

# A Broken Bond

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# Chapter 1

“You girls ready!”

“I’m ready as ever!”

“Let’s do this!”

“Okay...three...two...one...WATER BALLOON FIGHT!” Scootaloo shouted as she and her best friends, Applebloom and Sweetie Belle, headed to their own self made cardboard fortresses. Upon reaching hers, the filly pegasus started throwing her water balloons at Apple Bloom.

“Is that the best ya’ll can do?” Apple Bloom shouted as she proceeded take cover until she heard Scootaloo shout, “Oh no! I’ve run out!”

Upon hearing this, Apple Bloom peered over her cardboard fortress for a quick shot, but was met with a water balloon to the face from a laughing Scootaloo.

“Hey! No fair! Ya’ll said you was out!” Apple Bloom shouted, dripping wet.

“All’s fair in love and war!” Scootaloo answered just as a water balloon missed her mane by inches. Taking cover again, she immediately fired back at Sweetie Belle who dodged the throw. The two continued to fire at one another until Scootaloo managed to shoot two at the same time, confusing Sweetie Belle on which way to dodge. The two balloons managed to hit her at the same time and Scootaloo cheered in triumph.

“Yes! Two for two by Scootaloo! Oh yeah!”

As she continued to cheer, both Apple Bloom and Sweetie Belle looked at each other with a smirk before aiming a balloon each at Scootaloo.

“I’m the queen of the hill! The star of the skies! I’m-“

SPLASH! SPLASH!

“...soaking wet.” Scootaloo finished, as her friends laughed at the sight of her.

“All’s fair in love and war.” Apple Bloom stated.

“Yeah, yeah. So did we get them?!” Scootaloo quickly asked as she and the others checked their flanks.

“Blank!? Darn it!”

“Still no cutie mark...”

“I’ve got nothing.”

The three sighed in disappointment upon seeing they hadn’t gotten a “Water Balloon Fight” cutie mark. Apple Bloom stomped her hooves in frustration, “We didn’t get’em again! Not one cutie mark! Ah was sure we was going to get’em this time!”

“We’ve tried fly fishing, raft making, pumpkin throwing, pig rounding, ice cream selling, and more,” Sweetie Belle said with a dejected look. “Anypony got any other ideas?”

An expectant silence hung above them; neither of her friends could come up with something.

“Guess that’s it for today, girls. We’ll have to try again tomorrow after school.” Scootaloo said as she shrugged her shoulders.

“Yeah, ah got’s to dry up before ah get home though. Applejack won’t like it if ah come home all wet.”

“Same here. Rarity will get really angry if I get damp the carpeting.”

Scootaloo smirked as she told her friends, “No sweat! I’ve got it covered!”

Rushing over to a nearby tree, she found her scooter and helmet right where she left it. After putting on her helmet, Scootaloo got on her scooter

and began to beat her tiny wings to pick up speed, sending her and the scooter forward.

The other two watched as Scootaloo made her way towards them and started spinning around in circles with the two of them in the center. Flapping her wings harder, she concentrated on her turning, making sure she didn't get too close to hit her friends as she began to develop a small sized tornado. Although it wasn't strong, Sweetie Belle and Apple Bloom could feel the wind around them blow off the water like a dryer.

After a few more turns and Scootaloo soon put on the breaks and slowed down before coming to a complete stop. Opening their eyes, the two were amazed to find out they were completely dry.

"Wow, Scootaloo! That was amazing! I thought you weren't old enough to make weather yet." Apple Bloom shouted.

"I can't. But with my scooter I'm able to make enough wind to make a mini tornado only without the super fast force. I learned it from Rainbow Dash when she was practicing her moves last week and I've been trying to nail something like it with my scooter." she answered.

"You mean Rainbow Dash taught you her some of her moves?" asked Sweetie Belle.

"Well....no....more like I just happen to have seen them while I was watching her from behind some bushes..." Scootaloo blushed as she rubbed her hoof behind her head, "Anyway, I've wanted to try that trick and there you go! Dry as a desert."

"Ah'll say! Ah'm all drier then Granny Smith's dried apple pie." Apple Bloom examined her coat and found it wet free, "Ya'll really are talented with that scooter of yours. Ah'm surprised ya'll don't have a cutie mark for it already."

"Heh, thanks." Scootaloo said with a blush.

An idea then came to Apple Bloom, "Hey! Maybe ah can try out your scooter! It looks like fun and maybe ah'll get my cutie mark if ah try it!"

Scotaloo was surprised by Apple Bloom idea, "T-try my scooter? Are you sure?"

"Why not? Ah always see ya'll do them fancy tricks of yours all the time and ah've always wanted to try a few. It always looks like your having so much fun it makes me want'a try it."

To Apple Bloom surprise, Scotaloo just shook her head, "Sorry, Apple Bloom. But I'm the only one who gets to use my scooter."

"Huh? But why?"

"Well...I've never let anypony else on before...and besides you might hurt yourself. Trying to use a scooter is harder than it looks." Scotaloo said, trying to discourage Apple Bloom. However, this only made Apple Bloom more determined to try it.

"Then teach me! Ya'll can teach me all there is to know and then ah can ride it."

Scotaloo groaned, "Look! I have my reasons for being the only one to ride it so just drop it okay?"

"What reasons are they? It just sounds like ya'll being selfish." Apple Bloom said as she glared at Scotaloo.

"I'm not being selfish! I just don't want to share it!" Scotaloo yelled.

"But that's what being selfish means." Sweetie Belle pointed out much to Scotaloo's irritation.

"Look, I've got to go home. Mom's got dinner cooking, so I'll see you ponies tomorrow." Scotaloo said and rushed off on her scooter before her friends could say anything.

Apple Bloom just huffed and asked, "What was all that about?! Ah just wanted to try out her scooter, is that so wrong?"

"Maybe she has a good reason for not letting you ride it?" Sweetie Bell suggested.

"Then why won't she just say it? Ah can't think of any reason why we can't be trying it out." Apple Bloom said, angry that her Scootaloo's actions, "All she's doing is just being selfish and I don't like it."

"Well, there's nothing you can do about it now. Maybe she'll change her mind tomorrow at school?"

Apple Bloom sighed, "Ah guess...but this ain't over! Ah'm going to ride that scooter one way or another!"

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As she rolled her way through Ponyville, Scootaloo thought back to the small argument she'd had with Apple Bloom earlier that day. A part of her felt guilty for not letting Apple Bloom ride it, but this scooter was more than just a regular scooter. It was her connection to a happier time in the past, back when everything seemed normal. Even though it had been three years since...**that day**...whenever she rode the scooter she only felt the good times back then.

If anypony else used it, would it even feel the same? Would she lose that connection she had with her scooter? It might seem selfish, but because of that link nopony could ride this scooter but her. She wouldn't even let Rainbow Dash try it if she asked.

**That** was how valuable it was to her.

She arrived at her home on the corner of the next street. She opened the door shouting her arrival, "Mom? Where are you?" Scootaloo asked, rolling her scooter into the living room.

"I'm in the kitchen making dinner. How does fried carrot salad taste, tonight?" a voice called out from the kitchen at the other end. Scootaloo licked her lips and shouted, "Sounds great! I'll head inside in a minute."

Dragging her scooter up the staircase she made her way into her room. It was filled with posters of famous flyers along with pictures she took of Rainbow Dash whenever she went to watch her idol. Some magazines and comics lay on the floor and her bed was shaped like a cloud only it was

made wood and painted like one instead of a real one like most pegasus's preferred.

Hanging her helmet on a coat rack, Scootaloo then leaned her scooter near her dresser where a small photograph showing her family stood. It showed a much younger Scootaloo, on her scooter, and beside her were her parents. A light orange coated male pegasus with a red mane whose cutie mark was a storm cloud with white wings stood on the left. On the right was a brown coated female earth pony with a fuchsia mane whose cutie mark was a fork and chef's knife crossed over.

Scootaloo looked at the picture with a smile, but her eyes showed a hint of sadness in them.

"Scootaloo?" her mother asked as she entered the room, "Dinner's ready. Are you coming?"

"Yeah, I'm going." her daughter replied as she made haste for a good meal.

Scootaloo's mother smiled as her daughter ran out, but that smile was replaced with a sad look upon looking at the photo and the scooter, "Oh, Storm Ride..." she whispered before heading down to join her daughter for dinner.

\*\*\*

The next day, both Apple Bloom and Sweetie Bell were waiting for Scootaloo to arrive at school. Already the other fillies and colts were heading into their class rooms, but the two of them decided to wait.

Sweetie Belle just wanted to wait for her friend. Apple Bloom wanted to try and convince Scootaloo to let her ride the scooter again. She was more determined this time to do so then yesterday and she was going to ride it no matter what.

"Where is she? She'd better be here." Apple Bloom looked around for signs of the pegasus.

"Don't you think your taking this a little too seriously? It's just a scooter." Sweetie Belle asked.



“Ah know it’s just a scooter, but come on! Don’t tell ya’ll never want to ride something like that before!” Apple Bloom said, as she imagined herself saying through Ponyville on it, “Why ah’d bet it’s easy! Scootaloo makes it look like walking and ah’d bet if ah put my effort into it, ah can be just as good as her! Plus it looks fun!”

“I don’t know...I kind of like just keeping my hooves on the ground.” Sweetie Belle replied, “Besides she seems determined not to let anypony ride it.”

“Well, it would only be for a short time. It’s not like ah’m gonna brake it or anything.”

Before Sweetie Belle could answer, they heard a loud shout and looked down the road to see Scootaloo heading towards them at full speed. Making a sharp turn, she then steered herself towards the jungle gym where she wheeled and waved through the metal bars without a problem before making her way to the merry go round. Grabbing one of the handle bars with her tail, she started spinning faster and faster before letting go and heading towards the slide.

Grinning, Scootaloo performed a quick Ollie, rode up the slide, and into the sky where she flipped around on her scooter a few times before falling down. She landed back on the ground where she rolled over to her flabbergasted friends, halting in front of them.

“Hey, am I late?” she asked.

Both Apple Bloom and Sweetie Belle’s eyes and mouths were wide open, “Wwwwooooooooowwww...”

“Yeah, I know.” Scootaloo said as she got off her scooter.

Apple Bloom then jumped up with excitement, “That was amazing! Ya’ll was all over the place with that scooter! It was so cool! Ah can’t wait to do something like that!”

“Yup, soon you will...wait what?” asked Scootaloo, looking confused, “When did you get a scooter?”

“Ah didn’t, but ah figured ah’d asked you if I could ride it. At least for five minutes.” Apple Bloom asked.

Scootaloo groaned, “I’d thought I told you that nopony is allowed on the scooter but me. You’re still asking even though I already said the answer?”

Apple Bloom huffed, “Oh, come on! Ya’ll can’t just let nopony try it out just because you say so!”

“I can because it’s my scooter!”

“Just because it’s yours doesn’t mean ya’ll can’t share with your friends!”

The two continued to bicker in each other’s faces as Sweetie Belle tried to calm the situation.

“Um...girls?”

“What!?” they both asked, taking her by surprise.

Sweetie Belle rubbed the back of her head and said, “Well...can’t we discuss this after school? We’re going to miss the first bell if we don’t hurry.”

The other two looked at each other with a glare before agreeing and made their way inside.

But Apple Bloom wasn’t going to give up just like that. She had a plan to get on that scooter and prove to Scootaloo she could ride it.

She just had to wait.

\*\*\*

Hours past and school dragged on.

It was now the final period and Cheerilee was giving out the final steps in the math equation when Apple Bloom quickly looked at the clock on the wall to see that it was only ten minutes till school ended.

Seeing the time was perfect, Apple Bloom quickly raised her hand.

“Yes, Apple Bloom?” Her teacher asked.

“May ah go to the little fillies’ room, please?” Apple Bloom quickly lied, hoping her teacher would buy it.

“Are you sure you can’t hold it?” Cheerilee asked, but Apple Bloom quickly shook her head. Looking at the clock, she decided it was alright and allowed Apple Bloom to go.

“Thanks Ms. Cheerilee!” Apple Bloom said as she hurried out towards the hall.

However, she wasn’t going to the bathroom and instead headed to where Scootaloo’s locker was.

Hoping that the combo was Scootaloo’s birthday, she worked on the lock and heard a satisfying click.

Apple Bloom hesitated a bit, knowing that she was downright stealing from one of her friends, but it would only be for a few minutes and she would bring it back without anypony noticing. Opening the locker door she saw the scooter and the helmet and immediately took both before rushing out to the front door.

Once she was outside, Apple Bloom put on the helmet and got on the scooter while trying to stay on.

“Woah, this is weird.” she commented as she tried to keep her balance. Once that was done, she focused on the path ahead of her and gulped with nervous anticipation. She reassured herself was only going to be for five minutes and she just wanted to feel how it was like just once.

Taking a deep breath she put both her front hooves on the handle bars and pushed off. Apple Bloom kicked the ground a few more times and started gaining momentum that allowed her to feel the wind in her face. She smiled and felt her adrenaline pumping as she continued to go faster and faster...

...and she wasn't stopping.

Realizing that she was going too fast down the road, Apple Bloom's lack of experience started to affect her balance and she started wobbling down the path with no sense of direction. She tried to find a way to stop, but she was too afraid to think straight. She soon curved off of the road and onto the grass where the scooter started making it's downwards towards a steep hill where some rocks lay below.

Taking a chance, she jumped off and rolled on the ground a bit before laying flat. She groaned in pain upon feeling the bruises on her body, but then remembered the scooter and looked to see it roll around before crashing into the rocks.

Apple Bloom just stood there with her mouth open, horrified at what happened to Scootaloo's scooter. She rushed down to see the damage.

When she got there she found that it was not a pretty sight.

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The final bell rang and every filly and colt rushed out of the school to enjoy the weekend. Two however were waiting for the last member of the group to arrive.

"Where is she? I know she drank a lot of apple juice during lunch, but to be in the bathroom for ten minutes?" asked Scootaloo.

"You think she's having stomach problems? Like that time we tried to make curry for a curry cutie mark?" Sweetie Belle asked as the two of them shivered at the memory of that day.

"Thanks for making me remember the most painful sick week I ever had." A disgusted Scootaloo said, "Anyway, I'm going to go get my scooter. I'll be back in a bit."

Scootaloo headed back inside, but just as she did Sweetie Belle looked behind her and saw a bruised Apple Bloom heading towards her.

“Apple Bloom!? What are you doing out here? Why are you hurt and why....” Sweetie Bell stopped in mid sentence as she started at what Apple Bloom brought with her.

“WHAT THE HAY!?” Scootaloo’s voice shouted out in the school. Rushing outside, the orange pegasus said, “Somepony took my scooter! Where could it...”

Upon seeing Apple Bloom, she felt her eyes widen and her heart sink at the sight of what she saw.

Her scooter was trashed. The handle bars were bent and looked like they were about to fall off, the steering stick was nearly crushed, and the board itself was almost broken to pieces.

It took a moment for Scootaloo to react as she rushed over to her scooter and screamed, “WHAT HAPPENED TO IT!?”

