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MY LITTLE PONY

Season II

"Pony Confidential"

Episode 223

Outline by

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Outline: February 21, 2011

**Notes Due: February 23, 2011**

## TEASER

In a down-home country scene, the Apple family sits on the front porch relaxin'. Applejack reads the paper, but can't help listening in as Apple Bloom and the other Crusaders lament their lack of Cutie Marks. Suddenly, she has a brilliant idea. She hands them the paper, saying maybe it is the answer to their Cutie shortage. They think she's a genius, and race off to earn their Marks!

But then they encounter another problem. What do they do with the newspaper? First, they try making papier-mâché boots and saddles, but they just end up covered in a sticky mess with no Cutie Marks. What else can they do with the newspaper? They try packing boxes. No dice. Making fold-up hats. Another strikeout. Finally, they use the newspaper to housetrain Winona's new puppies – not an easy task – but even this doesn't work.

Finally, they return to Applejack, covered in newsprint and the assorted messes of their previous activities. But the one thing they're not covered in? Cutie Marks. Applejack laughs. She gave them the newspaper, not so they could do something with it, but so that they could write for it. They should join their school's news staff and write for the newspaper, the Horse's Mouth! (ALT: the Ponyville Express or the Foal Truth) The Crusaders love the idea, and race off to sign up! Then they slink back toward home. Better clean up first...

## ACT I

The final bell rings to announce the end of the school day. Most of the ponies file out to head home, but the Crusaders and a few others kids stay behind. Today's the first day of newspaper club, and they buzz excitedly about their new endeavor. Cutie Marks in journalism! What could be cooler? Cheerilee welcomes all the new prospective reporters. She explains that the Editor-in-Chief is in charge of the paper, and that they'll be having a new one this year since last year's graduated. The Crusaders watch in disbelief as the new Editor is presented: Diamond Tiara, their arch nemesis! They're not happy that she'll be their boss, but they're also not going to let it stop them from pursuing their Cutie Marks. Diamond Tiara addresses the class. If they thought she was full of herself before, she takes it to a whole new level as she lays out her ambitious plan for the Horse's Mouth. She wants hard-hitting news and interesting think pieces. No more namby-pamby stories like last year's Editor, Namby Pamby, liked to run. This is a new regime.

The Crusaders load their cameras and notepads into their saddlebags, put on their "PRESS" hats, and race off to report some stories! But finding newsworthy items proves tougher than they thought. For Scootaloo's first attempt, she tells the others to document her first story, a feel-good piece about newly hatched birds. As their cameras click away, she climbs a tree to get some pictures of the baby birds. But once she's gotten the shots, she finds herself stuck in the tree because she can't fly! To add to the embarrassment, a group of kittens sits down below and laughs at her. Sweetie Belle doesn't have a whole lot of success either. She's going to interview Rarity about a new hat she's created, but she wants to wear a dress she designed on her own to the interview so the others can take

pictures. Sweetie Belle's dress, however, is beyond hideous. They do their best to try to frame her out of the pictures, but she insists they make sure to get her gorgeous dress in the shots. For her story, Apple Bloom decides to interview Granny Smith about the early days of Ponyville. But her friends are only too happy to take pictures of the embarrassing Apple Bloom baby pictures that Granny Smith proudly shows. She was one goofy foal! The Crusaders turn in their stories (minus the embarrassing photos) to Diamond Tiara, but she refuses to print any of them. *Baby Birds Born? Rarity's Hot New Hat? Ponyville: The Early Years?!* These stories are no good! She wants something juicier, and she wants it on her desk by the end of the day!

The Crusaders walk out of school, dejected and worried. "What are we gonna do now?" Sweetie Belle leaves the others for a moment to get a drink from the fountain. While she's there, she overhears Snips and Snails engaged in a heated argument. She peeks around the corner and finds them literally joined at the hip by sticky bubble gum! They try everything they can get their hooves on to unstick themselves, but it only seems to make matters worse, and they get more and more entangled. She stifles her laughter, taking secret photos of the enjoined ponies. She races back to her friends and says she thinks she might have found something a little "juicier"...

The next day, the Horse's Mouth is everywhere. The schoolyard is abuzz over the story on Snips and Snails and their bubblegum escapades. The boys, rather than being embarrassed, are thrilled with the coverage, and feel like local celebrities. Diamond Tiara congratulates the Crusaders, and says she particularly liked the way they closed their column: xoxo Gabby Gums. "We couldn't fit all our names in," says Sweetie Belle. "Well, Gabby Gums is a hit!" The Crusaders feel more confident than ever before that they've found the path to their Cutie Marks.

