

On The Equestrian Republic And Equestrian Citizenship

(For making of great splash at citizenship application hearing! BIG YES!)



Written by Aristides of Derby [Year of the Two Sisters (TS) 460]

Translated by Dr. Andrew J. Talon, Professor of History, University of Canterlot [Year of the Restoration of Harmony (RH) 1]. With added notes by Twilight Sparkle (Holder of the Element of Magic) and HRM Princess Luna.

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Foreward

Aristides of Derby's renown as a scholar, statespony, orator, advocate, and breakdancer is largely due only to the painstaking reconstruction of vital documents by archaeology, frequent consultation with Princess Celestia, and pouring through the Canterlot and Derby archives: The former have been well maintained since the banishment of Nightmare Moon in TS 1000, but those of Derby were looted, burned and otherwise destroyed twice: First by the Third Dragon War in TS 897, and then by the Mad Mule Pyronticus in TS 1200 who reportedly burned the archives on a bet.

Despite these disasters, or more likely because of them, the Derby archives almost always had backups. Unfortunately, these backups were often disguised as the most random objects imaginable, from toilet paper to books with titles like "Absolutely Boring Statistics Nopony Would Ever Want to Read or Burn." While a number of scholars believe this strategy saved much of the archive, the author would humbly point out his own (well publicized) work on the alternative "Look! A Bird!" title strategy employed by the ancients. However this is neither here nor there.¹

Aristides was born in Derby in the year TS 403, to a father who was a miller and a mother who was an advocate. His cutie mark appeared on his fifteenth birthday after he had sought employment in a wide variety of fields. Tales are told of his inability to successfully make bread without setting whole kitchens on fire; How every attempt at work as a farmhoof ended in miserable failure; How his attempts at engineering resulted in the grand palace of the Ace of Derby falling into the sea. He did have some success as a soldier in the city militia; he was often sent over to the enemy side to cause them more misfortune and chaos than he could on his own during the Hippos Border Wars².

¹ It really is a fascinating book. You should totally buy it. It's just a few bits and I have... Uh... Twelve foals to feed. Yes. And a poor wife. And a sick grandmother.

²The hippopotamus tribes of Gnarlian would frequently attempt border raids into Equestria's city-states during this period: They always seemed to be hungry.

These actions gained him acclaim, of a sort, which pushed his parents into having him learn a reliable trade that would not result in massive amounts of property damage: Advocacy.³

Under his mother, the venerable Livia of Derby, Aristides became a great legal advocate. The misfortunes visited upon others by his physical actions seemed negated so long as he simply spoke, though one memorable incident involved his pounding on a table with his hoof to emphasize a point to the jurors, and said table spontaneously exploded.⁴

Aristides' skill in citizenship application trials soon saw him gaining work in Canterlot itself, due to the large swelling of Equestria's borders by numerous refugees from the onslaught of the Aduu Hordes.⁵ Entire tribes applied for citizenship and recognition in the Republic, and due to the various complex means and bureaucratic impediments created to deal with it, Equestria was absolutely overwhelmed. Princess Celestia offered a prize of fifty thousand bits to whoever could devise a means of simplifying the process. Aristides gamely took up the challenge, and despite an unexpected explosion in the printing press⁶, he submitted his most well known work, *On The Equestrian Republic And Equestrian Citizenship (For making of great splash at citizenship application hearing! BIG YES!)*⁷.

Quickly translated into several languages, it became the mainstay for both hopeful new citizens to Equestria, and for foalhood education on the structure of Equestria's government. Emboldened by this success, Aristides became a senator, representing Derby in the Equestrian senate five times. During this time he wrote a great many other works: *On the Nature of Disaster*, *Life Among the Hippos*, *Princess Fantasies*, *Basic Advocacy*,

³Originally his father had been very unhappy with this decision, given he was of very old fashioned beliefs regarding oratory: It was felt to be the work of a mare, not a stallion in his family. After Aristides succeeded in warping his mill gears beyond all recognition while attempting to learn mechanical repair,, he quickly changed his mind.

⁴How this happened is a matter of considerable debate, to say the least. At least one scholar went absolutely mad trying to figure it out, ending his days asserting that the salami clearly was responsible, despite the fact the case concerned melon growing permits.

⁵Suggestions to treat the invasion with an analgesic cream by Prince Crashdown were seriously considered only by other statesponies with head injuries.

⁶Try figuring *that* one out.

⁷The caption was generally omitted in the second edition due to a general feeling of frustration by native Equestrians at new citizens repeating this phrase over and over again *ad naseum*.

