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Girls and Bridle

Chapter 6 - A regular day at the stable

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"Stardust? Who is Stardust?"
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Instead of answering Moonlight's question, Morning Star quickly ran to her bedroom and returned with an already sorted pile of old magazines that she spread throughout the table in chronological order. Each and every cover featured Stardust.

"She is a legend! She won six Super Cups and countless other famous races and tournaments. This is absurd! How did this happen? How come she became their owner? Why them?"

"I like her bridle with the mask... She looks intense. Oh, and she wore the same color as us, black."

"Yes, when she retired, nobody dared to pick her color as she was considered a Goddess. But Penny wasn't shy about it and went to get it when she became my owner."

"Well, Morning Star, you are a champion too. You deserve to wear that color."

"I don't know... Stardust was way better than I will ever be. I never broke her Super Cup track record and probably never will. She is amazing!"

Morning Star's admiration toward Stardust was without boundaries. Avid reader of racing magazines, she had memorized every single stats and history of the former champion. Moonlight, her, was simply amused to see how passionate her companion was about this news. Other than that, she had never followed racing before, so she didn't care too much about fame and stuff like that.

The main question remained, though. How did Stardust end up buying Paul's stable, and why did Paul even sell it in the first place. Not long ago, he was determined to prevent them from winning the Triple Crown. Shedding some light on this was why Penny and Sophie left early to the city this morning.

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"Oh! Star! Sophie and Penny are coming back! Let's go meet them outside."
"Yes!"
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The two civilian ponygirls rushed to the front door and walked up to the car that had pulled in the long dirt driveway. Morning Star went to help Penny out while Moonlight started questioning Sophie right away.

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"So? Did you find anything?"
"Oh, yeah... It was all true. Paul sold his stable to Stardust."
"But... Why?"
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"Not too sure... We went to Pony Exchange to check the paperwork, it was all legit, and then we asked people around and guess what ... Stardust, Nightshade, and Xiuying were seen together shortly after the transfer of ownership was signed."

"Xiuying!? With Nightshade? That's not possible..."

When Sophie had suggested that Tiantang's stable could potentially have an involvement with this whole story, both ponygirls were shocked. Xiuying hated Paul's team so much because of all the racist comments she had to endure, so how could she even be able to breathe in the presence of one of their members. Nightshade wasn't the meanest one, but still.

"Well, that's what we thought too. So, Penny suggested that we go straight to Tiantang stable and ask them directly about this whole thing."

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"So? What did they say?"
"Nothing!"
"N... nothing?"
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"They confirmed what we already knew, the change of ownership, but that everything else was a private matter. You know, I'm not overly surprised. Tiantang and Xiuying have such a strong code of honor. They wouldn't betray their worst enemy even if they had a decent reason to do so."

It greatly puzzled Moonlight, of course, but she was new in this pony business; at the end of the day, she wouldn't care too much about any of this as it was more than likely not that relevant to her situation anyway. The one who seemed to have a problem with this turn of events was Morning Star. She looked anxious, and her rapid eye movements betrayed her overthinking, forcing Sophie to nudge her out of that zone.

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"Morning Star? What are you thinking?"
"... nothing."
"It's bugging you, I can tell... You can tell us, you know..."
"It's... It's because it's... Stardust..."
"Ah, yes... Why am I not surprised? Are you... jealous?"
"..."
"Do you want to change stable and be owned by her?"
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"NO! Sophie! Don't say things like that... It's mean... It's just that she is a legend and—"

"Hahaha! Fangirl! Come on, you two. Let's get you ready for training. It will take your mind off this quick enough. You will have to show me what you've learned with Ivory two days ago. Today we start training with the double cart... It's time to get serious!"



"Would you stop acting like an idiot, Hemlock! Look at Nightshade... She didn't give me any trouble when I prepared her. What's the big deal?"

"Mmphh!"

Brittany, Hemlock, and Nightshade were back at Paul's stable, which was now Stardust's stable. Yesterday, when Nightshade and Xiuying bumped into Stardust in town, they received shocking news; Paul had sold his very lucrative stable to Stardust, turning her de facto into their new owner.

Instead of explaining everything on-site, Stardust decided to give the big bundle of keys to Nightshade and told her to return to the stable with Brittany and Hemlock, which they did. The place felt like a ghost town, and Paul's limited belongings were already gone. It was such a surreal and somewhat creepy sensation to be back there so soon after the heavy drama that had unfolded the day prior.

The three girls were scared that Paul would show up out of nowhere with an axe to slaughter them, so much that since they came back, they kept guard on a rotation; while one stayed awake, the two others were resting. It would be like this until Stardust showed up to officially invest the property and hopefully shed some light on this whole transfer.

