssst, Blooey*. That’s when you walk out!”

The curtains flew back in a wave of magic, and it took all of Celestia’s willpower to resist bursting into a laughing fit. Either that or grab him in a hug that never ended.

“Y-You look b-beautiful,” Celestia said, bringing the fan up to cover her face.

Blueblood didn’t reply, his expression inscrutable as he tromped against the floorboards and turned to the side to strike a pose. Around his waist was a horribly frilly tutu that, of course, did nothing to hide the diaper he was stuck in. If anything, his bulging blue butt was made all the more obvious by the pink of his puffy skirt. “Oh please, don’t patronize me. I look ridiculous and you know it.”

Snorting, Celestia brought her hooves up. “Okay, okay, ‘beautiful’ is a *slight* stretch. You at least look cute. Does that satisfy your desire for accuracy?”

With a sigh, Blueblood turned and puffed his chest out, jutting a hind leg behind him as a ballerina would. “Only for you, Aunty. For no other pony shall I be *cute*, lest they face the wrath of a scorned prince.”

“Really, now?” Celestia asked, brow raised and smirk ever-present. “And what will that punishment look like?”

“A serious case of diaper rash.” Blueblood stopped his posing and turned to Celestia, offering a smirk of his own. “If I were the pony in charge, any foal foolish enough to mock the royal tushy would never find themselves outside of a diaper ever again, save for changes at my leisure.”

Celestia’s heart swelled as she heard his words, remembering how only a month ago Blueblood would hardly speak once in his foalish attire. *Now he’s making jokes at his own expense. You do me proud, Blooey.* “Good thing you aren’t a prince, then. Looks like my hiney is safe for another day.”

“Quick, Prince Shushie, make a declaration in my name!” he cried to his bear. Shushie sat on his cushion and watched whatever was in front of him. “A traitor to my crown, you are. There will be no escaping my hold tonight, mark my words.”

Clapping her hooves together, Celestia cleared her throat. “Sorry that your staged coup as ended in defeat, but you have a show to put on. I want to see those ribbons swirl!”

Blueblood’s horn lit up as a set of dancer’s ribbons were lifted up from behind, their handles wrapped in the glow of his magic. “You mean you want to see me shake my rear for you.”

“Perceptive. That’s an excellent quality for a pony on my council to have,” Celestia said, bringing her spectacles back up. “I’m not liking the sass, though. Less grump, more rump.”

Sighing in defeat, Blueblood waved his ribbon wands this way and that as he moved left and right across the stage. Not once had Blueblood taken a dance lesson, which made it all the more impressive that he managed to pull off an impersonation of a filly who’d been studying for a few months. Years of practicing poise gave him some idea of how to act like a ballerina. Add the fact that he was in a diaper, though, and any such notion was immediately removed. Trying to pivot was met with resistance as the thick garment forced his legs from bending inward. The gliding strut he was going for became a crinkly, awkward waddle, tipping him to one side or the other as as he moved on the tips of his hooves or tried to twirl.

Celestia’s grin couldn’t get any bigger without sliding off her face. “Oh my stars, Blooey, you’re such a little foal. Don’t become any cuter, please, I don’t think my heart could take it!”

“Believe me, I’m not trying very hard,” Blueblood said through a blush, smirking as he pointed his sun-decorated butt as Celestia. “Apparently all I have to do is wiggle my hips and tell you that my diaper is plush, cozy, and making it hard to move. Point out how well my tutu frames the sun on my diaper, perhaps? Or maybe you want me to tell you how the material on the inside slides across my rear when I bend over, like this.”

Gasping, grabbing at her chest, Celestia made a half-exaggerated choking sound and fell back to the floor. “No, stop, it’s too much for me! Put that thing away before you kill me!”

“Oh, I’m sorry, has my dancing left you speechless? Perhaps I should take my act on the road, all the mares will love me.” Blueblood turned back around, ribbons still orbiting him as he smiled down at his Aunty.

“Y-You’d better be careful, that tushy is lethal,” Celestia said, sitting back up and trying her hardest not to laugh. “The city would swoon with naught more than a sway.”

Blueblood shuddered. “I think not. There is nowhere else besides this room you shall see me act like a foal.”

“Really?” Celestia asked, brow raised.

“Yes, really *really*.”

Celestia’s smile softened. “In that case, thank you.”

Blueblood blinked. “Err... for what?”

“For being adorable for your Aunty Celestia. There aren’t many ponies who’d willingly make themselves cute for my amusement alone.” Blowing a kiss, she added, “So thank you.”

“Yes, well... *ahem.*” Blueblood turned his head and coughed, trying to appear indifferent and the pink tinge on his cheeks giving him away. “As I said, Aunty, only for you. No pony else shall see me parading in pampers.”

“How unfortunate. I’d love to let everypony know what a precious foal you are,” Celestia teased, giggling when he blushed even harder. “But being the only pony that gets to see you this way does make it something special. Then I can give all this love to you and only you.”

Despite himself, Blueblood smiled again and cleared his throat. “Well, since I am your *special little colt*, and you’re my *wonderful Aunty*, might I make a request?”

“You certainly may,” Celestia said with a wink. “Whether or not I listen is at my discretion of course. But you know how to tilt things in your favor.”

Blueblood sighed and plopped onto his diaper. “Aunt Celly, I know you enjoy me being a foal for you, but I implore you, in earnest. Please let me take this atrocious tutu off. I feel foolish. And I know, it’s just it is just the two of us in here. Remember how you told me that the sun on my diapers mean I am yours and everypony who sees it will know it, even if it’s only us? Only you and I will see me like this, and I don’t like how I look. If I *have* to be dressed up like some doll, please, may it at least be clothing that an actual colt would wear?”

There was a pause as Celestia absorbed Blueblood’s words, brow raised. This was not the *pretty please with chocolate frosting on top* she’d been expecting. This was Blueblood expressing himself sincerely. Exactly as Celestia wanted. “Blooey, understand that this time is to instill humility, not to humiliate. If you feel this strongly about it, and of course say *please*, I will relent.” She winked. “That said, if you ever want a favour, you know where this tutu is...”

“Thank you, Aunty Celly,” Blueblood said as he bundled up the ribbons and tossed them to the side. “Do not worry. Knowing you, you’ve already thought of some other horrendous way to embarrass me.”

“Backstage you’ll find a box with *S.S. Blooey* written on the side,” she said without missing a beat.

Blueblood froze as he started to tug the skirt off. “Did you... plan this?”

“Planning? Blooey, plans never, ever work. I was *prepared* for this.”

At Celestia’s Discordian smirk, Blueblood huffed and toddled back from whence he came, closing the curtains behind him. “No other stallion in the world has to put up with this, I guarantee it. What other prince has a princess gushing over them being in diapers and wearing silly outfits?”

“Ah, but you aren’t a prince right now~” Celestia called after him, her fan *thwaping* his rear before the draping hid him away. “There are plenty of stallions walking around in diapers, even as we speak. None of them matter to me right now, though. All that matters is my Blooey and making sure he gets every drop of love and attention he needs.”

Silence reigned over them for several seconds, Blueblood’s rustling coming to a halt. Celestia called for him a few times when she became curious, almost getting up to check on him. Before she could, Blueblood waddled out, frilly skirt bouncing with each step, and stopped in front of Celestia. He wore the same expression she’d seen each time he’d seemed to come to some conclusion he hadn’t considered before. Wide-eyed and blank-faced, like a newborn’s as they explored the world.

Blueblood sat down and reached his forelegs up, and Celestia couldn’t resist. Without a word, she leaned down and they wrapped each other in a hug that lasted a long while. Much to Celestia’s delight, Blueblood was to first one to nuzzle, a motion she gladly returned. Still silent, they both let go and Blueblood walked back behind the play-stage, a bounce in his step that the elder pony couldn’t help but delight in as it made his crinkley bottom sway.

Once the moment had passed and both ponies took in their contentment, Celestia said, “Three minutes until the next show, Blooey. Your audience wishes to see what other things are in style for foals this season.”

