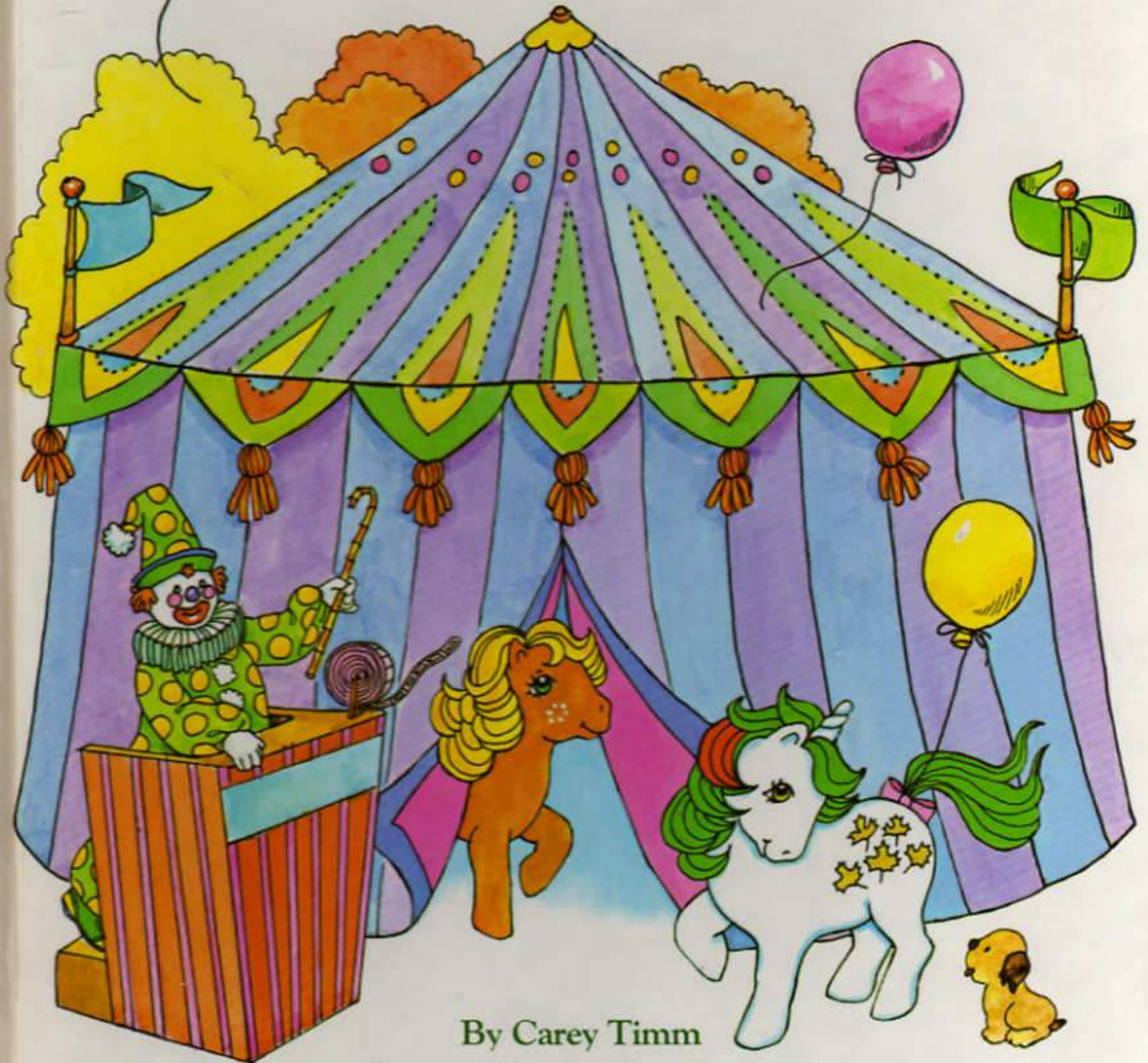


My Little Pony

Under the Big Top!



By Carey Timm

Illustrated by Carolyn Bracken





Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data:


Timm, Carey, 1955- . My Little Pony under the big top! SUMMARY: When the circus comes to Pony Land, Gusty learns a set of tricks and makes an appearance as guest performer. 1. Children's stories, American. [1. Ponies--Fiction. 2. Circus--Fiction] I. Bracken, Carolyn, ill. II. Title. PZ7.L97825Mzb 1985 [Fic] 85-42536 ISBN: 0-394-87385-8

Manufactured in the United States of America 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

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Random House  New York

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It was autumn in Pony Land. All the leaves at the Dream Castle had turned beautiful shades of scarlet, gold, and orange, and the sun was shining brightly.

The Little Ponies gathered outside the castle because today was a very special day—they were going to see the Big Top Traveling Circus!