They expected her arrival this morning. For the occasion, Brittany thought it would be appropriate to prepare her ponies to make them look perfect. Brittany had no illusions; she knew she was not the most liked person around, and if someone risked being fired right off the bat, it was her. Hence the reason why she spent so much time on Nightshade a moment ago, making her stand out, and was now trying to do the same to Hemlock.

The small driver had literally transformed one of the stalls into a grooming station and used all her most expensive products to turn Nightshade into one good looking racer. Starting with the boots, she had replaced the standard crisscross lacing she usually used by a very fancy woven lacing. Nightshade had never seen one of those before. Even if she still had ill feelings because of what Brittany had done to her, she still couldn't help but be impressed by her skills.

Brittany had also given the pony a complete and durable shine of her pink catsuit, making it almost glow. The harness had been next on the list. After being thoroughly cleaned and conditioned, Brittany had replaced one of its buckles that didn't seem to sparkle as much as the others. As usual, she had fitted the harness on the ponygirl in a perfect way.

Because the goal was to show off racing ponygirls and not cute and delicate show ponies, Brittany had decided against applying makeup. Instead, she had spent a lot of time perfecting Nightshade's ponytail. For a ponygirl, the long hair was an iconic source of pride and admiration.

The bridle had been the last thing to go on Nightshade before Brittany led her out of the stall, where she would keep an eye for Stardust's arrival or a potentially murderous ex-owner. However, the trainer had warned her not to do anything that would risk undermining the end-result or her look. A bit of dirt on the freshly polished hooves would be nothing less than catastrophic.

It was Hemlock's turn to be groomed, but things were not going smoothly. Even her bit between her teeth hadn't calmed her down.

"Stoooop! Stardust can show up at any minute, and you are nowhere near ready. For the last time, stop moving!

"Mmmph! Mmmph!"

"I know you can't wait to see her but control yourself, damnit! It's the third time I'm trying to lace your boot, and you mess it up every time. Stay!"

Hemlock couldn't help it. She continuously tried to peek out of her stall to see if Stardust had arrived, forcing Brittany to pull her back so she could complete her makeover.

The prospect of being owned by her idol, who was more like a Goddess to her, was almost too much to handle emotionally. How did this happen? One day, she had risked her entire career to protect Brittany, and the other, she had learned that the person she admired the most in life was now replacing the man she hated the most.

"Done. Now let me give you a quick shine. You are all dusty."

"Mmm!"

Brittany sprayed some latex conditioner on a soft pad and started working the smooth surface. Since this task was less demanding on her mind, it was a good opportunity to acknowledge what her ponygirl had done for her during the past two days.

Even after being harshly punished and separated from her lover for an extended period, Hemlock had shown Brittany compassion. The ponygirl had sensed that something was very wrong with her trainer and had tried, in her own special way, to breach her walls. If she had not done that, having faith in her training one last time, Brittany would have lost everything she loved; without her two ponies, she would have left as well and probably would have abandoned her trainer career for good. So this little trip to see a ponygirl show, which turned into something much more emotional, had really saved her. Hemlock had saved her.

"Hey, Hemlock... I don't think I've said... thank you. You did everything a ponygirl should never do, but in the end, it was a good thing. Right?"

"Mmmph!"

"I'm sorry about everything I did to you and Nightshade. I was just angry... mostly angry at myself... for being so damn weak."

A pair of hands softly landed on Brittany's head. That, too, was not allowed. Touching a trainer without permission or grabbing things such as the harness or reins were prohibited. But this time, it was the right thing to do; it was better than words. Nothing Hemlock could have said could have sunk into Brittany's brain more than this gentle touch.

"O... Okay... That's enough, Hemlock. Lift your arms now, we need to finish this."



"Alright... I think we are good to go? Ready to stretch your legs?"

Sophie slapped Morning Star's butt playfully after making sure the double cart had been secured properly to the ponygirls' harnesses. It was a slightly different setup than what she was used to, but she was knowledgeable enough to figure it out.

The small driver climbed on her springy seat, put her little helmet on, and grabbed the reins. Piloting two ponygirls at once would be the challenging part. Not only she had to learn how to tug two sets of reins at once, but she would also have to train her ponies to react the same way to her commands.

She decided that Moonlight would be the one that would have to adapt. Morning Star was a fully trained and conditioned pony, and her habits would be too hard to break; it was much easier to work with Moonlight, who was a clean slate.

"Yup... to the track, girls! Let's find out how this thing works."

Penny's stable had a generic four hundred meters dirt track near the barn. It was the standard size for short races like the Super Cup, two 400 meter laps. The Triple Crown was quite different, and the tracks were huge, respectively 3000 and 3500 meters.