“Of course *you* are,” Blueblood scoffed as he pulled his skirt off and opened the box. “...Well, this isn’t as bad as I thought it would be.”

“Did you hear that, audience? Our model approves! Aunt Celly sure knows how to dress her foals, hmm?”

“Yes, yes, the irony of the situation isn’t lost to me, Aunty.” After a few minutes of grunts and rustles, Blueblood called out, “Alright, make your ridiculous speech and call me out.”

“As you wish, dear nephew.” Celestia cleared her throat. “Mares and Gentlecolts, we present to you for your viewing pleasure a lovely piece hoof-picked by the illustrious Princess Celestia herself. A dedication to all the ponies who go out to sea each and every day, working hard to keep their ships afloat, please put your hooves together for the *H.M.S. Navy Nappy*!”

The curtains once more parted and Blueblood stepped out with a new outfit for Celestia to gawk at. How his aunty had ever found this costume he could only begin to guess. As the name suggested, what he was wearing parodied sailor suits. Whoever had tailored the outfit had made sure it looked far more like the foal iteration than a proper uniform in every way possible, from the little cap on his head being undersized to the buttons on the shorts being larger than necessary. The pants did little to hide Blueblood’s waddling, amazingly. If anything, the pants only exaggerated it more as they hugged his padding, creaking with each motion as they tried to contain the diaper within.

Blueblood walked to the front of the stage and gave a salute. “Ready to set sail, milady. Shall I swab the poop deck and all that jargon?”

Letting out a small *eeek~*, Celestia brought her hooves to her cheeks and shook with excitement. “Oh sweet *me*, look at you! I could just eat you up, but then I wouldn’t have the most sweet-as-sugar foal to cuddle and snuggle and adore all day long~”

Furious blushing was nothing new the Blueblood by now, but it was still disconcerting sensation whenever the butterflies flew in his belly. That didn’t stop Blueblood from appeasing his aunty as he spun about and presenting his hindquarters. “Have they passed out the titles yet? I’d like to be the *rear* admiral.”

Celestia burst into laughter, several of the high class items she more falling to the ground around her. “S-S-Stop! There’s too much adorable pony in just one diaper!”

“Such a profound effect,” Blueblood said as he smirked. “With this diaper and this suit, I could take over all of Equestria! Bow before the new sun, the one on *my* bottom!”

“R-Really, now?” Celestia stuck her tongue out, wiping her eyes. “And how do you suppose that? There’s a large difference between swooning a populace and ruling them.”

“I seem to have you under my hoof,” he argued as he bent down to look between his legs. “Whoever controls the princess of the land would naturally control Equestria.”

“Loopholes may work wonders in my council, but fail to apply in this nursery, Blooey.” Celestia took a deep breath and stood up. “If it means anything, you hold a special place in my heart.”

Blueblood lifted his head and tried to look like it didn’t matter much at all. He didn’t do a good job of it.

“In fact, you hold such a special place in my heart that I want to remember these moments forever.” Horn lighting up, Celestia trotted to a dresser across the room and poked through the contents.

“What do you mean by that?”

Celestia pulled out an apron, of all things, yellow and frilled with pink lacing. When she turned around and tied it around her waist and neck, Blueblood saw that the words *Kiss the Aunty* were written in cursive on the front. “A memento for us, to always remember our special time in our special place. Do I look sufficiently homely?”

Rolling his eyes, Blueblood said, “As if you need a costume to radiate love.”

“Blooey, you always know the right thing to say. Now come here and sit in your aunty’s lap. It’s photo time!”

“Photo?” Blueblood blanked. “A... picture?”

“That’s what photos usually are.” Sitting down on her pillow, Celestia motioned for Blueblood to sit as a camera popped into existence in a golden flash.

Blueblood furrowed his brow as he stepped forward. “And, hmm, who will you show this picture to?”

“What’s the matter? Scared I’ll show anyone your poofy padded bottom?” A snicker left Celestia at Blueblood blush. “Don’t worry your precious little head over it, my darling. Have I ever shown you my scrapbook?” When Blueblood shook his head, she continued, “It’s filled with a multitude of pictures from my time on this world. It goes as far back as when my sister and I first took the crown. We didn’t have cameras back then, of course, but we had paintings. I put things in it that I want to remember for thousands and thousands of years.”

Again, Blueblood blinked. “And this picture is going into this memory book?”

“That’s what I said,” Celestia teased.

“You think... you think this time together... time where you make me a foal, is worth remembering? Compared to your coronation?”

“And the time Starswirl’s infinite taffy spell made a mess of the castle, and the time my school for gifted unicorns opened, and the time a niece of mine learned when to ride a bike in secret in the castle courtyard.” Celestia’s face became warm as her sun in the sky. “The time one of my other nephews got his cutie mark and learned how good he was at making maps.”

“I... I...” Blueblood smiled and brought a hoof up. “Ah, my apologies. I seem to have something caught in my eye.”

Celestia reached forward, Blueblood relaxing into Celestia’s forelegs as she picked him up and settled him in his lap. “No trouble at all. I swear, things get caught in my eye all the time when you’re around and make me proud.”

“Aunt Celly? May Shushie the Second be in our picture?” Said bear was lifted up and floated into Blueblood’s lap, which he grabbed in a hug.

“Shushie would like that a lot, I believe.” Celestia floated the camera in front of them and tickled Blueblood’s side. “Smile for the birdy~”

“H-Hey!” Blueblood cried, but before he could do anything could be done, the bulb on the camera flashed and the deed was done. Though the picture was taken, that didn’t stop Celestia from giving more generous tickles to wherever she could find.

“Nothing like the laughter of a foal to perk a pony up,” Celestia cooed when she was done, squeezing him tight.

“I suppose I make a decent enough substitute,” Blueblood replied, leaning back into the hug. “I can already see the page in your book, nonsensical doodles with the words *Blooey and Aunty Celly* written underneath.”

“You take after your aunt so well~” Celestia patted her nephew’s head. “Have I told you I love you yet, Blooey?”

Closing his eyes and smiling, Blooey hummed and settled into the comfiest, most welcoming seat he’d ever had. “You have, Aunty Celly. I don’t believe I’ve told you in kind, though. I love you, Aunt Celly.”

Celestia leaned down to kiss Blooey’s mane. “This will be quite the story to tell your grandkids, you know.”

Blooey’s eyes widened. “What?”

“Oh, certainly. Won’t your descendants just treasure hearing how their big cuddly granddaddy was Celestia’s favorite foal? Already I can hear their pitter patter as they surround their Aunty, eagerly asking for the story of when Blooey got himself stuck in a box because his diaper was too big.”

“Th-that wasn’t my fault!” Blooey fought back, bringing Shushie up to cover his eyes. “You’re the one who forces me into these gargantuan garments!”

“Only because you’re *such* a big foal.” Celestia hugged him again and gasped. “Say, can you get back in your tutu for a teensy tiny minute? I bet your granddaughters would go crazy about hearing what a spectacular dancer you were. You’ll be able to show them how to do the tushy tango!”

Blooey flopped forward, as if he could escape Celestia’s love. Fortunately for him, he’d be stuck in it for a long, long time.

For many months, Celestia and Blooey returned to the nursery in order to punish the latter with the love and attention a foal would receive. As was decreed by a ruler before her, Celestia made sure the punishment fit the crime. If Blooey ordered some servants to do things that they shouldn’t have to do, he was taken to the room and was played with like a doll until he could finally say please to her. If he mocked a pony’s ability to find things, they played a game of hide and seek where Blooey was dressed like a bunny rabbit and Celestia as a fox. When Blooey took spare desserts from the kitchen (especially ones Celestia had planned to eat), she placed him in a high chair and fed him vegetable casseroles, made herself and personally tested to be delicious.