“Let’s hurry!” Gusty cried impatiently to her friends. “I want to get there early!” So with a shake of their manes the ponies were off, galloping over hillsides and through meadows to the circus grounds.



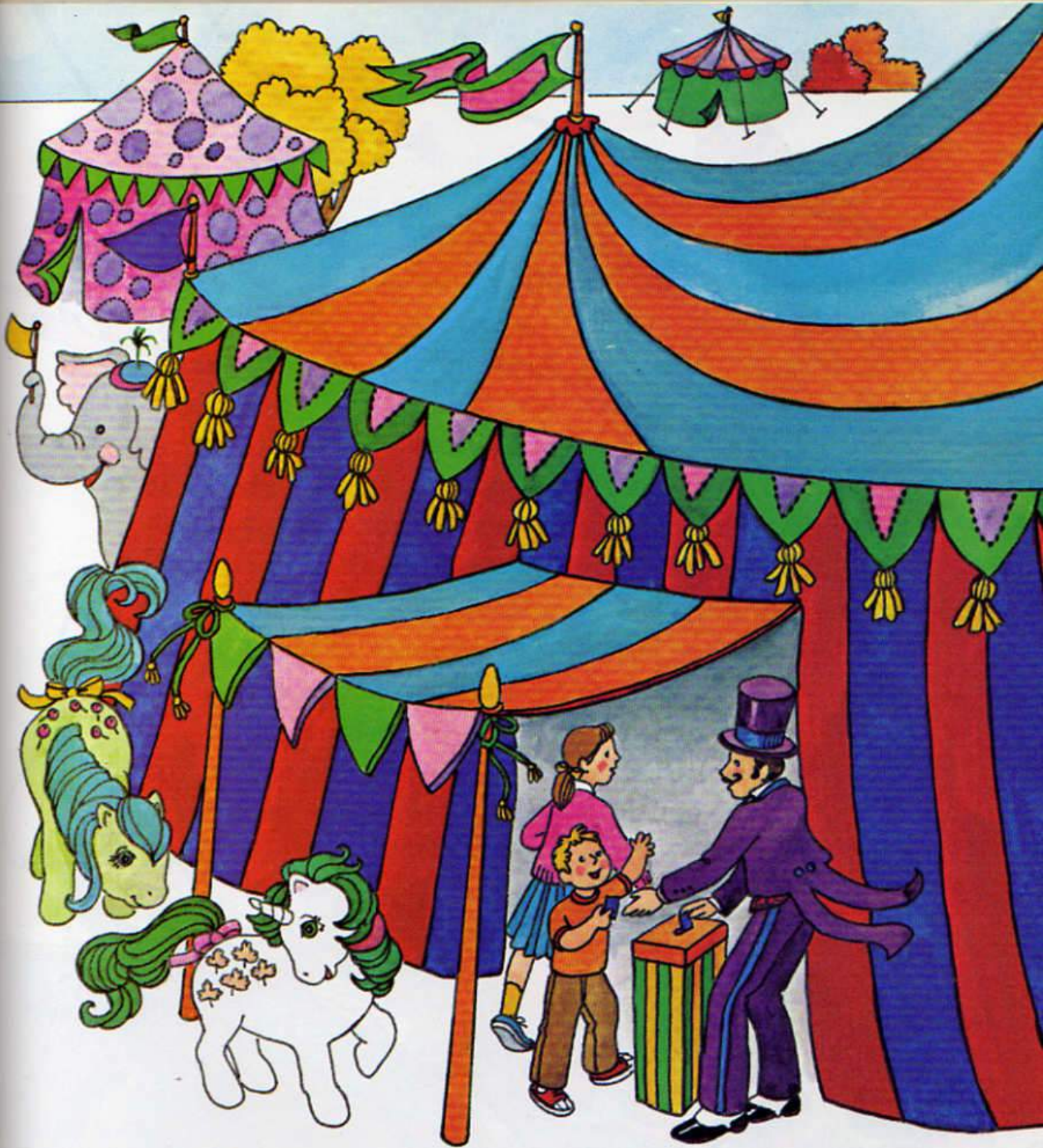
When they arrived they saw tents of all sizes and colors. Right in the center of the grounds stood the striped big top, where all the circus acts performed. And everywhere, vendors offered delicious treats to eat.

“Look, candied apples!” cried Applejack.