All the pre-season and qualification races would occur on 3000 meters tracks, then the Triple crown would consist of two races of 3000 meters, and the last race would be an extremely demanding 3500 meters. Performing well on the shorter ones didn't guarantee success on the longer one, which was the main reason why it was so rare for a team to win the three races.

"Er! Stop pulling me side to side like this... you are going to make me sick. I thought Ivory taught you how to pull a double cart properly."

As they went down the gravel road leading to the track, the ponies made the cart jerk uncomfortably because they were not working together. There was a lot of sarcasm in Sophie's voice since she was fully aware that the two ponies had never pulled a real cart together, and it would take some getting used to. It was just funny to watch Moonlight trying to sync her feet to Morning Star's. The jerking motion came from Moonlight, who looked at her companion's hooves instead of in front of her. Her body was simply trying to go where she was looking.

Slowly but surely, the little cart reached the dirt track where the real training would take place. Today, there would be no need to perform. It was merely a first attempt for everyone to find out how it felt to work as a team of three.

"Alright, ponies... Show me what you've got. Trot!"

It took a few seconds for the pony girls to get synchronized. Right away, Sophie saw a lot of flaws, errors, and mistakes but didn't mention any of her observations during the first lap. Instead, she just studied and made mental notes for later. Having a comforting and casual chat with them was a better calming treatment.

"We will need to groom that track soon. Maybe you can help me with that later, Moonlight? If you are not too tired, that is. You like pulling things, right? That rake is not light."

It hadn't rained forever on Penny's stable, causing the dirt to be extra dry and dusty and forcing Sophie to pull up her scarf to cover her mouth. She was not that much bothered by this, it was part of the job, but she couldn't help but think about the pony cleaning she would have to do at the end of the day. They both had long hair that would need thorough brushing and washing.

After a full lap of trotting, the small driver began the real work. The trick for Sophie was to pick certain elements to work on and ignore others. A rolling fire of criticism would be counterproductive, and she risked discouraging her ponies. Morning Star and Moonlight were not always the most cool-headed beings, so Sophie had to gauge her words carefully to prevent making them feel like victims.

"That wasn't bad at all. Is Ivory that good? Okay, Morning Star, remember, you are the lead pony, so stop trying to accommodate Moonlight. You just make her life more difficult. Let her adapt to your gait. And you Moonlight, stop looking at the ground. Your hooves are not going away. Use your ears instead. Your hooves are noisy enough. Don't get frustrated. It's just practice. Keep those knees high too. I don't want you to trip. Good... Good! That's what I like to see. That's my girl!"

For a little while, the trio kept riding around the track casually. It could have been qualified as a light workout for the ponies. The dual cart was barely heavier than the single one, but since two ponygirls pulled it, it was effortless. Sophie barely weighed more than a bag of feathers too, so it was not even close to being a challenge for her tractors.

Sophie then guided her ponies to the center of the track where there were a bunch of rusty metal barrels. This zone was dedicated to control and obedience training. They would zig-zag around the barrels, which was good for both Sophie, who was learning how to use two sets of reins at the same time, and for the ponies who needed to learn how to negotiate turns together; they had to work in sync like never before, and it was not as easy at it looked.

Saying it was challenging would be an understatement. Large turns were not much of a problem, but the tighter ones were a nightmare. Everybody tried their best, but if this was an omen of what was to come at the Triple Crown, it was not a good one. Particularly when Sophie sent the ponies straight into one of the barrels, making it fall and roll on the ground.

"Aaah! I'm so sorry! That was my fault! I'll go pick it up! Sorry!"



"MMPHH! MMMPH!"

"What? Stardust is here already? Okay, well. You look great. Come, we will go meet her."

Hemlock was so excited that she kept jerking on her reins, trying to make Brittany move faster. She wanted to get out of the barn now to see her idol.

"Calm down... Hemlock. You don't want to give her a bad first impression. Nightshade, come here. Let's do this the way we discussed."

Nightshade trotted to Brittany, who grabbed her reins with her free hand. The small driver now had the two powerful ponies on each side of herself and headed toward the big barn door. Even though she suspected that it could be her last day being a trainer, she was proud to have made her two ponies look fabulous for their new owner; at least Brittany knew she had not messed up that part.

A black pickup truck had parked near the house, but nobody had stepped out of it yet. Brittany and her pink ponies reached the outside, and a burning dry wind put their blonde ponytails in motion, enhancing their charisma. They slowly walked toward the truck and then paused about ten meters from it.

For a long moment, they stayed in front of the vehicle, waiting for its occupants to step out, but they seemed to take their sweet time looking at some paperwork first.

"What are they doing? Nightshade... posture!"

It was her bad habit. Nightshade straightened her back to regain an additional inch of pride.