Apple Bloom, filled with regret, said, “Ah’m sorry! Ah...ah just wanted to try it for five minutes and ah went to fast...ah went off the road...it crashed into some of them rocks near the hill and...gosh...ah’m sorry Scootaloo! Ah really am!”

Scootaloo looked downward, her face hiding from her friends, and said nothing.

Sweetie Belle then said, “Well...maybe we can fix it?”

“Yeah! It just needs some work on it. It will be good as new!” Apple Bloom said with a nervous chuckle just as the wheels came off.

“...sorry? Fix it?” Scootaloo said, her voice growing with anger before she looked at Apple Bloom with rage and tears, **“YOU THINK YOU CAN FIX SOMETHING LIKE THIS!!!”**

Apple Bloom nearly fell of her hooves upon Scootaloo’s shout, “Scootaloo, ah said ah was...”

**“SORRY DOESN’T CUT IT! YOU BROKE INTO MY LOCKER, TOOK MY SCOOTER AND RODE IT EVEN THOUGH I TOLD YOU NOT TO!”**

Scootaloo shouted as loud as she can, her face filled with wrath. If looks could kill, then Apple Bloom would have been six feet under right then and there.

“YOU DON’T KNOW WHAT YOU’VE DONE! This was...this was....”

To both their shock, Scootaloo started crying. Her tears falling like raindrops as painful memories filled her mind. The day he left, the day she and her mother were told what happened, the goodbyes, the sorrow and pain she still felt whenever she remembers him.

Apple Bloom, who realized that her mistake was significantly greater than she imagined, tried to say something but couldn’t find the words.

“....I hate you.”

Her eyes widen, “Wha...what?”

Scootaloo glared at Apple Bloom, “I hate you...**I HATE YOU!! I NEVER WANT TO SEE YOU EVER AGAIN!!!**”

Scootaloo then ran, leaving her scooter and her ‘friends’ calling out her name as she ran as fast as she could.

“Scootaloo! Wait, ah’m sorry! Scootaloo!” Apple Bloom shouted as she started to cry tears of her own. Her shouts went unanswered as she saw Scootaloo run off in the direction of her home.

“What have ah done...”Apple Bloom whispered as she started crying.

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She ran all the way through Ponyville, the sight of her scooter just broken into pieces made her want to run away from the sight, but it was burned into her mind. A few other ponies that saw her called her out and tried to get her to tell them what wrong, but she ignored them.

Arriving at her home, she slammed the door open and rushed upstairs.

“Scootaloo? What’s wrong?” her mother asked, rushing after her daughter.

When she got into her room, she locked the door before jumping onto her bed, still crying.

Her mother banged on the door, "Scootaloo!? What's wrong!? Why are you crying!? Scootaloo!"

"Go away! Leave me alone!" sobbed Scootaloo. Her mother was taken a bit back, by the tone of her voice, but realized her daughter needed some time to herself before talking. As she walked away, Scootaloo took the picture of her family on the dresser and looked at it. A few of her tears dropped onto the male pegasus's face.

"...daddy." she whispered before hugging it.

# Chapter 2

Never in her short life had Apple Bloom felt more like trash than now. Not only had she betrayed the trust of one of her best friends, but she destroyed something that was extremely important to her. All she wanted to do was ride the scooter and in the end not only did it get destroyed she might have also destroyed her friendship with Scootaloo.

Yesterday's events still played in her head over and over again; from her crash landing, to Scootaloo's yelling, to Sweetie Belle looking at her with eyes of disappointment.

She'd messed up, big time.

Last night she hadn't got any sleep and spent most of the time crying. Her family noticed her sad behavior and questioned it, but she hadn't told them anything. As she walked through town, she tried to figure out what she could do to correct the problem between her and Scootaloo.

Fixing the scooter seemed like the most obvious one, but it was seriously damaged and Apple Bloom had no idea how to fix a scooter. She wasn't going to try going blind on this one, unlike other previous attempts to fix things, not with what was at stake.

Her thoughts were interrupted with a loud rumbling noise from her stomach. She saw an outdoor salad café nearby and decided get a bite. Walking up to the counter, she waited for service only to be surprised when she saw Scootaloo's mother came forward.

"Apple Bloom?" she said upon seeing the filly, "Is that you?"

"Um...hi there. I'll just be going." Apple Bloom said, turning away.

"Wait! I need to talk to you." Scootaloo's mother said as she yelled to the back, "I'm taking a break!"



“Alright, just be back in thirty Olive Garden! You know this place falls apart without you.”

Olive Garden quickly walked over to Apple Bloom with a worried face, “Thank goodness I found you. It’s Scootaloo. Ever since yesterday, she’s been up in her room crying. I’ve tried to talk to her, but she’s keeps her door locked and she won’t say anything. She won’t even come down to eat. Apple Bloom, what’s going on?”

Apple Bloom felt her guilt deepen upon hearing about Scootaloo. She started to trickle tears from her eyes, “It’s my fault...it’s all my fault...”

Although surprised, Olive quickly nuzzled the crying filly with comfort, “Hey, it’s okay. Why don’t we talk about it?”

She led Apple Bloom to a bench where the two of them sat.

“Tell me what happened?” she asked.

Apple Bloom told her about the scooter, how she crashed it, how Scootaloo hated her and how she felt guilty for what happened. After hearing the story, a sad look appeared on Olive’s face as she muttered, “I should have known...”

“Ah’m really sorry about everything.” Apple Bloom apologized again, “Ah didn’t think she would be so angry. Ah mean it was just a scooter right?”

Olive looked at Apple Bloom with surprise, “You mean...you don’t know? She never told you?”

“Told what?”

Olive Garden sighed as she looked up into the sky, her eyes filled with sorrow, “Did my daughter ever tell you what happened to her father? My husband, Storm Ride?”

Apple Bloom shook her head; Scootaloo never said anything about her dad. Apple Bloom assumed that he worked away from home, but something was telling her that it wasn’t going to be the case.

"That scooter...was the last gift my daughter ever got from her father...before...we lost him." Olive said as a tear dripped down from her eye.

Apple Bloom's eyes widen.

"It was three years ago..."

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*"Happy Birthday, Scootaloo!" both parents shouted across the table. A much younger Scootaloo looked around her with delight. There were streamers, balloons, and a huge chocolate cake in front of her with the words "Happy Birthday" on them.*

*"Go on, make a wish!" her father, Storm Ride, said with a smile.*

*Taking a deep breath, she blew all the candles out as her parents clapped their hooves. "So what did I get?! Where are my presents!?" Scootaloo asked eagerly.*

*"Hold on, kiddo. First, let your mom give you hers while I go get mine." Storm Ride said as he walked away. Olive Garden took her gift from underneath the table and handed it to Scootaloo. Taking it with anticipation, she ripped the wrapping apart until she gasped.*

*"The new issue of Captain Starhooves and the Space Pegasus team?!" Scootaloo shouted as she held the comic in her hands, "This is awesome! I've been waiting all month to get this!"*

*The two hugged as Storm Ride came back, wheeling something in. Upon seeing it, Scootaloo dropped the comic in shock.*

*"Tah dah! Your very own scooter!" Storm Ride said showing it off. Scootaloo rushed forward with her face filled with excitement as she carefully felt it with her hooves.*

*"Wow!" Scootaloo said, but looked confused, "But dad. I'm a pegasus. Why would I need a scooter if I'm going to fly someday?"*

*“When I was your age, my family moved from Cloudsdale to Ponyville. It was kind of odd, being the new kid, and my wings weren’t strong enough to fly yet. So my parents got me a scooter and I was able to use my wings to go really fast by flapping them as fast as possible. It was amazing and I had so much fun with my friends with it. I want you to experience the same feelings I had so that when you start school, you and your new friends can play around with it and have a great time.”*

*Scootaloo then got on the scooter, but almost fell off, “Whoa. Will you teach me, daddy?”*

*Storm Ride nuzzled his daughter and said, “Of course, Scoot. I promise to teach you tomorrow. Now let’s have some of that cake!”*

*“Yay!” the filly shouted as the family gathered around the table.*

*\*\*\**

*“Are you sure you can’t do this without me? I promised my daughter...” Storm Ride said to Firefly, a female pegasus with a turquoise coat, pink mane, and fiery comet as her cutie mark. She had shown up on their front door pleading for his help.*

*“You’re the best when it comes to dealing with storms and this one is coming from the Everfree Forest, meaning it’s going to be a big one.” Firefly said with absolute worry.*

*“What about that new mare? Rainbow Dash? I hear she’s really good.” Storm Ride said.*

*“Out visiting family in Cloudsdale. Don’t know when she’ll be back.”*

*Storm Ride looked worried, “How much damage is estimated if the storm reaches Ponyville?”*

*“Estimates are that many houses will be damaged, trees will be ripped, and if some ponies aren’t careful there might be casualties.”*

*Storm Ride nearly cursed. This was supposed to be his day off, but, of course, something had to go wrong.*

*"Daddy! I'm ready!" Scootaloo came out with a helmet on her head, her smile stretching all over her face.*

*"Scoot..." Her father looked at her and then at a pleading Firefly. Sighing with regret, he walked over to Scootaloo and said, "Scoot, I'm sorry. We're going to have to cancel the lessons today."*

*"Huh? Why?"*

*With a sad smile, Storm Ride answered, "Daddy's got to go to work for an emergency. A big nasty storm is coming from the Everfree Forest and if I don't stop it, then ponies might get hurt."*

*Scootaloo shivered at the mention of the forest. She heard terrible things about that place like if you went in you might as well buy the farm right then and there.*

*"Will, you teach me when you come back?" Scootaloo asked with pleading eyes. Storm Ride smiled and nuzzled his daughter, "Of course I will. Just tell your mother I might be late for dinner, okay?"*

*"Okay! Now go kick that storm in the rear!" Scootaloo ordered.*

*"Yes, ma'am!" Storm Ride shouted before heading out with Firefly. Scootaloo ran out and watched her father fly off as she shouted, "See you soon, daddy!"*

*"You too, kiddo!"*

*\*\*\**

*Scootaloo waited all day and night for her father to come home, but he didn't come back. Not even when her mother made his favorite salad for dinner.*

*She sat in the living room with her scooter next to her, waiting for her dad to teach her how to ride it. It was almost her bed time and she was getting really sleepy when she heard the doorbell ring and jumped up in excitement.*

*Her dad was home!*

*Rushing over to the door she opened it and, to her disappointment, it was only a damp Firefly with grief in her eyes.*

*“Where’s daddy?” asked Scootaloo, but this only made Firefly shed a few tears.*

*“Is...is your mother home?” Firefly asked.*

*“Firefly? What’s wrong?” Olive Garden asked as she came to the door from the hall.*

*“Oh Olive.....I....” Firefly started, but Olive felt a sense of dread up her back as she told her daughter to head upstairs to her room.*

*“But mommy...”*

*“Please, Scootaloo...this is adult talk.” her mother said with a serious voice, but there was a slight feeling of fear in it.*

*Scootaloo nodded and went upstairs, but stopped at the top to listen closely.*

*“....what happened?”*

*“The storm...it was too strong...we all tried to stop it, but it was as if we were taking on a raging dragon. We couldn’t break it up, so we tried to move it away from Ponyville. It worked, but....near the end....there was a lightning bolt and...Storm Ride...it hit him.....”*

*Scootaloo’s eyes widen.*

*“....he fell....”*

*Now they were beginning to tear up.*

*“... by the time we saw...he’s...he’s...”*

*“NO!!!”*

*Scotaloo rushed down, to their surprise, and screamed at Firefly, “HE’S NOT DEAD! HE PROMISED HE WOULD COME! **HE’S NOT DEAD!!**”*

*“Scotaloo!” Olive shouted trying to control her daughter.*

*“He’s not dead! Daddy’s not...he’s not...” Scotaloo just cried. Her mother held her as tight as she could as both mourned for their lost loved one.*

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*After the funeral, everypony that attended headed to the reception where ponies, mostly pegasi, dressed in black talked to one another as food was served. Olive, also dressed in black, tried her best to be social, but the impact of her being a widow and having to raise a child alone was still fresh in her mind.*

*“Olive...” said a male brown coated pegasus. He had a bright yellow mane and a outline of an eagle as his cutie mark, “I am so sorry. Storm was a good pony and a good friend.”*

*They hugged as Olive said, “Thank you, Flyren. He always said you were a good boss to work for.”*

*“Listen, if there is anything you or Scotaloo need. Just ask and the weather patrol will help. You guys are a part of our family no matter what and we always look after our own.”*

*Olive nodded, “By the way, have you seen my daughter?”*

*“Last I saw her; she was outside in the back. Don’t know why though.” Flyren said before Olive walked away and went to her backdoor where she saw her daughter. She was trying to keep still on the scooter while pushing it in order to move.*

*A determined Scotaloo started to flap her wings and she moved a bit, but soon fell down.*

*“Arugh!” Scotaloo shouted as she got up and tried again.*

*Olive just watched.*

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“She never stopped practicing. Every day I would see her work on her scooter and get better and better at it. Now do you see why she loves it so much? It was the last thing her father ever gave her. To her it’s the last piece of she has left to remember before we lost him.” Olive said, finishing her story.

Apple Bloom was shocked, “But...why didn’t she ever say this? If she just told me...”

“I think she doesn’t want to remember the sorrow that comes with mentioning it. We haven’t spoken about her father since his death. A part of me wanted to help her since then, but I was afraid of opening those wounds that she held in her heart.” Olive said, “As well as those in mine.”

“Now ah’ve opened them and she hates me.” Apple Bloom said, feeling like dirt.

“She doesn’t hate you and neither do I. Even though what you did was wrong I can see that you feel sorry about it.” Olive said as she got up and said, “I’ll talk to her, I promise. Thank you for telling me all this Apple Bloom.”

Apple Bloom didn’t say anything as she watched Scootaloo’s mother walk away. Upon hearing the whole story now, it all made sense why Scootaloo didn’t want anypony to ride that scooter. If her father or mother gave her that scooter then she would have been the same.

She felt remorseful for Scootaloo and understood, in a sense, what she was going through. Her mother died giving birth to her and her father died before that from an illness. She never knew either of them when they were alive or when they died, but the pain of knowing that you’ll never see your parents in your life still hurt her sometimes.

“Ah got to make this right again...somehow...” Apple Bloom said as she walked the route home was.

Along the way, however, she noticed a workshop she had never seen before and her eyes widen.

The store had a huge sign that said, "GRAND OPENING WEEK: Mr. Fix-it's Fixing! Fixes everything to their original form!"

A feeling of hope started to boil in Apple Bloom's chest as entered the shop and saw dozens of broken objects ranging from stoves to plates all lined up on shelves on one side of the shop while the other side had things that looked brand new. Near the counter, a male purple coated unicorn with a black mane and a hammer and nail cutie mark was looking at a broken old rusty tea kettle with his monocle.

He closed his eyes as his horn started to glow along with the tea kettle. Apple Bloom then gasped as she saw the cracks and rust of the tea kettle disappear along with the paint looking cleaner. Within minutes the once old and rusty tea kettle transformed into one that looked like it was brand new.