*Rhetorical Questions, Rhetorical Questions 2, Rhetorical Question 3 (The Revenge), Do They Need Answers? and Dancing to Break.*⁸

As senator, Aristides' accomplishments were quite novel. He established a formal juror selection system that encouraged ponies to register to vote and become jurors for trials, which made obtaining jurors much easier. He did this by including in the bill provisions that made trial hearings a far more competitive exercise which included jury involvement and new rules for court floor conduct, including the allowance of stage names, readings of popular fiction, costume roleplaying, dancing, singing, baking, and allowance of wrestling matches in particularly hotly contested cases⁹.

A further innovation Aristides introduced was paying for public works programs through lowered interest rates attached to loans that were competed for by various concerns. He famously debated the famous orator Sardines on the right to such competitions, and successfully argued that allowing the loans to be held on strings above the two parties was a valid tactic if no other recourse could be found. This both lowered the number of cases that had to be brought to trial (forcing ponies to resolve many financial and domestic issues themselves) and lowered the expenses of the state by needing to hold fewer trials.¹⁰

So popular was Aristides that he was offered the chance to run for the Consulship on a joint ticket with Ciceron of Rome. Aristides gladly accepted and ran on his great successes. He had strong backing from new citizens and old citizens alike for his reforms, and with his chest of fifty thousand bits he was well poised to be elected.

However, the campaign was an unmitigated disaster due to Aristides' insistence on opening the first fund raising banquet with his "newly perfected" breakdancing routine¹¹. The resulting public scandal sent

⁸His diction was unusual to the point it was assumed he meant this translation literally, though more modern scholars contend it was metaphorical. Few asked Aristides the precise translation: More were concerned with breaking his legs in retaliation for the damages done by the breakdancing. It was not until Tiropita Pie in TS 963 that safe breakdancing was perfected.

⁹The introduction of mud and/or jelly to the matches involving female plaintiff and defendant, or male plaintiff and defendant, swelled the jury rolls.

¹⁰Though making it legal to sell tickets to court hearings involving mud wrestling, introduced by Cicero of Rome, made legal challenges far more popular.

¹¹There were no survivors.

Aristides into exile, where he soon perished by attempting another breakdancing routine by a volcano.¹²

Despite the magnitude of the disasters Aristides unintentionally caused over and over again, years after his death he was rehabilitated in the public eye. His works were all very useful, well written, and (in the case of *Rhetorical Question 3 [The Revenge]*) filled with exciting air battles and ninjas. After enough ill feeling was removed, his bust was added to the Royal Canterlot Library-Though forever kept in the back room. Great ponies are often not appreciated until they are dead, but Aristides is one of the few to not be appreciated until he has been dead long enough.

Nevertheless, now with more information provided by the recently returned Princess Luna, and some additional work done by Princess Celestia's apprentice Twilight Sparkle, this final edition of the book will at the very least give Aristides' his due as a shaper of the Republic, a dedicated public servant, and one of the unluckiest beings to ever trot the face of the Earth. With that in mind, welcome to the Equestrian Republic. As you may have guessed, a sense of humor is considered a civic duty.

~Talon

¹²There were survivors, but most of them would have preferred to not be.

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1

Welcome to the Equestrian Republic! If you are reading this it means you have made the wonderful decision to join our nation as a free citizen under the protection of Princess Celestia and Princess Luna! I am Aristides, legal advocate for the Citizenship Review Board, and I will be guiding you through the process of becoming a citizen of Equestria, and all the rights, privileges and responsibilities thereof!

Now, your first question might be, “What is Equestria?” Or it might be “What is a republic?” Or it might even be “Who are you, and why are you in my house?”¹³ Well, if you cannot understand the first paragraph at all then...¹⁴ You probably can’t read this one either. Or this sentence. Or this word. In which case you can probably use this book as food. I think you can eat it, I haven’t the slightest idea...

For those of you who can read this book, please disregard entirely the previous two paragraphs, they are utterly useless. Save for my introduction.¹⁵

In the Republic, you have the right to vote for your leaders at specific levels of government to represent your interests. They, in fact, work for you. Their fortunes are made and broken on your choices. To that end, they will do whatever they can to try to gain your loyalty. So the first rule of being a citizen of Equestria is to understand your representative to the fullest level you are capable, and carefully select your choice.

Now, in theory everypony will select a representative that will represent their interests honorably and effectively. In practice, most everypony selects a representative that says they will represent their

¹³Not an infrequently asked question given Aristides’ propensity for sleepwalking, bumbling, or some combination of the two. I should know: He walked into my bedroom on numerous occasions, once on a rope. ~Princess Luna

¹⁴ It was not common practice to insert ellipses in great numbers into one’s writing until Aristides. After his exile it remained a habit that many pony writers could not break, even to this day. ~Twilight Sparkle

¹⁵This part is usually cut, for obvious reasons. The original edition included enough self-pitying blubbing to be absolutely ignored. ~Talon

interests honorably and effectively. The results can vary from pony to pony. Some ponies are honorable and effective, while others are villains who will scam you and everypony else around them for whatever gold or glory they can get. How are you to know for sure if a pony is honorable or villainous?