After an additional minute of ignoring the ponies, two women, dressed formally, exited the car and loudly slammed the steel doors. The driver was someone they didn't know, and the passenger was someone everybody knew, the legendary Stardust. The former walked up to Hemlock, who took a step back. That person was familiar to her, but she couldn't really recall where she had seen her before.

"You don't remember me, do you?"

"Mmmph?"

"I'm Cassy... We met when you were a small teenager. I'm the one who led you to Stardust at the fair. Do you remember?"

A lightbulb instantaneously turned on in Hemlock's head. What the woman named Cassy said happened over a decade ago, but it all made sense now. That girl was Stardust's sidekick back then and never stopped to be even after that long. Hemlock thought it could be neat if Nightshade and Brittany could stay together with her forever too.

"You became one magnificent racer. You know that?"

"..."

Hemlock didn't want to be rude, but a stranger complimenting her about her racing skills wasn't what she wanted at the moment. Her idol was so close... She wanted to interact with Stardust, not her helper. Maybe it was not the best thing to do, but she ignored Cassy and stepped toward Stardust without being told to do so. Brittany reacted right away by yanking on her reins.

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"Hemlock! Stop it! Step back!"
"Mmph!"
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Stardust, who had her arms crossed until then, smiled a little. Having hardcore fans was something she was very familiar with, and that included many of the ponies of Hemlock's generation, the ones who were now in their late twenties and grew up watching her. That said, it was rather flattering to see such an elite pony being so excited about her presence.

However, Stardust's first words were not the ones anybody had expected.

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"So, what do we have here? Is this a beauty contest?"
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"I guess I would have preferred to see you training hard instead of playing dolls with the ponies, Brittany. That's what you should have done if you intended to impress me."
"..."

Screw you, bitch! Those were the words that resonated inside Brittany's head after hearing such a snarky remark from the new owner. Having good looking ponies was an important aspect of Paul's stable, and it was not only for marketing purposes. Brittany knew her ponies at a personal level and knew that looking good boosted their confidence greatly. She wasn't sure if Stardust had said that to insult her or because of ignorance about the stable she had just purchased.

Brittany didn't have a specific opinion of Stardust until now. Being a legend or not didn't do anything to her and didn't make a person more important in her eyes. For example, she knew Sophie was a solid trainer, but she would never go for a drink with her because she was an idiot. The same went for Morning Star. Accepting that she was a tremendous pony didn't mean she would like to train her.

That said, Brittany didn't have a lack of knowledge regarding the woman before her. For lack of better terms, Stardust had been a war machine during her racing days. Back then, physical appearance wasn't that important, so the ponies were often dirty, used half-damaged harnesses,

and the carts were full of scratches and dents. So it wasn't that surprising to find out that Stardust didn't have a great opinion about the cosmetic aspect of racing and no respect for things she didn't know.

However, and that was the most infurious reason explaining how offensive what she said was, Stardust has been the first woman to attract the spotlight by wearing a non-essential black mask over her eyes when she was racing. It served no other purpose than looking different and catching the media's attention. So Stardust should have appreciated better the effort Brittany had put in making her ponies look great for their new owner.

Of course, instead of phrasing her thoughts like an adult, Brittany responded with all her canons.

- "... says the woman who wore a mask!"
- "... What did you say?"

"You heard me! You are a hypocrite! You were the first one to seek the camera's attention by dressing up like a dominatrix."

"You are fired! Get off my property. Cassy, bring the ponies back to the barn. And lace their boots properly. I want them ready to race, not to parade around."

Brittany had expected that something like this would happen, so she just surrendered the reins to Cassy and headed to the house to collect her belongings, frustrated that too many people on this planet were absolute morons, including Stardust.

This disturbing event wasn't what Hemlock and Nightshade had expected. It was supposed to be a happy moment... between them and Stardust... between all of them. How did that happen? Why was it chaos all of a sudden? Was Brittany really fired? The two ponies looked at each other, not knowing what to do anymore. Nightshade knew very well how close Brittany and Hemlock were, and if they were to part ways like this, who knew what the future would look like. Why was this happening so soon after they had pledged solidarity toward each other? Did it mean Hemlock would leave the stable too?

As Cassy dragged the two confused ponies back to the barn, Stardust turned heels and returned to the car to grab her bags.

Yank after yank, the trio finally entered a stall, and Cassy closed the door to make sure they wouldn't escape.

"Aaah, stop acting like that. Stardust wants me to lace your boots. I have nothing to do with what she decided. We can talk about it later, okay? Now, calm down and help me a bit."

"MMMPH! MMMPH!"

Hemlock pawed the dusty ground like a mad horse, passing the message that it would not be a good time to go for a run. There was a problem, and addressing it was a big priority. She pulled very hard on her cuffs... too bad those were not her racing ones with the quick disconnect. Without having someone freeing her arms, her wrist would stay near her waist... But she tried again... and again... trying to get free and sending Cassy into panic mode.