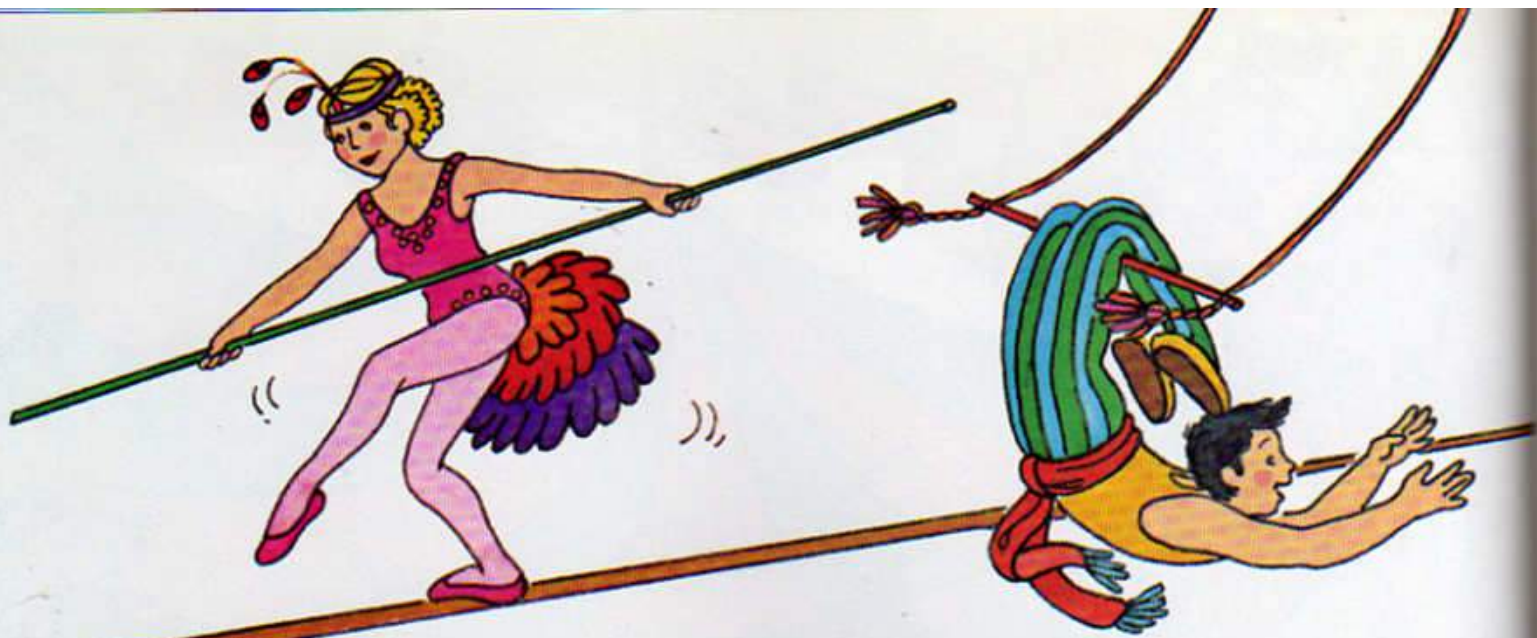
“And cotton candy!” exclaimed Baby Cotton Candy.

The Little Ponies stopped at a row of beautifully painted caravan wagons to look at the circus animals. There were lions, tigers, seals, elephants, and even a bear that danced!





“Let’s go over to the big top, ponies,” said Gusty. “It’s almost time for the show to start!” And they hurried off.



The lights went down under the big top, and the ringmaster walked into the ring. "Ladies and gentlemen! Ponies of all ages! Welcome to the greatest show in Pony Land!" he began. Then he introduced the trapeze artists.

The ponies watched as the daring trapeze artists flew through the air high above their seats, and held their breath as a young woman walked across the highwire holding a balancing rod.

"There's no net!" gasped Gusty.

One exciting performance followed another, but the ponies' favorite was the very last act!



A beautiful white pony stepped into the center spotlight. She wore a sparkling gold and silver bridle with a long feather plume, and her flowing white mane and tail glistened as she began to gallop around the ring. Soon a small dog wearing a red collar scampered into the ring after her. He ran up a ladder and waited for the pony to gallop by. As she drew close, he leaped into the air and landed on her back, and there he sat proudly as they circled the ring together. Then the little dog hopped off the pony's back and onto a seesaw. The pony pranced up to the seesaw and pushed it down, and the little dog went soaring through the air!

The pony raced to the other side of the ring just in time for the little dog to land safely on her back.

"Hooray!" cheered the crowd.

"What a wonderful trick!" cried the ponies.

Soon the show was over and it was time to return to the Dream Castle.





When Gusty got up the next morning, all she could think about was the show she had seen under the big top. "Let's play circus!" she said to her friends.

"Great idea! I'll walk across the tightrope!" cried Bow Tie, tiptoeing along a fallen log.

"Here's my famous balancing act!" giggled Tootsie. She balanced a stick on the tip of her nose.

"And I'm a beautiful white circus pony," neighed Gusty, galloping around the Dream Castle.

But soon the Little Ponies grew tired of the game, and they left Gusty all alone with her daydreams.

“If I found a dog to be my partner and we learned to do tricks together, maybe I could be a circus pony too!” thought Gusty. “I know—I’ll look for Brandy!”