Naturally, as time went on, their trips to the nursery became less common. It was bound to happen at some point, Celestia merely wished it hadn’t been so soon. Blooey truly was a good pony at heart and learned how to be an even better one the same way a pegasus took to flying. The basic plan she’d laid out was happening so much faster than she’d expected, and now that she’d spent so much time with her little Blooey, she never wanted it to end. Alas, the nearly twice-a-week trips were becoming once a week and Blooey’s behaviour, while not perfect, had improved vastly. Pretty soon he’d be cleaning after his own messes and not trying to sweep broken vases under the rug and blame Luna for them when caught.

Their special playtime was running out, or so Celestia believed. In almost no time at all, she’d be spending her days ruling the kingdom and he’d be assisting with the council. They’d still see each other and meet for tea, most likely, but he’d be well behaved and have no reason to return and let her make him a baby for just one more day. The most she hoped for was special occassions where she’d ask her favorite nephew for a special favor.

To that end, Celestia wanted to get as much out of this unique situation as she could, for the both of them. Instead of making Blooey a foal as a punishment, she made it a reward, at least one time. When he’d treated a mare with proper respect, making polite conversation, holding doors open, and even personally escorting her around the palace, Celestia decided to celebrate with a trip outside the castle.

Blooey was against the idea, of course. Going outside in giant diapers, showing off his foalhood to Equestria? The idea made him quiver. The only thing that stopped him from begging his aunty to reconsider was that Celestia had begged first. *It will be in a forest far from Canterlot,* she’d said. *Perfectly safe and secluded, nopony around for miles. Just the two of us on a walk, like an aunty taking care of her perfect nephew would.*

Naturally, Prince Blueblood couldn’t resist Celestia’s demands. Even moreso, Blooey couldn’t say no to his aunty’s warm-as-the-sun smile. So supplies were packed, a picnic lunch to enjoy and some spare diapers, and they were flying to the woods at the base of the mountain.

The trip was short, though Blueblood didn’t take notice of the flight itself. His thoughts were preoccupied with several things, one at a time. First there was the fact that he was going out in broad daylight in his heavy diapers. Even if they left out a high window and likely nopony would notice a princess’s and a prince’s finer details with them so far from the ground, that did not ease the worry in his gullet. On the note of his stomach, being at such a height, at least for one without wings, did little to alleviate his worry. The moment they were in the air, he wished he was firm on the ground and held tight to the only solid thing within his reach, that being his Aunty.

“Are you scared, Blooey?” Celestia said, turning her head back to nose her nephew.

“S-Scared? Me? P-Perish the thought, A-Aunty.” The words spoken did not mask the chattering of his teeth, and of course Celestia saw Blueblood had his eyes shut tight to avoid looking as the passing land beneath them. “I’m a g-grownup and we do not get scared at s-silly things like this.”

“We don’t? I must have missed a memo at some point during the ages I’ve been alive. I get scared at silly things all the time.”

While Blueblood could hear his Aunty, he did not respond this time. Instead he held tighter still, eliciting a smile from Celestia.

“Blooey, you know I’d never, ever put you in any danger, right? If you fell, which I’m not going to let happen, I’d scoop you back up so quickly you wouldn’t even know you were falling in the first place.

“I-I know.”

“We’re gliding along at a leisurely pace. No barrel rolls or dives or anything of the sort, just moving with the breeze and coming to a gentle stop.” Celestia snickered before adding, “I wouldn’t want to scare you into a wet diaper already, I only brought so many spares.”

Blueblood cracked an eye open and tried to push his fear away enough to pout. “I shan’t give you the satisfaction of a diaper change while we’re out here, Aunty. It is awful enough my royal rear is swathed like this to begin with.”

“Blooey, what have I told you about lying to your Aunty?” Celestia stuck her tongue out and winked.

“I-I don’t like diapers!” Blueblood huffed, cheeks burning as he unconsciously wriggled his hind legs. “I’m only in them because you put me in them!”

“And who’s the naughty little colt that keeps on having his Aunty pad him up? Perhaps you act like a bad little colt just so you can get hugs, kisses, a diaper, and your teddy bear~” Gentle laughter flowed through the air as Celestia saw Blueblood blush and close his eyes again. These were meant to be simple teases, but Celestia wondered how much Blueblood actually liked the diapers and cribs and toys. She could tell he enjoyed the love and attention he received, but the treatment itself? When he was a full grown prince in her eyes, she would ask. That wouldn’t be too much longer, she decided.

Blueblood tried and failed to look agitated, his grief amounting to an embarrassed foal acting like he didn’t enjoy the taste of broccoli after fighting so hard not to eat it. “Hmmph. Well, I suppose having Shushie the Second makes things a *little* more bearable.”

“Ha, *bear*able, I see what you did there.”

“Uuuugh, I can’t believe I said that.” Blueblood slapped his face. The regret was instant as his balance was tipped and he grabbed Celestia again.

Coughing, Celestia shifted her neck around so her windpipe wasn’t being crushed and let her horn light up with a warm glow. The picnic basket hanging from her leg rattled as her magic reached out to it. “Speaking of Shushie,” she said as the teddy bear floated out of the picnic basket, along with a parchment scroll, “I hope you didn’t think I’d have us go on this adventure without your faithful companion.”

Blueblood opened his eyes to see the blue bear floating within hoof’s reach. Too spooked to let go of his aunty, he was about to ask if the stuffed toy could be put away for safekeeping. Before he could, though, the bear snuggly slipped through Blueblood’s grip, pressing into his chest as if giving him a comforting hug.

“Better?” Celestia asked, nuzzling his man.

“Mmm...” Blublood hummed, cheeks red yet eyes calmer. “Where is our destination exactly?” the clinging stallion asked, taking notice of the unfurling scroll.

“In terms of actual land, the base of Canterlot’s mountain isn’t used for much of anything. Not so much uncharted as much as unneeded. After all, why build a town right underneath the grand capital of Equestria?” Celestia’s eyes scanned the map and the world below them, brow raised as she observed both. “It’s the far, far edges of the Everfree forest, so far it might as well not be part of them at all. Nopony decided to name this area, so it’s just here.”

Arching his neck around Celestia’s, he tried to get a better look at the sheet of paper she was observing. From what he could make out, it was a crude map of a lake and some surrounding woods. “What is that?”

Celestia glanced back long enough to smile. “Oh, this? A map of where we’re going. It’s been years since I’ve been here, so I need a guide to get there. Ah, here we are, seven miles west of the mountain.”

“You’ve been here before?” Blueblood asked.

“A long, long time ago, yes. I had a companion with me, and we went on a treasure hunt together. Granted, we didn’t find anything like gold or jewels, but we had a grand adventure.” Celestia rolled the map up and put it away. “Had a swim, ate some lunch, and even left a treasure here during our second visit.”

Blueblood blinked, gaze straight ahead and focused on nothing, or at least nothing really there. “Treasure hunt...” he echoed.

The smile Celestia wore grew even wider as he heard Blueblood repeat her words. “And there’s the lake right now. Let’s go down and have our sandwiches, hmm?”

“Isn’t this...” Blueblood began, only to find the words had died in his throat.

Dipping down, Celestia led herself and Blueblood down to the ground, coming to a stop by the lake's edge. She took in the air around them and sighed as the picnic basket was set down and folded her wings. “I’d forgotten that strangely fresh-and-stale scent you can only find out in the wilderness. Dirt centuries old under you hooves, freshly grown leaves swaying in the breeze. It’s a nice change from the castle’s walls, hmm?”

“Hmm...”

“Blooey, we’re not up in the air anymore. You can get off and go play, now.”

“Huh? Oh, yes, *ahem*.” Blueblood released his hold on Celestia, still clutching Shushie, and tried to gracefully get down from his aunty. Due to his foalish attire, his goal was not met and he plummeted the short distance between Celestia’s back and the forest floor. Thanks to the garment, though, the impact his bottom made was a soft one. He landed diaper-first with a crinkle and a small cloud of foal powder.

