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MY LITTLE PONY

Season II

"Pony Confidential"

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Outline V2 by

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TEASER

Sweetie Belle and Scootaloo are leaving school, lamenting their lack of Cutie Marks. There's got to be something they haven't thought of! Suddenly, Apple Bloom crashes into them, excited and out of breath. She holds up a copy of the school newspaper, the *Horse's Mouth*, and says this is the answer to their Cutie Mark problems! But before she can explain further, a loud whistle echoes through town. That's Granny Smith calling her home for chores, so she zips away. The other two, meanwhile, 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 help some of Fluttershy's birds make their nests, but even this doesn't work.

Finally, Apple Bloom finishes her chores and catches up with her friends, who are covered in newsprint and the assorted messes of their previous activities. What happened? she asks. They explain that they tried everything they could think of with the newspaper, but still no Cutie Marks. Apple Bloom collapses on the ground in laughter. She meant that they should earn their marks by becoming journalists and writing for the paper!

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 newspaper staff, and 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*. **First, she grabs the paper's photographer, shoves a camera in his hooves, and throws him out the door, telling him to document everything! Next, she turns her attention to her reporters,** saying 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 grab their notepads, 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 tries a feel-good piece about newly hatched birds. She climbs a tree and writes up her story, but then finds herself stuck because she can't fly! **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 look professional, so she puts on a dress**

of her own design to wear to the interview. Rarity keeps futzing with the dress, but Sweetie Belle manages to fight through the distraction to get the interview she wanted. For her story, Apple Bloom decides to interview Granny Smith about the early days of Ponyville, but all Granny wants to do is look at old baby pictures of her granddaughter. Finally, after hours of photos of herself as a goofy-looking baby, she manages to get the story out of Granny. The Crusaders excitedly finish their stories and turn them in to Diamond Tiara, but she refuses to print any of them. *Baby Birds Born? Rarity's Hot New Hat? Ponyville: The Early Years?!* These aren't newsworthy! 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, grabbing the paper's photographer and telling him to take some secret photos of the enjoined ponies. She races back to her friends and says she thinks she might have found a story that's 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 realize that they might not have what it takes to earn their Marks as reporters, but they sure do seem to have a gift for gossip! If they can't earn their Marks through the news, then they'll earn them through their hot new Gabby Gums column!

ACT II

The Crusaders are in a bind. The initial euphoria from the success of their gossip column has faded as they realize not much juicy stuff actually happens at school. To make matters more depressing, they've published several columns already and have no Cutie Marks to show for it. Maybe Gabby Gums wasn't their ticket to Marks after all. They sadly part ways and head for home.

Sweetie Belle enters the boutique, depressed from the newspaper failure. She drops her saddlebag and heads to the back to work on her dress. Maybe that'll cheer her up. Rarity, meanwhile, starts tidying up and discovers Sweetie Belle's saddlebag. She's a bit of a snoop, and she can't help herself so she takes a look inside. She finds the Snips and Snails column, and thinks it's genius. It tickles her so much, she asks Sweetie Belle all about it. At first, Sweetie Belle is upset that Rarity violated her privacy by snooping in her saddlebag. But she quickly realizes that Rarity thinks the Gabby Gums column is great! She even wants to show it to her friends. "You mean your friends would want to read the school paper?" Rarity replies, "Why certainly! Gabby Gums is so clever, so funny, so... juicy!" Rarity continues quizzing Sweetie Belle about Gabby Gums'

identity, but before she can get anywhere, Sweetie Belle races out of the boutique and tracks down the other Crusaders, telling them what her sister said. Maybe they gave up on Gabby Gums too quickly. What if they expand their horizons and start doing their column on all of Ponyville, and not just the school? Maybe that's the key to the Marks!

The first Gabby Gums column to focus on someone outside of the school – *Pound and Puddin' Cake: Trip to the Store Ends in Tears!* – goes viral! Diamond Tiara can't print enough papers to satisfy the demand. Ponies are showing it to their older siblings and parents, who are showing it to their friends, and soon everypony in town wants a copy of the *Horse's Mouth*! Even the main cast, gathered at the La-Ti-Da Spa for some much-needed pampering, can't get enough of the hilarious gossip column. Except for wet blanket Twilight Sparkle. As she has her hooves buffed, she 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?"