"Another one bites the dust." the unicorn said as he levitated it onto a shelf before noticing Apple Bloom, "Ah, hello there little filly. Welcome to Ponyville's newest and, soon to be, biggest workshop! Mr. Fix-it's Fixing! I'm Mr. Fix-it and anything that is broken I can fix it back to its original self."

"Ya'll mean ya'll can take broken things and fix it just like that?" an eager Apple Bloom asked.

Mr. Fix-it laughed, "My dear, I do more than that. Any unicorn can learn a simple repairing spell, but what I do is more advance. A repairing spell just fix's any object up, but that's just like putting things together with tape. Some things like rust, decay, and extreme amounts of damage can't be fixed with the repairing spell. Instead, I use a restoration spell to bring the object back to its original form. Back to when it was first made like with the tea kettle you just saw moments ago."

"Can ya'll use that fancy spell to fix a scooter!" Apple Bloom immediately asked.

"A scooter? Sure, just how damaged is it?"



“Wait a minute, Ah’ll be back!”

Apple Bloom ran all the way home to get the pieces of the scooter she kept after yesterday. Taking them in a bag she arrived back at Mr. Fix-it’s in ten minutes and dumped the pieces on his counter.

Looking at each piece carefully, “Well, this is quite a damaged piece of work. What did you do? Slam this thing upon a sea of rocks?”

“Well...”

Mr. Fix-it shook his head, “Doesn’t matter. A repair spell won’t work on this thing, far too damaged. Luckily, I can fix it...”

“YES!” shouted Apple Bloom.

“...for a price.”

“Huh?”

“You didn’t think I did all this for free, did you?” asked Mr. Fix-it, “I run a business and I won’t lie, the prices for my services are high.”

Apple Bloom gave a defeated look.

“But I suppose I could lower my price to two hundred bits.” Mr. Fix-it said.

“Two hundred!? That’s a lot!” shouted Apple Bloom.

“Sorry, my little pony. That’s the way things go. Don’t worry; I’m sure you’ll find the money.” Mr. Fix-it said as he handed her the scooter, “Now I think its best you be on your way, I hope to see you soon.”

Apple Bloom put the scooter in the bag and walked away, wondering how she was going to get two hundred bits.

She had thirty bits saved in her piggy bank and she got an allowance of five bits every Wednesday and Sunday for doing chores. It would be a long time before she got to two hundred however with only that as her source of income.

“Ah’ve got to ask for more work! That way they’ll give me more money!” Apple Bloom reasoned as she made her way home.

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“Put her steady right there, Big Macintosh. Don’t let any of them apples fall out the cart.” Applejack ordered as she directed her brother where to put the apple cart. Big Macintosh slowly backed up near the entrance to the cellar before lowering the carriage gently.

“Phew, nice work out there big brother. Let’s see if we can get all these apples in before dinner.” Applejack said before hearing her name being called from a distance. Turning around she saw Apple Bloom running as fast as her hooves could take her. She soon arrived in front of her sister while catching her breath.

“Apple Bloom, where’s the fire girl?” Applejack asked, “Ya’ll look like ya’ll came running from a marathon.”

After calming down, Apple Bloom quickly asked, “Applejack! Ah want to have double...no triple amount of chores!”

Needless to say, both of her older siblings looked shocked and stared at each other in confusion.

“Uh, Apple Bloom? Don’t ya’ll always complain about having to do the chores even though ya’ll only got a few?” asked Applejack.

“Yes, but if ah do more would ya’ll give me more money for my allowance? Ah’ll do whatever is needed! Paint the barn, give Granny Smith her sponge bath, feed the pigs, buck apples, ah’ll even clean the outhouse!” Apple Bloom begged.

Suspicious of this, Applejack then asked, “Now what’s all this about, Apple Bloom? Why is getting money so important now?”

Apple Bloom was reluctant to answer, but Applejack was giving her a glare that told her it was best not to lie.

“Ah...ah accidently broke Scootaloo’s scooter...” she replied and proceeded to tell her siblings the truth. They weren’t happy about it when she finished.

“Ya’ll stole from one of your best friends and broke it!? How could you Apple Bloom!? Didn’t we teach ya’ll better!?” Applejack shouted with fury. Even Big Macintosh was shaking his head with both anger and disappointment.

“Don’t ya’ll think ah feel bad!? Don’t ya’ll think ah keep hearing Scootaloo telling me how much she hates me in my head!? Don’t ya’ll think ah feel so guilty learning that her father gave that scooter to her and died before she could learn to ride it from him!? Don’t ya’ll think ah’ve been regretting and wishing ah didn’t do it every minute? Ah want to fix all this, big sis! Ah want to make it up!”

Apple Bloom looked down at the ground in shame as Applejack slowly calmed down and sighed, “Ah’m really disappointed in ya’ll Apple Bloom...but ah understand that ya’ll feel sorry.”

She hugged her sister as Apple Bloom just whispered, “Ah just want to make things right...”

“Ah know. Listen, Ah’ll give ya’ll some extra chores and ah will increase your allowance, but ya’ll get paid only at the end of every week from now until ya’ll get that scooter fixed from this Fix-it fellow. Ya hear?” Applejack said as Apple Bloom smiled and nodded.

“Good. Now get on going to the outhouse, it needs cleaning.” Applejack said as she sympathetically watched her sister head to the direction of the outhouse.

As she made her way to her new chore, Apple Bloom started to count in her head the amount of time and money it would take to fix the scooter with her new chore schedule. In the end, she knew that even with the increase in her allowance it wouldn’t be for weeks till she got to two hundred. She needed to find another way to make more money.

Even if it meant working till her body broke down, she would find a way to fix the mistake she made.

No matter what.

# Chapter 3

Being a single parent was never easy, especially when you had a job that kept you from your child most of the time. Olive arrived home around seven, tired from her long hours at the café, but she kept her mind focused on the task she had to accomplish.

Her daughter had been locked in her room for nearly the entire weekend, only coming out to eat or go to the bathroom before rushing back inside. She tried to get Scootaloo to open the door several times, but it remained shut.

Since it started, Olive had been trying to figure out what could have caused her daughter to behave in such a way - until finally she learned what had happened. It wasn't a surprise to see Scootaloo act like this. After all, the scooter had been the last thing Storm Ride gave her before they lost him.

Olive tried to remember the last time she and Scootaloo had talked about Storm Ride, but she couldn't remember a time when even his name was discussed. A part of her blamed herself for not talking about it with Scootaloo; keeping such emotions locked away was not a healthy thing to do, but now she was going to talk with her daughter one-on-one and maybe get her out of her room.

Walking up the stairs, she arrived at her daughter's door and knocked, "Scootaloo? Open the door, now."

No response.

Olive knocked a few more times before she took a deep breath and shouted, "Young lady you have till the count of five to unlock this door and let me in or I will knock it down! I don't care how much it costs to fix it! One! Two! Three! Four!"

Before she counted to five, a clicking noise was heard and the door creaked open. Olive opened the door to see her daughter on the bed,

looking at the ground in both anger and despair. Preparing herself, Olive sat down next to her daughter and said, "We need to talk."

"...about what?" Scootaloo said.

"Your behavior this weekend. All you've done is sit in this room since you got back from school. You never answer when I call you and the only times you come out are to eat. Not to mention at night....I hear you crying." Olive said with concern, "It makes me want to hold you every time I hear you cry, but I can't help you if you don't tell me what's wrong."

"There's nothing to talk about." Scootaloo said turning away.

Olive sighed, "Apple Bloom told me what happened...."

This made Scootaloo straighten up at the mentioning of her 'friend'. She replied in an infuriated tone, "Oh really? What did my 'Best Friend' tell you? How she stole from me?! How she broke something I loved!? How she betrayed my trust!?"

"She feels terrible about what she did. The poor filly was nearly in tears." Olive replied, "She looked as if she had committed a crime against Equestria itself. Scootaloo, she really is sorry."

Scootaloo glared at her mother, "I don't care if she said she's sorry or pleading for forgiveness! I'm not speaking to her ever again!"

Olive just shook her head, "Dear, she made a mistake. Ponies do that all the time. You can get the scooter fixed, or I'll buy you a new one."

"You can't just buy a new one like that! It's...it's..."

"It's something your father gave you, correct?" Olive asked, which made Scootaloo's eyes widen as she held her breath.

Neither of them spoke for awhile until Olive went to her daughter and hugged her. Scootaloo soon started to cry as she embraced her mother and just let her tears fall from her eyes like rain.

"It's okay....it's okay..." Olive whispered as she soothed her daughter, "I know that scooter meant so much to you and I know how much you miss him."

"He...he pro-omised hee-e wou-u-ld come back...th-a-at he would teach m-me..." Scootaloo spoke through the tears, "He...di-dd-n't..."

Olive felt her own tears falling as she remembered the day she became a widow. How she lost the love of her life and the joy he gave her every day. It was a wound that hadn't healed in the last three years for her and her daughter.

As she calmed down, Scootaloo spoke, "Every time...I rode that scooter I always felt that he was right there with me. Like I could feel him watching down on me and it made me fell happy. But now that I've lost it...now that it's gone is that feeling gone too? Am I just going to forget him?"

Oliva shook her head, "No, Scootaloo. He's still there deep inside of you and he'll always be there. I know what you're going though and it's not easy. You lost a father and I lost a husband. We both lost somepony we both love very much."

Scootaloo didn't say anything.

Oliva continued, "You have a right to be angry at Apple Bloom for breaking your scooter, but at the same time, maybe if you told her the truth then she would have understood your feelings more and all of this could have been avoided."

"She still shouldn't have done it!" Scootaloo replied angrily.

"I know. It was wrong that she did that, but she regrets it. I can see it in her eyes."

"I don't care...I won't forgive her!" Scootaloo shouted, "She can plead and say how sorry she is, but it won't make any difference!"

Oliva shook her head, "I can't tell you be friends with Apple Bloom, that's your decision. I only ask that you try to remember all the good times you,

Apple Bloom and Sweetie Belle have had and ask yourself...is it really worth it to throw away all that?"

Scootaloo looked down at the floor as her mother kissed her on the forehead and said, "Just think about what I've said? Please?"

She said goodnight and left the room, closing the door behind her. Scootaloo stood still for a few minutes before she went over to her dresser and took two photos into her hooves.

One showed her family, including her father. The other showed the Cutie Mark Crusaders at their club house.

She took both of them and hugged them close to her chest.

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Sweetie Belle was nervous. The first bell was going to ring and neither Apple Bloom nor Scootaloo had shown up. Ever since Friday, she'd had a bad feeling inside that worried her to no end. Seeing Scootaloo in tears and shouting how much she hated Apple Bloom who walked away crying in silence with pieces of Scootaloo's broken scooter on her back...she hadn't known what to do.

Sweetie Belle wished she could have talked to one of them at least, but who should she have gone to? Should she have gone to Scootaloo because she was upset or Apple Bloom who looked guilty for what she did? In the end, she didn't do anything and was left to worry for her best friends all weekend.

This time, however, she resolved to talk to them today. She would make them forgive each other and everything would go back to normal.

Her thoughts were interrupted when she heard a familiar yet weary voice cry out her name, "Mornin' Sweetie Belle."

The unicorn filly turned to say hello only to gasp, "What happened to you? You look terrible."



Apple Bloom was covered in dirt and had some mud on her hooves, not to mention she smelled like pigs. Her eyes looked like they were about to close and fall asleep any second, but she was struggling to keep them open. Both her mane and tail looked like a tornado went through it and she winced at the slightest movement of her muscles.

“Ah had to do mornin’ chores...feed the pigs, take out the trash, wash the cows, and other stuff.” Apple Bloom said with a yawn.

“But you told me that your sister does all the morning chores. Why are you doing them?” Sweetie Belle asked.

“Ah asked for them. Applejack and Big Macintosh promised to raise my allowance if ah did more chores.”

Sweetie Belle was shocked, “But you hate doing chores? Why ask for more? What’s going on?”

Before Apple Bloom could answer she froze and stared behind Sweetie Belle. Turning around the unicorn gasped at the sight of Scootaloo heading towards them from the opposite road. Her face was still like a statue as she looked at the two of them and then glared at Apple Bloom.

“Scootaloo...ah....” Apple Bloom tried to speak, but Scootaloo just ignored her and went into the school without saying anything. Once she was gone, Apple Bloom let out a depressing sigh and followed Scootaloo.

Sweetie Belle could only feel the concern in her chest grow as she entered the school too.

It was going to be a long day.

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For the first few periods, no interaction between the three occurred as they focused on Miss. Cheerilee’s lessons. It was soon time for art as the class began to bring out their supplies whilst their teacher gave instructions, “Okay class! Now we’re going to pair up into groups of three for today’s art lesson! Let’s see, we’ll have Rainy Feather, Peachy Pie, and Tootsie Flute

in one group. Dinky Doo, Little Hoof, and Coronet in another one. Apple Bloom, Scootaloo, and Sweetie Bell are in a group as usual. So then..."

Scootaloo raised her hoof and said, "Excuse me, Miss. Cheerilee? I want to be in a different group."

Needless to say, the request shocked everypony in the room. It was well known that the Cutie Mark Crusaders did everything together and it was a surprise to see one of them wishing to be separate from the others. Apple Bloom was more than just shocked though; she was heartbroken that Scootaloo even said such a thing and knew that this was directed at her.

"Oh...well....okay." a surprised Cheerilee said as she looked around, "How about you switch with Dinky? Is that alright?"

Nodding, Scootaloo went to join her new partners while Dinky Doo walked over to Sweetie Belle and Apple Bloom. Dinky looked at the two with uncertainty and asked, "Ummm...is something wrong?"

Neither of them answered.

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During lunch time, both Sweetie Belle and Apple Bloom were sitting on one of the schools benches watching Scootaloo from across the playground. She was under a tree all alone, eating a daisy sandwich while occasionally glancing at the two of them.

"She hates me..." Apple Bloom said in a depressed voice, "She don't want me as her friend no more."

Sweetie Belle put her hoof over Apple Blooms back and said, "I'm sure Scootaloo's just angry. Things will get better. Maybe if you patch things up..."

"But ah am!" Apple Bloom said, "Ah'm tryin' to get enough money to get this unicorn to fix the scooter back to the way it was. It's gonna cost me two hundred bits to do this though so ah gotta work as hard as ah can."

“Is that why you came to school all dirty and tired?” Sweetie Belle asked to which Apple Bloom nodded, “Well...why not try to fix things now. Maybe give her one of your apple cookies to start?”

“Ya think that will work?”

“It’s worth a shot.”

Apple Bloom thought about it for a moment and nodded. Handing Sweetie Belle her cookie bag from her lunch box, she asked, “Can ya deliver it to her? Ah don’t think she’ll take it from me if ah present it.”

Sweetie Belle nodded, hoping that this would help bring her friends back together as she headed towards the other side of the playground.

When she arrived, Scootaloo looked up and saw Sweetie Belle carrying the bag before asking, “What is it?”