Celestia tittered, hoof failing to block her laughter as Blueblood tried to stand up as if nothing had happened. “Perhaps we didn’t need to worry about you falling, that cushion you wear would have absorbed the impact.”

“Don’t even joke about that.” Blueblood harumphed and moved to rub his undamaged hindquarters, but he was too slow. Aunty Celestia beat him to it, patting and massaging his sun-decorated rear.

“There, there, no harm done. Does my little Blooey need a kiss on his booboo-bottom to make it all better?”

Blueblood looked to the side to avoid Celestia’s smile. “As you said, my *bottom* was unharmed because of this pillow you have me wear. Your kisses would be better spent elsewhere.”

“How about here?” Celestia asked, and paced her lips on Blueblood’s reddening cheek. “That’s always a great place for a smooch.”

“The royal foal would have gladly accepted on the snout.” A timid smile worked its way onto Blueblood’s lips. “I... ahh...”

“Yes, Blooey?” Celestia reached into the basket and pulled out a blanket, flapping in in the breeze before letting it fall to the ground. At the same time, her horn pulled out the meager amount of dishware and the various snacks they’d packed.

“You mentioned that you’ve been here before.”

“That I did.” Laying herself on the blanket, Celestia motioned for Blueblood to sit next to her. “It was a small venture, but a venture none the less. Would you like to hear about it?”

Blueblood nodded and toddled over to Celestia and laid sphinx-style with Celestia. The larger pony extended a wing to wrap around him and pull him close.

“Comfy?” she asked.

Blueblood nodded, squeezing Shushie tight. Uncertainty wracked his features before he leaned his head on Celestia’s shoulder.

Reaching her hoof back, she patted Blueblood’s diaper again, just to remind him he was a foal and whose foal he was. With her other hoof, she reached into the picnic basket and grabbed a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, setting on on the plate in from of Blueblood. “Now you’re extra cozy and snuggly~ Hmm, I’m starting to see the appeal of having something to snuggle with. How would you like to be the royal teddy bear for a while? I’d still need you to wear diapers, of course. That makes you extra cushy~ And we’d need that sun on your rump so I don’t forget who you belong to.”

“*Hmmph*. You’re lucky I love you or else I’d be rather irate about now.”

Celestia smiled the widest she had in a great while. Blooey’s *I love you*s always made her heart swell, even if they were backhooffed. “So, a little story about a little adventure I had with a little pony. That should make for some entertainment while you munch.”

A hum left Blueblood as he stared at he sandwich. “It has been a long time since I had a meal as simple as peanut butter and jelly. Something like...”

“About fourteen years ago,” Celestia began. “I knew an excited little colt that had found his cutie mark. His special talent, you might ask? He was very, very good with maps. Reading them, understanding them, memorizing them, comprehending the difference in heights. I think he might have been the first pony to map out the castle in a hundred years.”

Blueblood lifted his meager meal up and took a bite, eyes clouded with thought.

“I loved playing with that little colt very much. We explored the castle and I told him stories of how my old one had secret passages and slides like a funhouse, and he often tried to find secrets in the halls where we live in now. There weren’t very many, but my astute little friend found a few of the well-hidden secrets I keep.” Celestia reached into the basket again and retrieved a thermal container and two cups, one of which being the sippy variety. “One day, on a day very much like this, I told him about the uncharted wilds of the Everfree where that old building still resides, and how there were a plethora of dangers and treasures hidden there.”

Each cup was filled with apple juice, Blueblood taking the more foalish one and smacking his lips to get the sticky peanut butter out of his teeth. “I bet that colt read a lot of adventure stories growing up. Lovingly read to him by a sweet aunty.”

Celestia hummed as though in thought, taking a sip of juice before nodding. “You’re absolutely right. When I had the chance, I read him several of my favorite books. Some *might* have been a tad advanced for a little colt like him, but I knew he was very smart.”

Blueblood smiled.

“So you could say it was my fault that he decided there must be treasure hidden somewhere in the Everfree. Being a responsible princess, there was no way I would take a little pony, no matter how smart, to a place with winged lions, saber-toothed tigers, and ursas running around.”

“Oh my,” Blueblood said, shaking his sippy cup and watching the liquid inside sway. “I bet that little colt pouted when you told him we... *ahem*, you couldn’t go there.”

“Fussy colts are fussy colts, but he settled for a compromise. This place is technically part of the forest, but is so far on the edge that nothing more dangerous than star spiders come out here. So we flew down to this exact same lake, my little adventurer dressed up just like Louisiana Bones. Although his proud stature was a little undermined by the crinkle of his diaper as he trotted along.”

Snorting, Blueblood couldn’t stop himself from wagging his tail and making the diaper around his haunches make a plasticy noise.

“As you might have figured out, we didn’t find any treasure. We looked high and low for a clue or something of a landmark, but every stone hid only dirt and a few beetles. Still, I like to think there was much fun to be had that day. Teasing my little adventurer when he got his adorably pouty thinky-face, helping him climb over the logs he was too teeny to manage himself. And just as my little colt was ready to give up and go home, I had an idea. *Why don’t we make our own treasure and our own treasure map?* He became an excited little explorer once again, and he set to work drawing the map I used to find this place again. It was the second map he’d ever made, but it’s a good one.”

“He had fun,” Blueblood said, eyes closed and smiling softly. “Lots of fun that day. And that’s when his aunty showed him how much faith she had in him, didn’t she?”

Celestia once again patted Blueblood’s diaper, then the top of his head. “Blooey, you seem to know this story quite well. Do you know what I did?”

Blueblood nodded and spoke, “That’s when you popped a treasure chest into existence and asked what sort of treasures he’d want to put in. He put in a few of his prized possessions, but there was one Aunty put in herself. It was... it was something she said Blooey could have the day he was ready to be a prince. Am I right?”

“Yes.” Celestia took another sip of her drink. “Then I locked the chest with a spell so only my nephew and I could open it, and it’s waited there ever since. Everything inside is as good as when we put it in, if the time capsule spell I put on it is still holding up.” Leaning down, she whispered into Blueblood’s ear, “Truthfully, I’ve gone down here every year to make sure everything is still in good condition.”

“Every year?” he repeated.

“I might be a day or two off, but I always make the time.”

Blueblood looked thoughtful, more thoughtful than he ever had. “Aunty Celly? May I please see that map?”

“Of course. But please be careful with it, I consider it as much of a treasure as the box it leads to.” Once more, Celestia reached into the picnic basket and pulled out the scroll, giving it to Blueblood. “It’s old and fragile, much like a good memory, so I’ve taken the best care I can to keep it intact.”

Blueblood set the sippy cup down and pushed his now-empty plate aside before taking the parchment in his hooves. Hesitation gripped him for a moment, as if scared by what he might see, before he took a breath and unfurled the paper.

The map was a crude-but-effective layout of the lake and a little of the surrounding area. Landmarks such a rocks, funny shaped trees, and logs, as well as the scale at the bottom, gave him enough information to pinpoint his and Celestia’s exact coordinates on the map. The most notable features on the scroll were an X that led to a spot a leg’s reach away from where they were, and a compass rose that looked exactly like his cutie mark.

“After all these years, you kept it.” He rolled the map up and smiled a sad smile.

“I was asked to keep it safe and guard it with my life. Didn’t want anypony else to get the valuable treasure inside.”

“And yet I’d entirely forgotten. The trip, the jaunts around the castle, all the fun we used to have. The treasure we made just for ourselves... All the fun we used to have. How good it felt to be my Aunt Celly’s special little colt.” Blooey rubbed at his eyes and sniffled. “Ah, pardon me, I seem to have something in my eye. It would appear to be tears. Where did those come from?”

Celestia said nothing, setting her cup down and hugging Blooey closer to her warm body.

“You remembered, you who has a thousand years worth of memories, who has detail upon detail to recall, you remembered me and my treasure, and I went and forgot. What sort of pony am I?”