Before long she found the little dog burying a bone behind the Dream Castle. She told him about the wonderful tricks that the circus pony and her partner had performed. “You and I could have our own circus act, Brandy!” she said. “Just like them!”

“Arf!” barked Brandy.

“We’d have to practice a lot,” warned Gusty. “Are you ready?”

“Arf!” barked the dog, and he handed her a paw.

“It’s a deal!” said Gusty. “Let’s go to work!”



Gusty and Brandy practiced their act for the next three days. Before long Brandy could jump onto Gusty's back as she galloped by, and sit up with his small paws in the air as she raced around the Dream Castle. He could even do a back flip in the air!

Finally they practiced the seesaw trick until it was perfect. "We'll be ready for the circus any day now," nickered Gusty happily.





Just then Peachy trotted by. "Are you still playing circus?" she asked.

"We're not playing," replied Gusty. "We're practicing. We're going to be famous circus stars!"

"But the traveling circus is leaving Pony Land," said Peachy. "The last show is today!"

"Today! Then we'll never be circus stars!" said Gusty.

"Well, maybe you won't," said Peachy. "But you could see the show one more time."

"That's a great idea!" whinnied Gusty. "Let's go, Brandy!"

Gusty and Brandy were on their way to the big top when Gusty spotted a small red tent with a sign hanging outside the entrance. "Fortunes," she read. Suddenly she was overcome with curiosity.

"Wait here, Brandy," said Gusty. Inside the tent, a woman was sitting at a table holding a small crystal ball. "May I have my fortune told, please?" asked Gusty.

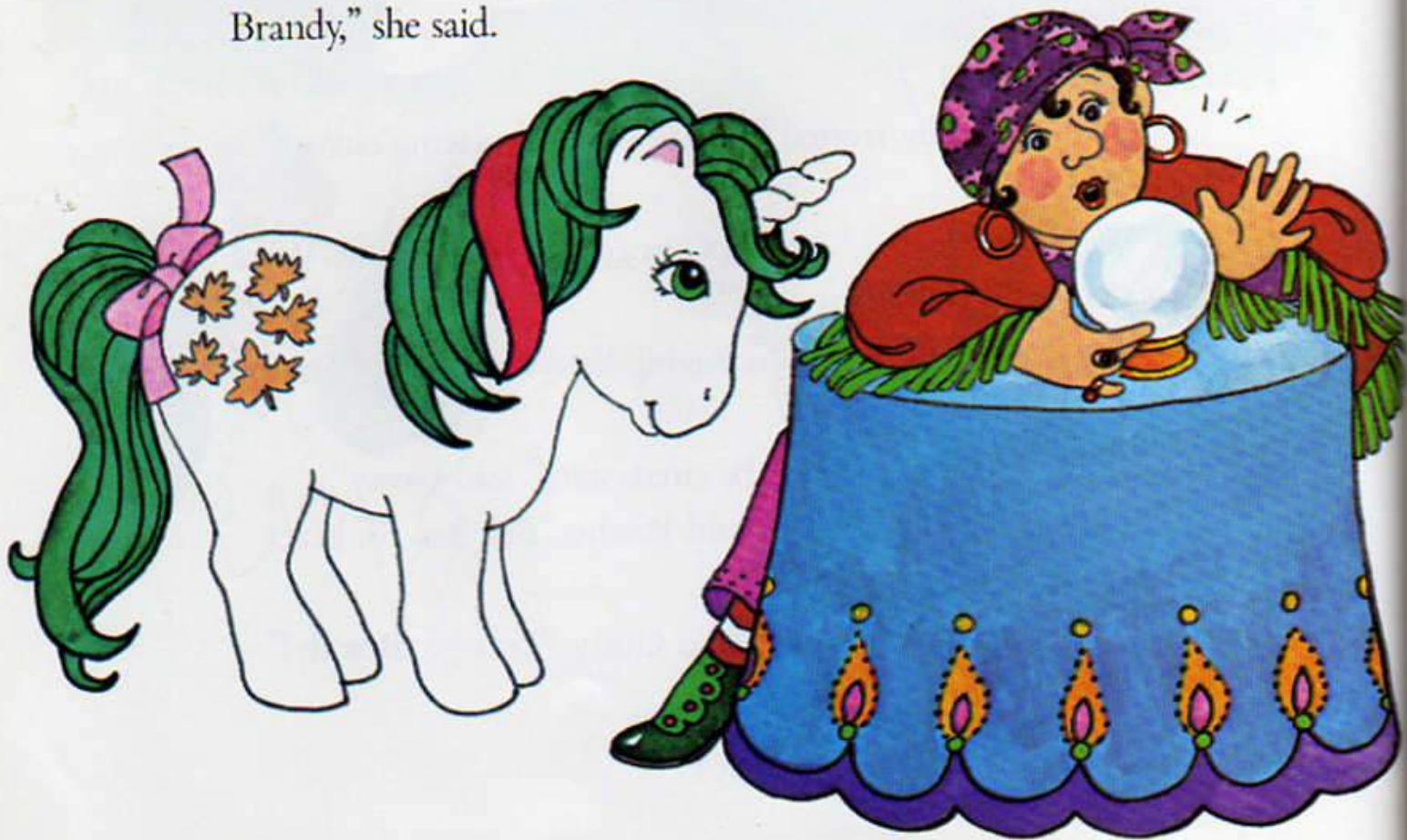
The woman nodded and stared into the ball. At last she spoke.