Well, in truth you cannot tell completely. But this is the reason that that pony is just one of many who are selected to represent your interests, for a limited amount of time. If they do a good job, then they are sure to be selected by you again. If they do not do a good job, then you are able to vote them out, whereupon if they have done something particularly heinous they will be run out of town with torches and pitchforks which are always available at any town or city hall or courthouse for this exact purpose¹⁶. While you are not legally able to harm this disgraced pony, you are free to make him or her gallop around in a panic until they are exhausted.

This is an effective deterrent, but a still greater one is Princess Celestia and Princess Luna! While regarded by some¹⁷ as potential tyrants given how much power they actually wield, the fact that they helped found the very Republic you have now entered should be proof enough of their good intentions. Their intervention in the affairs of state are marginal at best, and only when every other form of governance has failed or when it is not necessary. As a citizen of Equestria, you are now one of their children, and they will defend you to the death from world ending entities of evil.

However, the one thing they will not save you from is your own stupidity. To be a citizen of Equestria, is to be responsible for your own fate. There is no hoof holding here by the state. The government and the society are mirrors, they are not the same. Your fellow citizens can, of course, offer aid and the government does indeed award largess and aid to large swaths of citizens in need, such as after a natural disaster. However, too much aid by the government will make it your feeding trough, and if you do not look after yourself you will become a slave to it.

Admittedly, becoming the slave of either of the Princesses has a certain appeal to it. I myself have fantasized about a number of possible scenarios and am considering putting them into a book.¹⁸¹⁹

¹⁶I am quite happy this practice has continued into the modern day. ~Princess Luna

¹⁷Henceforth known as fools. ~Princess Luna

¹⁸*Princess Fantasies*, which was not only a best seller but was encouraged by Princess Celestia. ~Talon

²⁰ That is not relevant here though.

What *is* relevant is how the Republic works, level by level. I will give you the tools necessary to understand how the system works and thus utilize it effectively. You will be able to determine who gets to be in power, and indeed, even run for office yourself! Someday you too may become the Consul of Equestria, serving the Princesses and running our great nation! And someday you might thank me, Aristides, for giving you the means to do so.

Just a small pittance really, maybe a manor house. Coconuts. A few full flanked maids. A stallion has needs, you know.

¹⁹A disgraceful and embarrassing book which could not be suppressed thanks to the Constitution.

~Princess Luna

²⁰I myself read it, and found it useful for... Research purposes into... Something or other. Just for research though! ~Twilight Sparkle

2

Aristides here again! Good job for turning to chapter 2, instead of 3. For if you'd gone to three, you would have missed 2 entirely. And two has the first step in the Equestrian system of government! So perhaps it should have been 1... Oh well.²¹

The government of Equestria starts with you. Yes you, the citizen of the Republic. Whether you are female or male, rich or poor, smart or dumb, you are the building block of the Republic, it's basic unit. You have the main responsibilities as a citizen of the Republic:

- To register as a voter.
- To vote for your city representatives, mayors, advocates, senators, and Consuls, and be knowledgeable of the records and characters of those who serve and those who wish to serve.
- To perform jury duty when called to do so.
- To obey the Constitution and local laws.
- To contribute productively to society without infringing upon the rights of your fellow citizens.
- To serve however possible in a time of crisis.
- To raise up your children to also be responsible citizens.

Naturally, no citizen can fulfill these responsibilities all of the time. You and I are only mortal. Well, I'm fairly certain I am: Whoever is reading this might not be, such as the Princesses.²² But given most reading this are not, your duty as a responsible citizen is to fulfill these responsibilities to the best of your ability. Now, naturally it will not always be upon you to act as a responsible citizen. At times, the government will need adjustment. Therefore, these are your rights granted you from the moment you become a citizen:

- The right to free speech (To say whatever you like, however you like, whenever you like and to whomever you like).

²¹He really was quite a buffoon, in case you didn't already guess. You'll have plenty of other opportunities to learn if this wasn't a sufficient lesson. ~Princess Luna

²²I did. This forced me to develop what is now known as a "nonsense filter". ~Princess Luna

- The right to free worship (Whatever you wish to worship, whether it's the Princesses or the cabbages in your backyard you are free to deify!).
- The right to peaceful assembly (To protest something you do not like or support something you do.. It can be a new law or it can be to simply protest a severe lack of protests-As long as you are peaceful and break no laws, you can! I would suggest parties, parties are always fun.).
- The right to an advocate (In cases of trial), and the right to trial by jury.
- The right to a presumption of innocence (You can be accused of anything, but unless there is solid evidence, enough to convince a jury beyond a reasonable doubt, you are free).
- The right to vote (Provided you are of legal age, which can vary).
- The right to run for public office.
- The right to own property.
- The right to not suffer cruel and unusual punishment.