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"Hey! Hey! Hemlock! I know you are mad, but stop this! You can't do that!"
"MMMPH!"
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With spit and drool pouring around her bit, Hemlock wasn't listening anymore. She wanted to go see Brittany before it was too late.

Distressed and having not expected that her first day here would turn into this shit show, Cassy looked around and spotted a riding crop hung on the wall. After grabbing it, she turned to Hemlock and unqualifiedly threatened her.

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"STOP! If you don't... I ... I will use it!"
"..."
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Mistake. Maybe it would have worked if Brittany was at the end of the crop, but Cassy had no legitimacy to do such a thing and the shakiness of her hand didn't display a lot of confidence either. She was nobody.

Nightshade, her, didn't care about anything else than her angry lover right now, and it was not true that she would allow this stranger to hurt her. So in a spontaneous decision, she charged Cassy and bumped her off her feet, sending her flying to the big haystack.

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"Aaah! Nightshade!? OOOF!"
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Before she could regain her senses, a pretty pink pony sat on top of her hips and pinned her in the hay. Not nearly as strong as Nightshade, Cassy had no hope of getting out of this predicament.

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"Nightshade! LET ME GO!"
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Nightshade, relatively calm, just shook her head, signaling that it wasn't going to happen.

Meanwhile, Hemlock kept pulling on her wrist cuffs like a mad pony, and finally...

Rips!

The harness D-ring failed, and her arm flew up, causing her to make a few off-balanced steps back. She rushed to undo her other cuff to liberate her other hand, while Cassy only had words left as means to try to stop what was happening.

"HEMLOCK! Don't do this! Stardust won't tolerate it!"

The raging pink pony untied her head hardness and spat her bit out.

"I DON'T CARE! If Brittany leaves, we leave!"

"... Come on... You can't be serious... You wouldn't miss the chance to have Stardust as your owner."

"It pisses me off to do this, but I don't care. I promised Brittany we would never leave her, and I won't change my mind."

Hemlock pulled the gate open and ran out, leaving only a cloud of dust behind.

"COME BACK! OWW!"

It was probably better for Cassy to stop talking if she didn't want to be crushed like a walnut by Nightshade's powerful legs.

Hopefully, it wasn't too late. Hemlock ran to the nearby house and kicked the old wooden door open with her hoof, sending wood shards flying everywhere, before rushing inside to find Brittany.

But then she stopped...

Stardust and Brittany stared at her, puzzled by her violent entry. But it didn't matter. She walked to her friend and pulled her by the arm.

"Come, Brittany. We are leaving."

"No, wait. Hemlock!"

"Let's go get Nightshade. Then we will steal another car and leave."

"Would you calm down, stupid pony! Let my arm go!"

"No, Stardust was mean, and I'm not racing without you. I never agreed to be part of Stardust's stable in the first place. We can start our own stable, right? You always have money to buy us food. This time you can just buy us another stable."

Of course, Brittany was way too small to control her irrational pony, so it didn't take long for them to reach the outside, heading back to the barn. Stardust hadn't said a word and just followed them from a distance assessing this new development, not giving any clues about what she was really thinking.

Soon enough, Hemlock and Brittany entered the stall where Nightshade was still comfortably sitting on top of Cassy, who had given up all hope to get away, and was now just playing with a handful of straw instead.

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"Nightshade, we are leaving, come."
"Okay. Are we going to steal another car?"
"Yes. And Brittany will buy us a new stable."
"Okay."
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Having had enough of this, Brittany yanked her arm off Hemlock's athletic grip.

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"HEMLOCK! STOP!"
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"Listen to me! Don't leave this stable, or else you'll have nothing left. Your running career will be over!"

"Britt, no... We need you."

"No, you don't. Stardust may be a bitch, but she was the best racer ever. She can take you to the next level. Don't miss that opportunity."

"But... What about you? You won't have anything either if you leave."

"Well, I kind of deserve it. I'm banned from everywhere, and you have nothing to gain from being around me. I expected this to happen. You and Nightshade stay here, and you go win that triple crown. Okay!?"

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"But... Brittany..."
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"It's alright, Hemlock... That is the best thing to do. Just train hard for me, okay? And win that triple crown. Go kick Sophie's butt for me. That's all I'm asking."

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Clap! Clap! Clap! Clap! Clap!
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"..."
" "
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A slow and lonely applaud approached the stall, and Stardust, with all her overpowering charisma, walked in at a pace that slowed time down to a crawl. Her hands hitting each other almost made their blood freeze and paralyzed their bodies.