“Hush hush, now. All ponies forget things. I’ve forgotten important family as well from time to time.” Celestia kissed the top of Blooey’s head. “There’s no reason to go to frowny-town. We’re here to be aunty and foal again, so let’s be happy and have a good time, hmm?”

“Y-Yeah... yeah. I would like that.” Blooey sniffled again and rubbed his eye before setting Shushie down and hugging Celestia tight. “Where did that part of me go, I wonder. What happened to the good parts?”

“They never went anywhere. You’ve always been a good little pony, just a little lost because your parents were lost as well.”

Blooey hummed, then said, “They aren’t bad ponies either, though. It is not as though they did not treat me well or did not encourage me. I would not be the map-maker I am today without them. Nopony is perfect, after all.”

A sad shadow passed under Celestia’s eyes, thinking of Blooey’s less-than-perfect family, and the part she played in creating them. Or the lack-thereof, perhaps. “Sometimes ponies get so wrapped up in being important, they forget what actually *is*. But you know, I think my Blooey baby is the most perfectest pony there ever was.”

“Perfectest isn’t a word Aunty,” Blooey teased. “Yes, yes,” he interrupted as Celestia opened her mouth. “I know I used that word a lot back then.”

Celestia giggled and gave her nephew a squeeze. “Beat me to the tease. Oh well. So...” As Celestia’s horn lit up, two trowels floated out of the picnic basket, one hovering in front of Blooey. “Feel like digging for treasure?”

Blooey stared at the tiny shovel, taking in in his magical hold and observing it like an animal. “You mean now?”

“I can’t think of a better time.”

“I... well, if you’re sure.” Blooey smiled and stood up. “The irony is palpable, isn’t it? I helped bury this box while in pampers, and I’ll be digging it up in them. Did you plan this, Aunty?”

“What have I told you about that dirty word?” Snickering as she stood up, Celestia moved a few steps off the blanket and stuck the shovel into the ground. “Plans never, ever work.”

“Of course, of course.” Blooey rolled his eyes and mimicked Celestia’s movements, scooping a pile of dirt into the ground to scoop some dirt away. “You were *prepared*.”

The digging was slow, no small part because Blooey was a prince and had been raised as such, forced to fight the creeping thoughts of dirt mussing up his pristine coat. As the hole went deeper, though, his nervous excitement removed any such worry and he simply dug. Even when Celestia poured some dirt in his mane, the moment of worrying about his ruined locks was not enough to stop their excavation.

Soon enough, a small chest was pulled out of the ground. Befitting something once used by Celestia, the box was ornate and glimmered despite being underground for so long. Timeless, guarding the things trusted with it.

Blooey’s hooves hovered over the clasps holding the lid down, pulled away, and came back again. Turning to Celestia, he asked, “Are you... Are you certain I may open this? I do not feel I have earned it...”

“Well, we can bury it back in the ground if you don’t think so.” Celestia smiled, sat down next to Blooey, and placed a hoof on his back. “Do you feel like a prince?”

Dry chuckles left Blooey as and looked down and patted his diaper. “Was it not you who placed the rules that restricted my princely stature? Feelings are irrelevant.”

Celestia smirked. “Hmm, but wasn’t my rule that your title was taken away while in the nursery? This doesn’t seem like a room built to house the most adorable foal in all of Equestria.

This time Blooey smiled, leaning against Celestia for support. “You and your loopholes, Aunty. I’m the most foalish prince in the world then. And if I am so foalish... then I don’t think I’m ready for it.”

For what must have been the dozenth time, Blooey had surprised Celestia to the point of breaking her calm demeanor, if only for a few seconds. Celestia blinked, tilted her head, then pulled Blooey in close. “In that case, the crown will be waiting for you when you do feel like a proper prince. If it helps, I think you’re plenty princely enough.”

“That means the world and a dozen stars to me, Aunty, but a prince must serve his subjects. So far, I’ve only allowed them to serve me.” Blooey pulled away from his aunty and wiped at his eyes. “What did I do to have a perfect pony love and remember me when I had been horrible at doing the same?”

“You didn’t need to do a thing,” Celestia replied, nuzzling the top of his head. “I love *my* little foal, no matter what.”

Blooey’s tail swished to and fro at Celestia’s words as he sighed in content.

“Still, it seems a shame to go through all this work of digging up our treasure without at least taking a gander. Shall we do a little remembering together?”

“I would like that very much, Aunty.” Assurance anewed, Blooey reached out to the chest and undid the clasps, which shimmered at his touch. The chest’s lid flipped back and the two peered inside, reaching in to pull out a prize.

“Your very first compass,” Celestia said, looking at the little boxed device, watching as the red arrow slowly spun to point to the great north. “Remember this? You begged your mother for ages to give this to you.”

Blooey was smiling at the teeny buttoned adventurer shirt, marveling at how small it was and how large he’d become. “Indeed I do. When mother caved in, she had me promise to treat it was as much respect as I would a priceless artifact.”

“Seems you kept your promise.” She nudged Blooey and chuckled at his blush, then reached into the box to get a bottle cap collection. “And here is your *emergency bit supply* in case the *magic friendship bombs* ever exploded.”

“That’s what they used in the story!” Huffing, Blooey lifted a diaper from the chest, one much smaller than the fluffy garment hugging him now. “Oh dear... this.”

Celestia squealed and snorted un-princessly, poking the bottom of Blooey’s current diaper. “Oh my goodness, that’s right! You said you wanted a few of these in here so you could compare them to your *big pony diapers*!”

“Younger me, you have doomed me to a life of forever being Aunty’s foal!” Red faced, Blooey grinned his aunty’s way and said, “Is there a way I can write my younger self a letter of thanks?”

“Your sugary words will get you everywhere with me. You’ll be my special little colt forever and ever, Aunty loving you and snuggling you and giving you all the big baby diapers you’d ever need.” Celestia poked her tongue out at Blooey, winking for good measure to get the most blushing out of him. “But we can’t forget the biggest treasure of all, can we?”

Blooey sighed, looking saddened as Celestia pulled out a crown colored gold, decorated with sapphires. Still, the sight of the heavy head ornament kept his smile in place. “Perhaps we can. I did, after all.”

“True, true. But you remembered now, and that’s what matters.” Celestia held the crown out to Blooey. “Can you believe I had this made all those years ago? It feels like yesterday to me.”

“What a gift to give to a colt, though. A prince’s crown for when I’m a full grown prince.” Again, Blooey poked his diaper. “I’ve still got a ways to go.”

Celestia nodded and set the golden crown back in the box. “Perhaps not all that much. It takes a mature pony to know they aren’t mature. I think we’ll take our treasure back home and leave it in your room, after a good polish. That way you can put your crown on when you think you’re grownup enough.”

“You would trust that decision to me?”

“I think you’re ready to be a prince.” Celestia looked down at Blooey, loving and proud as she’d ever been. “If I had my choice, you would be trusted with a small kingdom because I know, as a fact, you’d run it wise and well. But if you aren’t ready for it, you aren’t ready for it.” The chest’s lid was closed, clicking shut with a dull glow to show the magic lock was in place. “And you’ll know when that is before I will.”

“That means more to me than words can possibly say,” Blooey replied, unable to stop himself from reaching out to hug his aunty. Not that he wanted to stop himself.

“Then stop talking and just snuggle me, you silly foal.”

For a long, peaceful moment, everything was perfect. There were no worries to be had between the aunty and her foal, no papers that needed signing or kingdoms that needed running. All there was in their little world was a wonderful aunty and her sweet little foal, sharing a hug.

Celestia sighed, running her hoof along Blooey’s diaper and leaning down to nuzzle her foal’s mane. “So long as you’re *my* foal,” she said, punctuating her words with a crinkly pat to his rump, “You’ll be happy.”

“I... yes, well... thank you, Aunty Celly.”

Humming to herself, Celestia’s mind wandered to every other time she’d felt like this. Happy, warm, content, proud, all put together into one instant. Being as ancient as page was, she had quite a few memories like this. The time she’d helped a niece learn to ride a bike, the day one of her distant relatives opened his own farm, and now the day she and Blooey came to this lake.