With these rights conferred to all citizens by the Constitution of Equestria, you have every incentive to act as a responsible citizen for a very simple reason: The Constitution and local laws can all be modified by votes and representatives. While we can put our faith in the Princesses, we cannot put our full faith in mortal ponies because... They are mortal. Mortalis ergo sum!²³

So, now that we have finished with the basic building block of the Republic, it is time to move on to the next level. Your local elections! When it comes to your local town, city, hamlet, or village, you get to choose the following:

- The Mayor
- The City Council
- Chief Advocate

There are different election cycles for every city, but most of them will hold elections every year or so. This is what you are voting for:

²³This does not actually mean anything. ~Talon

1: The Mayor is what we call an executive: He or she acts as the nominal leader of the community, responsible for defending your community in war and carrying out policy. Therefore you should pick one who is good at leadership. If they are not good at leadership, pick one that is good at management. If you can't find one good at management, you should probably find a stupid, easily manipulated pony to serve the post. As long as they are good-looking and good at speaking, the rest will attend to itself.²⁴²⁵

2: The City Council. Depending on your population, you will have a small number of councilors or a large number. You choose them to be in charge of the money and to be the ponies who draft laws. They can only pass a law with a majority vote, which must ultimately be approved by the Mayor. The Mayor can be overridden by the Council but only with an even larger majority than the previous vote. You should choose councilors based on their ability to manage money well, to care for the public welfare, and to be good debaters. If you can't find anyone who matches this, you will more than likely vote in spoiled, greedy or idiotic councilors.²⁶

3: The Chief Advocate. This advocate will organize and provide advocates for every court hearing, which includes criminal cases, business disputes, private disputes and citizenship applications. For any legal matter within the confines of the community, you will want to go to them or another advocate. This advocate should already be an advocate or a pony trained in rhetoric and the law. You should not elect a fishmonger, or the village idiot.²⁷ Those do not generally work out well in my experience.

Individual governments can have a variety of elected positions. Be sure to only elect those qualified into those positions, even if they are your friend whom you may possibly owe a favor or twenty-nine. I admit that is a specific number but it has no bearing on this situation, not even as an anecdote from my foalhood.

²⁴That's terrible advice! ~Twilight Sparkle

²⁵It was a different time. ~Talon

²⁶Some towns do not have councils at all, they just have informal committees formed to address specific problems, like Ponyville.

²⁷This should go without saying but it's already been said so... I lost my train of thought. ~Talon

Now, any government requires money to run. It gets this money from taxes that you, the citizen, pays. These taxes will vary, and are never pleasant to pay. However, they will never exceed the Republic's national tax rate, and if you cannot pay them you can petition the Chief Advocate to arrange for a delay in paying your taxes based on legitimate difficulties. Make sure they're actually legitimate, or at least somewhat legitimate looking. Perhaps pay some orphans or a beggar mare to accompany you to the hearing posing as your family.²⁸

But no! Taxes are an unpleasant duty to be sure, but rest assured that ponies can only avoid them by either performing considerable services to the community that offset the money they owe (such as charity), by breaking the law, or by dying. So you see, the genius of the state is in encouraging good works and good fellowship rather than encouraging the breaking of the law or death. To do this is to promote fair taxes, and as you yourselves select who gets to choose how high those taxes are, it is really you who decide how fair the taxes should be through them. Which is why you must take care to be responsible, informed citizens. Apathetic and ignorant citizens will get you your own reflection: an apathetic, ignorant government.²⁹³⁰

Therefore, make sure you know what your government is up to. This rule applies to all levels, starting with the community level, which we have covered, all the way up to the provincial and finally national levels. I would suggest against peeping on your elected representatives, however. This generally leads no where good.³¹

²⁸Aristides was never actually smart enough to utilize this approach, but then he usually left his personal advocate to deal with money matters. As his advocate preferred to be rich rather than poor and not in jail, Aristides never was late in his tax payments. ~Princess Luna

²⁹Aristides may have been trying to quote the great statespony Canter, who famously said: "The state and society are not the same thing: Rather they are reflections of one another." ~Twilight Sparkle

³⁰No need to drag his good name through the mud, Twilight Sparkle. ~Princess Luna

³¹It is likely that his experience in breakdancing also ensured he was durable enough to withstand the onslaught of furious females he had been caught spying upon. Why this was regarded as scandalous when most ponies still wore no clothing back then is a mystery outside the scope of this book. ~Talon

3

Now we come to the next level in the Republic. The whole thing is designed to have a number of levels to make everything neatly organized. This is based on the theory that life is much easier if you immediately know who is in charge, who is *not* in charge and who is in charge of what. If hordes of Aduuna raiders are attacking your village, you would not usually turn to the local party planner for help.³²

That is, if you elect your party planners. Some towns have an official elected party planner. If you wish to have one, please petition your local council to get it voted on.