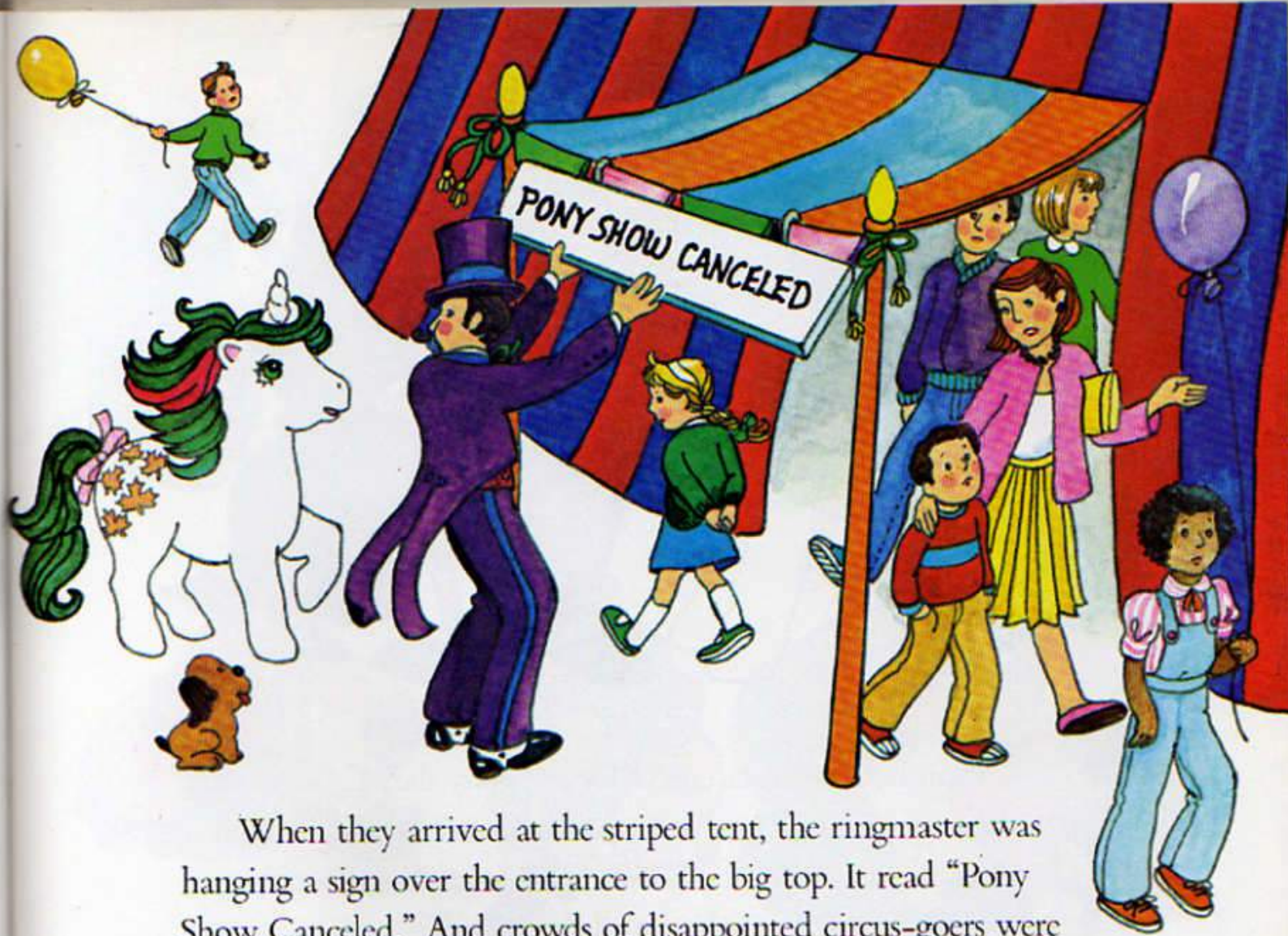
"I see you wearing a beautiful bridle with a long feather plume," said the fortuneteller, "and people are cheering you."

"Where? Why?" asked Gusty.

"My crystal ball is getting cloudy," the fortuneteller said mysteriously. "I cannot tell you any more."