“Apple Bloom sent me saying she wants you to have some of her cookies.” Sweetie Belle said as she laid the bag on the ground.

Scootaloo looked at the bag before rolling her eyes, “Tell her I don’t want them.”

“But...”

“Tell her.”

With a heavy sigh, Sweetie Belle took the bag in her mouth and walked back to Apple Bloom, giving Scootaloo’s response to her.

“Well, tell her that she can have as many as she wants.”

So she went back to Scootaloo again and gave her Apple Bloom’s new message.

“Tell her she can have them.”

And again.

“Tell her she can have them all!”

And again.

“Tell her that I’m not in the mood!”

It went like this for the entire lunch period. Sweetie Belle would tell one message to one pony who told her to deliver another message to that same pony. Finally, it became too much for her and she collapse in front of Apple Bloom.

“Can’t...walk...anymore...so...hungry.” Sweetie Belle replied as she took in deep breaths.

Apple Bloom, depressed that the plan failed, walked back to school with her head down as Sweetie Belle slowly got up and asked, “What about the cookies?”

“Ya can have them.” Apple Bloom replied as she walked away as Sweetie Belle looked at her with pity.

She then took one of the cookies and ate it, but even the taste couldn’t cheer her up at the thought that she and her friends were now drifting further away from each other.

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At last, the school hours ended and everypony was allowed to go home. Sweetie Belle stood by the entrance, hoping that her friends would meet her so they could prepare the next crusade to get their cutie marks.

Apple Bloom arrived first, but quickly told Sweetie Belle that she was needed on the farm.

“It’s okay. I’ll see you tomorrow?”

“Yeah, definitely.” Apple Bloom said as left for home.

Sweetie Belle waved goodbye as she then spotted Scootaloo coming out of the door and called her out, "Hey! Scootaloo! Want to head to the club house and plan the next crusade?"

Scootaloo shook her head, "Sorry, Sweetie Belle...but I'm not in the mood."

"But..."

"Please...I just want to be alone." Scootaloo said as she walked away.

Sweetie Belle finally couldn't take it anymore and dashed in front of Scootaloo, "Look here! I know that you're angry, but can't you see how sorry she is!?"

"You wouldn't understand." Scootaloo replied, "It's none of your business."

"It's my business when my friends start hating each other and ignore their existence!" Sweetie Belle shouted, "The three of us have been best friends for a long time Scootaloo! You can't just want this one fight to bring all that to an end! I know Apple Bloom made a mistake, but can't you forgive her?"

"Why does everypony keep telling me that!?" yelled Scootaloo shocking Sweetie Belle, "Both you and my mom don't understand! That wasn't just a scooter! It's more than that! My dad gave it to me before he died and it was all I had left of him! Now that it's gone what am I suppose to do?! It was the one thing that always made me remember him and feel happy! Now all I got left is that day....that one day I heard that my dad died and left me and mom all alone!"

"Your...your dad? I didn't...I didn't know..." Sweetie Belle said surprised upon hearing Scootaloo's outburst.

"That's right you don't know! You have your parents, even if you don't see them often because they travel a lot! I don't have a dad and my mom works all the time just to support us so she's barley even there for me! No pony I know understands what it's like to lose a loved one and feel alone!" cried out Scootaloo in despair

Sweetie Belle didn't know what to say until she remembered something, "But...didn't Apple Bloom lose her parents too?"

This made Scootaloo stare at her as she continued, "Remember? She told us that her dad died from a sickness and her mom died giving birth to her. I think it was that time we had a sleepover at my house. Remember? We asked her where she got her bow. She said it was her mother's when she was a filly like us and it was passed down to her. Did you forget?"

The truth was Scootaloo did, now that Sweetie Belle mentioned it, and remembered that night when the three of them hugged after hearing such a sad story.

"And I know what it's like to be alone. Before I met both of you I didn't have anypony, but my sister. Mom and dad traveled a lot so I had to live with Rarity who was always busy with her clients. Sometimes she would play with me, but those times were few in between and I was left alone by myself until I met you girls."

Scootaloo knew that feeling too. After her dad died, her mom had to work all the time and she started school. Before her, Apple Bloom, and Sweetie Belle became friends, she just stood apart from the other foals and was all alone.

"And remember what we both told Apple Bloom on that sleep over after she told us her story? We said we would always be there for each other forever so that none of us ever feel alone again and we would find our special talents in order to discover who we really are. That's why we became the Cutie Mark Crusaders." Sweetie Belle said with a small smile.

Scootaloo tried to say something, but Sweetie Belle's words made her remember what her mother told her last night. Was she really willing to let her anger get the best of her and forget all the moments she had with her friends?

"I...I need to go home." Scootaloo said as she walked past Sweetie Belle, her feelings mixed inside.

Sweetie Belle just watched her walk away and hoped that somehow this would help fix the broken bond her friends were now facing.

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Apple Bloom walked into town looking sadder than seeing Fluttershy when one of her animal friends died. All day long Scootaloo made it an effort not only to ignore her out right, but also show that she didn't want anything to do with her anymore.

All because she decided to be a stubborn idiot and break not only her friend's most prized possession, but also her trust.

She was beginning to doubt that even fixing the scooter would solve everything, but she had to try either way as there was no other option left. Even if she never forgave her, Apple Bloom still wanted to fix her mistake no matter how long it took.

But even with the extra chores and additional pay it would take a long time for her to reach two hundred bits.

If only there was some way to earn money faster...

Apple Bloom was so preoccupied with her thoughts that she didn't notice Twilight Sparkle in front of her and bumped right into her.

"Wha'? Oh, sorry Twilight." apologized Apple Bloom.

"Oh it's no problem, Apple Bloom. You okay? You were zoning out." Twilight asked.

"No, just...thinking about stuff." Apple Bloom said as she saw a Twilight post a flyer on a wooden message board which was filled with other flyers, "What's on the poster?"

"It's a request for some pony to help me with some work tomorrow. Stuff like book sorting, cleaning the floor, and minor stuff like that. Spike normally does that, but he's heading to Canterlot tomorrow to help Princess Celestia with some errands. Since Owlowiscious sleeps during the day, I'm looking for a temporary assistance for only tomorrow." Twilight answered.

A thought came to Apple Bloom as she eagerly asked, "Are ya payin' them to help you? Like a job?"

Nodding, Twilight said, "Of course, I wouldn't want just anypony coming over and help me without some sort of reward. I'm giving them twenty bits since all I need is an hour or two of help anyway."

"Then can ah do it!? Ah promise ah'll do really well and ah won't screw up or anything!" Apple Bloom said quickly.

Twilight was a bit hesitant as she remembered the other times she and the Cutie Mark Crusaders tried "helping" her out, "I don't know..."

"Please please please! Twilight ah really need the money! Just give me a chance!" Apple Bloom begged, her eyes wide open.

Twilight thought about it for a bit and nodded, "Okay. Come by my place after school. I'll make sure I don't hold you too late so you can have fun with your friends."

"Yeah...with my friends." Apple Bloom said softly before thanking Twilight as she left. Turning back to the board, Apple Bloom saw dozens of jobs that ponies all over town were asking from walking pets to helping them move goods from one place to another.

Apple Bloom saw each of them as a way to earn money quicker. Some of the jobs looked physically grueling while others looked like they were going to take a long time to complete. Between school and her chores it looked like she was going to have her hooves full.

She quickly took a few of flyers down and made her way to speak to the ponies who posted them while also planning what time to do each job.

Even if it took her to the brink of exhaustion, it would all be worth it just to fix Scootaloo's scooter.

She just hoped she could do it all.



# Chapter 4

*“Did ya see the faces on those two?! It was hilarious!” Apple Bloom laughed as she and her new friends Sweetie Belle and Scootaloo exited out of Sugarcube Corner. After both of them had come to her aid and defended her against Diamond Tiara and Silver Spoon, the two of them just took off in anger. Since nopony wanted to waste the party materials Pinkie Pie made, everypony just decided to have a party for the sake of, well, a party.*

*During that time, she learned a lot about her rescuers who she managed to get along with just fine. It turned out they had a lot more in common than just being 'Blank Flanks'. Sweetie Belle was also the younger sister of Rarity, a friend of Applejack's, and Scootaloo was a massive fan of Rainbow Dash, another friend of her older sister.*

*As the party ended, the three of them decided to take a night stroll, promising their guardians they would come home soon.*

*“Well, we couldn't just leave you there to be picked on. No pony should be made fun of like that.” Sweetie Belle said.*

*“Especially from those two!” Scootaloo said, “Besides. What kind of pony's special talent features a spoon as a cutie mark? A cereal eating pony?”*

*The three laughed as Apple Bloom decided to ask a question that she had been wanting to ask, “Hey, do ya'll want to... ah don't know... hang out tomorrow?” Apple Bloom asked, nervously.*

*“Sure! I think we can be great friends! Maybe we can even help each other find our cutie marks!” Scootaloo suggested.*

*“Yeah! We can work together and help each no matter what until all three of us have them!” Sweetie Belle cried out.*

*“We'll call ourselves... the... uh... the... the Special Talent Finders!” Apple Bloom suggested.*

*“Ugh, that’s lame. How about the Destiny Mark Madponys!” Scootaloo also suggested, but the other two just shook their heads before Sweetie Belle gasped.*

*“I got it! The Cutie Mark Crusaders!” Sweetie Belle shouted as the other two looked at each other and shouted in agreement.*

*“Then from this day forward, the Cutie Mark Crusaders shall be together forever! We’ll go all over the world if we have to in order to find our special talent and discover who we are!” Apple Bloom announced as she put her hoof forward and the other two followed.*

*“Cutie Mark Crusaders! Friends forever!”*

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“Apple Bloom!”

The sudden shout woke Apple Bloom from her day dream as she shot her head up. However, she went a little too fast and found her seat losing its stability before she ended up on the floor with the class laughing at her.

Cheerlie walked up to her and asked if she was alright.

“Ah’m fine...” Apple Bloom replied as she got up, feeling the bump on her head.

“This is the third day this week I’ve seen you fall asleep in class, Apple Bloom. Is everything alright?” Cheerlie asked with concern, but Apple Bloom told her not to worry despite yawning a second later.

“Listen, I think you should get some sleep tonight. It sounds like your not getting enough.”

“Ah know... Ah’m just busy.” Apple Bloom replied, her voice drowsy.

“Do I need to talk to your sister to see if she can lighten the work you do on the farm?” Cheerlie asked, but Apple Bloom quickly shook her head.

“No, ma’am! Ah, can tell her myself.”

Cheerilee looked a bit sceptical at first, but before she could say anything the bell rang and it was time for school to end. Apple Bloom took this opportunity to quickly leave with the other foals before her teacher could call her out. By the time she made it to her locker she stopped and sighed in relief.

The truth was she hadn’t been getting enough sleep for the last four days. Ever since she started doing those jobs on the farm she had been just as busy as if it was applebucking season.

She took many different jobs such as cleaning Twilight’s library, wrapping candy for Bon-Bon, getting groceries for various restaurants and stores, delivering the Equestria Daily newspaper when a worker was sick, and many more. Not only did it help her get bits, but nopony even bothered to ask why she was doing them. Most just assumed she wanted to make some spending money or was looking to find her special talent.

Yet, despite all the good it came with, all of the hard work came at a price

Between the jobs, her school work, and her extra chores on the farm Apple Bloom was both sore and tired from all the hard work she had been doing.

There were times when she would fall asleep in the middle of doing something, or feel a burning pain in her muscles that made it feel as if she was on fire, but despite all the hardships, she was finally earning a lot of money.

In less than four days, she managed to save over forty bits and with the thirty she had saved in her bank, before the scooter incident, she had a total of seventy bits. She was almost halfway there to getting the money needed to fix not just the scooter, but also the friendship she had with Scootaloo.

Speaking of which, Scootaloo had been acting even stranger since she started doing her extra jobs. She had stopped giving Apple Bloom angry glares and instead just ignored everypony. Granted, she was doing that before, but when she did it before she’d looked angry. Now she looked like she was lost.

It was if she was lost in the clouds and was numb to everything around her. Apple Bloom didn't know what to make of it, but only assumed that Scootaloo was still upset.

Needless to say, to Apple Bloom, it didn't make a difference if Scootaloo was angry or depressed. The only thing that mattered was getting her friend to smile once more.

Just as she was about to get her saddlebags and head out, Sweetie Belle walked over with a worried expression on her face.

"Apple Bloom. Are you doing okay?" she asked, her voice filled with worry.

"Oh yeah... just busy workin' on the farm. Ya know how it is." Apple Bloom lied with a fake chuckle.

It didn't work on Sweetie Belle, who gave a glare that made Apple Bloom sweat, "Really? Then why is it that your no longer speak to me?"

"Ummmm..."

"Or keep falling asleep in class?"

"Ah... ah... ..ah..."

"Or the fact that I keep seeing you all over Ponyville doing thing I've never seen you do. Like helping Fluttershy bring birds to the park, or help carry crates to different houses, or delivering sacks of hay to Ed'Donalds for their hay fries!"

Apple Bloom gulped as Sweetie Belle stomped her hoof on the ground and said, "And don't tell me it's nothing! Your looking more tired and stressed out then my big sister did when she was making those dresses for the Gala awhile back. Tell me the truth!"

"Okay! Okay!" Apple Bloom shouted, giving in.

Sweetie Belle started to calm down and said, "I'm just worried, Apple Bloom. Scootaloo doesn't talk to us anymore and now your starting to fade away from me... I'm just scared."

Guilt started to eat Apple Bloom away as she mentally kicked herself for forgetting her other best friend, "Ah'm sorry, Sweetie Belle. Ah'll tell ya the truth... "

After explaining what she had been doing, Sweetie Belle just stared at her with both astonishment and concern.

"You've done nothing, but work for the past four days? Have you been eating!? Or getting any sleep!?" she asked, fearfully.

"Well, ah don't get much sleep and ah do eat... sometimes... " Apple Bloom shamefully admitted. Sometimes she had to skip breakfast and dinner in secret so she could do some extra work.

"Apple Bloom! You can't keep doing this! I know you want to make up to Scootaloo and fix her scooter, but you can't kill yourself in the process!" Sweetie Belle.

"But Ah'm so close!" Apple Bloom argued, "Ah have to do this Sweetie Belle! Ya said it yourself! Scootaloo doesn't talk to us anymore and it's all my fault! Ah'm the one that ruined everything and I have to fix it! Ah have to for the sake of all of us!"

Closing her locker, she turned away and said, "Ah've got to go. Please, don't tell anypony about this Sweetie Belle! Please!"

Before she could protest she watched as Apple Bloom galloped away, leaving her alone in the hall.

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Ever since her last conversation with Sweetie Belle, Scootaloo had never felt more conflicted in her life. The words of what Sweetie Belle said had started to make her wonder. Was she taking her anger on Apple Bloom too far?

On one hoof, Apple Bloom had destroyed her scooter and took it without permission. The scooter was the last present her father had given her and it was more valuable than anything she had. When she lost him, a hole entered her heart that reminded her every day of what she had lost. The scooter was the only thing that kept her somewhat happy and she had good reason to hate Apple Bloom for destroying it.