Ah! Yes! I completely forgot! Ballots! I was going to bring it up last chapter but it equally applies here, on the Province level.³³³⁴³⁵³⁶ So, first question: What is a Province? A province is like a smaller nation within the greater nation of Equestria. Just as you came from a small kingdom or country or tribe, so too is this a smaller part of a greater whole. The Province does two things. First, it ensures that the central government of the Republic is not all powerful because the Province is afforded certain rights that cannot be infringed upon by it, and it makes the running of the country more efficient because not every decision must be approved by the central government through a vast, unwieldy, corrupt bureaucracy.³⁷

So! The province, yes. It is modeled much like the city council, with an Executive, a Provincial Council that is half-elected by the citizens every

³²I wouldn't be too sure about that now... ~Twilight Sparkle

³³He was always doing this, forgetting things. Like that he was, in fact, carrying a jug of olive oil that he just *happened* to drop onto me but he *cheerfully* offered to lick off. ~Princess Luna

³⁴Hard to blame him... ~Talon

³⁵What was that? ~Princess Luna

³⁶Nothing. ~Talon

³⁷As has been shown with how inefficient, corrupt and brutal Stalliongrad's government was. Can you believe some ponies still think that there was *anything* good about those policies? Sheesh... ~Twilight Sparkle

over year (who are called Representatives), half-elected by the various city councils (who are called Councilors), and an appointed Judiciary Council. We will start with the Legislature.

In the Legislature, you can live a life of ease as half the councilors must run for office while the other half are chosen by the cities. In the legislature, there are two types of officials, Councilors and Representatives. In the legislature, the two are set against each other. I do not mean that they engage in outright ritualistic combat over policy decisions³⁸, by that I mean that in order to pass any policy a majority must agree to it among the Representatives and the Councilors. Such policy proposals are called “bills”, and must be voted on among each group independently.

Ultimately, any policy determined by the Legislature must be approved by the Executive, who is elected by a mix of the popular vote and what’s called the electoral vote-That is, special electors randomly chosen by the city councils will vote for a candidate based on how much of the popular vote he or she obtains in a city, and every city has an equal number of electoral votes. Now, while this seems kind of strange, it ensures that the election is not a straight popular vote. If that was the case, candidates for the Executive could quite simply campaign to buy off voters in the larger cities and completely ignore the wishes and desires of the rural cities.

How terrible would it be if our leaders ignored every ignorant hick and grass chewing yokel in the rural parts of our great republic! They might never get anything done! Ah, I mean... You should probably forget I wrote that. It won’t be on the citizenship test.³⁹

So, how do you know what to look for in a good Executive? Well, the same things apply for any good leader. First, ask what they are running for, exactly. Do they wish to be King? Do they wish to be Governor? Do they wish to be Dog Catcher? If they wish to be Dog Catcher then don’t bother with them for Executive, because what do you need a Dog Catcher in the

³⁸Though it did happen and still does happen in some of the older provinces. Tickets can be found on sale at many a reputable establishment, check your local listings. ~Talon

³⁹I wondered why my good friend Applejack disliked this book in school. ~Twilight Sparkle

Executive office for? You don't catch dogs in the Executive office! That'd just be silly!⁴⁰

Besides, Executives are called upon to lead the Provincial Guard, Civil Services, and assemble militias. Dog catching is the least of their worries when they have direct control over the provincial military and disaster relief. They must be tough, strong, smart citizens to whom Authority Equals Asskicking, as the great philosopher Tropicus wrote. To keep them from having total control, however, as in the case of the city councils the legislature holds the purse strings. To have them be outright dictators would be bad, no matter how awesome they might look walking away from explosions.

Anyway, you elect executives on a two year basis. They too are in constant conflict with the legislation, but their duties are different. They lead, firstly by signing the decisions of the legislation. If the executive does not like the legislation, he can veto it and send it back to the legislation. If the legislation, however, can pull together a greater majority than the majority they had to pass the bill the first time they can overrule the executive. The executive at this point can appeal to the Judiciary.

Now, what is the judiciary? Well, they are a council of up to fifty ponies chosen by the executive and the legislature to determine if a policy obeys or breaks the laws of either the Constitution of Equestria or local laws, as well as to hear cases that affect the entire province or are appeals from a lower court.