Gusty didn't know what to think. "Let's go see the show, Brandy," she said.





When they arrived at the striped tent, the ringmaster was hanging a sign over the entrance to the big top. It read "Pony Show Canceled." And crowds of disappointed circus-goers were leaving the big top!

"Oh, no!" cried Gusty. "I wanted to see the pony perform again!"

"I'm very sorry," said the ringmaster. "But my pony doesn't feel well, and I don't have a replacement for her." He walked away.

Suddenly Gusty remembered what the fortuneteller had said: "... A beautiful bridle with a long feather plume ... and people are cheering you ..."

"Come on, Brandy," said Gusty, and she ran after the ringmaster.



"I can be your replacement for the pony show!" Gusty said to the ringmaster. "Then you won't have to cancel it!"

"That's very kind of you," said the ringmaster, "but there isn't enough time to teach you all the tricks."

"I already know the tricks," said Gusty proudly. "I saw the show a few days ago, and I've been practicing ever since with my dog, Brandy. We can do them all, even the seesaw trick! Honest!"

The ringmaster looked doubtful.

"Besides," said Gusty, "you need a white pony, and the fortuneteller just told me that I would wear a beautiful bridle with a feather plume and people would cheer for me!"

Finally the ringmaster agreed. He took down the sign and told Gusty and Brandy where to find their costumes. "See you in the center ring!" he said.



All the circus performers were getting dressed in the costume tent. Clowns in huge bow ties and floppy shoes painted funny faces on each other, and acrobats put on sparkling leotards and silver slippers.

Gusty's mane and tail were combed until they shone. Then she was given a gold and silver bridle with a long feather plume. "Gosh!" said Gusty when she looked in the mirror. "Now I really am a circus pony!"

Brandy was brushed and given a beautiful ruffled red collar to wear.

"I guess we're ready," said Gusty.



Outside, some elephants were practicing their tricks. When they saw Gusty they lumbered over. "Hello!" they trumpeted. "Are you the new circus pony?"

"Yes," said Gusty. "And this is my dog, Brandy!"

"Welcome to the circus," said the biggest elephant. "Do you know lots of tricks?"

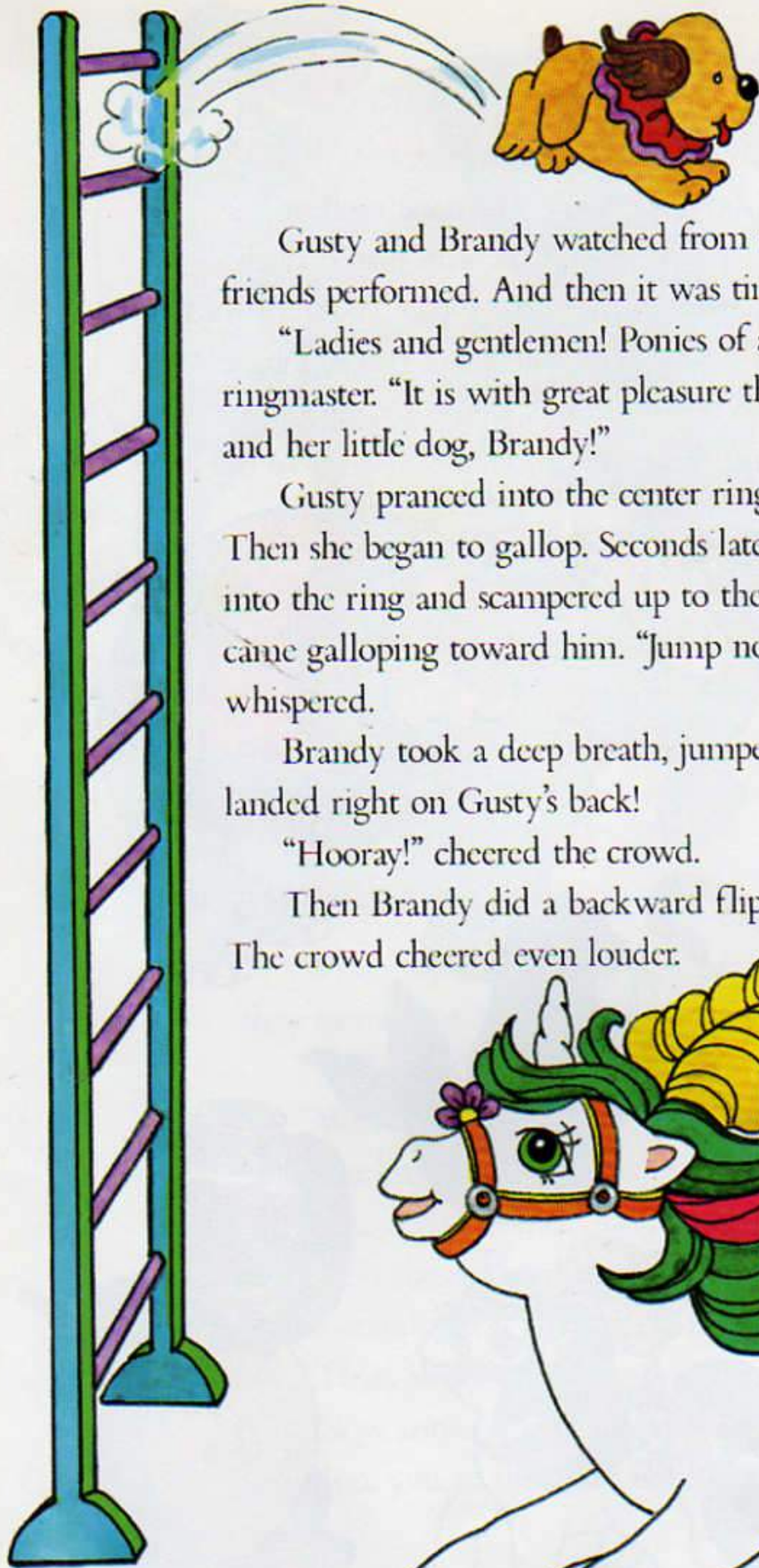
"One or two," said Gusty. "But I'd love to learn some more!" So the elephant showed Gusty one of his favorite tricks—standing on a pedestal on one leg!