## ACT II

Gabby Gums has made the Horse's Mouth into a must-read around the schoolyard. But just as the Crusaders start preparing their follow-up piece, Diamond Tiara pulls rank. She says she wants some of that attention Snips and Snails just got, so Gabby Gums is going to feature her this week. The Crusaders are at a loss. There's just nothing interesting about Diamond Tiara. Finally, the day before their column is set to run, something "juicy" finally happens: Diamond Tiara and Silver Spoon show up at school wearing the exact same outfit. The Crusaders snap a few pictures, and all of a sudden, they've got their next column. *Diamond Tiara or Silver Spoon: Who Wore it Best?* It's another Gabby Gums sensation (even though the final results show some voting irregularities, with 97% voting in favor of the paper's Editor).

As their success grows, the Crusaders realize they're quickly running out of stories. There's just not a lot of newsworthy stuff happening at the school. So they decide to expand their column to feature more of the outside world. They head out into Ponyville with their cameras and notepads.

Their first piece – *Pound and Puddin' Cake: Trip to the Store Ends in Tears!* – is passed around all over town. Gabby Gums has gone viral! And before long, her column is the talk of the La-ti-da Spa, where the main cast is gathered for some much needed

pampering. As she has her hooves buffed, Twilight Sparkle says she doesn't think Gabby Gums is being very nice. She doesn't seem to value anyone's privacy. As proof, she points to the latest column: *Celestia: Just Like Us!* with an embarrassing photo of the Princess in her workout clothes. Rarity thinks Twilight should lighten up. It's just harmless gossip, and besides, it's factually correct. She holds up a copy with the headline: *Zecora: Stripes Soooooo Last Season!* Pinkie Pie agrees with Rarity. Stories like *Mayor: Not Naturally Gray?* don't hurt anypony. Plus they're really juicy! The Mayor in a mane-dyeing scandal? Who wouldn't want to read that? Twilight says she hopes they're right, but she just can't help feeling a little sorry for the ponies featured in the columns. "Are you kidding," says Rainbow Dash. "You know how awesome it is to get your name in the paper?"

Diamond Tiara, meanwhile, is enjoying a wildly successful run as school paper Editor. The Crusaders, however, are having an increasingly hard time keeping up with the demand. Gabby Gums is such a huge hit, Diamond Tiara says she's expanding the column and giving them the whole back page of the Horse's Mouth. Now they'll need three times as many stories! And the juicier the better. The girls look at their latest story – *Exclusive! Local Dragon Tells All, Spike Opens Up About Canterlot, Naps, and his Favorite Gems!* – and realize this kind of thing isn't gonna earn them a Cutie Mark. They've got to step up their game...

In a musical montage, we see the Crusaders taking photos and making notes all over town, and nobody is off limits. Apple Bloom snaps pics of her sister taking a nap. Sweetie Belle takes photos of Mr. and Mrs. Cake coming out of the Sweet Shoppe and going their separate ways. Scootaloo trails Pinkie Pie to various birthday parties making notes in her notepad the whole time. Though we can't tell exactly what the angle of these stories will be, we see the girls working feverishly to get their columns in on time. The montage ends with the old-fashioned printing press going around and around...

Applejack storms into the Sweet Shoppe with the latest edition of the Horse's Mouth. "*Applejack: Asleep on the Job! Exclusive Photos!* Who the hay does this Gabby Gums think she is?" Twilight thinks Applejack got off easy. "*Twilight Sparkle: I was a Canterlot Snob!*" Rarity still thinks they're over-reacting, that it's just a harmless school paper, but Applejack won't hear it. She can't get a moment's peace because she's so worried that Gabby Gums might be lurking around with a camera and a notepad. They're even harassing her brother! She shows them a special edition of the column: *Big McIntosh: What's he Hiding?*" Twilight tries to back Applejack up. "These are all lies! If we were to believe Gabby Gums, we'd think that Fluttershy has tail extensions (Fluttershy races out of the Sweet Shoppe in humiliated tears), that Pinkie Pie is an out-of-control party animal for attending five birthday parties in one day ("It's true! I do have a problem!"), and that the Cakes are breaking up!" The Cakes turn to each other. "We are?" Rarity: "Don't you think you're being a little melodramatic?" Just then, Rainbow Dash soars into the Sweet Shoppe with a spectacular crash, newspapers flying everywhere. She explains that Gabby Gums has made it to Cloudsdale. When she saw the headline, *Rainbow Dash: Flight School Washout!*, she bought up as many copies as she could, but it was still too late. She's a laughing stock! "Now do you see, Rarity?" asks Twilight. Gossip can be a very hurtful thing. Still, Rarity remains unconvinced. It's just harmless entertainment, and besides, it's funny. She opens the latest issue and

her face falls...

*“Exclusive! The Drama Queen Diaries, Part 1 in a 6 Part Series!”* The entire column is a word-for-word excerpt out of Rarity’s diary! As Rarity starts to rant and rave about the horribleness of Gabby Gums and the destructive nature of gossip, the Crusaders enter the Sweet Shoppe unnoticed. But just as they pass through the room, Rarity’s diary accidentally drops out of Sweetie Belle’s saddlebag! Rarity is aghast. In front of everypony, she exposes the Crusaders as the real Gabby Gums!

