

IDW
ISSUE
31

my LITTLE PONY

FRIENDS
FOREVER



FLEECES • RICHARD • BRECKEL



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YOU WERE RIGHT, RAINBOW, THIS IS THE FLUFFIEST CLOUD YET!

I KNOW, RIGHT?

THEY GET FLUFFIER THE HIGHER UP WE FLY!



WHY, FROM THIS HIGH UP, YOU CAN SEE ALL THE WAY TO APPLELOOSA.



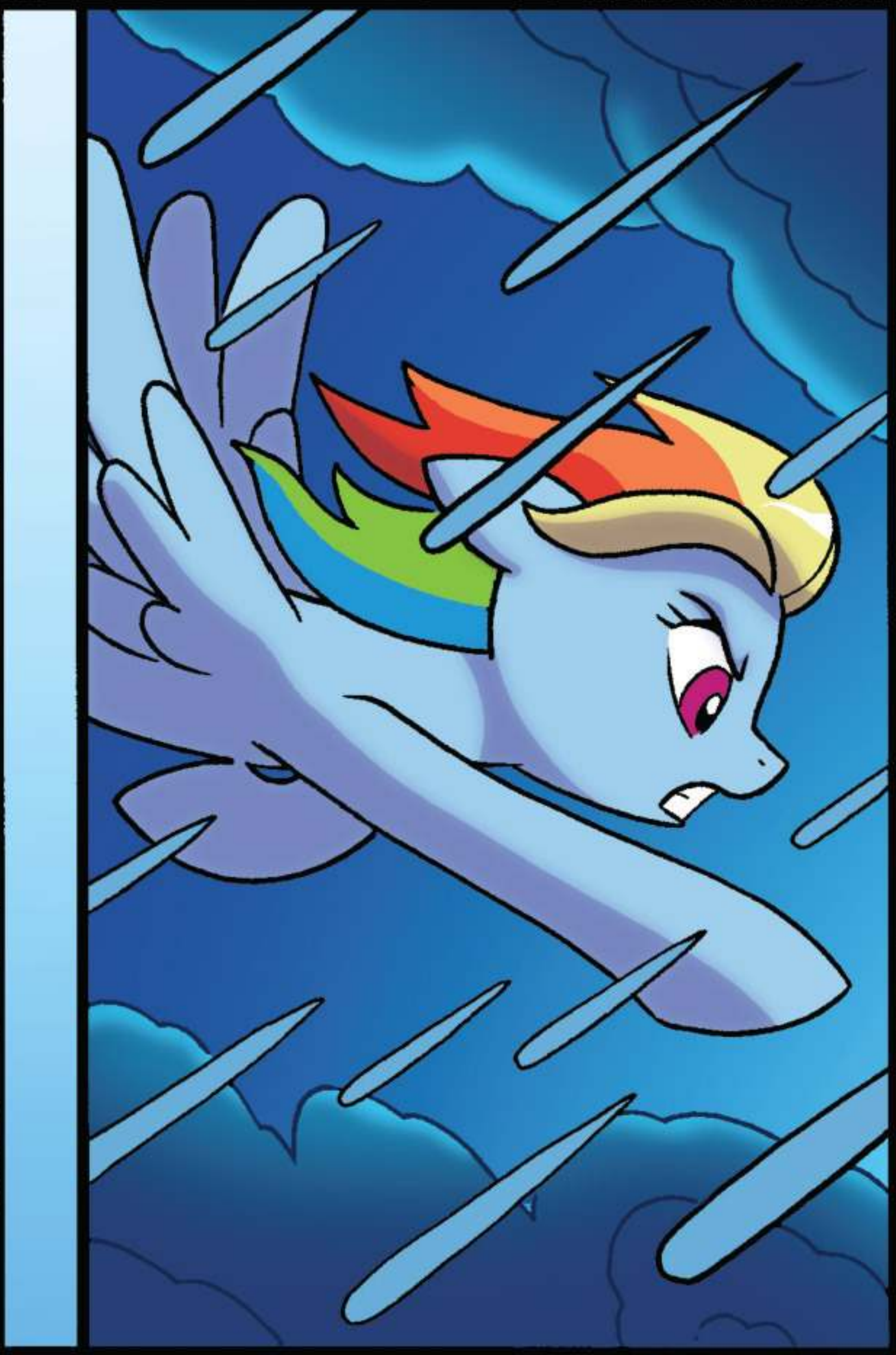
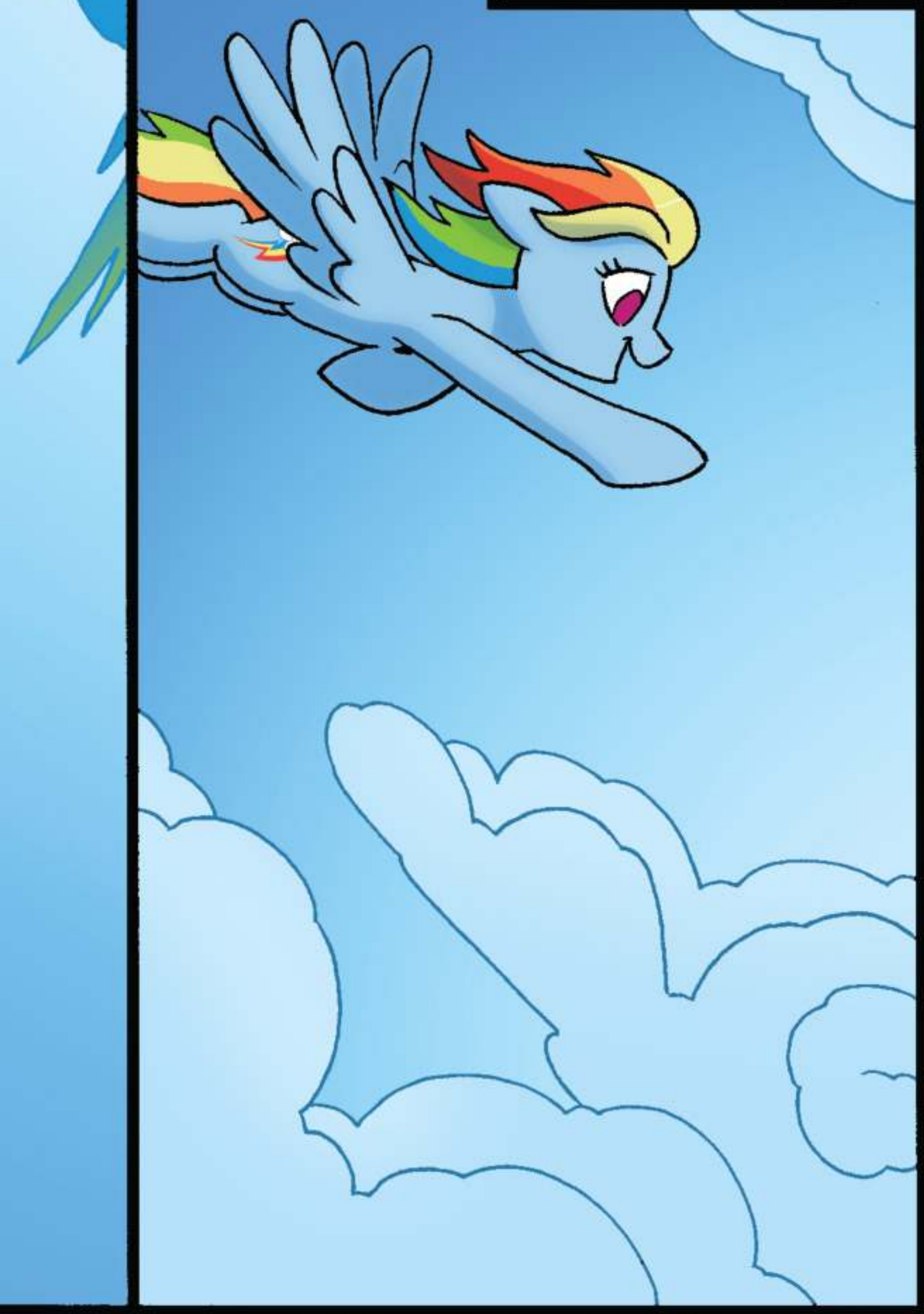
WHAT'S THAT THERE? IS APPLELOOSA ON FIRE?