Yet, was that reason enough to end their friendship?

Apple Bloom and Sweetie Belle were her not only her best friends, they were the only friends she ever had. The three of them had a lot in common and they all wanted to find their special talent. That's why they became the Cutie Mark Crusaders. All of their adventures and attempts to find their cutie marks were the best times she ever had in her life. Most importantly, they made her happy. Something she didn't feel much after her dad died.

They were more than just best friends. They were sisters. They did everything together, they shared everything together, and they told everything to each other. So why hadn't Scootaloo told them about her scooter? Why didn't she tell them about her dad?

If she had told them the truth? Would she have prevented all this? The broken bond that now separated the three of them could have been avoided if she had trusted them and told them the truth.

Did she decide not to tell them because she was afraid? Was it because she didn't want to feel pitied? Or because she didn't want to remember that day?

It was too late to change anything and what was done was done. Her scooter was gone and now the friendship she had with two ponies who gave her the best times of her life might be gone too.

As she wondered around Ponyville, trying to reconcile her thoughts, Scootaloo wondered what she was going to do. Should she forgive Apple Bloom? Both her mother and Sweetie Belle made it clear that Apple Bloom was sorry. A part of her wanted to believe this... but was it already too late?

For the last four days, Apple Bloom had done nothing but ignore not only her, but Sweetie Belle as well. She never said anything in class or even

looked into the face of anypony, not even her. A few times they had crossed paths, both at school and in town, but Apple Bloom just walked by without even looking at her. It was like she didn't even know she existed anymore.

Did Apple Bloom just give up on trying to be friends again, or was she angry at Scootaloo? Maybe she was angry that Scootaloo wasn't trying to be the better pony and fix their problems? Or maybe she was angry that Scootaloo didn't tell her the truth about the scooter and felt that there was no trust between them? It was a mess to think about and Scootaloo couldn't help but be plagued by it.

Her thoughts were so preoccupied that the moment she turned around the corner of the street, she didn't notice somepony walking the opposite direction. She managed to stop herself from colliding with them only to feel her body freeze upon seeing who she had almost hit into.

It was Apple Bloom, carrying saddlebags of streamers, who also looked surprised by their unexpected meeting. The two of them just stared into each other for awhile, neither saying anything before they finally turned away.

"Hey." Scootaloo said first.

"Hey."

Scootaloo shifted some dirt around with her front left hoof before speaking again, "Umm, what are the streamers for?"

"Pinkie Pie asked me to pick some up for her. Some kind of party." Apple Bloom replied.

"Well, duh. What else would Pinkie Pie need streamers for?" Scootaloo asked, rolling her eyes.

"Ah was just saying!" Apple Bloom cried out defensively.

"Whatever... just... watch where you're going next time." Scootaloo said before walking past Apple Bloom who just looked away before setting off for Sugercube Corner. When she felt that Apple Bloom was no longer

nearby, Scootaloo released a melancholy sigh and wondered why she spoke so cold to her when just seconds ago she was thinking of forgiving her?

“Maybe I just need to head home. Get some rest.”

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“Here are the streamers, Pinkie Pie.” Apple Bloom said with a small smile as Pinkie took the streamers and smiled.

“Thanks a whole lot! I was hoping to get these streamers today, but then Mrs. Cake told me she needed me to for the late afternoon shift! I wanted to get those streamers really badly, like really badly! So badly I kept seeing streamers everywhere! It was like I was in a streamy streamed world of streamminess! But then I heard you were helping ponies with problems for some cash! So I quickly called for you, told you what to do, and here you come with them with seconds to lose! Or no seconds really since you weren’t being timed to begin with.” Pinkie Pie said in her usual cheerful tone.

“Uh, yeah so which party are these streamers for again?” Apple Bloom asked.

“Oh, there for all kinds of party’s! There’s Ziggy’s Birthday party! Ditzzy’s “Congratulations for not flying into a tree for three weeks” party! Lyra and Bon-Bon’s anniversary! And so much more and you’re welcome to come of course because I always invite everypony to all the parties I help make!” Pinkie said, bouncing around as she went over to a shelf. When she opened it, the large barrage of fireworks went off and shot everywhere around the kitchen.

Apple Bloom quickly ducked for cover underneath a chair as the fireworks went off showering the room with a huge display of colorful explosions. One firework managed to explode in a bowl of cookie dough and caused a enormous mess. After the last firework went off, Pinkie licked off all the cookie dough on her face and giggled, “My oopsy! I forgot that’s where I put the fireworks for the fourth!”



Getting out of her hiding spot, Apple Bloom quickly said, “Well, ah’m just glad ah can help. If you don’t mind ah kinda like to get my pay and get goin’.”

Pinkie nodded and took a few bits she had on the table, as well as a chocolate cupcake, and handed both to Apple Bloom who quickly took off for the job board, eating her cupcake along the way

In a few minutes she soon arrived back at the job board in town and started looking for another job. She only had enough time to get one more job done before she had to go home for her chores on the farm.

“Babysitting for ten bits... ..barrel carrying for seven bits... back up dancer for eleven bits... ..lost pet, please help find for... ..” Apple Bloom’s eyes widen, “Holy... ..applesause... ..”

One hundred bits.

Finding a lost pet for *one hundred bits*.

Apple Bloom mind went blank before she quickly tore off the paper and looked at it:

HELP! LOST KITTY!  
Please help find our lost kitty Mimi!

She’s a grey cat with blue eyes and a very fluffy tail!

Last seen near near the west edge of the Everfree Forest!

Will pay 100 bits if returned safely!

Apple Bloom felt excitement run through her. If she could find the lost pet and get that one hundred bits, it would only mean she would have to get thirty more bits to pay Mr. Fix-it to fix the scooter!

However, something made her pause and that was the fact that she would be near the Everfree Forest. She felt a shiver in her spine upon thinking about that place. The only safe road she ever took in the Everfree Forest was when she went to see Zecora. Other than that, her previous

experiences with it hadn't been pretty. She would have to search near the west edge, the opposite side where Zecora lived. Was it honestly worth it?

Yes it was. To fix her mistake anything was worth it. Even going near the Everfree Forest.

Taking the paper with her, Apple Bloom darted in the direction of the Everfree forest as fast as she could.

How hard could it be to find one cat anyway?

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Apparently it was exceptionally hard.

She had spent over two hours already and not one sign of the stupid cat. Apple Bloom was getting worried. The sun was going to set soon and she was suppose to be home by now.

Every bush, tree, and grove she looked in had no sign of the cat. "That cat has to be here somewhere... it's just gotta!" Apple Bloom looked between some bushes before sighing in disappointment. She'd looked everywhere around the area, twice, and still no sign of the cat! The only place to look was...

Apple Bloom gulped as she looked behind her where the Everfree Forest stood only a few feet away. It was *possible* that the cat could have entered the forest, but should she enter it? All she had to do was just look a bit for the cat and come back with it or without it... but what if she got lost? It was a vast forest and it was so confusing you might as well have been in a maze. Not to mention how full it was of terrible creatures such as Manticores, Cockatrices, Dragons and more.

Was it really worth it the risk to find this cat and get the one hundred bits that would help her fix her mistake? Was it actually worth her life to try and make Scootaloo smile once more? Apple Bloom closed her eyes and thought long and hard about what she should do.

Finally, she opened them, and with a look of fierce determination she strolled forward into the forest.

# Chapter 5

Rarity knew when she had been asked to take care of her sister a few years ago it wasn't going to be easy. After all, she had her own busy career and social life to deal with. Yet, to this day, she never regretted it. Sweetie Belle, while sometimes a bit of hassle, was still a darling girl whom you just couldn't help, but love.

Whether it was wanting to be like her older sister and make her own clothes or have a small tea party for fun, Sweetie Belle made Rarity smile every time. Sometimes she felt more like a mother than a sister and Rarity made a vow that should the time come to choose between her love of fashion or her sister, she would choose the latter no matter what.

This was why Rarity had been worried for the past few days. Sweetie Belle had come home every day looking depressed and when she had went to check up on her last night, she found her little sister crying silently asleep. Rarity knew that Sweetie Belle was old enough to come to her when she had a problem, but sometimes the elder sister had to take action.

"Sweetie Belle, can you please come down?" Rarity asked up the stairs. A few seconds later, a depressed looking Sweetie Belle poked her head around the corner and tersely asked her sister what she wanted.

"I thought it would be nice if we had a chat. I have tea ready with a plate of snickerdoodles in the kitchen." Rarity said. Sweetie Belle didn't say anything for a minute before she nodded and came down, almost reluctantly. The two of them entered the kitchen where the warm tea was already set as both sisters sat across from each other.

"So, how is school?" Rarity asked, while she poured the tea.

"Fine...." Sweetie Belle answered looking downward.

"Are you doing okay in your studies?"

"Yes..."

“Does the tea smell good?”

“Yeah....”

Rarity, with a little mischievous grin, then said, “Did I tell you that I decided to enlist you in boot camp?”

“Yeah.....WAIT!? WHAT!?” Sweetie Belle shouted in shock before staring at her sister with a stupefied look, “You’re not serious are you!?”

Rarity then giggled for a while upon seeing her sister’s reaction. She soon calmed herself down and took a sip her tea before leaning back into a more relaxed position while asking seriously, “No, just trying to get your attention dear. Now that I have it, do you mind telling me what’s the matter? You haven’t been acting yourself for the past few days and I’m worried.”

Looking away from her sister’s stare, Sweetie was hesitant in telling her sister what had happened. Yet a part of her wanted to tell her big sister about the her feelings she had about the dilemma she and her friends were going through.

Sensing her hesitation, Rarity put her tea down and looked at Sweetie Belle with gentle eyes and said, “You know you can tell me anything, Sweetie Belle. Whatever it is I promise I’ll help you.”

Sweetie Belle was silent for a while. Then she whispered “I’m scared...”

“Of what?”

“.....that I’m going to lose my best friends.”

Rarity listened as Sweetie Belle told her everything, from Scootaloo’s broken scooter to today when she found out that Apple Bloom was pushing herself to fix it. All the while Sweetie Belle looked more and more desperate as she went further into the story.

“Now Scootaloo doesn’t talk to ether of us and Apple Bloom’s working herself to exhaustion just to fix everything, and I know she’s suffering from

it! I don't know what to do, sis! I don't know!" Sweetie Belle said, her eyes watering.

Rarity just walked over and nuzzled her sister, "Listen. Friends fight all the time. I've lost count over the times I've had issues with Applejack or Rainbow Dash. Sometimes they last a few days, but we always come back apologizing."

"But how?"

"Because we care about each other, dear. I care too much about my friends to worry about some silly little grudge. It's unlady like and when you really care for somepony you'll want to make up with them. I believe Scootaloo and Apple Bloom still care for each other. You've just got to be patient dear and let them sort it out." Rarity advised as Sweetie Belle slowly made a smile and hugged her sister.

"Thanks big sis," Sweetie Belle said, but her smile soon disappeared, "I just wish Apple Bloom could stop working like crazy. I'm worried something will happen if she keeps it up."

"I'll be sure to talk to Applejack and get her to talk to Apple Bloom." Rarity said, before a series of knocks was heard from their back door.

"It's open!" Rarity shouted, as a worried looking Applejack entered through the back, "Ah, speaking of which. Applejack, there is something I must address to you about your sister."

Upon hearing her sister mentioned, Applejack went straight up to Rarity's face and asked, "Ya see my sister?! Where?!"

"Huh? No, I was just talking to Sweetie Belle and..."

"Then ya saw her?!" Applejack asked Sweetie Belle who looked at her with eyes of sheer panic and anxiety.

Rarity decided to calm her friend down before anything happened, "Applejack! Darling! Relax, you look like you're going to have a heart attack."

“Ah’ll be havin’ one in a minute! Apple Bloom didn’t come home so me and Big Macintosh looked all over the farm and even most of Ponyville, but we’ve seen no sign of her! I’m really worried, Rarity. Ah’ve got a bad feelin’ that somethin’ happen to her and it ain’t good. Have ya seen her?”

“Apple Bloom’s missing?!” Sweetie Belle shouted, “Have you checked anypony asking for help with some jobs?”

“Why? Do you know somethin’!? Say it!” Applejack started as she towered over Sweetie Belle who was frightened. Rarity quickly pushed her back and said, “Applejack, please! I know you’re worried, but try to calm down.”

Applejack took a few deep breaths and slowly nodded, “Sorry, ya’ll. Please, Sweetie Belle.”

Sweetie Belle quickly told Applejack what her sister had been doing for the last four days. Needless to say, Applejack was both shocked and outraged that Apple Bloom had been doing extra work at the cost of sleep and food. While she did feel a bit proud about her sister’s determination, she was even more worried now considering the health of Apple Bloom’s body.

“Ugh! That stubborn pony! She’s more stubborn then Winona when it’s bath time.” Applejack muttered, “Anyways, thanks for the help. Ah gotta head over to the job board and see what jobs she might have taken. Maybe ah can ask whoever put them up if they’ve seen her.”

“I’ll come with you!” Sweetie Belle shouted before looking at her sister with pleading eyes.

Rarity nodded, “I’ll come too. Don’t worry. We’ll find her.”

“Much appreciated, both of ya’ll. Now come on! Time’s a wastin’!” Applejack said as they three of them hurried outside.

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She was lost.

Really lost.

Apple Bloom would have kicked herself for being stupid enough for heading too far into the Everfree Forest, but she was so tired that even walking felt like a strain. Collapsing near a tree, Apple Bloom took a look at her surroundings not recognizing any part of the forest she was in. She said it would only be for a few minutes till she would turn back, but she kept going; determined to find that stupid cat.

Now, here she was: lost in the Everfree Forest at night, cold, tired, and hungry. Curling up to keep warm, she shivered as the bitter wind blew through the air and shook the trees. The sound of the branches creaking made Apple Bloom tense, her nerves jumping at every little sound that she heard.

A sudden growling sound almost made Apple Bloom jump, but she realized it was her own stomach. Looking around she tried to find something to eat, but there were tons of plants she didn't recognize. Not wanting to risk getting sick, she settled for just eating the grass which tasted bitter and cold.

Despite the bad taste, she still continued munching while wishing she was back home having some of Granny Smith's apple cinnamon rolls mixed with applesauce. The thought of such a tasty meal made her mouth water. She just hoped that she would even get another chance to taste it if she ever got out of here.

Despite being scared out of her mind, she knew that her older siblings would know that she was in trouble for not arriving at home this late. The only problem was she didn't know if they knew where she was. Yet she had to have faith that her big brother and sister would come for her, along with everypony else. Till then she had to make sure she was safe.

First thing to do was find some place to rest. There were many dangerous animals in the Everfree Forest and standing out in the open didn't seem like such a bright idea. Getting up carefully, Apple Bloom moved onward, hoping to find a safe place.

But just as soon as she started moving, she felt her hoof hit something and tripped. Groaning, she got up and turned to look what it was only to feel her insides freeze.