### ACT III

Rarity stomps into the Carousel Boutique, nose in the air. The Crusaders follow, telling her to lighten up. What’s the big deal? The town loves their column! Rarity lays into them, railing about the betrayal and the invasion of privacy. But the Crusaders don’t get it. She was the one telling everypony else to lighten up. Why is she so uptight all of a sudden? Before things get too ugly, they decide to leave her alone to cool down. Sweetie Belle says that Rarity’s just being dramatic. She overreacts to everything, and if they just give her a little time, she’ll get over it. In the meantime, they’ve got to find more stories for the insatiable public appetite...

But as they go to their usual sources for stories, they notice that something’s changed in Ponyville. When they go see what Rainbow Dash is up to, she puts a cloud over them and makes it rain. When they go to Fluttershy’s cottage, Angel won’t let them inside, shaking his head in disapproval as Fluttershy cries in the background. “What’s going on? Why’s everypony so upset?” They’re even more confused when they find that Twilight has put a force field around the Library. Spike yells at them to get lost. Apple Bloom says maybe they should go to Applejack for the lowdown on why everypony’s so mad, but even she’s not talking to them. “Hey, big sis, you’re not upset too, are you?” “Yup.” “You won’t even talk to us?” “Nope.” Big McIntosh, however, has plenty to say. “You girls should be ashamed of yourselves, humiliating your sister and I like that. We don’t want to talk to y’all right now, so just go away.” The Crusaders wander through Ponyville, perplexed by everypony’s behavior. They all love the column, but they’re mad now that they know who Gabby Gums is? It doesn’t make any sense. As they try to figure it out, Pinkie Pie trudges past, looking more like Eeyore than Pinkie. After the expose on Pinkie Pie’s hard-partying ways, she vowed never to party again. She had no idea she had such a problem until she read about it in the Horse’s Mouth. What is going on? Even Pinkie Pie is acting weird!

The Crusaders are in desperate need of a Gabby Gums column, but now everypony in town is completely shunning them. Doors slam, shutters snap shut, curtains are drawn, open signs are flipped closed. What are they going to do? They go see Diamond Tiara with no story. She’s irate. “Quitters don’t get Cutie Marks!” If they don’t get her a new Gabby Gums by press time the next morning, they’re off the paper. Dejected, the Crusaders head home, certain that their chance at a Cutie Mark is evaporating in front of their eyes. That night, each of them lies awake, worried and desperate for a story. They flip through their notepads for any hint of an idea. They scour their photographs for anything they can possibly use. And then, one by one, they each have an Eureka moment. They each pull out a notepad and start writing...

The next day, the final school bell rings and the girls head to the schoolyard to see the latest Gabby Gums column. As they go to pick up a copy of the paper, they notice that everypony is snickering and pointing at them. They turn to Gabby Gums to see that Diamond Tiara published all three of their stories! *Scootaloo: Still Flightless After All These Years?* *Sweetie Belle's Fashion Fail!* *Exclusive: Can You Guess Who This Goofy Baby Is?*

The Crusaders are furious with each other. They've all exposed each other's hugely embarrassing secrets from Act I! "I can't believe you betrayed me like that!" "What you wrote was way worse! You need to lighten up!" "Me?!" To make matters worse, all the other kids are laughing and pointing. They all stop talking to each other and pout but that doesn't last long. "You really hurt my feelings, Scootaloo!" "Well she really hurt mine!" As they finally get to the heart of the matter, the pain and embarrassment caused by their exposed secrets, it suddenly dawns on them. This is exactly how they've made everyone else in town feel. It's just like Rarity said: an invasion of privacy. How can they possibly apologize to the whole town and fix this horrible situation? Time for Gabby Gums to write one more column...

Diamond Tiara finishes reading the column and refuses to print it. It'll ruin the Horse's Mouth! But the Crusaders are determined to get their column in print. They race to the printing press, and as two Crusaders block Diamond Tiara, the third does a printing run with the newest Gabby Gums column in it. We see ponies picking up the paper, with the whole town reading the latest column: *An Open Letter to Princess Celestia*. Gabby Gums, also known as Apple Bloom, Sweetie Belle, and Scootaloo, apologize for all the pain and embarrassment they've caused. They didn't understand that the types of things they were printing could be hurtful. They've learned a valuable lesson about respecting other ponies' privacy, and about how hurtful gossip can be. The town sees the true remorse the Crusaders are showing and forgives them. Meanwhile, for refusing to print the most important column of the year, Cheerilee strips Diamond Tiara's editorship and gives it to a more traditional choice: Namby Pamby's younger brother, Milquetoast.