Blooey’s hug was returned in full, and for a long, peaceful moment, everything was perfect. There were no worries to be had between the aunty and her foal, no papers that needed signing or kingdoms that needed to be ruled. Just a mare and the perfect prince she held and gave loving pats to to remind him he was a foal, her foal, and she wouldn’t have it any other way. They wanted this moment to last as long as it could so they could be happy all the way through it. Celestia’s eyes opened wide as she thought of just the right way.

“Alas, Aunty Lulu will get mad at me if we stay out here too long,” Celestia said after a while. “She never did like moving the sun. Thinks it’s a little too wild and untamed.”

“Not entirely inaccurate,” Blooey said, still leaning into Celestia’s chest and hugging her tight. “We are talking about you, aren’t we?”

Celestia huffed, giving Blooey’s diaper a firm pat before regretfully prying her nephew off. “Oh, and I suppose you’d know all about that.”

“Naturally.” Blooey grinned up at Celestia. “I’m a descendant of that wild and crazy mare. I must have inherited some of it, to...” Flushing, Blooey reached down and gave his diaper a squeeze. He hadn’t even realized he’d placed his hoof there. “To end up like this.”

“Or,” Celestia said as she nosed his snout, “you could be a great big foal at heart.”

“Yeah,” Blooey said through a wistful smile, looking at their treasure chest. “I could be.”

Time was such a fickle thing, Celestia found. It never ran correctly anymore after her many, many years of ruling. Sometimes time slowed down to a crawl, seconds passing like weeks, months stretching into years. Not always a bad thing when she was partaking in festivities she wished never to end, yet absolute torture when meetings with delegates and kings and queens just dragged on and on and on and on.

Then there was time running far, far too fast. Hours of time gone from under her hooves before she’d even prepared for her day. She was up and awake and ready to christen a ship, and before she could tell what was going on breakfast was over, the ship was sailing, and dinner was announced. Fast times were doubtless worse than slow times, much as she loved getting through her boring meetings sooner than later. She always felt she’s missed something she could have savored if only there were a few more seconds in her day when things went too fast.

Doubtless, though, the worst thing about time was the lack of it. There was never enough, fast or slow. It became spent and the day ended, then the night ended, and yesterday was as much of a memory as the first time she’s turned a rock into a snowball and chucked it at Starswirl’s head. The time was well spent, yet the purchase of a memory never seemed enough. The only saving grace was her photographic memory, recording every precious moment to revisit whenever she desired, so long as her scrapbook could lead her down the lane to these precious thoughts.

Still, if only she could get more time. Enough to last forever so nothing ever had to end. Or at least so she had more memories to recall. Anything to make her precious moments with Blooey all the longer, the more to enjoy. Because she’d been far, far more right than she’d ever hoped about her nephew. He was a good pony at his heart. So good... too good. He learned far, far too fast for her liking.

The trips to the nursery became fewer and fewer as time stretched on. That was expected, part of the goal. Blooey learned to behave himself, as foals do when given a loving, firm, helpful hoof to guide them. Punish Blooey with love and affection until he learned to respect ponies with love and affection. But did he have to be *so* good? Their daily trips to their hideaway became every two days, then once a week, then every three weeks. Blooey’s naughtiness was running out, and excuses to put him in a diaper and let him be her foal were running dry. There were so, so many times she’d been tempted to make something up so she could grab him and coddle him and spoil him like her little colt and just have fun.

But no, she wouldn’t give in to that. She wouldn’t say it aloud to him. She knew how much sway her words held. He might humor her, not really enjoying it for his sake, only to please her. That’s not what she wanted for herself, for him. Blooey needed her help. As much as she wanted to have him be her little baby Blooey forever, as much as she would love to tell him she’d love for him to be her foal, he had to grow up eventually. And, alas, all was well, and it was all too soon.

These thoughts, among others, haunted Celestia every morning after their trip to the lake. She did think he was ready to be a proper prince, which made it all the more agonizing. There was no need for Celestia to take care of her little Blooey. She wasn’t needed anymore, and he didn’t need to be foaled. No more baby play time. No more trips to the nursery. No more butt pats or snack times or cuddling together for naptime. Just Celestia and Blooey doing royal business, and doing regular grownup pony things.

How utterly *droll*.

Celestia sighed and pulled the covers from her face. Out of a sense of duty, she got out of bed and performed her duties, marked with bulletins in her head.

Is sky still dark/starry? If yes, skip to raising the sun.

Sun already up? Make a note to buy Luna imported chocolates and give the best hug in all the land, sleep when note was made.

Once sun is up, check self in mirror. The usual morning nonsense. Bags under her eyes revealing her true age. Ponies want to see their princess full of life and vigor, not looking like she walked out of the crypt! She’d always smile, though, remembering one Nightmare Night where she didn’t need to get a costume, just get a nap.

Slapped awake, mane brushed and cleaned, the next thing to do was get her royal garb on and pull out her most princessy smile to let everypony know that everything was okay and nothing was wrong.

Wait. Something was wrong.

Celestia looked back at her mirror. Shoes, check. Torque, check. Winning smile, check. Tiara.

Tiara.

Her tiara was gone.

Blinking, and blinking some more, Celestia tried to comprehend that her crown was missing. Looking over at the desk she placed her headwear on yielded an empty space. She was so used to the crown being there she hadn’t noticed when it was missing until now.

Her picture-perfect memory told her she’d placed the crown there last night, and hadn’t gotten up to move it for any reason. Just in the extremely unlikely case she’d forgotten, though, she looked around her room. Not under the pillows, not hiding in her closet, not accidentally thrown in the fireplace, not under the bed. But there was something under her bed that should not have been there.

Shushie the Second greeted Celestia when she poked her her under, staring at her with his unblinking eyes. The sight of the plush bear confused Celestia and rendered her frozen as she tried to understand what was going on. Blooey wouldn’t have...

“But he must have,” Celestia said.

He couldn’t have done this, there was just no way he would.

“Well, he’s surprised me before.” Reaching out with her magic, she grabbed the teddy bear and lifted him out from under her mattress, smiling at the stuffed toy. “I don’t suppose you know why Blooey took my tiara, do you, Sir Shushie?”

Sir Shushie simply stared at her, silent as ever.

“While your loyalty to the prince is admirable, it is ultimately futile.” Celestia giggled as she placed Shushie on her back. “The information shall soon be forced out of him and you’ll both end up in the playpen for ten whole minutes for treason.”

Trotting out her door, the royal guard she’d assigned to keep an eye on Blooey’s activities was waiting to bow and present his report.

“Prince Blueblood has been well behaved, your majesty,” the guard said.

“Thank you, Captain Tail. Do you know where Blueblood is as of now?”

Captain Tail stood back up. “Last heard was...” Blinking, the captain arched his head around the princess to see a teddy bear on her back. “Ah yes, well, *ahem*, Prince Blueblood was last seen in his castle quarters, madam.”

“Thank you. Come along, Shushie, let’s interrogate your liege and find out what trickery he’s been up to.”

“Trickery?” Captain Tail said as Celestia walked by him. “Did my unit miss a transgression, your highness?”

A chuckle left Celestia’s throat as she made her way down the hall. “No, no, your patrol does a fantastic job. We’re merely playing a game of sorts.”

The Captain nodded dutifully and trotted. “Very well, Princess. Have a pleasant day.”

The walk to Blooey’s study was uneventful, though a pleasant enough distraction. She always liked walking to Blooey’s study because it meant that...

“Ah right, not today,” Celestia chided herself as she came to the door. “Just a prank. A prank doesn’t warrant any punishment. If they did, well, I might have to act the foal myself every week.” Raising a hoof, she knocked on the door. “Blueblood? Blueblood, are you in?”

Celestia had to wait a few second for a proper reply, the sounds of shuffling from the other side giving the idea Blooey was scrambling to hide something.