It was a skeleton...a cat skeleton.

Apple Bloom felt her mouth start to dry out and her bones beginning to shake. Her heart started to beat so fast it felt like it was about to burst right out of her chest. As she slowly crawled away from the remains of the cat, her mind quickly began to imagine the cat bones being replaced with a different set, one that looked like a small pony with a cute red bow on top.

Finally, she got up and just ran. Fear driving her forth without any stop. She didn't care where she was going. She just wanted to leave that image away forever. But it still haunted her as she went deeper into the forest.

But as she ran, a set of eyes watched her from its hiding place deep in the forest, its present hidden. Upon seeing such a tasty pray, it licked its chops and soon began to follow in secret.

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Upon arriving at the board, they looked at each of the fliers and then split up to find the ponies who put them up. They asked every pony who put a flier up if they had seen Apple Bloom, but all of them said no. An hour later, they all met back at job board with neither Apple Bloom nor any clue to her whereabouts.

"Now what do we do? It's already night time and still no sign of her!" Applejack said, "We've got to figure out where she could be!"

"Wait!" cried out Rarity as an idea struck her, "Twilight can help us! She can use a dowsing spell to find Apple Bloom."

"A drownin' spell? Rarity, this ain't the time to be thinkin' about swimmin', much less drownin'!" Applejack said.

No, dear. A '**dowsing**' spell! It's a spell that allows you to find something or somepony wherever they are. One day I lost Opalescence and couldn't find her. So when I told Twilight about it she used a dowsing spell to help me find her. By using the hair brush I use on Opalescence as a medium we found her over at Fluttershy's cabin." Rarity explained.



“And ya think Twilight can use this spell to find Apple Bloom?” asked Applejack.

“I’m certain. We just need something belonging to Apple Bloom to use as a medium for the spell to work.”

Sweetie Belle jumped up and down, “I know! I know! Our crusader capes! I brought them back to my place a while ago to add some work on them! I still have Apple Bloom’s back home!”

“Wonderful! Sweetie Belle, you go get the cape. Applejack and I shall meet you at Twilight’s.” Rarity said to her sister.

“Gotcha!” Sweetie Belle replied, as she headed back home.

Applejack turned to Rarity and asked, “You’re sure this spell can help us?”

“Absolutely.”

Smiling with determination, Applejack shouted, “Well, what are we waitin’ for? Let’s head on over to Twilight’s!”

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Twilight could feel the sweat dripping down her entire body. It had taken all day, but she was so close to finishing her potion. Dozens of chemistry equipment and books lay in front of her table as she took one last look at her notes. She then slowly began to levitate a vial filled with blue liquid over a beaker filled with purple liquid.

“Concentrate Twilight....concentrate.” Twilight muttered to herself, “Just one drop....one drop...”

**SLAM!**

“Hey Twilight!” shouted Spike.

“WAH!” Twilight shouted as she jumped. The vial almost fell into the beaker, but Twilight was fast enough to stop it with her magic and sighed in

relief. Her relief quickly turned to anger as she turned around and glared at her assistant.

“Spike! Do you know what you could have possibly done?!” Twilight shouted.

“Uhhh....no?”

“You could have ruined my experiment! This formula could be the very thing that could change all of Equestria! I have to get every ingredient right or else who knows what may happen! I could even blow up all of Ponyville!”

Spike gulped at the thought that he could have been the reason why there home was almost a crater, “Sorry, Twilight! I didn’t know!”

“And just where were you anyway? It’s late at night and you know you shouldn’t be out this late” Twilight asked, with a parental attitude.

“I got bored. You’ve been doing this chemistry thing all day. So I went for a walk, went to the park, and then went over to Pinkie’s for a snack. She made these really awesome cream puffs with rubies in them, but I kinda ate too many and fell asleep.” Spike answered nervously.

“Ruby filled cream puffs?” a bewildered Twilight asked, “How do you even make that?”

“I don’t know. But they sure were tasty!” Spike licked his chops and rubbed his stomach, “I gotta ask for the recipe.”

“Well, tell me the next time you go out. Meanwhile, just be quiet as I finish this.” Twilight said as she went back to her equipment.

“What are you making anyway?” Spike asked as he walked over and examined the large amount of chemistry equipment on the table. He had seen her do this all morning before he left, but she was too busy to answer his curiosity then.

“It’s a potion that could possibility increase magic proficiency up to ten times the normal amount! If this works then this potion could unlock new

magical powers and abilities for everypony. Maybe even allow earth ponies and pegasi the ability use magic as well!"

"I thought earth ponies and pegasi couldn't use magic?" Spike asked.

"They can't cast magic, but all ponies have magic inside of them. It's used differently depending on the type you are. Unicorns are more connected to magic and their horn is used to channel the magic flowing through them as a way to release it. Pegasi can't channel the magic within themselves, but they manipulate the magic around them in order to create the weather. Earth ponies are the least connected to magic, but they are the most sensitive to the magic around them. They feel the magic in the earth and understand it better, which is why most earth ponies are well adapted to nature such as Applejack's family." Twilight explained, in full lecture mode, "With this potion, I believe I can unlock new magical discoveries in all ponies. I just need one more drop from this vial and..."

She slowly tipped the vial and a single blue dropped into the beaker, turning the liquid from purple to light blue.

"Success!" Twilight gleefully shouted, as she began to imagine the praise her mentor would give her for her discovery. However, as she turned her away from her work, the beakers started to bubble uncontrollably.

"Uh...Twilgiht."

"I can't wait to show this to the princess! She's going to be so proud! I wonder if this is enough to get a statue of me in the Academic Hall of Great Discoverers!"

"Twilight...I think you should look at this...." Spike nervously mentioned as he slowly walked away from the bubbling beaker.

"Not now, Spike. I wonder when we can start mass production!?" Twilight said as the beaker started shaking.

"TWILIGHT! HIT THE DECK!" Spike shouted as he ducked for cover.

"Huh?"

**BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!**

A heavy black smoke erupted from the library, surprising many ponies in their houses who wondered what the hay happened. Back inside, Spike nervously poked his head out of a pile of books to see the entire library covered in black soot, including a stupefied Twilight.

Spike couldn't help but laugh at the sight of Twilight. She was not only covered in the black soot, but her mane looked like it was designed by blood thirsty wolverines. Twilight coughed out some smoke and glared at Spike, "It's not funny..."

Spike slowly calmed down and asked, "So, I guess it was a dud?"

Twilight looked at the beaker and saw it empty, the liquid had evaporated. With a disappointed sigh, she answered, "Yeah...looks like it."

She was about to clean up when the door open again. This time it was her friends Rarity and Applejack who were flabbergasted at the mess.

"Ew! What is this? It's disgusting!" Rarity cried out as she stopped right in front of the door, not wanting to get dirty.

"What in tarnation happened? Did somethin' blow up in here?" Applejack asked, as she entered the room despite the mess.

Twilight's shook of the soot all over her and used her magic to put her hair back in proper position, "Sorry for the mess, girls. I kinda had an experiment that went wrong."

"I'll say. This place is a travesty." Rarity commented, "Somepony please clean this up!"

Spike was already front and center as he saluted, "I'll do it! Give me two minutes!"

Like a flash of light, Spike dashed into the closet and grabbed a mop and pail full of water. As soon as he had grabbed them, he zoomed all over the house like a purple streak cleaning all the soot up for his beloved Rarity to walk through cleanly. With his desire to impress his crush guiding him,

Spike managed to clean the room in two minutes flat with no place unchecked.

When he was done, he then appeared right back in front of the white unicorn and bowed, "Is it suited to my lady's taste?"

Rarity looked closely at the floor and nodded much to Spike's delight, "Yes. I suppose this will do. I would ask that it be waxed, but there is no time. Twilight we are here for your help."

"What is it? Is something wrong?" Twilight asked.

"Yeah. Apple Bloom's missin'! Ah've looked all over with Rarity and we can't find her! Ya got that dowsing spell or whatever it's called, right? Can you use it to find her?"

"A dowsing spell? Sure, I can do that. I just need something of Apple Blooms to act as the medium to locate her."

"Sweetie Belle's already on it. She's gettin' one of their Crusader capes."

"I'm right here!" Sweetie Belle shouted, as she entered the library with the cape around her neck.

"Perfect. Spike, get the map of Ponyville and the dowsing crystal please." Twilight asked as she took the cape and tore a small part of it off. Spike came back with the map and a small red box that he put on the table. Twilight opened the box and lifted out a small dark green crystal with ruins on it that was held by a black leather necklace.

Rarity was captivated as she stared at it with reverence, "My stars! That gem is absolutely stunning!"

"It's a Dowsing Crystal. It has the ability to lock on to a living creatures life force by connecting itself with the magic around the world and finding that person based their magical signature, which is found in our DNA." Twilight said.

"DNA?" asked Sweetie Belle.

"Yes. DNA, or Deoxyribonucleic acid, is what contains the genetic makeup in all living things. I have it, just as you and everypony here has it. It's like a blueprint that contains all the genes from our parents needed to maintain our cells and pass on genetic traits. The unique thing about pony DNA is that all of us carry what is known as the "Magical Gene". It's the gene that allows us to be connected with our magic." Twilight explained, "Depending on what type of pony you are and your background, your magic gene will be different from others. All ponies have the magic gene, but each utilizes their magic differently as I just told Spike earlier."

Twilight then tied the cloth around the crystal and levitated it near the map, "By using the cloth from the cape, we can use it to focus on the exact location of Apple Bloom by her DNA signature."

"Ya getting any of this?" Applejack asked Spike, who shook his head, "Well ah don't care how it works! Ah just want it to find my sister!"

"Okay. Now I just need you all to be quiet. This requires a lot of concentration." Twilight spoke as she closed her eyes and concentrated, connecting her magic with the crystals. She focused on Apple Bloom's own magical essence from the cape and sent it into the crystal which began to glow green and start spinning around. Once she put in enough, Twilight stopped pushing the essence in and just let the crystal do its work. It kept spinning faster and faster until the crystal started slowing down while heading closer to the map.

"Almost there...." Twilight whispered as she continued to hold her connection with the crystal. Finally, it stopped and landed on the map, but where it landed made them gasp in horror.

The crystal was pointing directly at the Everfree Forest.

"The Everfree Forest!" Applejack shouted, "What in Equestria is she doin' in there!?"

"Are you sure that's where she is!?" a terrified Sweetie Belle asked.

Twilight slowly nodded, "Yes...I didn't do anything wrong. She's right there."

“Ah gotta go after her!” Applejack shouted as she rushed for the door, but it was slammed shut by Twilight’s magic. Turning around, she glared at the unicorn and shouted, “What are you doin’, Twilight! Let me out or I’ll buck the door if I have too!”

“Applejack, you can’t just rush in there.” Twilight said, but Applejack didn’t want to hear any of it as she stomped her hoof on the ground.

“To hay with that! Ya know how dangerous that forest is! Its night outside and who knows what kind of horrible creatures are out there looking for their dinner!? My little sister is stuck in that forest lost and scared with danger surrounding her at every corner! What if she’s hurt or...or...” Applejack turned away not letting anypony see a small tear fall from her face. She quickly wiped it away and continued, “Ah ain’t lettin’ nopony stop me from getting into that forest!”

“AJ, listen to me!” Twilight yelled, “I know you want to rescue your sister! We all do! But if we’re going to do this we need to do this with a plan! You don’t know where in the Everfree Forest she is and it’s much too big for you to look for her alone! If you go out there by yourself who knows what will happen? What if you get hurt or lost as well? Then who will help Apple Bloom? We need to get everypony to help us out! Just charging in blindly isn’t going to help Apple Bloom.”

“But....”

Twilight walked over and hugged her friend, “Trust me. We’ll find her. I promise.”

The cowgirl pony didn’t answer at first, but she then sighed and slowly nodded before hugging her friend back, “Alright Twilight...Ah trust you.”

“Good. Now here is what we need to do. Rarity, you head over to Fluttershy and then go get Rainbow Dash with her. Tell her we need the entire weather patrol for this,” Twilight ordered.

“Of course.”

“Spike, I need you to wake up the mayor and inform her about the situation. She can help us get Ponyville organized for a rescue mission.”

“Got it, Twilight.”

“Applejack and I will go get as many ponies as we can up and ready. We’ll all meet at the edge of the Everfree Forest with everypony in half an hour. Understood?”

“Understood!” a saluting Pinkie Pie shouted from behind, which made everypony jump at her sudden appearance out of nowhere.

“Pinkie!? How did...when did you...” Twilight babbled, wondering how she got inside without anypony noticing.

“The door was open so I decided to come in.” Pinkie Pie said, like it was no big deal.

“But I just closed it!” Twilight said, “And I’m pretty sure we would have seen you coming in.”

“Silly Twilight! I just used the secret entrance!” Pinkie Pie said.

“I have a secret entrance?” Twilight asked, confused.

“Duh! Everypony knows that libraries have secret entrances. For a pony who spends so much time in a library you really don’t know much.” Pinkie Pie said, much to a confused Twilight who couldn’t help but think she was just insulted, “Anyway, I couldn’t help, but hear everything! Don’t worry! I’ll get everypony up and ready lickety-split to save Apple Bloom before any meany pants monsters try to eat her. And when we get her back we’ll have a huge ‘Rescue Apple Bloom’ party to celebrate our success!”

Twilight had to admit, if any pony could get ponies together for any reason it was Pinkie Pie, “Okay then, the three of us will round the town up. Everypony else knows what to do?”

A collection of nods answered her, “Good, then let’s go!”

Sweetie Belle then interrupted, “What about me? What can I do?”



Rarity quickly answered, "You're going to go home and wait for us, dear. It's too dangerous to bring you along."

"But I want to help! Apple Bloom is my friend and I want to help find her!" Sweetie Belle pleaded.

"I know you do, Sweetie Belle. But the forest is much too dangerous and I can't bare the thought of something happening to you." Rarity said.

"But..."

"No, buts!" Rarity interrupted, "You're going home. When we come back with Apple Bloom I will let you know. But for now, I need to know you're safe and that you'll promise me you'll stay safe."

Sweetie Belle wanted to argue more, but Rarity gave her a look that clearly showed she wasn't going to win this argument and just nodded in defeat.

"Alright, everypony! Let's go!" Twilight shouted as everypony, but Sweetie Belle, rushed out of the library. The little unicorn just stood there, feeling helpless with one of her best friends in mortal danger.

She had to do something. Anything!

A thought then came to Sweetie Belle's head. What about Scootaloo? Didn't she deserve to know about Apple Bloom, even though the two were in a fight?

Making up her mind, Sweetie Belle ran out library and made her way to Scootaloo's house, thankful that it was only two blocks away from Twilight's place. Arriving at the door, she knocked repeatedly until the door finally opened revealing a surprised Scootaloo.

"Sweetie Belle? What are you doing here? It's late at night." the pegasus asked.

"Apple Bloom...she's...she's..." Sweetie Belle tried to say as she tried to catch her breath. Upon hearing the name, Scootaloo just frowned and shook her head.

