

## ***The Royal Stables (Animal TF, Tearmoon Empire)***

Mia raised a hand to shield her eyes from the sun as they strolled down the path to the royal stables.

“Are you feeling well today, Mistress?” asked Anne, scurrying behind her with the enthusiasm of a puppy.

“I am!” replied Mia, with a grin. “But I’ll feel much better on the back of a horse, riding around the estate.” She’d been cooped up inside for far too long, worrying about that awful guillotine. Some fresh air would do her a world of good.

Soon, the pair entered the stables, where the smell of horse struck them like a physical barrier. Mia wrinkled her nose and tried her best to ignore it—it was more than worth it for the chance to go riding.

As she waited in the center of the aisle for Anne to prepare her normal mount, however, she caught one of the horses looking at her oddly. “Hello,” she said, cocking her head as she approached. “You’re a beautiful animal, aren’t you?” She raised a hand to stroke the horse’s muzzle, but as she approached, it drew back, sucked in a deep breath, and—

“A-CHOO!”

—sneezed with the force of a cannon. Mia flew back, face dripping snot. For a second she simply stood there blinking, too stunned to properly react. Then the moment passed, her shock broke, and she threw back her head in a gigantic scream of disgust.

“Mistress! What’s the matter?” Anne rushed back over, a handkerchief already in her hand. “Please, let me help you!”

As Mia sagged to her knees, still dripping, Anne knelt beside her and hurriedly mopped her off. Only once every last drop of disgusting slime had been wiped from her face did Mia finally recover the strength to stand. She shuddered. *I think I got some in my mouth...*

“Are you okay, Mistress?” asked Anne, taking her hand. “Perhaps you’d like to sit down?”

Mia swallowed. “I—I think that would be for the best,” said Mia, letting Anne guide her towards a waiting stall. All of a sudden, she felt so lightheaded.

Halfway there, her legs gave way. Falling to the floor (and dragging Anne down to it with her), she lay there with her hands in the hay, her heart pounding, her stomach churning, her skin dripping sweat. When she tried to breathe, she couldn’t bring in half the air she needed. It felt as if her airways were about to close up.

“Mistress!” cried Anne. “I—I’ll fetch help!” She made to rush off, but Mia caught her ankle before she had a chance.

“Don’t—!” she said, struggling to even get the words out. “D-don’t leave me...!  
Don’t—Neeeeeeigh!”

She clapped her hands over her mouth in shock. Had that...? Had that sound just come out of *her*?!

Anne was staring at her in shock. “M-Mistress? Are you—?”

Mia opened her mouth to say something reassuring, but all that came out was another horse-like neigh. She slammed her lips shut, eyes shivering in terror, heart pounding. She didn’t trust herself to say even a single word. What was happening?

Unfortunately, whatever it was, it wasn’t restricted to her voice. Even as she struggled back to her feet, a terrible lurch in her gut threw her back down to the ground again, wanting to throw up. Her body pulsed and rippled like something unseemly, veins popping into being up and down her sides. She moaned, screwing up her eyes. Everything hurt a little.

As she fought to stand up, she felt a terrible twisting in her knees, and further movement become impossible. Wobbling on all fours, she struggled without success to push herself back onto two legs, but no matter how hard she tried, she inevitably found herself on all fours again. It was as if her entire center of mass had shifted.

Nearby, Anne squealed. “M-Mistress! You have a—!”

Mia felt a tingling in her tailbone. Looking back, she gasped to see something squirming like a snake under her dress—with every second, it grew larger and larger, until at last the fabric refused to hold it anymore. With a terrible ripping, the cloth tore, and something long and furry burst through the gap into the open. Mia stared at it, eyes trembling in shock. She couldn’t believe what she was looking at. *Is that—is that a tail*?!

Even as she stared in horror, she felt a fresh twitching in her fingers and her toes and looked down to see her hands bulking, fingers turning hard and dark before fusing together entirely. Tearing through her gloves, they struck the ground with a pair of clacks, followed seconds later by a similar sound from her feet as they ripped through her shoes. Stumbling sideways, she struggled to stay upright as her hard new hands and feet struck the ground like wooden mallets. It wasn’t long before she lost her balance and toppled sideways, wailing.

“Mistress!” Anne rushed to help her stand.