OH NO! WE BETTER GET HELP!



HOLD ON A SECOND...

YOU TWO HANG BACK. I THINK THIS IS A JOB FOR...







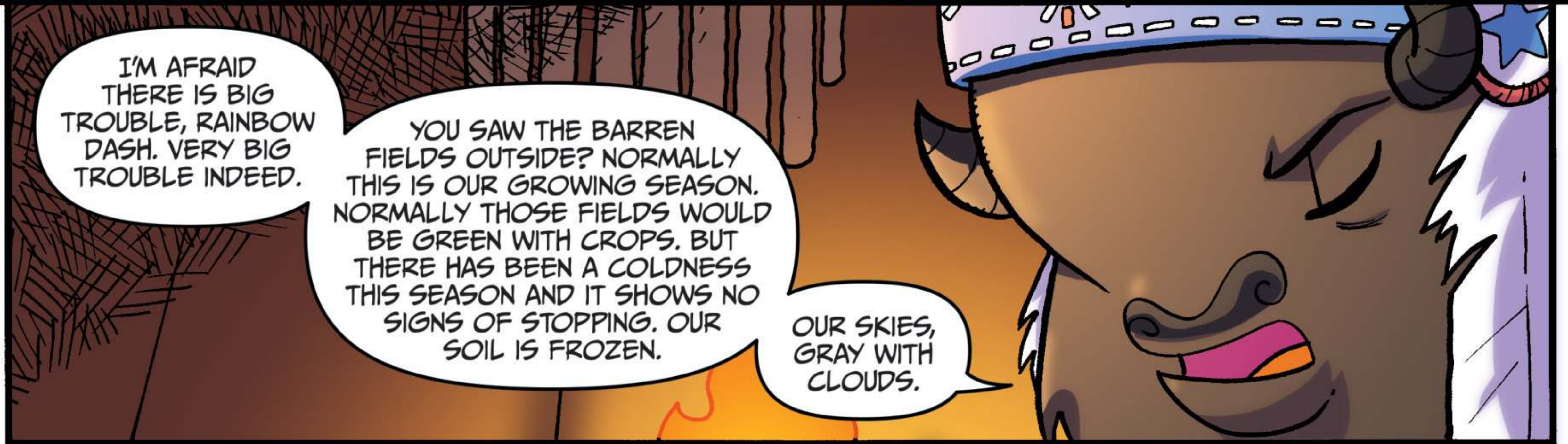
THIS WAY.
IT'S WARMER
INSIDE.



RAINBOW
DASH, MEET
CHIEF THUNDER
HOOVES.

THANK YOU
FOR COMING,
MS. DASH.

NO PROB,
CHIEF. WHAT'S THE
TROUBLE?



I'M AFRAID
THERE IS BIG
TROUBLE, RAINBOW
DASH. VERY BIG
TROUBLE INDEED.

YOU SAW THE BARREN
FIELDS OUTSIDE? NORMALLY
THIS IS OUR GROWING SEASON.
NORMALLY THOSE FIELDS WOULD
BE GREEN WITH CROPS. BUT
THERE HAS BEEN A COLDNESS
THIS SEASON AND IT SHOWS NO
SIGNS OF STOPPING. OUR
SOIL IS FROZEN.

OUR SKIES,
GRAY WITH
CLOUDS.



CLOUDS? WHY
DIDN'T YOU JUST
SAY SO? CLEARING
CLOUDS IS MY
SPECIALTY!

WHY, I'LL
JUST ZIP ON
UP THERE
AND—

WE HAVE TRIED
THAT, RAINBOW DASH.
IT WILL NOT WORK.
THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY.
YOU MUST FIND THE
RAINBOW CROW.

THE
RAINBOW
CROW?



MANY YEARS
AGO...

"...WHEN THE NOBLE BUFFALO FIRST
CAME TO THIS PLACE IT WAS EVEN
COLDER THAN IT IS TODAY.


"THE FIELDS SEEMED TO STRETCH ON
FOREVER AND THE HILLS FOR STAMPEDING
WERE PLENTIFUL, EACH ONE TALLER THAN
THE LAST. BUT FOR THE BITTER COLD IT
WAS THE PERFECT HOME.

"THE BUFFALO HAVE ALWAYS BEEN
STUBBORNLY OPTIMISTIC SO THEY
DECIDED THAT THEY WOULD MAKE
A PLACE FOR THEMSELVES HERE.

"THE COLD GRAY WOULD
HAVE TO SURRENDER TO
SUMMER'S GREEN SOON.

"OR SO THEY THOUGHT."





"THE COLD DID NOT SURRENDER... BUT NEITHER DID THE BUFFALO. WITH NO CROPS TO HARVEST THE BUFFALO GREW HUNGRY.

"THEY COULD SEE THE SUN'S WARM FIRE IN THE SKY BUT IT'S HEAT DID NOT REACH FAR ENOUGH TO MELT THEIR ICY VALLEY.

"TO WARM THEIR HIDES, THE BUFFALO WOULD STAMPEDE OVER EVERY HILL THEY COULD REACH. IT WAS IN THESE HILLS THAT THEY FIRST HEARD SOMETHING THAT WOULD WARM THEIR HEARTS AS WELL:

"THE DULCET MELODIES OF THE GREAT RAINBOW CROW.

"AGAINST THE GRAY OF THE FROZEN HILLSIDE, THE RAINBOW CROW'S PATCHWORK FEATHERS SPARKLED LIKE GEMSTONES BUT IT WAS HER SONG THAT SHINED THE BRIGHTEST.

"HER NOTES WERE SAID TO STRETCH ON FOR DAYS. FROM THE MOST MOURNFUL LOWS TO THE MOST EXPLOSIVE HIGHS. AND SHE COULD FLY JUST AS HIGH. HIGHER.

"THE BUFFALO HAD AN IDEA."




"THEY BEGGED THE GREAT RAINBOW CROW TO FLY TO THE BRIGHT SUN AND ASK IT FOR RELIEF. THE TREK WOULD BE LONG AND DANGEROUS. BUT THE CROW'S BRAVERY WAS SECOND ONLY TO HER LOYALTY.

"UP SHE FLEW THROUGH HILLS AND INTO CLOUDS, PAST THE STARS AND MOON. FINDING NO PERCH TO REST SHE SOARED HIGHER AND HIGHER, SINGING HER SONG AS SHE SPED ALONG.

"AFTER THREE LONG DAYS SHE FINALLY REACHED THE BRIGHT CENTER. UP CLOSE, THE SUN WAS EVEN BRIGHTER THAN THE CROW'S OWN LUMINANCE.

"SHE HONORED HIM WITH A SONG AND IN RETURN, THE SUN GAVE TO HER THE GIFT OF ITS WARMTH."



"THE GREAT RAINBOW
CROW RACED BACK
THROUGH THE HEAVENS.

"AT FIRST THE FIRE WAS A COMFORT
TO HER, WARMING HER WEARY BODY AS
SHE FLEW. BUT AS HER TORCH BURNED
DOWN THE FLAMES CRYPT CLOSER TO
HER COLORFUL PLUMAGE.

"IF SHE FLEW TOO FAST THE FLAME
MIGHT GO OUT. TOO SLOW AND THE
FIRE WOULD OVERCOME HER."

"THE FLAMES BURNED CLOSER STILL. AS
SHE REACHED THE ATMOSPHERE THE FIRE'S
SMOKE WAS UPON HER. STEADFASTLY SHE
CARRIED THE TORCH THROUGH THE CLOUDS.