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"Veeeryyy niiiice! Very nice, indeed! I'm impressed."
"..."
"..."
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"You guys are much more interesting than I could have expected. Ponies breaking the whole rulebook, even attacking my helper... That is quite a surprise."

Cassy looked up at Nightshade, who was still crushing her in the hay.

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"Would you get off me now?"
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Nightshade shook her head. Not going to happen. Instead, she turned her attention back to Stardust, who resumed her mysterious speech.

"You know, guys, this is much more encouraging than I would have thought. You are very close to each other and are willing to abandon everything you have for what matters the most to you. It almost makes me emotional."

"Where the hell are you going with this?"

"Tsk! Tsk! Language, Brittany. Alright, there is no point in dancing around the pot. This was a test—a risky one, but a test nonetheless. I just purchased the stable from that idiot, Paul, and I wasn't too sure how broken you guys would be. A quick way to assess your worth was to tear you apart and wait to see what would happen. Honestly, this is better than I expected. You are nothing like Paul. You guys are closer than any team I've seen before."

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"... You... you tricked us?"
"Well... Let's say that I merely run a stress test on my new stable."
"... A stress test...? YOU! YOU ARE SUCH A WHO...mmpph!"
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As Brittany launched herself toward Stardust, probably not to hug her, Hemlock grabbed her by the collar and pulled her backward while slapping a hand over her mouth.

While preventing the small driver from doing something she might have regretted later, Hemlock questioned Stardust further.

"So, you... you don't hate us?"

"What? Nooo! Hemlock, I gave you your name, remember, and you became an amazing racer. How could I ever hate you?"

"But... you were so mean. Brittany put a lot of effort in making us pretty for you."

"Ah, yes. I'm very sorry about that. It was tough to keep a poker face in front of such beauties. I don't know how Brittany did it, but I've never seen such a perfect work. You two are beautiful."

"Aaaah! So... You'll keep Brittany on the team then?"

"Of course! She is one of the best trainers out there. I will even give her a raise because she was literally exploited. From the paperwork I've seen so far, she was not even paid the legal wage for trainers."

Brittany finally stopped struggling, and Hemlock squeezed her in her arms.

"See, Britt. I told you Stardust was awesome. I knew she couldn't be that mean for real."

"Mmmph!"

"Oh, right. There, you can talk now."

"... I ... I have nothing to say to her."

"Haha. That's fine... but you are going to keep training Nightshade and I, right?"

"Mmm... Yeah... I guess I can do that. But if Miss owner pulls some crap like this again, I'm out of here."

CLAP!

Once more, Stardust's mighty clap changed the mood instantaneously.

"Good! Looks like we have a stable! Brittany, touch up your ponies. I want them to look perfect for our first official picture. Cassy, when you are done playing with Nightshade, come help me unpack the truck, will you?"

"I'm NOT playing! I have a pony sitting on me! You always put me in these situations!"

"Aaah! Poor you. It's so hard to be friends with a legend."

Cassy pushed on Nightshade's abdomen one more time.

"Okay, Nightshade. We are good now. You can get off me."

"Mmmph."

Nightshade shook her head. Attempting to use a riding crop on her lover was not a crime that she was willing to forget this quickly. She had decided that she would keep sitting on Cassy until Brittany was done preparing Hemlock for the photo, which could take quite a bit of time.

She squeezed Cassy's torso just a bit harder with her knees to make sure she wouldn't move. Plus, Cassy was kind of a cutie, and it felt very good being on top of her. She would have to talk to Hemlock about this later.



"Well, that was a fun training session, don't you think? It was hard at first, but we quickly got the hang of it. What do you think?"

"We can do better."

"I was gonna say the same."

The first day of training in a new discipline wasn't meant to be perfect, so Sophie thought her ponies were a bit too hard on themselves, but she wouldn't contradict them as it was a healthy thing for an athlete to want to do better.

While Sophie hung the harnesses and bridles to the wall on their respective hooks in the stall, the two ponies, who wore nothing else than their dusty latex suits, still jogged in place, trying to be in sync with each other.

"Geez, guys. Aren't you tired?"

"Yes, but we want to win, sooo..."

"Haha, alright. Let's go back to the house. Go take a shower while I'm fixing you a snack."

"With cookies for dessert?"

"Yes, Moonlight. With cookies."

It didn't take much more than that to make Moonlight happy. She had this thing for cookies that came from wherever. It was odd but useful to get her motivated. Morning Star, obviously, carburated to racing magazines. There was no doubt that it was an obsession, borderline sickness, but it kept her happy.

Since Moonlight was already far away, heeding the call of cookies, Morning Star and Sophie slowly walked back to the house together while chit-chatting.

"So, what do you think, Star? Do you like racing with a partner?"

"It's different. But I want to go back to the Super Cup. It was more fun."