The Executive submits lists of jurors for approval, and the Legislature can approve or disapprove of the choices. The Councillors are usually the ones to approve the jurors, but if the Executive does not approve of their ruling he can petition the Representatives to overrule the Councillors by a two-thirds majority vote. In this way, constant conflict is guaranteed between all parties in government and any change is slow and difficult.⁴¹

Now, the obvious question is: Why make things so enormously difficult to change? The answer is quite simple: It is so no citizen or faction of citizens can usurp power easily and enforce tyranny by ramming through

⁴⁰He's missing the point... Again. ~Princess Luna

⁴¹Indeed, there are still cases being decided from MY day. Not many but a few. ~Princess Luna

new policy. The greatest impediment to ponies who desire power is other ponies who desire power, and in this way every faction is kept at odds so that only if the majority of them agree to a policy, it may become law. In this way, the interests of most citizens are represented, save for those ponies who are completely insane or who wish to rule the world as a God Emperor.⁴²

Before, I wished to speak to you about ballots and ballot initiatives. Well, that part is rather simple. A ballot is a citizen initiative to get a bill passed. Rather than originating in the Legislature as most policy does, a ballot is a citizen petition to get something voted on. How many signatures you need varies from province to province but it usually runs to at least a thousand ponies. If you can't get a thousand ponies to sign off on your ballot, I advise you to learn how to forge signatures or simply bribe the clerk responsible for passing petitions onto the Legislature. Bribery instructions will be provided in a later edition of this book.⁴³⁴⁴⁴⁵

Once the petition initiative is approved as a bill, it is voted upon in the legislature like any other bills. Some provinces will turn the vote over to the citizens on ballot initiatives, depending on what they do. So once again, it is up to you to be a responsible, informed citizen to ensure that your government behaves properly. Otherwise, they may vote themselves private island retreats with harms of beautiful mares to wait on them hoof and hoof.⁴⁶

⁴²Thankfully, those are indeed a minority, though if you are interested Ponies for God Emperor meets monthly at Mrs. Cake's Sugar Shack basement for roleplaying nights. ~Twilight Sparkle

⁴³I wouldn't use those instructions now, they're horribly out of date and inflation has rendered them laughably low. ~Talon

⁴⁴Ahem?~Princess Luna

⁴⁵And it is immoral and illegal, too. ~Talon

⁴⁶Which he himself tried to do, rather infamously. It was one of the most one-sided votes in the history of the Equestrian Senate. ~Princess Luna

4

At last we reach the national level of government, and given the forms we've followed it should be no surprise it is almost an exact copy of the provincial level. I would have simply copied chapter 3 and edited all the words out to make it fit the national level but my editor wouldn't let me.⁴⁷ So! Let us begin.

Like the provincial level of government, the national level is composed of an Executive, a Judiciary and a Legislative branch. Let us start with the Legislature, which is commonly referred to as the Senate. Like at the provincial level half the elected officials are elected by popular vote every two years, and the other half are elected by the provincial councils by majority vote every two years. One third of the legislature is up for re-election at any one time with a year's break in between to allow every pony a bit of breathing room so that they aren't constantly barraged with politics.⁴⁸

They do everything the provincial legislature does, just on a larger scale. In addition, they have elected leaders among themselves called Tribunes, who act as the leaders of their faction of the Senate who are generally tasked with organizing and running specific committees of the legislature that investigate issues and produce bills related to those issues, such as funding for the military, intelligence, and law enforcement. These committees are not permanent and are constantly changing to reflect changing challenges to the nation, though some Tribunes are elected more than once due to their demonstrated wisdom, popularity or ability to bribe others, though you didn't hear that from me. You read it, big difference.

The executives are actually two Ponies-Consuls, who are the highest elected officials in Equestria. One is chosen every four years, and once again the dichotomy of power is evident. One is chosen by popular election, and the other is chosen by election through the legislature every

⁴⁷He became rather infamous for this in his *Rhetorical Questions* series. ~Twilight Sparkle

⁴⁸I know I like this aspect of our society, good grief. ~Talon

four years. They are known as the Day and Night Consuls, reflecting the two Sister goddesses Celestia and Luna.⁴⁹

The Day Consul is traditionally⁵⁰ concerned with the military, public morale, open diplomacy and the economy. Bills on any of these issues are usually signed into law by him (or her) or vetoed if he does not wish to sign it. This consul is generally the more public of the two and is usually the more attractive and better at public speaking.⁵¹ He is the “Sun under the Sun” of Equestria and is often the one elected by popular vote, though not always.