"THE DARK ASH AND SOOT
BEGAN TO DARKEN HER
RAINBOW WINGS."

"INSTEAD OF AIR, HER LUNGS
FOUND ONLY SMOKE, AND LIKE
HER FEATHERS, HER BEAUTIFUL
VOICE BEGAN TO STAIN.

"SHE COULD NOT SING TO
ANNOUNCE HER RETURN.
SHE COULD ONLY—"

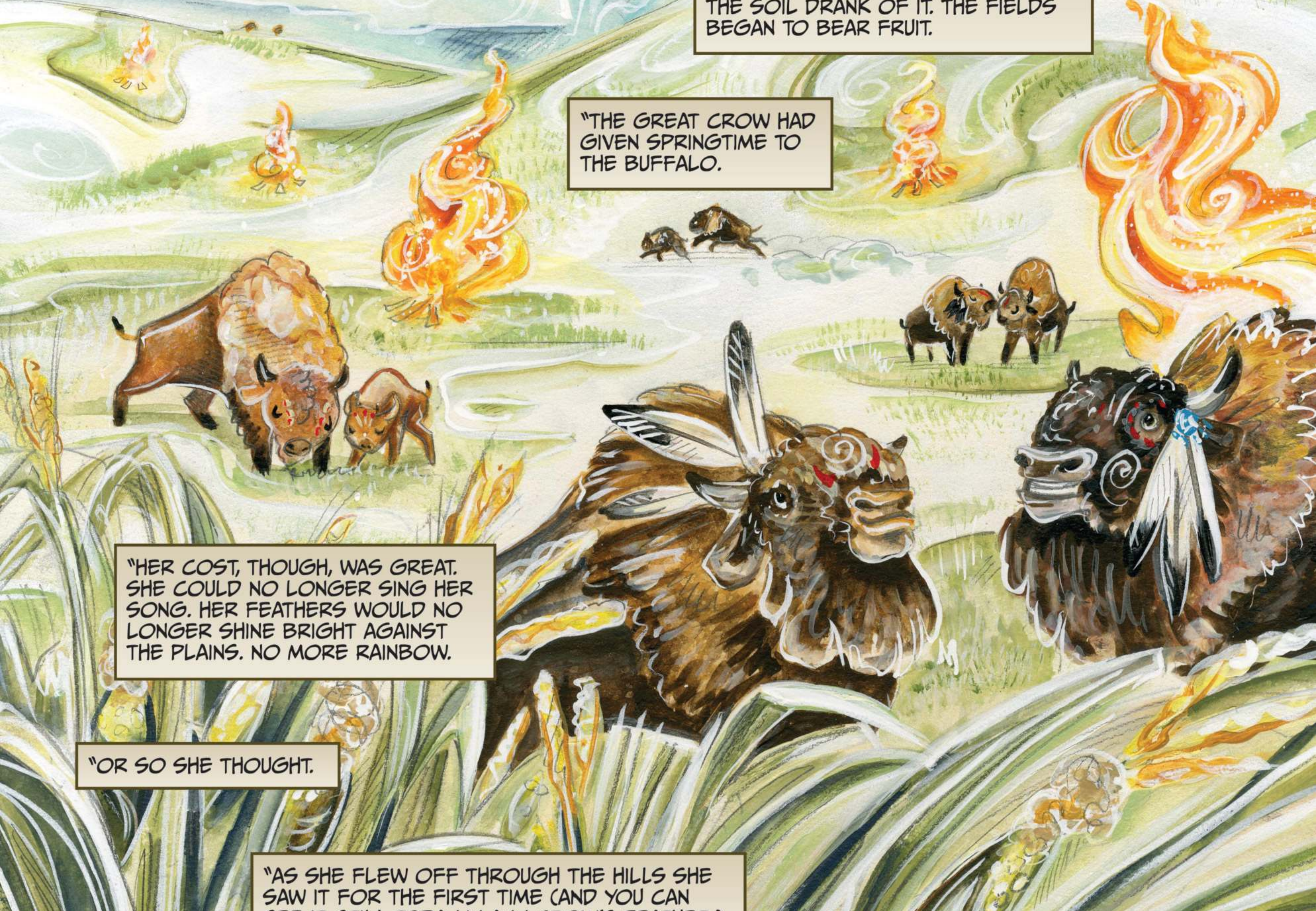
KAAAAA WWWW



"WHEN SHE REACHED THE PLAINS THE NOBLE BUFFALO DID NOT RECOGNIZE HER. FEATHERS THAT WERE ONCE AS BRIGHT AS MORNING WERE NOW BLACK AS THE NIGHT. BUT THERE WOULD BE COLOR SOON.

"THE BUFFALO TOOK THE WARMTH AND SPREAD IT ACROSS THE PLAINS. THE SNOW MELTED INTO WATER AND THE SOIL DRANK OF IT. THE FIELDS BEGAN TO BEAR FRUIT.

"THE GREAT CROW HAD GIVEN SPRINGTIME TO THE BUFFALO.



"HER COST, THOUGH, WAS GREAT. SHE COULD NO LONGER SING HER SONG. HER FEATHERS WOULD NO LONGER SHINE BRIGHT AGAINST THE PLAINS. NO MORE RAINBOW.

"OR SO SHE THOUGHT.

"AS SHE FLEW OFF THROUGH THE HILLS SHE SAW IT FOR THE FIRST TIME (AND YOU CAN SEE IT STILL TODAY IN ANY CROW'S FEATHER.)

"WHEN THE SUN FOUND HER JUST RIGHT, A SHIMMER. A BEAUTIFUL, IRIDESCENT RAINBOW REFLECTION.

"A THANK YOU FROM THE SUN FOR HER LOYALTY. HER FRIENDSHIP. FOR HER SONG."



THAT WAS AWESOME!

SO WHAT, YOU GUYS WANT ME TO FLY UP TO THE SUN AND BRING BACK MORE FIRE?



WAIT, SHE'S STILL AROUND?!





THE BUFFALO HAVE NOT SEEN THE GREAT CROW IN MANY WINTERS BUT SHE KEPT A NEST.



IT IS FAR, FAR FROM HERE, PAST THE BADLANDS AND THE FORBIDDEN JUNGLE. THE TREK IS LONG AND DANGEROUS.



BUT NOT TO WORRY, LITTLE STRONG HEART KNOWS THE WAY.



TAKE THIS. IF YOU FIND THE GREAT CROW SHE WILL EXPECT A TRIBUTE.

PLEASE HURRY. UNLESS OUR FIELDS THAW SOON, THERE WILL BE NO FOOD TO EAT.



HEY, NO PROBLEM! THERE'S NOBODY FASTER THAN RAINBOW DASH AND...

LITTLE STRONG HEART!





OK. LETS TRY YOUR WAY.



FOLLOW THE RIVER UNTIL IT FORKS. HANG A LEFT THERE AND KEEP GOING UNTIL YOU HIT MARSHLANDS.

