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MY LITTLE PONY 5

Changing of the Guard

5##

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TEASER**SC.1 - INT. TWILIGHT’S CASTLE – DAY**

We find ourselves in the “downstairs” of the castle... the area where CASTLE SERVANTS are busy running the kitchen and handling the linens and planning events and setting tables, etc. It seems the staff is used to PRINCESS TWILIGHT having a fairly “hooves on” role in this process, as they frequently ask her to make decisions on small matters much like a director on a movie set. It’s a role she handles with aplomb, which keeps everything running smoothly, however she has an announcement to make and every time she tries to make the announcement she gets interrupted with another question.

As Twilight becomes even more harried, SPIKE approaches her to let her know that one of the castle guards has quit so is it okay with her if Spike goes into Ponyville to audition replacements? Twilight says yes, but finally she’s had enough of all the interruptions and puts her hoof down, demanding everyone’s attention. The general hubbub screeches to a halt, and Princess Twilight informs them all that she has to leave town for Canterlot tomorrow, but not to worry: she has found the perfect party pony to keep things running smoothly while she’s gone. Enter PINKIE PIE. Twilight exits and now Pinkie Pie gets peppered with questions... but Pinkie Pie’s answers are so inventive and mystifying that ponies end up just standing around trying to make heads or tails of what she just said. Looks like this smooth running operation may not be quite so smooth for a little while.

END TEASER**MAIN TITLES****ACT 1****SC. 2 - EXT. PONYVILLE – DAY**

APPLEJACK is on her way through town when she happens to notice Spike in the middle of a crowd looking frustrated. She wanders over to find out what’s going on, and Spike informs her he’s auditioning ponies to fill the castle’s new guard vacancy. Applejack looks on as Spike auditions the next candidate, and it becomes clear why Spike’s so agitated: everypony seems to think that all you’re supposed to do as a guard is just stand there looking fancy in fancy clothes in front of the fancy castle. But it turns out there’s a long list of other miscellaneous duties for which the guard is also responsible, and Spike’s beginning to wonder if there’s any one pony still available who could be right for this job. Applejack reassures Spike. She may know just the one.

SC. 3 - EXT. SWEET APPLE ACRES – DAY

BIG MAC is busy helping GRANNY SMITH and APPLE BLOOM fix the cider press. It seems when you turn the crank even a little apple mush starts spewing all over the place. Pretty good for making a geyser of applesauce, but for making cider not so much. None of them can understand what’s going on, but they’re all confident that if anypony can figure it out, Big Mac can.

Meanwhile, Applejack arrives on the scene full of excitement. There’s a great opportunity to help Princess Twilight at the castle and Big Mac would be perfect for it! Applejack tells Big Mac to come follow her back to Ponyville to audition but Big Mac responds flatly: “Nope.” But doesn’t Big Mac even want to hear about the job? “Nope.” Granny Smith explains that Big Mac can’t leave the farm: how would they ever keep the farm running without him? She points out the long chore list in Big Mac’s possession.

But Applejack insists they can't just be thinking about themselves, they've gotta give Big Mac the chance to do something new for a change. "Big Mac wants to try something new for a change, don't you, Big Mac?" Big Mac considers this and, despite some hesitation, hands over his chore list to Applejack and off they go.

SC. 4 - EXT. PONYVILLE LATER – DAY

Spike's still auditioning ponies, having more frustration than ever. Applejack walks right up with Big Mac, telling Spike he brought Big Mac up to speed on the way over, and Spike should check him out. Spike hardly gets out two words before Big Mac goes through all the steps of the audition, passing them with flying colors. Spike looks pleased.

SC. 5 - EXT. SWEET APPLE ACRES – DAY

Applejack returns - without Big Mac - to announce that Big Mac got the job and he's starting right away. Isn't that fantastic? But Granny Smith and Apple Bloom don't seem nearly as excited as Applejack is about this; they're still puzzling over how to fix the cider press and wonder if having Big Mac off the farm is such a good idea. But Applejack is resolute: it's about time the Apples supported him in using his talents elsewhere to see how far they can take him. Big Mac's so capable it's not quite fair to keep his talents all the themselves on the farm, now is it? But Granny Smith and Apple Bloom whine that they need him! Applejack insists that if they let on how much they need him, Big Mac will quit that job and come right back to the farm. That's just how he is. They owe it to Big Mac to do their best to manage without him. Then, as Granny Smith reluctantly admits that perhaps Applejack has a good point, Apple Bloom announces that she's fixed the gate (one of the items on Big Mac's chore list) so the chickens and pigs would stop escaping the pen. All by herself, look! **ANGLE ON** pigs and chickens streaming of the pen and scattering in all directions through a gate swung wide open. Uh oh.