The Night Consul is traditionally concerned with the judiciary, intelligence, law enforcement, covert operations, diplomacy and anything else that is traditionally out of sight of the average citizen. Sometimes called the “Shadow under the Moon”, he or she is usually elected by the Legislature, though again not always. He signs into law bills regarding his areas of responsibility, usually without the pen of the Day Consul.⁵² Often he directs the intelligence and covert services of Equestria, safeguarding it from enemies from within while the Day Consul safeguarded it from enemies from without.⁵³

However, in matters of state that are extremely important, such as a declaration of war, passing the budget of the entire Republic or other weighty matters, it requires both Consuls to be in agreement to allow them to pass. The Legislature can pass bills over their heads but only if there is a larger majority than in the first vote by at least a third of the original number of voters.

Finally, we come to the Judiciary. Fifty to one hundred jurors, depending on the case or matter to be debated, will be submitted by the

⁴⁹My idea, actually. I didn't like the idea of there just being one main executive, felt like it could be too easily abused. ~Princess Luna

⁵⁰But not always-It's generally figured out by the two Consuls upon election, who has what responsibilities, though this can be determined by the Legislature if they feel one Consul has too much power. ~Twilight Sparkle

⁵¹This feels vaguely blasphemous, but I'll let it slide. ~Princess Luna

⁵²Most of these I was very fond of. I think the legislature tried to find candidates like me, which was very flattering. Some of them though, I could not stand-They were just too timid or too dark. ~Princess Luna

⁵³So far, the legends of super ninja ponies have gone unsubstantiated. ~Talon

Consuls for approval by the Senate. The Consuls generally have lesser officials called Quaestors to choose these jurors and act as managers of them during hearings, as they cannot do everything themselves. The same rules apply-The jurors are chosen by vote, but to prevent backlogs and constant deliberation, in general the jurors are chosen by a committee of Councillors and Representatives called the Judiciary Committee that votes on the choices.

If the rest of the Senate is unhappy with their decisions, they can vote to block the appointment of the Jurors Council but require two-third majority. In this way, while it is more efficient, any citizens who would make truly appalling jurors are kept out of the deliberative body. They vote on policies to determine if they are constitutional, and hear cases that would have an effect on all of Equestria, as well as appeals from lower courts regarding cases. My innovations to this allowed for jury hearings to be both fun, entertaining and just, and maintained a high level of participation in government by the average citizen.⁵⁴ If the Judiciary finds a bill to be illegal or unconstitutional, it will strike it down. This ruling can be appealed by Advocates employed by anypony, of course, but only if you really, *really* want to.

⁵⁴See the introduction to this book, or read *Wrestling on the Senate Floor* by the great scholar and professional pony wrestler Pluton.~Twilight Sparkle

5

Now at last, we come to the large, firm flanked elephant in the room- The Royal Princesses.⁵⁵ What role do they play in the government? Well, it may surprise you to know that their powers in this regard are actually rather limited, despite their enormous power.

Like any other citizen, they can petition a Senator to bring forth a bill for vote. Granted, most Senators will probably be more likely to listen to the Princess' petition over the petition of a normal rock farmer, but the Princesses do not do this often. They preside over festivals, religious ceremonies and the like, and offer council and advice to every pony in the government but officially they do not need to be listened to. However, both can make their frustrations with a particular action of government known, the same as any other citizen.

One bit of real power the Princesses have is over the distribution of welfare and the raising of certain funds for government, though in practice this is not too different from what most private citizens do. They can bestow titles, organizations lands from their own privately own domains upon certain citizens who then become known as Princes and Princesses of Equestria. Princes are generally tasked with running foundations in relation to charity, managing public spaces for the benefit of all citizens, or acting as the head of advocate firms to bring suits against the immoral. In other words, whatever the Princesses feel needs to be addressed without undue interference from the rest of the government that can be handled by private concerns, the Princesses appoint Princes and Princesses to these tasks.⁵⁶⁵⁷

During wartime, Princes and Princesses are tasked with raising funds for the army, helping to manage charities and beneficial organizations such as the Order of the Gentle Hoof, the Red Sun and Moon, and the

⁵⁵I would kill him for this if he were not already dead. ~Princess Luna

⁵⁶How on Equestria did Prince *Blueblood* get appointed? ~Twilight Sparkle

⁵⁷Apparently the selection process has become a bit... Lax in the years I've been gone. ~Princess Luna

Hippocratic Society; and to run public lands dealing with the military, such as military bases, training centers and the like.

Finally, for strictly symbolic purposes there are Princes of the Unicorns, Princes of the Pegasi, and Princes of the Earth Ponies. These are titles of honor and prestige, of course, but hold no true government powers.⁵⁸ They are merely extremely shiny and pretty, worth nothing at all... Though they are so very, very shiny, so wonderfully shiny...⁵⁹

Ahem. Where was I? Oh yes! The Princesses!