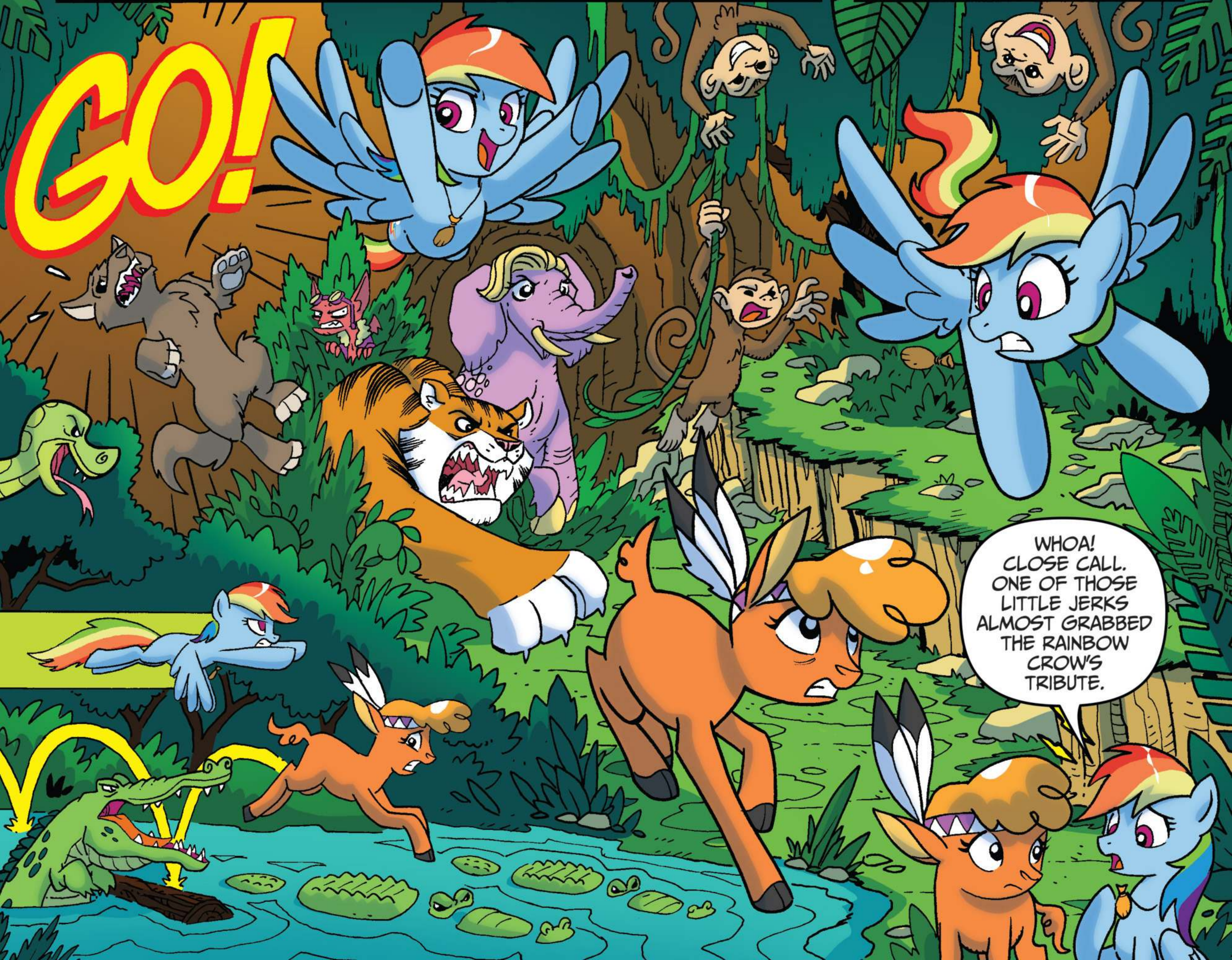
LOOK OUT FOR HANGING VINES IN THE TREES AND QUICKSAND ON THE GROUND. AND WATCH OUT FOR LIONS, TIGERS, AND—

BEARS?



NO. CAPUCHIN MONKEYS. ADORABLE BUT VERY GRABBY. YOU READY?

SET.



GO!

WHOA! CLOSE CALL. ONE OF THOSE LITTLE JERKS ALMOST GRABBED THE RAINBOW CROW'S TRIBUTE.



EW, GROSS! OK, COMMAND DECISION: WE'RE DEFINITELY DOING THIS ONE MY WAY.



YOU'VE GOTTA ADMIT, YOUR WAYS DO SEEM A LITTLE SILLY. SETTING A FEATHER ON FIRE TO GROW YOUR CROPS?

THE BUFFALO'S TRADITIONS HAVE BEEN PASSED DOWN FROM ONE GENERATION TO ANOTHER FOR CENTURIES. OUR RESPECT FOR OUR HISTORY MAKES US STRONGER.



RIGHT, BUT WHEN I TACKLE A PROBLEM I JUST GO STRAIGHT AT IT. THE SHORTEST DISTANCE BETWEEN TWO POINTS IS A STRAIGHT LINE, RIGHT?

I MEAN, DOESN'T IT SLOW THINGS DOWN? ALL THESE RITUALS AND CEREMONIES?

PUT ME DOWN RIGHT NOW!



YOU THINK YOU KNOW EVERYTHING, DON'T YOU?

ALRIGHT, COOL. YOU CROSS THIS MOUNTAIN RANGE YOUR SUPER-FAST-STRAIGHT-LINE PEGASUS WAY. I'LL GO MY CRUSTY-OLD-TRADITIONAL BUFFALO WAY.



ARE YOU SURE?

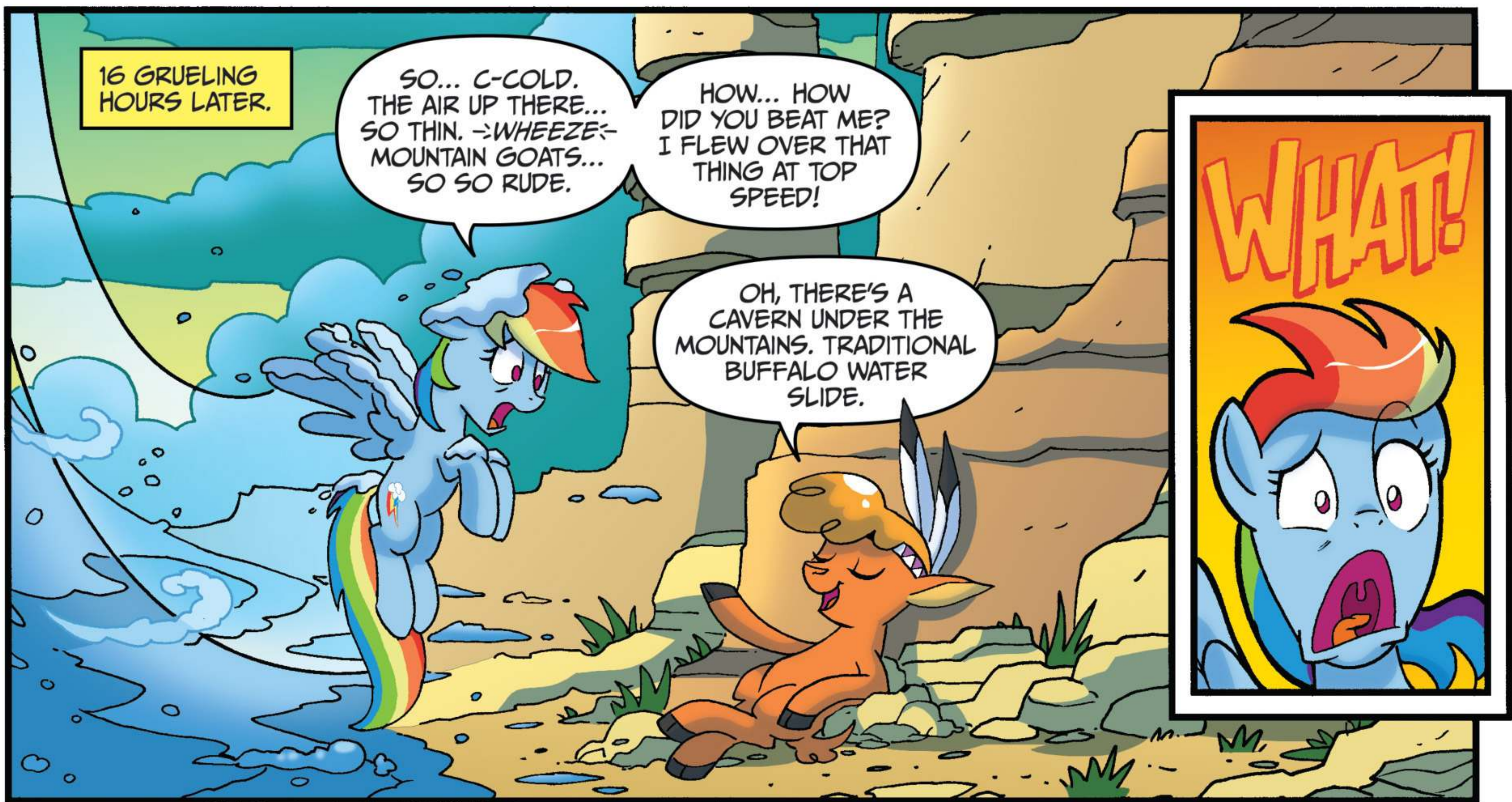
SURE, I'M SURE, KEMOSABE. GET ALONG!