"I don't want to talk about her alright. Just go home and..."

"SHE'S LOST IN THE EVERFREE FOREST!"

Scotaloo's eyes opened as she stared at Sweetie Belle with a stupefied reaction, "Wha...what?"

"She went into the Everfree Forest! I don't know why, but she's been in there for hours and nopony has seen her! My sister and her friends are getting everypony in town to go rescue her, but I'm scared Scotaloo! It's been hours and who knows what might have happened to her already!" Sweetie Belle shouted.

Scotaloo's mind was still trying to wrap around the fact that Apple Bloom was lost in the most dangerous place that she knew of and was still out there in the dead of night, "What in all of Equestria is Apple Bloom doing in there!? Is she crazy!? Everypony knows that the Everfree Forest is dangerous! Especially at night!"

"I don't know...maybe she tried running away or maybe there was a job she took that led her there..." Sweetie Belle commented, which got Scotaloo's attention.

"Job? What do you mean job?" Scotaloo asked, which made Sweetie Belle cringe having mentioned Apple Bloom's secret. This made Scotaloo suspicious as she looked her right in the eye and said, "You know something, don't you? Tell me what it is."

Sweetie Belle tried to resist, but she gave into pressure and said, "She's been doing jobs and extra chores at her farm to get money. She's done nothing but work, school, and chores with little sleep and eating for the past four days! You've seen how it's been affecting her haven't you? How she keeps falling asleep in class and how tired she looks every day? It's because she's been working her body to the brink!"

Needless to say, Scotaloo was shocked. The reason for Apple Bloom's behavior wasn't because she was angry or ignoring her like she thought, but because she was working like crazy.

“But...why?” Scootaloo asked. What drove Apple Bloom to push her body to its limits?

“Because she was going to use the money to fix your scooter. She found a unicorn who can repair anything to its original form if it's been broken. She's been doing it for you.” Sweetie Belle confessed.

“For...me?” Scootaloo looked at her in shock. Apple Bloom had been doing all that work, just for her? Scootaloo couldn't believe it. After all the yelling and insults, Apple Bloom was still willing to work non-stop just so she could repair the scooter she broke and obtain forgiveness?

Guilt began to form inside of Scootaloo as she realized that Apple Bloom was truly sorry for what she had done and Scootaloo did nothing, but ignore and hate her.

“...why?” Scootaloo asked.

“Because you're her friend and she loves you, Scootaloo. Just as I love you both and I know you feel the same way about us.” Sweetie Belle said as Scootaloo stared down at the ground in shame.

Scootaloo was ashamed that she let her anger against Apple Bloom get the best of her and not only made her suffer, but Sweetie Belle as well. She had hurt both of her friends by letting herself get blindsided by her anger and sorrow, ignoring their own feelings.

And now Apple Bloom was in danger...her **friend** was in danger.

Scootaloo looked up at Sweetie Belle with a determination and said, “We're going in after her.”

“What?” a shocked Sweetie Belle said, “But my sister and the others...”

“To hell with what they said! Our best friend is in danger and I'm not going to sit here any longer while she's in trouble! Cutie Mark Crusaders never abandon each other!” Scootaloo said. Sweetie Belle looked at her; surprised by not only the outburst, but the fact that Scootaloo called Apple Bloom her best friend.

“Does this mean you’re...” Sweetie Belle asked with a smile.

Scotaloo nodded, “Yeah....I ...I still care about her... I was being an idiot, but no more. We’re going to find her and we’re going to save her, even if it takes all night! I’d rather lose a thousand scooters than lose another pony I care about!”

Sweetie Belle nodded, feeling just as determined as Scotaloo, “Then let’s go! Cutie Mark Crusaders Rescue Team!”

“Right!” Scotaloo shouted as the two of them made their way to the direction of the forest post haste, praying that their fellow crusader and friend was still alright.

# Chapter 6

Just as Pinkie promised, it didn't take long for her to notify everypony in Ponyville about Apple Bloom's disappearance. With great haste, everypony who could volunteer headed to the edge of the Everfree Forest where Twilight and the others helped organize them into groups. After they were all organized, Twilight got everypony's attention as they all stood ready.

"Okay, I think we have enough ponies to start. Now listen up everypony! We have a lost filly in the woods and she's been in there for hours. We all know the Everfree Forest is dangerous and easy to get lost in, so we're going to have to do this carefully." Twilight said, her voice filled with authority. "Here's the plan. Dash and the other pegasi will fly over the forest as our eyes in the sky. If you see any sign of Apple Bloom, one of you find another group on the ground while the others keep Apple Bloom safe. As for the rest of us, we're going to split up evenly with each group having half earth ponies and half unicorns. If you find Apple Bloom, have one of your unicorns send up blue sparks into the air and we'll know that she's safe before meeting back here. If you're in trouble, just shoot up red sparks and we'll come help."

Everypony nodded and quickly got into their groups while the pegasi took off into the skies.

"Dash, keep a good eye out for her and stay safe," Twilight asked her friend.

"No sweat, Twi. Me and the others, we'll find the kid in less than ten seconds flat," Rainbow Dash said confidently as she flew up. She signaled the others to follow her and the pegasi team was off.

"Fluttershy, you and Pinkie Pie head with a group to the east end of the forest. Find Zecora and see if she's seen Apple Bloom. I'll head over to the center of the forest with my group while Applejack and Rarity head over to the eastern side." Twilight said.

"Okie doki loki!" Pinkie Pie saluted.

"Thanks again, y'all. Ah can't tell ya how much this means to me and my family," Applejack said with a grateful smile.

"Don't worry, Applejack. I'm sure we'll find Apple Bloom," Fluttershy spoke softly. After saying good luck to each other, they headed to their groups and soon the rescue operation was underway.

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Unbeknownst to the rest of Ponyville, another group of ponies was already searching for Apple Bloom.

Scootaloo and Sweetie Belle had been running nonstop through the Everfree forest, calling out their friend's name in the hopes that she would answer. While Scootaloo was filled with pure determination, Sweetie Belle was exhausted from all the running and was starting to lag behind.

"Wait...please..." she gasped, her throat parched, "Can we take a...break..."

Scootaloo stopped and turned around, "Come on, Sweetie Belle! We have to find her! We're wasting time and every second we wait is another second Apple Bloom is in danger!"

"But I...need...to...rest..." Sweetie Belle begged as her legs gave in.

Scootaloo groaned, "Fine, but only for a short while."

Sweetie Belle sighed in relief as she began to relax while Scootaloo looked around before asking, "Um....any idea where we are?"

There was a long silence between the two before they groaned.

"Great. Not only is Apple Bloom lost, but so are we. This sucks," Scootaloo muttered as she kicked a rock.

A nervous Sweetie Belle then asked, "W-what do we now?"

Scootaloo replied, "We continue on and find Apple Bloom! That's the most important thing!"

“But... what if she’s...” Sweetie Belle said, but stopped. It was a small concern that had been in her head for awhile now and she didn’t want to say it out loud, but it wouldn’t stop whispering.

“If she’s what?” asked Scootaloo.

Sweetie Belle nervously answered, “...dead?”

**“SHE’S NOT DEAD!”** shouted Scootaloo, scaring Sweetie Belle, “Don’t even think about it! Apple Bloom is not going to become dinner for some kind of monster in this stupid forest! She won’t die! I won’t let her!”

Scootaloo turned away from Sweetie Belle and mumbled, “She can’t... I still have to apologize...”

The thought of losing Apple Bloom was hard enough, but the idea of Apple Bloom getting herself killed because of her was something that Scootaloo couldn’t live with. If Apple Bloom never came home because of their stupid argument she would never forgive herself. She couldn’t lose another person she cared about to this forest.

Sensing her inner fear, Sweetie Belle got up and nuzzled her friend, “You’re right. I was being stupid. Come on, let’s keep going!”

Scootaloo nodded before they pressed on..

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“How could ah have just run off like that? Scared like some baby... now Ah’m even more lost!” Apple Bloom told herself. After calming down a while ago, she tried to retrace her steps to see if she could go back to a part of the forest she recognized.

However, the night made it harder to see, even with Luna’s moon up in the air. Apple Bloom didn’t know if she was going back towards Ponyville or deeper into the forest at this point. Arriving at a clearing, she sat down and cursed her luck.

Apple Bloom started to regret even thinking of trying out that scooter. If she had just respected Scootaloo's wishes not to touch it then this terrible week never would have happened. She would never be in this forest and her friends would still be with her. It just wasn't fair in her mind for all this to happen, but she knew deep inside that it was her own fault and nopony else's.

Tears soon began to fall from her eyes. She was scared, alone, and lost with no idea what to do.

"It can't get any worse..." she whispered.

SNAP!

Apple Bloom's head shot up as her body froze. Her breathing went silent as she slowly gulped and looked around for the direction of where the sound came from. The silence of the trees made her nervous as her heartbeat increased and her hooves started to shake like jelly.

Was it a pony from Ponyville? Or was it something else?

That's when she heard something in the bushes behind her and turned around only to scream and jump away as a large figure nearly took her head off. Apple Bloom got to her hooves and just stared at the creature in horror.

It had the body of a pointy eared tiger like she'd been learning about in school and was about five feet in length and at least twice her size. Its fur was dark grey with black spots while on its back its bristling mane stretched up into the air like a mohawk.

The thing that stood out most was its face. There was no skin, only the muscles and skeletal structure of its skull as if its skin was ripped off of its face. Its dark blue predator like eyes glared at Apple Bloom with a gaze full of hunger.

Apple Bloom knew what this was. When she had visited Zecora, the zebra had told her about all the different kinds of creatures that lived in the forest and had showed her pictures of each one. This was known as a krenshar, a creature that was not only scary to face but also hard to outrun.



A terrified Apple Bloom slowly tried to back away, but the krenshar wasn't going to let that happen. It leaped into the air with a fierce growl, its claws ready to tear her to shreds. Apple Bloom quickly dived forward in the nick of time as the krenshar sailed over her. Getting to her hooves, Apple Bloom ran deeper into the forest with the krenshar right behind her.

As she ran, she proceeded to run through bushes as well as jump over rocks and logs in order to gain distance between her and her chaser. The krenshar however was both quick and agile and it managed to follow past the obstacles with ease.

Knowing that she had to do something fast, Apple Bloom tried to look for a way out when she spotted something far away. Narrowing her eyes, she saw a large river in the distance and decided to take a chance by using it to escape while hoping the creature couldn't swim.. A growl alerted her to the krenshar that was only a few feet away from her with its jaw ready to bite her little flank off. Knowing that there was no time to think of another plan, Apple Bloom headed straight for the river at full speed.

As they were only a few feet away, the krenshar realized what the pony was going to do and pounced. Apple Bloom, using all the strength she had in her legs, leaped out and dived into the river. The krenshar quickly stopped itself from falling into the water as its prey swam with the current downstream. It growled in disappointment before abandoning the river, hoping to find another way across.

Meanwhile, Apple Bloom struggled to keep herself above water as she let herself drift for a while until she was sure the krenshar was far away. Swimming towards the other side of the river, she lifted herself onto dry land while coughing out water, "That...was...too close."

After drying her body with a few shakes, Apple Bloom looked up the river trying to see if the krenshar was still chasing her. After seeing nothing, she felt more relaxed as exhaustion started to overwhelm her. She had to find someplace to rest and get her strength back before anything else came after her. Turning to her left, she noticed a small mountain of rocks, no bigger than her family's farm, off in the distance. With her destination in mind, she dragged her sore hooves forward.

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“Apple Bloom! Apple Bloom!” shouted Applejack, calling out along with a few of the other ponies in their group. They had been searching for at least an hour and still no sign of her which made Applejack more nervous with each minute passing.

“Do ya see any of them sparks in the air, Rarity?” Applejack asked as she looked up past the trees.

“No, none. I really hope we find your sister soon! This filthy forest is really damaging the manicure on my hooves,” Rarity commented as she looked at her hooves with worry.

“Ya should be more worried about findin’ my sister then some fancy smancy manicure!” Applejack shouted.

“Applejack! I *am* worried about your sister. No need to get all snappy.” Rarity glared back.

The cowpony sighed, “Ah know. Ah know. Ah’m just...”

Rarity smiled and put her hoof on her friend’s shoulder. “It’s okay, Applejack. I’m sure I would be acting the same way if Sweetie Belle was in Apple Bloom’s place.”

“HEY!”

Everypony looked up to see Rainbow Dash fly towards her friends, “I just got a tip from Wind Whistler! She said that she found a track of hoof-prints nearby heading southeast! They’re filly sized tracks!”

Applejack’s heart gave a leap. “Are they Apple Blooms!?”

“Most likely, but that’s not all. The strange thing is that there were another set of tracks not too far off heading in the same direction. Only these track showed two ponies traveling together and they were also filly sized. Any of you got an idea what’s up with that?” Rainbow Dashed asked.

Both Rarity and Applejack looked at each other with wide eyes.

“Don’t tell me...” Rarity asked, but she knew that her suspicions were right.

“Rainbow Dash! Follow those tracks and keep yer eyes open for anypony! The rest of us will follow you, but don’t wait up for us. Also, ah need ya to send some pegasi over back home and check to see if Sweetie Belle and Scootaloo are still there!” Applejack ordered.

“Wait, are you telling me that all three crusaders are lost in the Everfree Forest?! Jeez! Why can’t those three ever stay out of trouble!? Though I do have to give credit for their guts...”

“Rainbow!” Applejack shouted, getting the speedster back to reality.

“Right! On it!” Rainbow shouted before she dashed off into the air.

“Everypony follow us! Time’s a wastin’!” Applejack shouted as she guided the group southeast.

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Upon arriving at the mountain of rocks, Apple Bloom felt more exhausted than ever. Between walking who knew how many miles and getting chased by that krenshar, she was already set to fall asleep then and there.

“Actually, that doesn’t seem such a bad idea,” Apple Bloom thought out loud as she started to curl herself up. She would only take a short nap and then she would start walking through the forest again. Maybe even climb the stone mountain and see if she could find a path home.

That was until she heard a sudden familiar growl that made her stand up with her eyes wide open, “No... don’t tell me...”

Slowly, the krenshar came out of the trees with its sharp teeth and bony face reflecting in the moonlight. It unleashed a loud roar before it started charging at Apple Bloom. It took a second to get over the sudden shock before she turned around and started climbing the rocky the mountain.

As she jumped from rock to rock , the krenshar followed with perfect precision in each jump with catlike reflexes. When it was close enough it

then jumped over Apple Bloom and landed on the exact rock she was about to land on next. Apple Bloom tried to maneuver out of the way, but the creature knocked her down with the back of its paw.

As she fell, she felt her ribs and shins slam against the rocks of the mountain before landing back on the ground, her body covered in bruises and cuts. As she got up, the krenshar leaped into the air and landed in front of her. It slowly crawled towards her with its mouth watering from the smell of blood from her cuts. Apple Bloom pushed herself back into a large rock before realizing that this was it.

She was going to die here.

She would never see home again. She would never get her cutie mark. She wasn't going to graduate from school and she wasn't going to get married. She was never going to see her family again and she would never see her friends ever again.