“Nopony’s in!” Blooey called. The tone he used suggested he wasn’t trying to convince anypony he was Nopony.

“Well, *Nopony*, I’m looking for my nephew. A large pony, handsome and dapper fellow, princely and kind. Tends to act like a big baby a lot of the time, however. I believe he has something of mine and I’d like to get it back.”

Muffled snickers snuck their way under the door. “I’ll have you know, there isn’t a pony, prince or otherwise, more grownup than Prince Blueblood.”

*Believe me, I know.* Celestia kept her smile up as she plucked Sir Shushie from her back. “Really? There’s a lonely teddy bear here that is most disappointed to hear that. But if Blueblood is grownup, I suppose Sir Shushie can go find a new home with a good little colt or filly who really needs something soft and fluffy to snuggle. If you see Blueblood, tell him... oh, Blueblood! There you are!”

Blooey poked his head out his doorway, horn lighting up to take Sir Shushie and place him in his hooves. “Mine,” he declared, sticking his tongue out.

Rolling her eyes, Celestia leaned down to nose Blooey. “Hello, nephew. Did you see where Nopony went? He seemed like such a nice stallion, I was hoping to invite him to tea.”

“Had to step out, I’m afraid. But, ah, we could always have tea, could we not?” Blooey smiled, looking hopeful.

*Yes, tea, like all my other friends and family.* Celestia resisted the urge to sigh and instead nodded. “Blueblood, of course. We can have tea whenever you’d like. Well, not *whenever*. Today I have some important meeting to attend. But there is a problem, you see.”

“A... problem?” Blooey tapped his chin. “What sort of problem? Nothing serious, I should hope.”

“You should, because that is the case. Do you see anything missing from my visage, dear nephew? Something important?”

Blooey squinted at Celestia, tapping his chin with the hoof that wasn’t holding Sir Shushie. “Hmm, important...”

“And shiny.”

“Your sparkling smile is still there. Your mane is shimmering, and your tail is much the same. Forgive me, Celestia, but I see nothing wrong.”

“Blueblood...”

Blooey looked up at Celestia, cheeks flushing. “Ah, you’re giving me that tone again.”

“The one in which I mean business. Blueblood, I need my crown. Please give it back so I can do my royal duty.”

“Ah yes, well... hmm.” Blooey smiled, the blush becoming deeper. Clearing his throat, Blooey pushed the door opened all the way and turned back inside.

Celestia followed after him, looking around at the maps and charts upon the walls. This space was so much more decorated than it had once been. The first time Celestia walked in there were but the barest essentials. Now it was personal. It was the room of a mapmaker. So lost in admiring the meticulously colored *Salt n’ Seed* sea chart, she hadn’t noticed when Blooey popped open the hollow globe on his desk until he’d returned to standing in front of her. In his blue magic was her tiara, offered to her.

“H-Here...” he said.

Celestia wanted desperately to snuggle Blooey right then and there. But she couldn’t, no matter how much he looked like a colt with his hoof in a cookie jar. She plucked the tiara from his grip and placed it on her head, the familiar weight a comfort. “Ahhh, much better. Thank you, Blueblood. I’ll be on my way.” She turned back to the door, ready to face the day.

Until she felt her tail being tugged. Celestia turned her head, finding Blooey pulling at her tail.

“That’s it?” Blooey said.

For a moment Celestia was stunned. A moment longer than she’d been stunned in a long, long time. As she always said, she never relied on plans, only on being prepared. She was prepared for Blooey to make a joke and let her leave. She was prepared for him to promise his next prank would be a better one. She was even prepared for him to throw Shuhsie at her head, which she’d catch and throw back. She was not prepared, however, for Blooey to ask if that was it.

“I... yes, that’s all,” Celestia said.

Blooey’s jaw worked itself as his brow furrowed, that look of deep concentration mixing with frustration before he blurted out his response. “But are you not going to punish me?”

“Punish?” Celestia turned around completely, eyes wide as she processed the question. “Why would I punish you?”

“B-Because I stole your crown!” Blooey argued. “I took it and hid it and was never going to give it back!”

Celestia blinked, looking around the room. “Blooey... Err, Blueblood, you *did* give it back.”

“B-But...”

“Blueblood, it was simply a prank. Nopony was hurt, physically, emotionally. My day certainly wasn’t ruined.” The elder pony looked about the room, trying to think of something to say. Surely he knew this. Surely he wasn’t...

“I... but I did something wrong...” Blooey bit his lip, looking just as confused as he rubbed a temple with his free hoof. Shushie was clutched tight to his chest, squeezed as hard as the teddy bear had ever been. “I was naughty, wasn’t I?”

Did he sound *disappointed*? Celestia gulped and licked her lips to remove the dry feeling. “Blooey?” she said carefully.

Blooey looked up at Celestia, jumping where he stood despite the quiet of her voice.

“Blooey, I’m not going to send you to the nursery for this. It’s a playful prank. I’m so proud of you, nephew, because of how much you’ve grown up in so short of a time.” Her smile was still warm as sunshine. “If anything, you don’t need the nursery anymore. It’s been weeks since you’ve been there. You’re a good grownup pony who knows how to treat others.”

“I do not... need the nursery anymore?” Blooey’s eyes widened, his expression going blank as the gears churned her words into something he could understand.

There was no denying it. Blooey was disappointed. Celestia felt hope well in her chest as desire gripped her heart. “Blooey?” Celestia cooed.

Blooey blinked and looked up at Celestia, muzzle scrunching.

“Do you *want* to be sent to the nursery?”

Blooey’s gaze softened as his cheeks burned brighter.

“Do you *want* to be my foal?”

Poor Blooey looked ready to explode with how red his cheeks were becoming. Shushie pressed tight into his chest, tail furling and unfurling as if trying to find something, Blooey stuttered out, “I am not... that is... I want...”

She wanted to say it. So bad she wanted to say it so much. But she couldn’t influence him, not with this. He had to want it. “What do you want, Blooey?”

And then, once more to her surprise, Blooey threw himself at her chest and hugged her tight. “Aunty Celly, I-I want to be your foal. I don’t know for how long, but I want to be yours. I want to go back to the nursery, I want you to play with me! I want to sing silly songs and have you tell me to turn around and shake my rump for you! I want to hold my teddy bear without thinking he’s going to be taken away, I want to never be alone again, I want you to put me in those special diapers so I can’t deny that I’m *yours*! I want you to love me! Please don’t think I’m c-crazy or insane, but I want it all so, so much!”

Celestia was speechless. Celestia was never speechless. Not for thousands of years. So taken aback, so surprised, it took the aged princess a full minute to think of something to say. When she came to her senses, she realized she’d automatically sat down and was holding her heavy-breathed foal tight to her body. She smiled, rubbing his back. And then she laughed. And laughed. And laughed a little more.

“Aunty?” Blooey said as she looked up at her. Before he could say anything else, his Aunty Celly had pressed her nose against his, making their noses scrunch.

“F-Forgive me, Blooey, b-but I wasn’t prepared for this!” Aunty Celly declared before taking a lungful of air to laugh some more.

Blooey blinked, jaw dropping. “You w-weren’t prepared?”

“No! Of course not! How could I have known? I thought you wanted to get away from being my foal and we’d just be grownup friends!”

“You had... no idea?” Blooey blinked again, a grin forming on reddened cheeks. “You mean you are not... heh, heh... all knowing?”

Aunty Celly guffawed another laughing burst before grabbing her sides. Since Blooey was in her lap and being hugged, he was squeezed tighter onto her heaving body. “Nope! Not at all! Not the foggiest idea!”

Blooey chuckled some as he pressed his nose into Aunty Celly’s. “You’re a pony too. You didn’t know. You’re just like me. Just a little mad, just a little crazy.”

“Of course we are! We’re two crazy ponies who want to be aunty and foal, and it’s the most wonderful thing ever!” Aunty Celly pulled Blooey back and began to tickle his tummy, tongue sticking out the side of her mouth. “You’re *my* foal, and I’m *your* aunty!”