OK.

SWAPI!





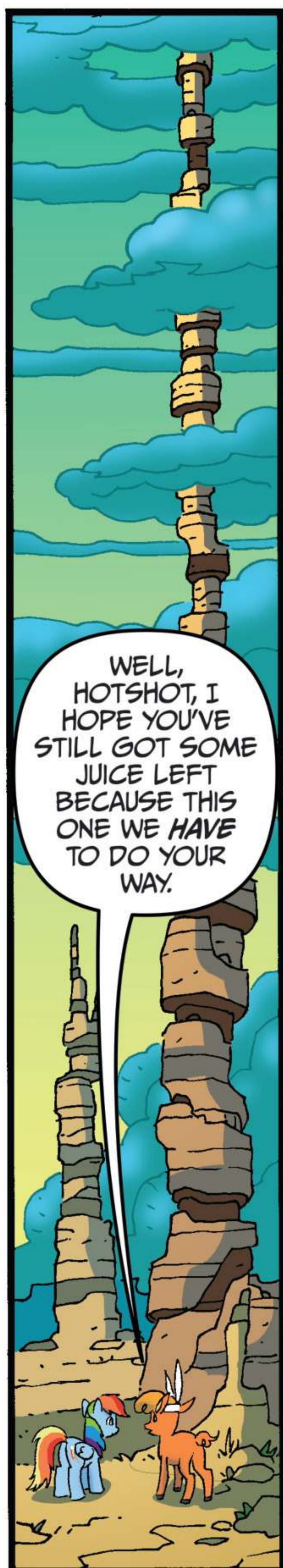
16 GRUELING HOURS LATER.

SO... C-COLD. THE AIR UP THERE... SO THIN. →WHEEZE← MOUNTAIN GOATS... SO SO RUDE.

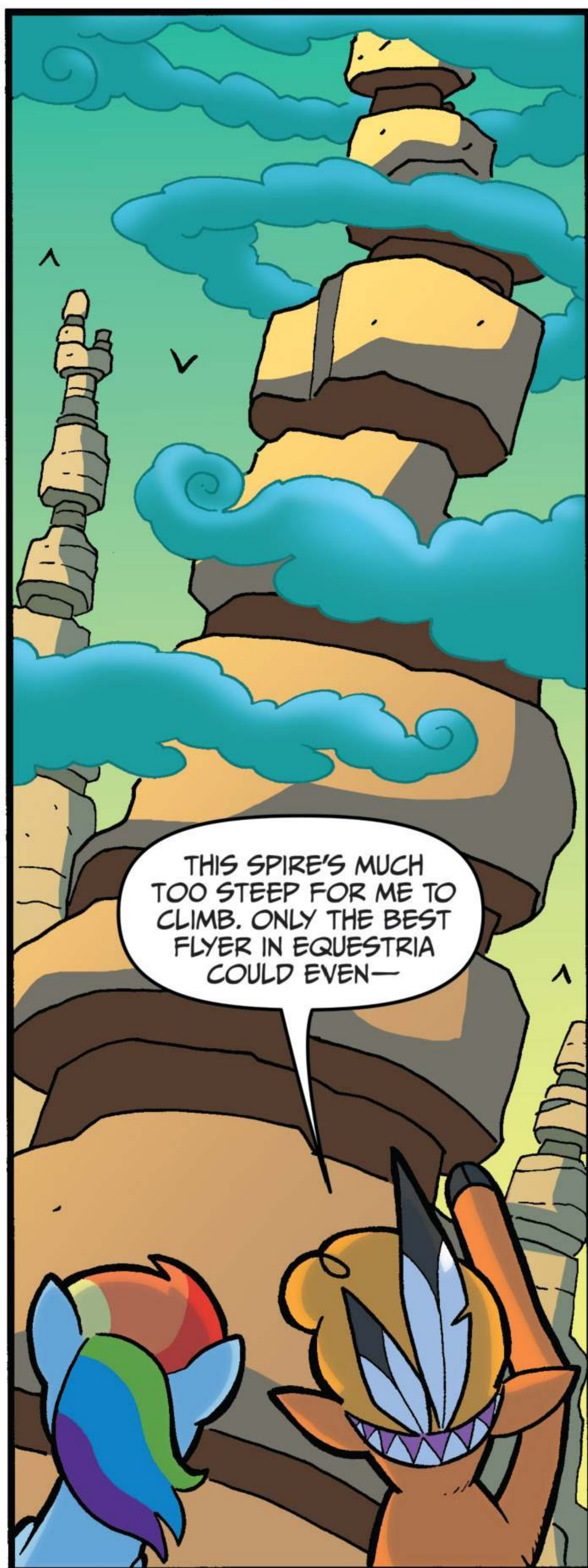
HOW... HOW DID YOU BEAT ME? I FLEW OVER THAT THING AT TOP SPEED!

OH, THERE'S A CAVERN UNDER THE MOUNTAINS. TRADITIONAL BUFFALO WATER SLIDE.

WHAT!



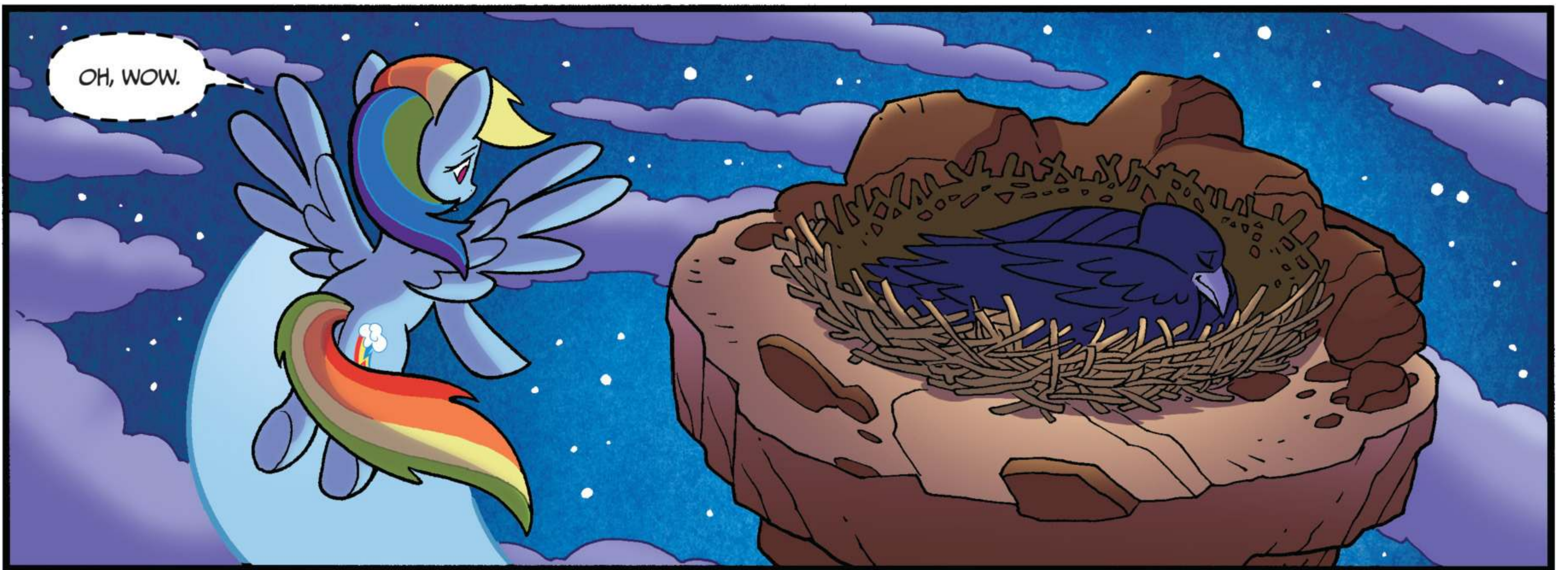
WELL, HOTSHOT, I HOPE YOU'VE STILL GOT SOME JUICE LEFT BECAUSE THIS ONE WE HAVE TO DO YOUR WAY.