"That's wonderful!" Gusty whinnied.

"Now come with us," said the elephant. "And we'll introduce you to the other circus animals."

So Gusty and Brandy met the dancing bear, two dark, shiny seals, and all the lions and tigers. The dancing bear showed Gusty how to dance a jig, and the seals played catch with Brandy. Then the circus animals told Gusty about all the exciting places they had visited with the circus! Before long it was time for the show to begin. Brandy scampered up the elephant's long trunk, and the group made its way over to the big top.





Gusty and Brandy watched from the wings as their new friends performed. And then it was time to go on.

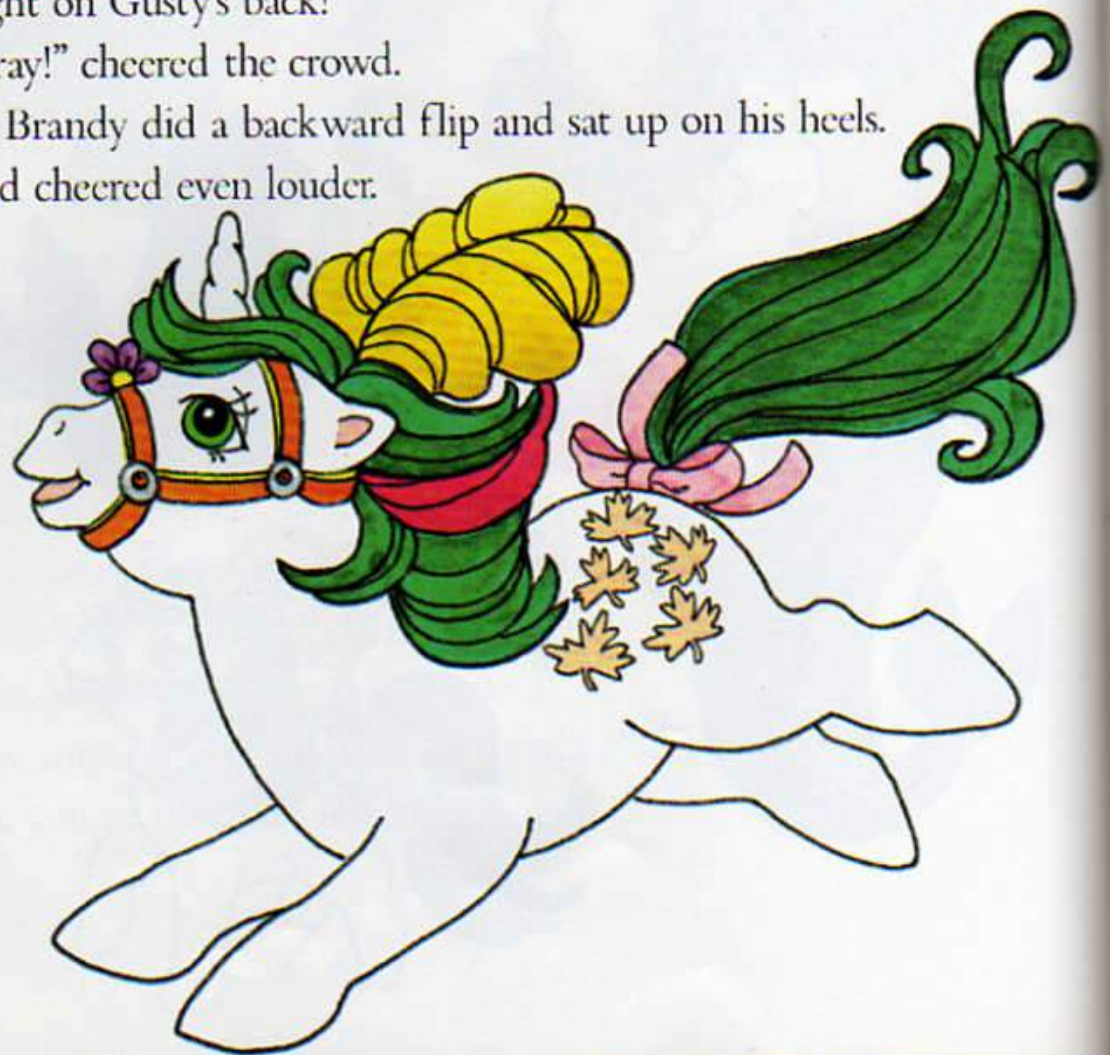
“Ladies and gentlemen! Ponies of all ages!” began the ringmaster. “It is with great pleasure that I introduce Gusty—and her little dog, Brandy!”