"You will. For now, it's better than nothing. Since Moon is sharing the weight of the cart, it's not as demanding on your ankle. Anyway, it's too late to register for the Super Cup. But next year, we will do it and win."

"What about Moonlight, Sophie?"

"She will go back to Tiantang Zhi Ma's stable. That's the deal, right?"

"Will she want to? I think she likes it here, now."

"I don't know, Star... I don't know. We might not even have a stable anymore next year."

Morning Star stopped walking and turned toward the empty, arid land. The sun had gone down already, and the moon was lazily rising. She would have loved to participate in the Super Cup this year. Her heart beat at the rhythm of her hooves when she raced alone with Sophie. But at the same time, it was quite fun to have a new pony friend who could keep up with her.

Penny's stable only owned one pony, Morning Star. The main reason was finance. If she didn't do well during the Triple Crown, the stable would close for good; the situation was that dire. Since Morning Star had never competed in that league, since her co-pony was a newbie, and since Hemlock and Nightshade, a perfectly well-oiled machine, were in the competition, it was far from certain that Penny's stable would survive. This crazy plan of winning the three final races, something that hadn't happened for twenty-five years, was precisely that, crazy.

In three weeks, they would have to go to their first mandatory race, and Morning Star knew very well that they wouldn't be ready. All they had to do was to show up and finish the race. But how was this supposed to be morally acceptable? She was a ponygirl, and she wanted to win. Participating wouldn't be enough.

But there was some hope within this unreal story. Morning Star had sensed it. Sophie had sensed it. In their team, there was an extraordinary ponygirl, one who until recently didn't even know what ponygirls were, one who had no clue about what it took to win, one who had trouble identifying to her new role, one who had been forced to join a stable that didn't interest her the slightest, one who had nothing to gain from any of this, one who preferred cookies to pony boots. Yet, that one wanted to run, that one had good values, that one had a huge heart, and above all else, that one was by far the strongest ponygirl in the world. Gifted with natural brute strength and raw power, she was oblivious to that fact.

But Sophie and Morning Star knew.

It was not something they could do anything about. They couldn't open Moonlight's chest and flip a switch to unleash all her potential. It was not up to them to do this. Only Moonlight herself could figure that one out. And if that were to happen, Morning Star, Hemlock, Nightshade, Tiantang Zhi Ma, ...everybody..., would be immediately rendered obsolete.

Yes, Moonlight could be THAT strong if she wanted to.

"Star? You coming?"

"... Yes. Oh, by the way, did you receive Pony World #132?"

"Haha... Yes... It was in the mail this morning. That was supposed to be your reward tonight."

"Oh! Give it to me now!"

"Nope, after your shower!"

"No, I want it now!"



"She is pretty cool, uh?"

"Stardust? Yes... but... We didn't spend much time with her. I'm a bit sad. She is my hero, you know."

"I know, Hemlock. But I'm sure you'll have a chance to spend a lot more time with her later. She clearly likes your spirit."

"Mmm... maybe."

After having taken a stable picture with the whole team, Stardust drove away since she was not fully ready to move in yet. Today she had set up her new office, but she would come back tomorrow with the remainder of her belongings.

Her helper, Cassy, was all set, though... kind of. The only issue was that the house wasn't very big. There was the master bedroom where Paul used to sleep, and that now belonged to Stardust. Brittany's bedroom was also upstairs but not very big either. Hemlock and Nightshade were sleeping together in the bedroom next to the kitchen and living room. So for Cassy, that meant she had no bedroom and probably didn't expect the house to be so modest considering Paul's wealth.

So poor Cassy only had one option left for tonight, and it was to sleep on the couch that had long lost its firmness because of all the ponygirl sex that had tired it.

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"What do you think of Cassy, Night?
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[&]quot;... mmm..."

"What? Tell me!"

"I think she... she is very pretty."

"Yes. I find that too. Did you know she is a former racer too? She didn't win anything, though."

"I didn't know that. But I'm not surprised, she is on the small side for a pony."

"She is the one who led me to Stardust for the first time when I was a teenager. I still remember her."

"She was comfortable to sit on..."

"Haha. That was funny. She quickly stopped to argue with you. We are going to have a lot of fun with her, I think. She is super nice."

Spooning naked under the fuzzy blanket, the two elite ponies casually discussed the new changes in their life. But when they talked about Cassy, their tone got a bit more cheerful. There was something about this friendly ex-ponygirl that just felt good.

Nightshade, who had her back pressed against her lover's generous chest, turned around to face her as if this last topic had particularly picked her interest.

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"... Well, about that..."
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Hemlock had seen this look on Nightshade's face more than once. That was a look of curiosity and a desire to experiment with new things. Perverted minds thought alike, and it was even more true in the case of those two sexually driven ponies.