THIS SPIRE'S MUCH TOO STEEP FOR ME TO CLIMB. ONLY THE BEST FLYER IN EQUESTRIA COULD EVEN—

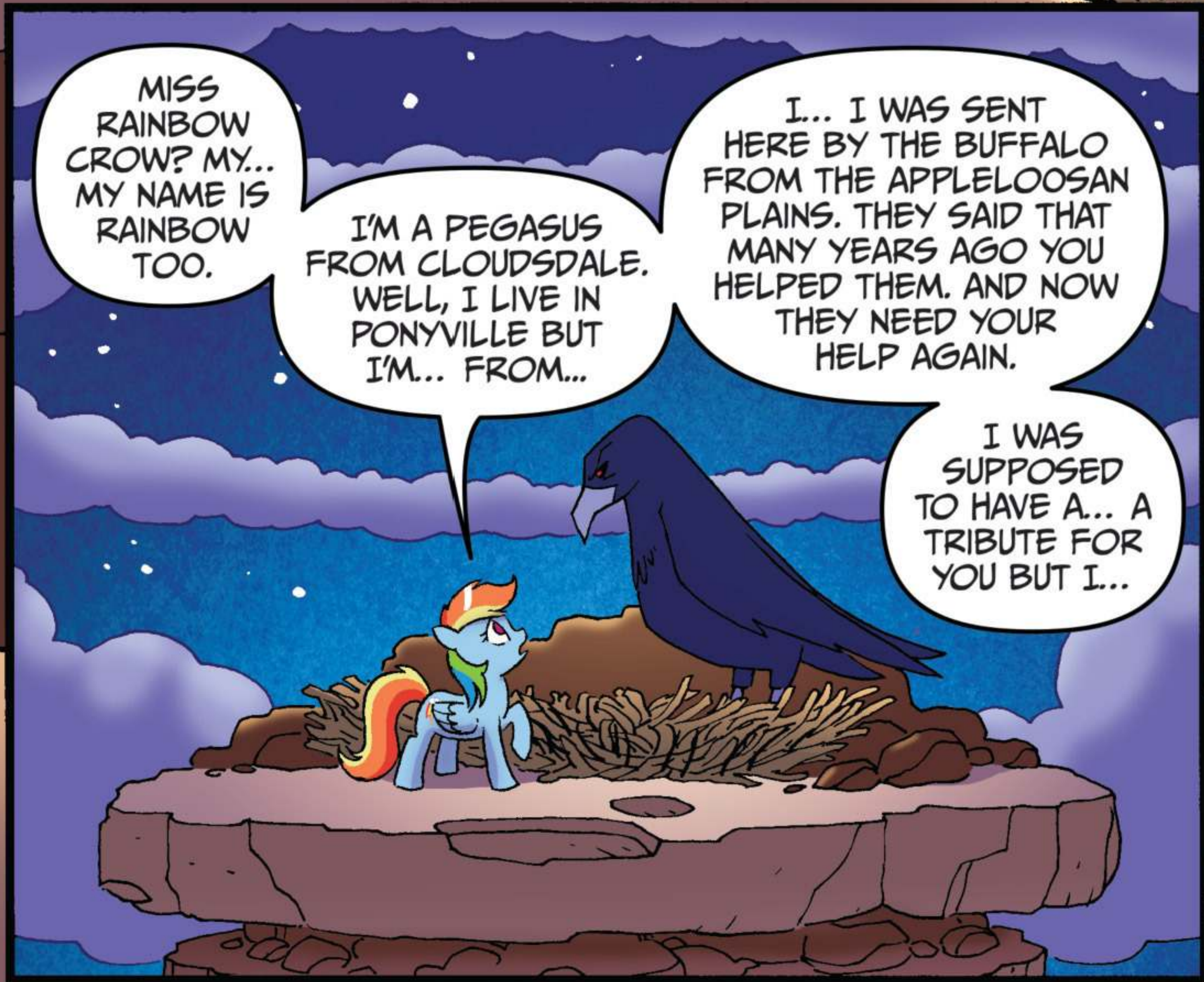


RAINBOW?





UM.



MISS RAINBOW CROW? MY... MY NAME IS RAINBOW TOO.

I'M A PEGASUS FROM CLOUDSDALE. WELL, I LIVE IN PONYVILLE BUT I'M... FROM...

I... I WAS SENT HERE BY THE BUFFALO FROM THE APPLELOOSAN PLAINS. THEY SAID THAT MANY YEARS AGO YOU HELPED THEM. AND NOW THEY NEED YOUR HELP AGAIN.

I WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE A... A TRIBUTE FOR YOU BUT I...