Gusty pranced into the center ring and took a deep bow. Then she began to gallop. Seconds later Brandy followed her into the ring and scampered up to the top of the ladder. Gusty came galloping toward him. “Jump now, Brandy!” she whispered.

Brandy took a deep breath, jumped off the ladder—and landed right on Gusty’s back!

“Hooray!” cheered the crowd.

Then Brandy did a backward flip and sat up on his heels. The crowd cheered even louder.





Next, Brandy hopped off Gusty's back and onto the low end of the seesaw. Gusty galloped over to the seesaw and pushed the high end down with her hoof. The little dog went soaring through the air! "I'll catch you, Brandy!" nickered Gusty, and she raced across the ring. Brandy landed safely on her back. The crowd cheered again!

"We really are circus stars now!" said Gusty breathlessly as she and Brandy took their final bow.



After the show the ringmaster gave Gusty and Brandy all the delicious treats they could eat. "You were terrific!" he said happily.

"And you saved our show!" said the circus animals.

Gusty and Brandy played with their new friends all afternoon. Then it was time for the Big Top Traveling Circus to leave Pony Land.

A big tear rolled down Gusty's face as she watched the circus pull away. Then she remembered—she hadn't returned the gold and silver bridle she had worn during the show. "Wait!" she cried, running after the wagons. "You forgot the bridle!"

The ringmaster poked his head out of the last wagon. "You can keep it, Gusty! You deserve it! You're a star!"





When Gusty got back to the Dream Castle, she and Brandy told all the Little Ponies about their adventures at the circus.

“I learned lots of new tricks,” she said, “but . . . well . . . I guess I won’t have any use for them now that the circus is gone.”

Gusty went to bed early that night. She hung the gold and silver bridle above her bed. “I miss the circus already,” she thought sadly. “I’ll never be a circus pony again!” And she drifted off to sleep.



“Gusty sure looks sad,” said Majesty later that night.
“She misses the circus,” said Bow Tie.
“Let’s think of something to cheer her up,” said Sparkler.
“We could put on our own circus!” said Spike.
“And Gusty will be the star!” cried Peachy.
“That’s a wonderful idea,” said Majesty. “We’ll have the circus tomorrow, and invite Megan and the Baby Ponies.”

All the Little Ponies worked late into the night getting ready for the circus. They sewed costumes, made signs, blew up balloons, and baked treats. Finally everything was ready.



The next morning Gusty and Brandy trotted into the Royal Courtyard of the Dream Castle. There was Peachy, wearing a floppy hat and a huge bow tie!

“Come outside,” Peachy said to them. “We’ve got a surprise for you.” They followed her over the drawbridge.

“Ladies and gentlemen! Ponies of all ages!” announced Majesty. “Welcome to the My Little Pony Circus! And here are the stars of our show! The beautiful, the talented, the famous . . . Gusty! And her little dog, Brandy!”

Gusty blinked her eyes. There were swings and trampolines, hoops and fences, banners and balloons. And all of her friends—dressed in fancy costumes!

“We want Gusty! We want Gusty!” cried Megan and the Baby Ponies. And then the show began!

Firefly and Medley flew through the air and performed daring acrobatic feats. Bow Tie stepped carefully along a tightrope, and Majesty did her famous disappearing act.

“This circus is even better than the Big Top,” thought Gusty. “I didn’t have to leave home to be part of the best circus in the world.”

And then she galloped into the center ring!





My Little Pony is always ready for fun!
Come join her as she performs dazzling
feats of skill and daring under the big top!

If you enjoyed this storybook, you'll want
to read its companion volume,
*My Little Pony: Baby Firefly's Adventure
and Other My Little Pony Stories.*

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ISBN 0-394-87385-8