END ACT 1

ACT 2

SC. 6 - EXT. CASTLE – DAY

Big Mac's all suited up in his guard armor, and Spike brings him over to his new workplace standing guard near the side-entrance to the castle, where the castle staff has easy access to the downstairs and to where supplies get loaded in. However, Spike's efforts to get Big Mac acclimated to this new situation get cut short by the sounds of commotion coming from inside.

SC. 7 - INT. CASTLE – DAY

In contrast to the smooth running operation we saw in the teaser, it's chaos inside. Pinkie Pie may be a party planner par excellence, but a master of running a large staff she is not. Spike reminds Pinkie Pie that she's just supposed to be holding down the fort for the day while Twilight is gone, but Pinkie has big plans for the place... **BIG!** That's all well and good, but when the staff approaches her with a straightforward question, Pinkie comes back with a flurry of ideas... a sort of stream of consciousness that may be inspired, but is driving the staff completely nuts! They're all running in circles and bumping into one another and hardly accomplishing a gosh darn thing.

A loud noise brings Big Mac running in to see what's the matter, but Spike assures him there's no way he can help with this fiasco and sends him back outside... but before he departs a staffer turns to him in exasperation: "So what do YOU think? Should we use this blue tablecloth?" Big Mac: "Nope." Staffer: "How about this green one?" Big

Mac: “Yep.” The frazzled staffer suddenly calms way down, and glances over at Pinkie, who exclaims: “Works for me!” More and more staffers turn to Big Mac for his straightforward answers, all of which get cosigned by Pinkie... and a situation verging on chaos begins to calm itself... all thanks to Big Mac. A relieved Spike takes note... maybe Spike can get somepony to cover Big Mac’s guard job for the day so Big Mac can help Pinkie here in the kitchen till Twilight gets back. Is that okay with Big Mac? Big Mac: “Yup.”

SC. 8 - EXT. SWEET APPLE ACRES - THAT EVENING

Granny Smith yells out the window that she needs some help getting dinner ready before Big Mac gets home. She’s gone all out to welcome Big Mac back home from his first day on the new job with a feast fit for a king, and she could use an extra hoof or two. Applejack yells they’ll be just another minute as she and Apple Bloom finish corralling the last of the pigs and chickens and blocks it closed with a stick. Granny Smith asks that they press a little fresh cider for Big Mac... it’s his favorite after all. They say the thing is still not fixed but she insists they should be able to get at least a glassful out of the darn thing.

Meanwhile, Big Mac arrives and gets a hero’s welcome...and Applejack takes great pains to assure Big Mac that life on the farm’s going without a hitch. Nothing to worry about. Plus they hear he got a promotion of sorts today, isn’t that right? Big Mac: “Yup.” They tell him to go inside where dinner’s waiting, and as he walks off Applejack confides in Apple Bloom: “You see what I said about his talents being put to good use? It’s now more important than ever we make sure he knows we got everything covered on the homefront so he can do his new job with peace of mind.” Apple Bloom’s on board.

They watch for Big Mac to disappear into the farmhouse... now for making some of that cider. They turn the crank just a little. Huge geyser of apple mush... a tiny droplet of cider. Uh oh. Applejack instructs Apple Bloom to run inside and keep Big Mac from seeing the mess she’s about to make trying to get a glass of cider outta this darn thing.

SC. 9 - INT. FARMHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER – INTERCUT

Inside, Granny Smith treats Big Mac like a prince, asking all about his day and telling him all about the big feast they have planned... which they’ll start eating as soon as Applejack and Apple Bloom come in with the fresh cider they’re making for him special. Just then Apple Bloom comes running in and draws the window curtain, but Granny Smith insists it be drawn back open so they can enjoy the sunset. She opens the curtain back up revealing the cider press apple mush geyser in all it’s glory, but Apple Bloom draws Big Mac’s attention away just in time: “Hey, lookit this dance I can do.” While Apple Bloom keeps doing more and more outlandish things to keep Big Mac’s attention away from the window, and Granny Smith keeps unwittingly undermining these efforts... Applejack is furiously pumping the cider press trying to get that one measly glass of cider... but the faster she cranks the more problems emerge... and soon multiple geysers are shooting out of thing... one of which knocks the stick loose blocking the pen gate closed. Uh oh. Applejack’s heart sinks as the pigs and chickens run back out. Meanwhile, back inside Apple Bloom runs out of ideas and Big Mac finally glances out the window. Big Mac runs outside to see puddles of applesauce all over the yard, being enjoyed by the pigs and chickens. Applejack (covering lamely): “Just... er, uh... feedin’ the critters. Heh heh.” Big Mac looks puzzled.