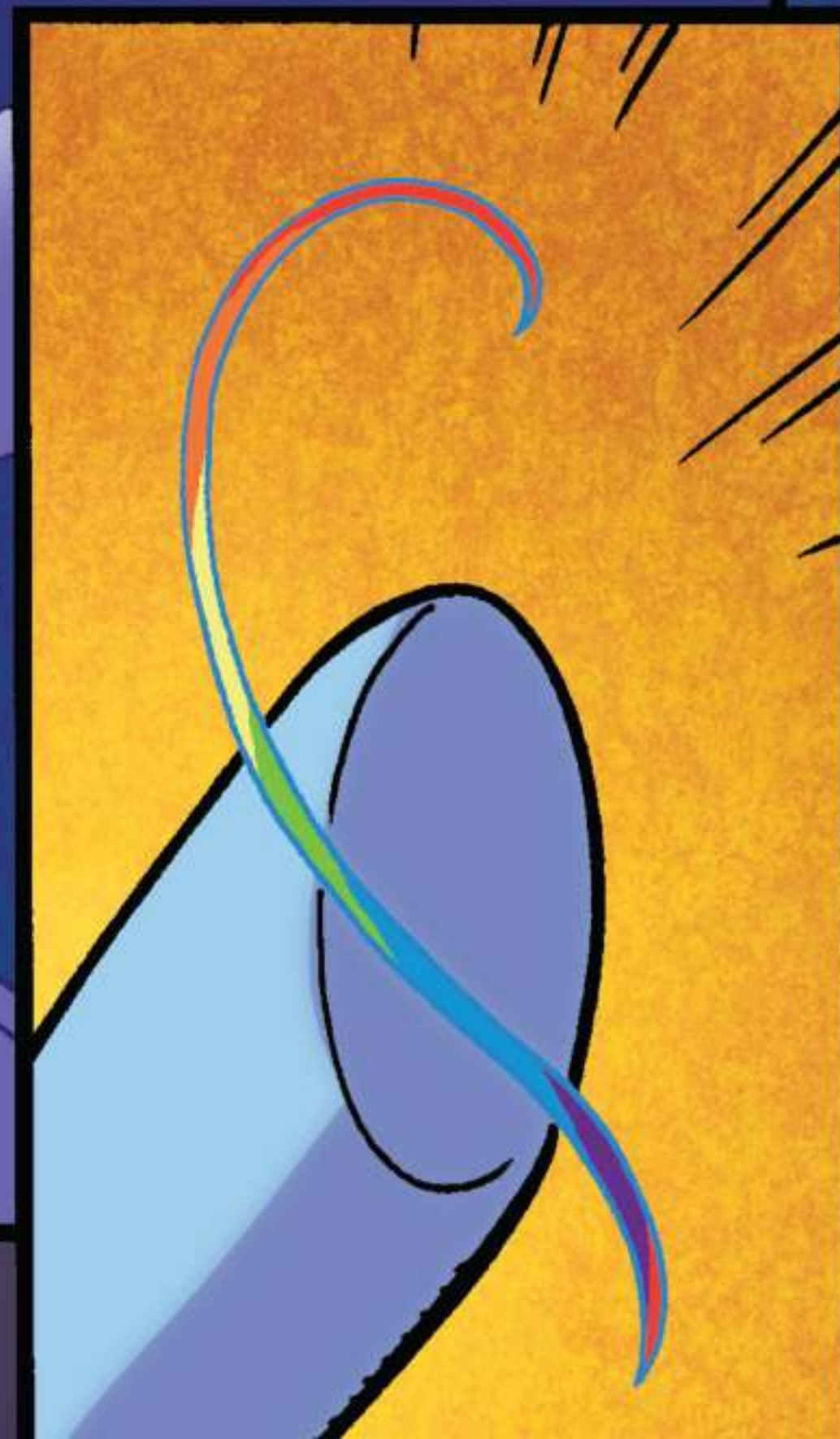


ALL I ASK IS A HAIR FROM YOUR LOVELY RAINBOW MANE.

REALLY? THAT'S ALL?

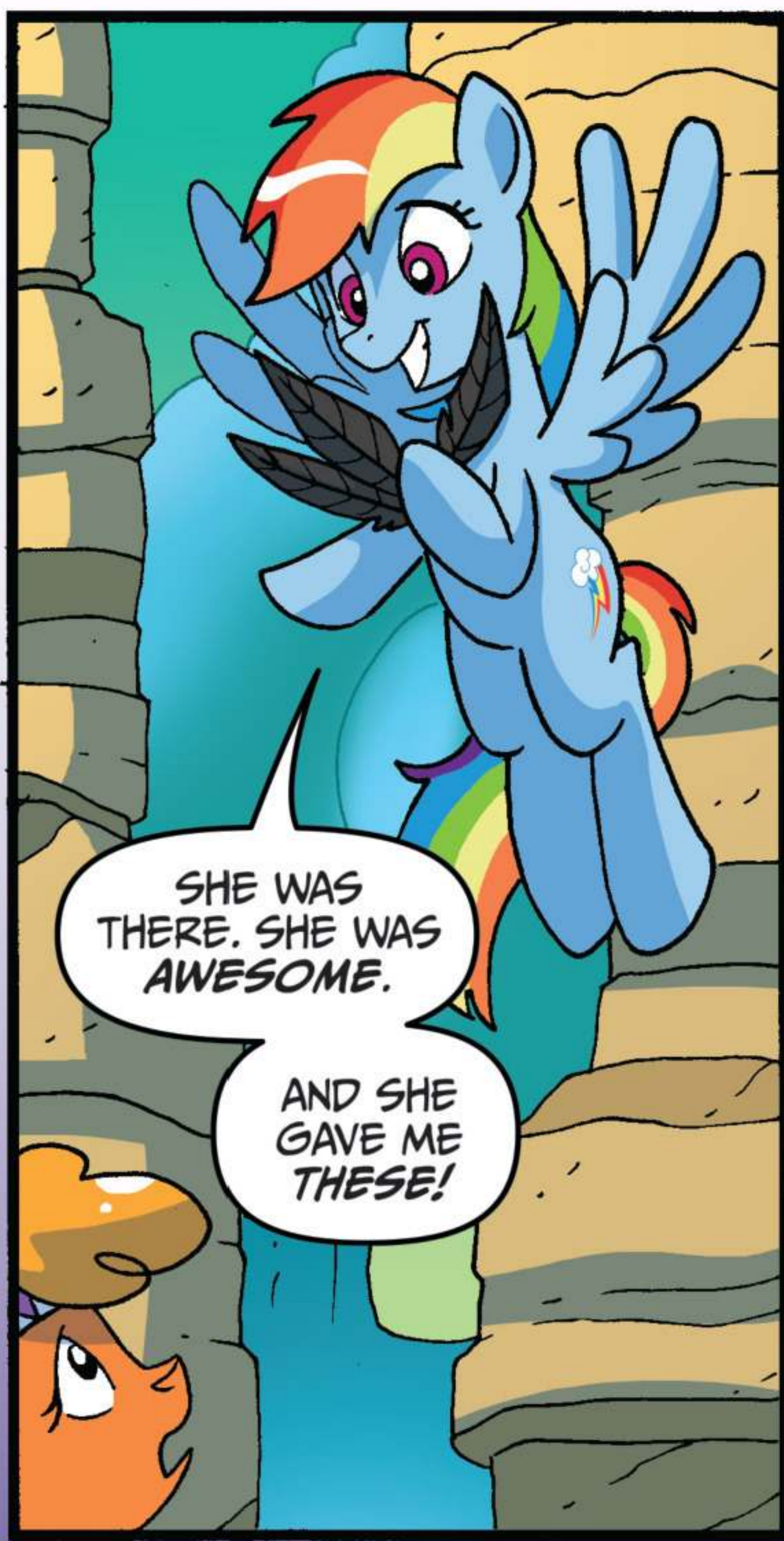


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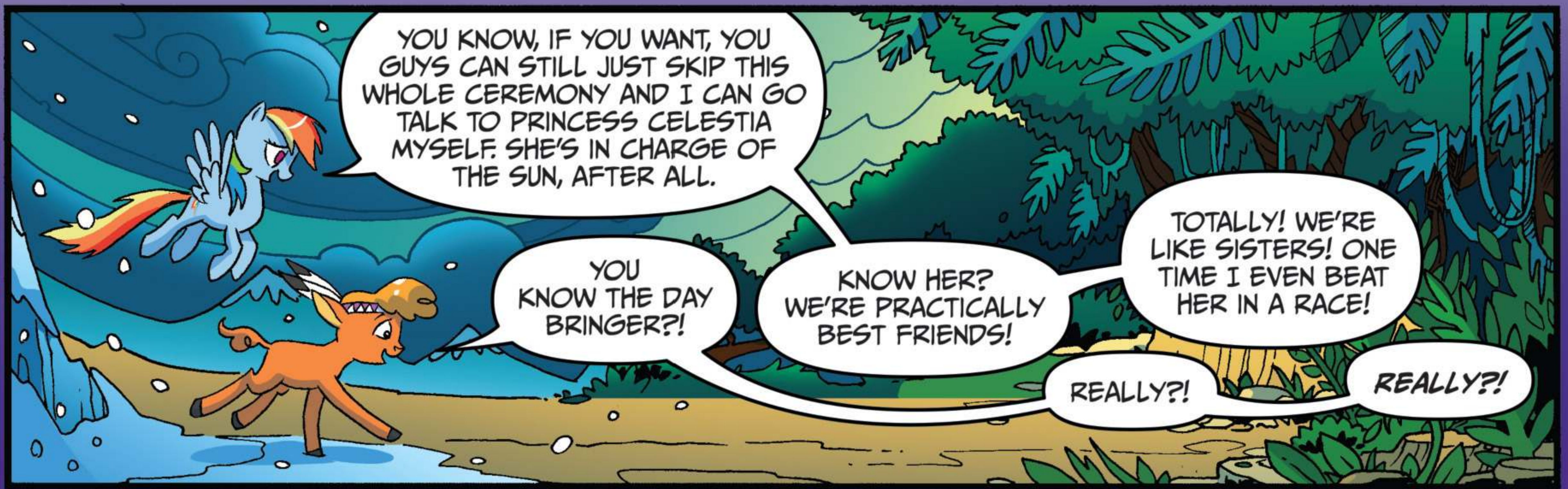
DID YOU MAKE IT?
 WAS SHE THERE?