*Anne!* This time, nothing resembling human-speech emerged from her lips, just a long, wild whine of a horse in panic. Her heart beat; her stomach lurched. She settled for trembling, terrified of everything.

Now, a wave of blonde fur, silky and smooth, rolled up her arms and her legs, leaving them glistening in the light of the stables. No sooner had the skin been covered than her limbs promptly bulked up, bloating and thickening into the muscular limbs of an animal. She screamed in surprise, slamming her hooves into the floor in shock. Another whiney escaped her mouth, but nothing clear, nothing *human*.

As she stumbled sideways, forcing a terrified Anne to dodge, the bulking process spread to Mia's torso, and her dress groaned as it struggled to hold her in. In the end, it could do nothing more to help her: with an awful *rrrip*, the fabric gave, and a fat, equine rear burst out into the open, its gelatinous cheeks jiggling.

"Neeigh! Neeigh!" Mia screamed in horror, thrashing to-and-fro in horror, though nothing could prepare for her for what was about to happen. "...!"

It was like someone had pinched her nose. Pinched it and started to pull, wrenching her entire face forward. Through trembling eyes, she watched her face elongate, her slender nose transformed into a long, equine snout covered in beautiful blonde hair. She squealed, but all that came out was another horrifying whiny.

With that, the changes came to an end. At least for her—nearby, Anne doubled over and clutched her gut as a wild *neeeigh* burst out of her lengthening snout as well.

*Anne!* thought Mia. *No, not you too!* How was anyone going to help them if they *both* turned into horses?

With an awful rip, Anne's maid uniform came apart, revealing the curves of a muscular equine body rapidly sprouting soft brown hair. Looking back, the maid moaned to see her tail wiggling behind her.

Finally, the same pliers that had caught Mia's face pinched Anne's own and stretched it long before releasing it with a snap. With that, Anne's transformation came to an end, leaving them both stumbling around in the mess of their own former clothes, barely able to stand on their new equine legs.

*Mistress!* Anne cried, voice emerging as a whiney. *What do we do now?*

*I don't know!* Mia wanted to reply, unable to speak save to neigh. *I don't know!*

As the two of them wobbled unsteadily, struggling to control their new bodies, the door of the stables opened, and one of the grooms walked in. "Woah, hey!" he cried, seeing the two of them out in the open. "Who let the two of you out of your stalls? And what's with all these rags on the floor?"

*Please, you have to help us!* cried Mia. "Neigh! Neigh!"

"Come on, let's get you back in your stalls," said the groom, guiding her to an empty one. "If you play along, you can have a nice, juicy carrot, okay?"

To her horror, Mia found herself salivating at the thought. What was happening to her?!

Guiding her by the head, the groom led her down the aisle and into one of the waiting stalls, where he rewarded her with a carrot for her troubles. She munched on it happily, barely even

noticing as the stable boy took Anne and placed her in the stall opposite. It wasn't until she finished the carrot that something resembling sanity returned to her.

With a neigh of horror, she threw herself at the gate of the stall, banging her hooves against the wood.

"Woah, calm down, girl," said the groom. "Here. Have a sugar lump."

Mia calmed down instantly, her tongue lolling in hunger.

As the sugar cube melted on her tongue, the door of the stables flew open, and in popped a pair of faces she recognized very well indeed. She swallowed the lump almost immediately, despite the fact it had yet to dissolve. *Oh no. Is that...?*

"Excuse me?" said Tiona, standing meekly in the doorway. "Is there a horse available?"

"O-oh, of course!" said the groom, throwing a look at Mia. "Let me get ready for you."

Mia's heart stopped beating. *No! No! Why does it have to be me?! There are so many other horses in here! ...So many actual horses! Pick one of them instead! Pick one of them insteeead!*

Guiding her out of the stall, the groom threw a saddle onto her back, connected the buckles, and checked it was securely fastened. "There you go," he said, patting her softly on the flank. "There's nothing to be afraid of."

Tiona approached her, face bright and happy. "This one's beautiful," she said, stroking Mia's mane and making her shiver.

Mia blushed, screwing her eyes tight and whinying, as Tiona settled into her saddle. *Urgh! Stop! Get off! This is so humiliating!*

"Good horse," said Tiona, stroking her mane. "Don't be afraid! I promise you'll enjoy it!"

*Urgh! I'd rather face the guillotiiiine!*