SC. 10 - INT. CASTLE - NEXT MORNING

Big Mac and Pinkie Pie make a great team, and they walks around together checking on the smooth-running downstairs operation. Twilight will be back from Canterlot soon, and Pinkie's delighted that they big welcome she has planned will be ready right on schedule. Thanks to Big Mac, everypony is so clear on what they need to be doing that nopony needs to ask him anything anymore. He doesn't have much to do. Big Mac smiles uneasily and then, taking a moment to himself, he glances back down the road toward Sweet Apple Acres.

SC. 11 - INT. SWEET APPLE ACRES – LATER

Back at the farm, Applejack and Apple Bloom still struggle to fix that darn cider press... and to their great surprise Big Mac has shown up, right in the middle of his workday. They never expected this! They try to convince Big Mac it's fixed (but it's clearly not). They try to convince Big Mac it's almost fixed (but it's clearly not). Big Mac begins pushing them aside to take a look at the problem himself, prompting Applejack to become more forceful than ever: "It's okay Big Mac! Go spread your wings and be great. We don't need you here!" Apple Bloom: "That's right Big Mac, we don't need you." Big Mac, taken aback, slowly and silently backs off and staggers away. Applejack turns to the others: "Too much?"

END ACT 2**ACT 3****SC. 12 - INT. CASTLE – DAY**

Big Mac returns to the castle in a daze, where he's greeted by Princess Twilight, who's big Pinkie-fueled welcome is in full swing. He feels badly for having left his post without permission, but she tells him not to worry... everything's still going so smoothly thanks to his clear direction and that's what matters. In fact, she noticed in Canterlot that the pony in a similar role at Canterlot Castle could use some help from a capable pony like Big Mac. They already sent a message to Celestia, and Celestia has summoned him to visit Canterlot at once if he's interested. Isn't that grand! They congratulate Big Mac but he seems uncertain what to say. Twilight: "Although I imagine your family would miss you terribly with you all the way in Canterlot." Big Mac: "Nope." Twilight and Spike register confusion as he turns and slowly walks away.

SC. 13 - EXT. SWEET APPLE ACRES - LATER THAT DAY

Back on the farm, Applejack FINALLY gets the cider press working again. Isn't that great? She looks up expecting to see Granny Smith and Apple Bloom but it's Spike standing there instead. He's here to bring Big Mac to the train station for his trip to Canterlot... and to Spike's surprise Applejack knows nothing of Big Mac's latest promotion... although she's pleased as punch to hear about it. Spike had assumed Big Mac would come home first to tell them about it, but looks like he must've gone straight to the train station and hopped a train to Canterlot himself.

SC. 14 - INT. FARMHOUSE – DAY

Granny Smith and Apple Bloom react with delight to Spike's news of Big Mac's new promotion while a proud Applejack looks on. Granny Smith and Apple Bloom try to be happy for Big Mac, but they'll miss him, but Applejack reminds them they mustn't think of themselves. They have to be supportive of Big Mac's meteoric success. After all, who's more deserving? Just then, Spike receives a message from Celestia... Big Mac wasn't on the train. Did he leave? How strange... if Big Mac isn't in Canterlot and he isn't at the castle and he isn't here at Sweet Apple Acres... where is he?

SC. 15 - EXT. EQUESTRIA – VARIOUS

A big search is on for Big Mac. No pony is finding him anywhere. Applejack tries to keep Granny Smith and Apple Bloom calm with little success. Finally Fluttershy finds Big Mac sitting under a huge tree on a remote hilltop. She says he won't speak to her. Maybe Applejack will have better luck.

SC. 16 - EXT. HILLTOP – EVENING

Applejack approaches Big Mac wondering what's wrong. She says how proud she is of him and how great it makes her feel that others are noticing his many talents and abilities, and that he's having the chance to share them with others. But none of this brightens Big Mac's mood.

Finally Big Mac speaks. To Applejack's great surprise, he has plenty to say, and he says it elegantly. Big Mac's grateful for having had this chance to try stuff beyond the family, and he's appreciates the family's effort to get along without him. But when they said he didn't need him, he realized how empty he felt. This new job is nice, but when he went to sleep at night, it's the first time in a long time he didn't go to sleep happy. Every day working on the farm, he goes to sleep happy, not just because of what he's doing but because of how much it means to the ones who mean most to him. So why did he do the job? To make Applejack proud... the way Applejack insisted he try out for the guard job, he thought Applejack wasn't proud of him.

Applejack says she's prouder of Big Mac than any pony in the world, with or without a castle job. Big Mac admits that he'd rather be without the castle job. He realizes his family may not need him on the farm, but he wants to be there anyway. Is that okay? Applejack confesses: actually, they need him there pretty bad.

SC. 17 - EXT. /INT. SWEET APPLE ACRES – VARIOUS

We end with a montage of Big Mac double-checking the cider press, Big Mac enjoying a dinner full of laughter with the Apples, and Big Mac going to sleep. Happy.

END.