SHE WAS THERE. SHE WAS AWESOME.
 AND SHE GAVE ME THESE!



OH, RAINBOW, YOU DID IT!
 OF COURSE I DID IT!
 WE GOTTA HURRY AND GET THESE TO THE CHIEF!

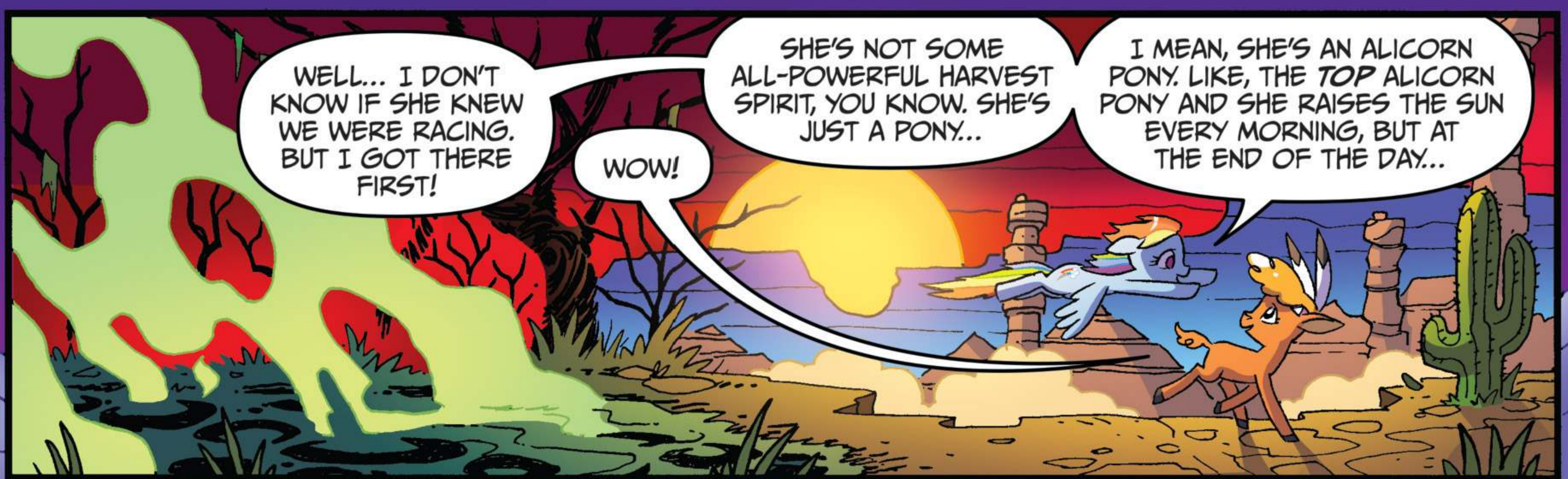


YOU KNOW, IF YOU WANT, YOU GUYS CAN STILL JUST SKIP THIS WHOLE CEREMONY AND I CAN GO TALK TO PRINCESS CELESTIA MYSELF. SHE'S IN CHARGE OF THE SUN, AFTER ALL.
 YOU KNOW THE DAY BRINGER?!

KNOW HER? WE'RE PRACTICALLY BEST FRIENDS!

TOTALLY! WE'RE LIKE SISTERS! ONE TIME I EVEN BEAT HER IN A RACE!

REALLY?! REALLY?!



WELL... I DON'T KNOW IF SHE KNEW WE WERE RACING. BUT I GOT THERE FIRST!

WOW!

SHE'S NOT SOME ALL-POWERFUL HARVEST SPIRIT, YOU KNOW. SHE'S JUST A PONY...

I MEAN, SHE'S AN ALICORN PONY. LIKE, THE TOP ALICORN PONY AND SHE RAISES THE SUN EVERY MORNING, BUT AT THE END OF THE DAY...

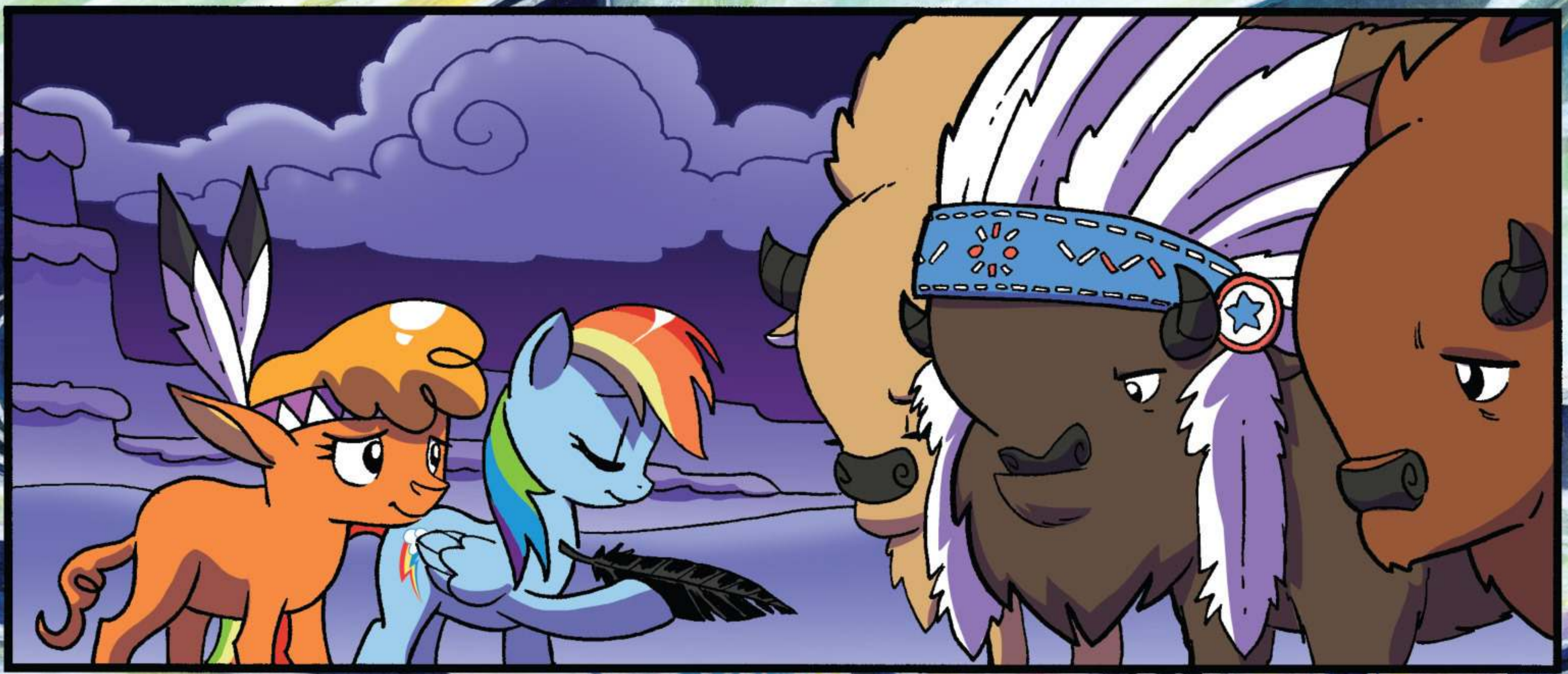


...SHE'S NOT SO DIFFERENT FROM YOU OR ME.

OH, WE KNOW THAT RAINBOW DASH, WE'RE NOT PRIMITIVE.

WE JUST LIKE TO OFFER TRIBUTE THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY. OUR TRADITIONS ARE WHAT KEEP US CONNECTED. OUR LINK WITH THE PAST ENSURES US A PROSPEROUS FUTURE.

PLUS—THE CEREMONY IS SUPER COOL LOOKING.



OKAY, LITTLE STRONG HEART, YOU WIN. THIS WAY IS TOTALLY BETTER.



THE END.