The Crusaders, meanwhile, are positively giddy about their success. Based on the overwhelming response to Gabby Gums, they're bound to get their Cutie Marks any day now! But even with all the delight over their success, there are some negatives, too. The Crusaders are having a hard enough time coming up with new stories day after day, and now Diamond Tiara is pushing them to find even juicier stuff to print. The girls look at their latest column – *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. True, they all feel a pang of guilt writing such personal things about their fellow townspies, but bruising the occasional ego is the price to pay for finally getting this close to their Marks!

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. Gabby Gums, whoever she is, is 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 scooped 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, *Twilight suggests that maybe the Crusaders might have some insight as to who Gabby Gums is. Rarity is aghast. "My sister would never associate with someone as beastly as Gabby Gums! I resent you even suggesting such a thing, Twilight! Why, she's the most innocent, most lovely, most..."* She trails off when she notices something sticking out of Sweetie Belle's saddlebag. *"She's evil!"* shouts Rarity, when she discovers her stolen diary! *Gabby Gums is her own sister!*

ACT III

Rarity confronts Sweetie Belle about being Gabby Gums. At first, Sweetie Belle doesn't see what the big deal is, but when Rarity explains that Gabby Gums is violating ponies' privacy – just like how she felt when Rarity snooped in her saddlebag – Sweetie Belle starts to understand that what she and her friends have been doing might be hurtful. She goes to talk to the other Crusaders, who reveal that they've been feeling a little guilty anyway about all the gossip they've been printing. They couldn't quite put their hoof on why, but now they see that printing gossip like they've been doing is hurtful to the ponies they're gossiping about. And besides all that, the only reason they wanted to do this in the first place was to earn their Cutie Marks, and that sure hasn't happened. With the realization of how they've been making everypony feel dawning on them, the Crusaders have no idea what they can do to make it right.

They try going straight to Diamond Tiara to resign. They explain how they're feeling, and say they just can't treat ponies that way anymore. But she's not having it. Gabby Gums is her bread and butter, and there's no way she's letting the Crusaders out of their column. She even blackmails them, showing them photos that the paper's photographer took that depict the Crusaders in embarrassing situations (Scootaloo stranded in the tree, unable to fly; Sweetie Belle in a hideous dress being futzed over by her sister; Apple Bloom looking at pictures of herself as a goofy looking baby). Diamond Tiara threatens to print the photos if the Crusaders don't continue to write their column. They're completely trapped!

They try their usual sources for stories, but 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. Twilight blocks them from the Library with a force field. Even Applejack won't talk 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 feeling depressed. They've tried to

apologize for Gabby Gums, but everypony's so upset with them that they can't even get the words out. Everywhere they go, doors slam, shutters snap shut, curtains are drawn, open signs are flipped closed.

Dejected, the Crusaders head home. Not only did they not get their Cutie Marks, but now nopony in town is speaking to them, and their most embarrassing moments are about to be published for all to see. Together, they stay awake all night trying to think of a way out of their predicament. And finally, just before dawn, they have a eureka moment...

Just as Diamond Tiara is about to start the presses with the Crusaders' embarrassing photos, they show up with a brand new Gabby Gums column! "You're lucky," she tells them. She doesn't have time to read the column before it goes to press, but they've managed to avoid having their secrets published for all to see. She warns them that this better not happen again... or else. The Crusaders assure her that it won't.

After school, the newest edition of the *Horse's Mouth* comes out, and it's an absolute sensation! Diamond Tiara walks smugly through the schoolyard, proud of herself and her massive readership. But then she catches a glimpse of the Gabby Gums headline and her eyes bug out. *An Open Letter to Ponyville*. Gabby Gums, also known as Apple Bloom, Sweetie Belle, and Scootaloo, apologizes for all the pain and embarrassment they've caused. They knew that what they were doing didn't feel quite right inside, but they ignored that guilt because they got carried away by their success. 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 blackmailing the Crusaders, Cheerilee strips Diamond Tiara's editorship and gives it to a more traditional choice: Namby Pamby's younger brother, Milquetoast.