She would never get a chance to apologize to Scootaloo.

"Ah'm sorry everypony..." Apple Bloom whispered, before closing her eyes and prayed it would all be over soon.

The krenshar prepared itself, ready to kill its prey when a rock slammed into its face from above and knocked it backwards. Looking up the krenshar then felt more rocks being thrown at its head as it howled in anger and pain.

Apple Bloom opened her eyes to see the sight before her, just before she heard two familiar voices, "RUN, APPLE BLOOM! RUN!!!"

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Scootaloo didn't know what to believe was more crazy. The fact that they'd found Apple Bloom alive or the fact that she and Sweetie Belle were angering what looked like to be a cat from ponyhell.

Sweetie Belle had suggested heading to the small mountain of rocks to climb and take a better view of the forest. As they climbed to the top, they heard roaring sounds that made them head up the mountain faster in order

to see what it was. When they made it up to the top they were shocked by what they saw.

It was Apple Bloom, about to be eaten by a strange beast.

With no hesitation, Scootaloo did the only thing she could do and threw a rock at it before it could attack her friend. Sweetie Belle followed suit and the two of them continued to throw rocks. They hoped that Apple Bloom could escape with the distraction they provided, but Apple Bloom was too stunned to move and the beast was starting to evade their throws.

“What do we do!?” shouted Sweetie Belle. She kept throwing rocks, but her aim was getting worse with each throw. Finally, Apple Bloom seemed to have gotten her wits together and started to limp away from the krenshar. Seeing how her friend was too injured to move, Scootaloo then made an effort to get to her by jumping off the rocks one by one while using her still developing wings to glide down.

The krenshar was now annoyed by the sudden arrival of the two other foals, but it wasn't ready to let go of its meal. The muscle and bone faced tiger roared as it dodged the next rock and jumped on top of Apple Bloom, pinning her to the ground. Apple Bloom screamed as the krenshar roared in her face, ready to rip her face off.

That's when Scootaloo did the most foolhardy thing she'd ever done in her entire life.

She jumped right off the rocks and landed directly on the back of the krenshar who was taken by surprise. Scootaloo bit her teeth into it's fur and held on tight as the krenshar jumped up and down, trying to get the pegasus off of its back.

Apple Bloom watched as Scootaloo tried to keep a grip on the krenshar before she decided to help by grabbing its tail. This only made the krenshar more angry as it ran into the forest full speed with both ponies on its back, determined to get them off.

“Apple Bloom! Scootaloo!” cried out Sweetie Belle as she headed down the mountain, hoping to catch up.

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Both girls continued to hang on as tight as they could while the krenshar ran through the forest, trying to knock the two foals off. It tried jumping around and waving its tail around to throw either of the two fillies off of him. Despite their muscles burning as if they were on fire, as well as the nauseous feeling from all the movement, the two of them still held on tight for their very lives.

The krenshar was blinded with rage. Not only were the two fillies humiliating it, but they were hurting it by holding on to its tail and fur. It then proceeded to run into the direction of the river and was about to turn when Apple Bloom finally lost her grip on the tail just as it swiped upwards, sending her into the air.

She waved her hooves around in mid air before landing right on top of the krenshar's face, blinding it. With its vision blocked, the confused krenshar didn't know where to turn and proceeded to head straight for the river. Both girls tried to let go in time, but they weren't fast enough and splashed into the river with the krenshar.

Scootaloo was able to support herself above the water, but Apple Bloom, who had suffered too many injuries, was barely able to move and struggled to keep afloat. Seeing her friend in trouble, Scootaloo swam over and held on to her, helping her keep her head above water.

A familiar cry was heard as they looked behind them to see the krenshar trying its hardest to swim, but failing miserably. It gave out one last cry before it sank underneath the water and didn't surface.

Both girls held each other, relieved that the creature was gone, but then they heard something that made them tense once again. Looking ahead they saw the river was starting to get faster and faster as the water started to rush around as if there was a storm.

"Rapids! Apple Bloom! Hang on!" shouted Scootaloo before they were tossed around by the fierce velocity of the water. Scootaloo could feel her whole body get thrown around like a rag doll. Her wings were pushing against the rapids so hard it felt like the feathers would be shredded off.

Apple Bloom wasn't doing much better as the pain in her body, combined with the cold punishing rapids, made her feel sick both inside and out. The two of them tried to hold on to each other, but the force of the raging rapids made them lose each others grip. The two of them tried to swim back near each other, but the current was too powerful. As she struggled, Apple Bloom didn't notice a large rock that stood in her path and she smacked head first into it. Scootaloo watched in horror as Apple Bloom's body went limp and was dragged by the water as if her body was a piece of dead wood.

**"APPLE BLOOM!"** shouted Scootaloo. She started to swim with the current, forcing every inch of her body forward till she reached her best friend and held onto her. Looking up ahead, she then saw a log by the edge of the right side of the river that was just close enough to help pull them out.

With all her courage and strength, she proceeded to swim towards it while holding Apple Bloom's limp body with her teeth, her hooves, her tail - anything to keep her friend safe. As she got closer, Scootaloo knew that if she had any hope of getting the two of them out of there she had to grab it.

She veered closer... closer... she was just inches away....

**CRACK!**

Scootaloo just stared in disbelief as the log cracked in two and the part she'd tried to grab fell into the water. Her thoughts were quickly disbanded as the rapids continued to throw the two of them around. Scootaloo tried to stay afloat, but her legs were getting tired and she felt like they were ready to fall off.

The water kept pushing them downstream until Scootaloo managed to see where it was taking them.

Up ahead was a massive waterfall.

Scootaloo was too shocked to think of anything. She just held onto her best friend as tight as possible.

"Apple Bloom... I'm sorry..." she whispered as they got closer to the edge.

Scotaloo closed her eyes before she felt her whole body drop with the sound of the raging water all around them. She tensed up, waiting for the collision between them and the most likely sharp rocky bottom that was underneath the waterfall.

Suddenly, she felt her body connect with something, but it wasn't water or rocks. It was something soft and warm. Scotaloo then began to feel the wind against her face and instead of heading downwards she felt the opposite.

"Don't worry squirts! I gotcha!"

That was the last thing Scotaloo heard before she finally blacked out.

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The moment Scotaloo woke up, she gritted her teeth as a wave of pain washed all over her body.

On one hand, it meant she was alive, but on the other hand, she was bruised all over.

"Scotaloo?! Are you awake?!"

Recognizing the voice, Scotaloo opened her eyes to see her teary-eyed mother standing over her. Looking around she saw that she was in one of the rooms at the hospital back in Ponyville.

"Oh Scotaloo!" Olive Garden cried as she hugged her daughter, "When I heard what happened I just couldn't stop worrying for hours! I'm so glad your safe!"

Scotaloo hugged her mother back as the two held each other, neither wanting to let go.

"Never do that again! Never make me worry that I'll lose my daughter ever again! When I heard you went into the Everfree Forest and they brought you back all banged up I felt as if the world around me had shattered like



glass. You don't know how relived I was to hear that you were going to be okay," Olive said.

Scotaloo nodded as she shed a few tears, "I promise. I'll never do something so stupid again."

The two continued to embrace each other as if nothing in the world mattered until Scotaloo asked, "How did I get here?"

"Rainbow Dash spotted Sweetie Belle as she was running after you. Sweetie quickly told what had happened and then Dash rescued you and Apple Bloom when you were falling off the waterfall. Everypony was looking for you three and the-"

Scotaloo suddenly sat straight up and shouted, "Apple Bloom! Where is she!?"

Olive quickly tried to calm her daughter. "It's okay! She's alive! She suffered some terrible cuts and a minor concussion, but she's alright!"

Scotaloo let lose a deep breath and fell back onto her bed.

She did it.

Apple Bloom was home.

"Can I see her?" Scotaloo asked.

"Dear, you really should rest," Olive said, but Scotaloo looked at her with pleading eyes.

"Mom, please. I need to see her." Scotaloo whispered softly.

Olive tried to think of something to say that would make Scotaloo stay in bed, but she couldn't say no to those eyes. After all she went through, the least she deserved was seeing Apple Bloom safe and sound.

"Okay," Olive sighed. "But only for a short time."

Scotaloo nodded as she slowly got off of her bed and followed her mom out of the room. Her aching body made her wince with each step she took, but she ignored it.

After a short walk through the hospital's halls, the two of them arrived at another room and opened the door, surprising everypony inside. Applejack and her friends were there along with Big Macintosh, Granny Smith, Sweetie Belle, and finally Apple Bloom who was covered in medical tape around her waist, hooves, and head.

Nopony said anything as Scotaloo slowly walked towards Apple Bloom. She was shocked to see Scotaloo, but relieved to know she was alright too. As the fillies looked at each other for a long time, all the adults realized that this was between the three children and one by one left the room.

When the last one left, Apple Bloom finally spoke, "Scotaloo... ah..."

***"WHAT THE HAY WERE YOU THINKING??!!"***

Scotaloo's shout surprised both Apple Bloom and Sweetie Belle as she continued, "What in the world were you thinking!? Forcing yourself to work like a dog and then going into the Everfree Forest alone!? You have to be the craziest and stupidest filly I've ever known!"

"Ah'm....sorry...ah..." Apple Bloom tried to find words, but all she could do was stutter.

"You could have been killed!? Hay, you almost were! Don't you know how much I... I..."

Apple Bloom didn't expect it. In one minute, Scotaloo was just screaming at her and then the next minute just ran to her side hugging her and crying. Apple Bloom didn't know what to do, but she held on to her friend and let her cry.

"Ah'm sorry... ah just wanted to... fix everything... ah didn't mean to make ya worry," Apple Bloom apologized.

"...Idiot....I'm the one who's sorry...I'm the one who should be apologizing...." Scotaloo said as she broke the embrace and looked at the

ground in shame, "I should have told you about my dad...both of you....I shouldn't have gotten so worked up over it either...."

"No! Ah was the one who broke it! Ah stole from ya and hurt ya! Ah was wrong!" Apple Bloom cried.

"I know...I knew you were, but I was too angry to see it. If I just forgave you then you wouldn't have ended up like this. I would rather lose a thousand scooters then lose one my best friends." Scootaloo said with a small smile.

Apple Bloom stared at her "Really?"

Scootaloo nodded, "When my dad died I was never happy. Everyday I woke up only to remember that my father was dead. There are no words that can describe how such a thing feels. The scooter was the only thing that kept me happy and I thought that as long as I had it I could forget about the pain. When I met you two and we became friends I was able to feel that sadness and pain go away. You two were what made me feel alive and happy every day since we first met. When you broke my scooter I guess I still was thinking that I needed it to be happy in order to get over my dad's death. The truth was I just needed needed both of you, my best friends."

Scootaloo looked at Apple Bloom and said, "I forgive you, Apple Bloom. Can you forgive me?"

Apple Bloom just nodded as the two hugged, all the hardship finally past them. That's when Sweetie Belle started crying as the two looked at her in surprise and asked why she was sad.

"I'm not sad...I'm happy..." Sweetie Belle said with a smile, "All this time I was worried that you two would never speak to each other again. I was always worried that our friendship was finally over. I'm just so glad that everything is back to normal and you two are friends again."

Both Apple Bloom and Scootaloo looked at each other with guilt. They had gotten so preoccupied in their argument that they forgot about Sweetie Belle who suffered just as much as they did

“We’re sorry, Sweetie Belle.” they both apologized as Scootaloo and Sweetie Belle jumped on the bed next to Apple Bloom and hugged one another.

“Let’s promise never to break up as friends. Even if we ever get in another fight!” Sweetie Belle said.

“Yeah! Nothing will ever tear us apart ever!” Scootaloo said.

“We’ll always have each other no matter what!” Apple Bloom cried out as all three of them looked at each other with smiles.

The crusaders had finally reunited.

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A month had passed.

It had taken only a few days for Apple Bloom and Scootaloo to get out of the hospital, but when they did they couldn’t have been any more happier. Even though all three of them did get grounded for a month because of their actions.

Although grounded, the trio decided to stop their plans for finding their cutie marks for a short time and focus on another goal: Making two hundred bits to fix Scootaloo’s scooter. It took awhile, but the three did as much work as possible while making sure they didn’t over do it like Apple Bloom did last time. When they finally managed to get all the money, they rushed over to Mr. Fix-it’s shop and presented him with the cash as well as the broken scooter.

The three fillies watched with anticipation as Mr. Fix-it counted each coin one by one. The broken scooter lay on his counter, ready to be fixed. Just as he counted the last of the coins he gave them a smile and nodded, “Two hundred bits. A deal is a deal. Stand back, girls!”

The three of them stood back as Mr. Fix-it’s horn began to glow as well as the scooter pieces before they were lifted up into the air and started to shine. The wheels were slowly shaped back to normal, the paint began to look brand new, the handle bars straightened, and the wood became clearer

as each piece then connected with each other to reform itself back to its original shape.

In less than a minute, the task was finished and Mr. Fix-it levitated the brand new repaired scooter in front of the crusaders who just stood there in shock. It looked as if it just came out of the factory with not a single trace of the accident a month ago on it.

“All done girls. Now why don’t you try that scooter out and enjoy the sunny day our princess has given us.” Mr. Fix-it said as he went to the back of his shop, pleased with his success.

Scotaloo slowly walked over to it and touched it a bit before getting on and pushed herself forward a bit. The the warm comfortable feeling that she got when she rode it was still there, like it had never left.

She smiled as a tear dripped from her eye.

“Thank you. Thank you girls.” she said to both of her best friends as they smiled at Scotaloo’s happiness.

As they left the shop, Apple Bloom then said, “So now that ya got the scooter back, ah bet ya want to ride it all around Ponyville, huh?”

Scotaloo thought about it, but then smiled, “Nope! I’m going to teach you how to ride this baby.”

“Wha!?” a shocked Apple Bloom shouted, “A-A-Are ya sure? Remember what happened last time?”

“That’s why I’m going to teach you. Somepony’s got to teach you how not crash and burn like a one winged duck.” Scotaloo laughed as did the others.

“Let’s do this at the park then! We can get ice cream afterwards!” Sweetie Belle suggested as the others agreed.

At the same time a nearby student of the princess was watching the event from her home by her window. She smiled as she saw the three fillies run towards the park as a thought came to her.

“Spike?” she called for her assistant.

“What is it?” asked Spike who walked over.

“Take a message for the princess please.” Twilight said as Spike took a pen and paper and began to write....

*Dear Princess Celestia,*

*I've learned that even if you're close to your friends there are times that you will fight with them and not only will you and the pony you're fighting with suffer, but your other friends will as well. Yet if your friendship is strong enough, any broken bond can be healed and will create a stronger connection with your friends in its aftermath. You have to have faith that everything will work out for the best and that your friendship will still remain strong. Because in this world of ours there is nothing more valuable than the connections we share with those we love, including our friends and family.*

*Your faithful student,*

*Twilight Sparkle*

And with that last line, Spike sent the message away.

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## *The End of A Broken Bond*

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