Any citizen has the right to have his or her case heard before the Princesses. Every single one. In this context, if the Princess decides to aid the citizen, they will act as an Advocate for them before the Judiciary or even the Senate. However, given the enormous number of petitioners every day, it is advised you be prepared to wait for a long time before your case is heard. More often it is simpler to hire an advocate to argue your case before the judiciary. You can even argue before the Senate if you wish, though this is mainly a means of playing to public opinion rather than gaining true power.

Indeed, if you were to calculate the costs (no need for an abacus-It is easy enough to do it in your head without using such a cumbersome device⁶⁰⁶¹⁶²⁶³⁶⁴), it is much easier to hire an advocate for any dispute you are having rather than involving the Princesses. But, if no one else can help you, if you are in trouble and need help, you may be able to call... The Princesses. They are a fantastic team ready to aid you, up to and including saving you from punishment for a crime you did not commit.⁶⁵ All foals know this from birth and will remember it.⁶⁶⁶⁷

⁵⁸Thank Celestia. ~Talon

⁵⁹He was always very easily distracted, as you can see. ~Princess Luna

⁶⁰Cumbersome?! How dare he call it cumbersome! It is not remotely cumbersome! He has no idea what he is talking about. ~Princess Luna

⁶¹There, there, Princess, no need to be upset. ~Twilight Sparkle

⁶²Yeah. He's been dead for centuries, what can he do to your abacus? ~Talon

⁶³... Hurt its feelings? ~Princess Luna

⁶⁴... Uh... Sure your Majesty. Whatever you say. ~Twilight Sparkle

⁶⁵Something about this seems very familiar, but I'm not sure why... ~Talon

⁶⁶I pity the foal who does not... Why are you laughing, Twilight Sparkle? ~Princess Luna

6

So! Now you know the basic structure and functions of the Great Republic of Equestria! If you do not know by now, I suggest either re-reading this, getting someone else to read it to you (slowly), or just buying another of my books and just saying you understood it perfectly if asked while holding up the book to appear intelligent.⁶⁸

Still, if you take nothing else from this book, please take this: Being a citizen of Equestria is not an easy task. You must use your brain and your eyes and your ears to keep appraised of your situation. No pony can spend all their time on it, so inevitably you will make mistakes. However, the wonderful thing about this system of government is that it is rigged-Not against the normal citizenry but against those who would outright abuse it. Crazy candidates must convince hundreds of ponies in a legislature, or millions of ponies in a general election that they are *not* crazy, and believe me that is a lot harder than it looks.⁶⁹

So to be sure, it is not all successful business this or living the highlife that or even constant partying all the time yes. You can do those things but there are consequences for every action, and if you do not keep track of what your government is doing, then it will do as it pleases. Even the Princesses cannot directly intervene because if they did, all those freedoms and laws would mean absolutely nothing.

The choice, as always, is yours to make Citizen.⁷⁰⁷¹⁷²⁷³⁷⁴

⁶⁷Oh... No reason...~Twilight Sparkle

⁶⁸He had something like this in every one of his books, that carrying it around would make you look more intelligent.~Princess Luna

⁶⁹Thank Celestia and Luna for small favors.~Talon

⁷⁰A very powerful ending... Written by somepony else, most likely.~Talon

⁷¹All the same, he allowed it in so he was not a total and complete foal.~Princess Luna

⁷²Indeed! This should make for an interesting letter to Princess Celestia this week!~Twilight Sparkle

⁷³Just be sure it's an abridged version.~Princess Luna

⁷⁴Don't worry, I know just how to phrase it.~Twilight Sparkle

Dear Princess Celestia,

The government is like your friend with a substance abuse problem or other psychological issues. If you interact with them and help them and work with them and share with them, they will be your friend back gladly. If, however, you don't interact with them or give them enough attention, they might decide to fall back into their addiction or, at worst, carve you up and turn you into... I don't know, cupcakes or something crazy like that. So, the lesson is to pay attention to your friends and keep them from going down a bad road as best you can so that they don't crack down on you and take away your freedoms. Who is the government.

Your student,

Twilight Sparkle⁷⁵⁷⁶⁷⁷⁷⁸⁷⁹⁸⁰⁸¹

⁷⁵So, how is that?~Twilight Sparkle

⁷⁶Not bad. ~Talon

⁷⁷I think my sister will approve, though the metaphor gets a tiny bit stretched. ~Princess Luna

⁷⁸No worse than anything else I stretch out, like endings. ~Twilight Sparkle

⁷⁹Hey, there is a minimum word count. I don't want the publisher to turn it away for lack of material.

~Talon

⁸⁰Just try not to put on so much padding you suffocate. ~Princess Luna

⁸¹Yes Your Majesty...~Talon