"Nightshade, you are a kinky one."

"I know... But... would that be okay? You like Cassy too, right?"

"I do... a lot, actually. It could be fun to play with her a little bit if she wants to. But we can't tell Brittany, okay?"

"Okay. I'll go get her then."

[&]quot;About what?"

[&]quot;Cassy... She will sleep on the couch tonight..."

[&]quot;Yeah, she could have slept in Stardust's bedroom, but she said she wouldn't do such a thing."

[&]quot;Well... You know..."

[&]quot;What? What is it, Night?"

[&]quot;She... she could sleep with us?"

[&]quot;... like in... with us? In our bed?"

[&]quot;... yes? I mean, you find her pretty too, right?"

Not a lot of words were necessary when Hemlock and Nightshade got a sexy idea. Their only concern was not to do something that the other wouldn't like to do; whether or not Cassy would agree to participate was rather irrelevant.

So, with her lover's blessing, Nightshade rolled out of bed and exited the bedroom, naked like a worm. Displaying her beautiful and athletic body along with her recently augmented breast wasn't something she was shy about. In fact, she didn't even ask herself if walking around the house like that was appropriate, not even thinking about what Cassy's reaction would be either.

She entered the living room and found Cassy sleeping on her back on the couch; it really didn't look comfortable. Stardust's helper was indeed pretty with her long brown hair and innocent face. Earlier today, when Nightshade had kept Cassy prisoner for a while in the stall, she had time to take a very good look at her, at her curves, and had a hard time waiting until now before sharing her intention to approach her with an indecent proposition.

Without notice, Nightshade peeled Cassy's blanket off, climbed on top of her, and then sat on her hips, startling the sleepy girl.

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"Aah! What the..."

"Hi, Cassy. Sorry for waking you up."

"Wha... What are you doing? And... you are... naked."

"Yes. Do you like it?"

"..."

"Hemlock and I want you to come sleep with us. Do you want to?"
```

Shocked by the question, Cassy tried to pull herself out from under Nightshade, but it didn't work at all. It was the same predicament that she was in earlier today in the barn but with way more skin on skin contact. Two prominent orbs were hovering above her blushing face, which forced her to look aside.

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"N...Nightshade... get ... get off me..."
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"No. We just thought it would be a good thing to give you a warm welcome and share our bed, so you don't have to sleep on the couch alone."

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"I... I appreciate it but..."
"Here, give me your hands!"
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Not shy about it, Nightshade grabbed Cassy's wrists and placed her two hands on her warm breasts.

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"See, you can play with those all you want too."
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Yes, Nightshade's brain didn't process reality the same way as other people's. What was pleasant for her had to be enjoyable for others.

Even if Cassy had not expected this long wet tongue to enter her mouth, there was little she could do about it. Her state of confusion didn't make her boat steer port or starboard, but there were definitely some strange sensations going on at the moment.

Would Stardust be okay with Cassy having fun with her new ponies? Would Nightshade accept no as an answer? Would indulging in this nightly activity turn into something recurring, or would it be a one-time affair? Cassy didn't feel like she would be able to answer any of those questions tonight as a forceful Nightshade with no ill intentions was doing her best to provide a convincing argument.

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"Hmmm... You taste good, Cassy."
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"Alright, come sleep with us. Our bed is comfier than the couch. I know that for a fact since I used the couch a lot with Hemlock."

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"O...okay..."
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It wasn't a decision, it was continuity, and it felt great not to fight it.

Before Cassy knew it, she was lying naked between Hemlock and Nightshade with soft feminine hands running all over her body. The first thirty minutes were pure and intense kissing alternating between the two ponies. Cassy didn't get a single break because as soon as one was done kissing her, the other took the relay. Thinking in such a situation was hopeless and unnecessary. She was just along for the ride without knowing exactly how it had happened.

Once the kissing died down a little, Hemlock went down on Cassy's crotch for a good sustained licking while Nightshade took that opportunity to get some clitoris stimulation from Cassy's tongue. This was good. Of course, after making Cassy cum twice, the two ponygirls swapped position for a repeat without giving her any break at all.

What Cassy didn't know at that time was that this first hour was simply the appetizer. She was aware that Hemlock and Nightshade were sexual beings but didn't suspect the extent of this

[&]quot;It... It's nice... and warm... but... I don't think... it's a good idea."

[&]quot;Aww, why not? What about this then?"

[&]quot;Wait.... Nightmmmhhph!"

[&]quot;It must be... my new toothpaste?"

behavior. A full hour of intense lovemaking could barely be qualified as a warm-up exercise for them.

Cassy's first night at Stardust stable would be a bit more demanding than she could have expected. She hadn't imagined that she would turn into some sort of pony food.

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