Blooey broke out into a laughing fit along with his Aunty, only partially due to her tickling. Just like his Aunty Celly, he was too happy and baffled and too unsure what to say. So all he could do was laugh. All they could do was laugh.

So they did. Laugh, and laugh, and laugh, until there wasn’t a laugh left. Laughing all the worry and frustration and cares away, until only two things remained. Aunty Celly and her baby Blooey. For that moment, however brief it was, that’s all there was.

But it would not be the last moment. Aunty Celly found more time. She just needed somepony special to help her find it.

The doors to the delegation halls opened under the influence of two unicorn guards as Blooey and Aunty Celly stepped out, accompanied by the Apple clan representative from Ponyville. Several other ponies stepped out, relief all over their faces and a few waving at Blooey as they walked by.

“Gotta tell ya, Prince Blueblood, I wasn’t expectin’ ya’d get this handled so fast,” Applejack said as she walked alongside Blooey. “Last time it took three whole weeks and a mess of paperwork sloppier than my pig’s pen to get anything done.”

“Bah, t’was nothing to be thanked for, madam. Though I hope you don’t mind me saying your ancestors were thrice as sloppy when it comes to the records.”

Applejack stopped and sighed, taking her hat off to wipe her brow. “Yeah, much as I love Granny Smith, poor gal can’t figure out why ya gotta use the blue ink to save her skin. But really, thank ya. I figured getting another few acres on Sweet Apple Acres was gonna be a nightmare.”

“We’re lucky to have somepony so knowledgeable on Equestrian law in regards to property,” Aunty Celly said as she pulled Blooey into a small hug.

“And good with a quill, iff’n I may say so!” Applejack said as she put her hat back on. “I ain’t never seen nopony make a map that fast! You’ve got some chops there, Prince Blueblood.”

Blooey waved Applejack off and scoffed. “Pish-posh, it’s my duty as your prince to help you, is it not? No thanks are required.”

“Maybe not, but ya still get ‘em. So, thanks.” Applejack grabbed Blooey’s hoof and shook vigorously. “Yer a classy act, yer highness.”

“Th-The p-p-p-pleas-s-s-ure is-ss-ss-ss mi-i-i-i-i-ine!” Blooey said through the earthquake-powered hoofshake. The world kept rumbling even after he let go, until Aunty Celly placed a hoof on his head.

Applejack rubbed the back of her head. “And, well, I gotta say sorry, too. When I saw you were handlin’ my troubles, I thought for sure you were gonna make my life a heap’a trouble. Last time we met you were, uhh...”

“A jerk?” Blooey smirked.

“I wouldn’tve been so crass to yer crown but, uhh, yep. You were a pretty big jerk.”

Aunty Celly smiled and looked at her nephew with a big smile. “Ponies can change a lot when you aren’t paying attention. Blueblood’s come to understand a lot more about being a prince since you two last met.”

“And a lot more about fine food.” Blooey’s horn glowed before a bag popped into existence, jangling with the sounds of coins as it fell into his hood. The bag was presented to Applejack as Blooey said, “Consider this something of an apology for the cake.”

Applejack’s eyes went wide at the sight. “B-But yer Highness, that wasn’t yer fault!”

“No, but I *did* ruin a perfectly good dress and missed the chance to try a treat, be it hurled at my face or otherwise. I have since learned the error of my ways, as your applesauce was recently fed to me and I daresay it was the best in all of Equestria.”

Aunty Celly’s smile grew a little wider.

The bag of bits shook as Blooey bounced his hoof. “This should cover that cake and serve as an advanced payment for some of your other confections, I should hope. Perhaps I may try a few before you leave? Becoming a return customer would be a pleasure.”

“Well, shoot, how can I say no to an offer like that?” Applejack took the bits and stuck them under her hat. “I’ll get ya some right now! Yer tongue’ll be whistlin’ dixie once ya tried some of my three-apple pie!”

Blooey waved as Applejack trotted off, a bounce in her step as she went.

A sigh escaped Aunty Celly as her wings unfurled. “Good gracious, I thought she’d never leave.”

“Come now, she wasn’t all bad,” Blooey said with a chortle. “The way you talked about this one made it sound like I would be talking to a rock.”

“*You* have a tongue made of silver, mister.” Aunty Celly pulled him into another hug, squeezing him tighter than when Applejack had been present. “If it wasn’t for you, I’d be there for the rest of the day arguing with her why we can’t just extend her orchards out.”

“Ponies work better with visuals more often than not, Celly.” Blooey returned the hug, smiling wide. “Perhaps you should start bringing flashcards to your meetings.”

“Ugh, please, the other noble ponies wouldn’t be able to point their noses down long enough to look. They’d be too full of themselves to glance at them! Not like *my* Blooey, who’s only full of snuggles and applesauce~”

“Aunty, silence yourself, sompony may be listening.” Despite his protests, Blooey grinned and flushed as he nuzzles Aunty Celly’s neck.

“Son? Son, are we too late?” a voice called.

Aunty Celly and Blooey gasped as they pulled away from one another. The princessly tension returned to Celly’s wings as Blooey straightened up and cleared his throat.

Around the corner came Blueblood’s parents, shuffling about as they huffed and puffed.

“Mother, Father?” Blooey said as they trotted up.

“Phew, we didn’t miss it, did we?” Blueblood’s mother said as she trotted up to Blooey. “Curses, we did, didn’t we? Drat it all to Tartarus.”

Blooey smiled and nodded his head, a forlorn look about him. “Sadly, Mother, you have. The delegation ended mere minutes ago.

Blueblood’s father wiped his brow with a handkerchief and said something under his breath. “I’ll have to fire that coach pony when we get home...”

Blooey made a mental note to hire that coach pony on to his personal staff.

“We are so, so terribly sorry, darling,” Blueblood’s mother said as she fanned herself. “I’d have sold my diamond rings if it meant seeing you in your first delegation. I’m sure my son showed those common folk who’s in charge, certainly.”

“Actually,” Aunty Celly said, placing a hoof on Blooey’s shoulder, “my nephew just solved a crisis in Ponyville for one of their trusted farmers. There’ll be several extra bushels of apples for our kitchens thanks to him.”

“You’re too kind, Princess,” Blooey said. “I have only my upbringing to thank for it.”

Blueblood’s father puffed his chest out. “Of course, Princess Celestia knows who raised you right.”

Aunty Celly smiled at Blueblood’s parents. “Oh, I most certainly do.”

“What do you say to a celebration, son?” Blueblood’s mother said. “Let us host a grand party and invite all our acquaintances. We can even break out the vintage!”

“I thank you, mother, but a prior engagement beckons me. The farmer in question has graciously allowed me to try several of their desserts, at my request. Perhaps you would like to join me?” Blooey offered a sincere smile.

Blueblood’s father began to scowl. “A... farmer’s desserts? Son, didn’t we teach you-”

“I certainly wish I could go,” Aunty Celly interjected. “Those apple fritters of theirs are some of my favorites, speaking personally. Anypony who doesn’t like them must be mad!”

Blueblood’s parents stuttered for a moment. Their white coats impossibly lost a little color as they held their tongues. They were so busy trying not to say something to upset the Princess, they didn’t notice as Aunty Celly and Blooey shared a wink.

“Ha, yes, o-of course!” Blueblood’s mother said a bit too happily. “If the princess loves it, it must be delicious! Right, *dear*?”

“Ooomph! Watch where you- Yes, yes, naturally! Err, indeed, son, will you take us to this, err, farmer?”

Blooey nodded with a warm smile. “Certainly, Father. Come, I’ll show you the way to a happier heart.” As he began to trot off with Blueblood’s parents in tow, he turned around and waved to his Aunty. “And we are still in agreement for tonight, Princess?”

“Wouldn’t miss it for the world.” Aunty Celly waved as her nephew went off. “Until then, my nephew. Good luck.”

Blueblood’s parents raised a brow at one another as Blooey said, “If I can change...”