

Too Shy for a Rainbow

And

The Rainbow's Surprise

By Jake Heritagu

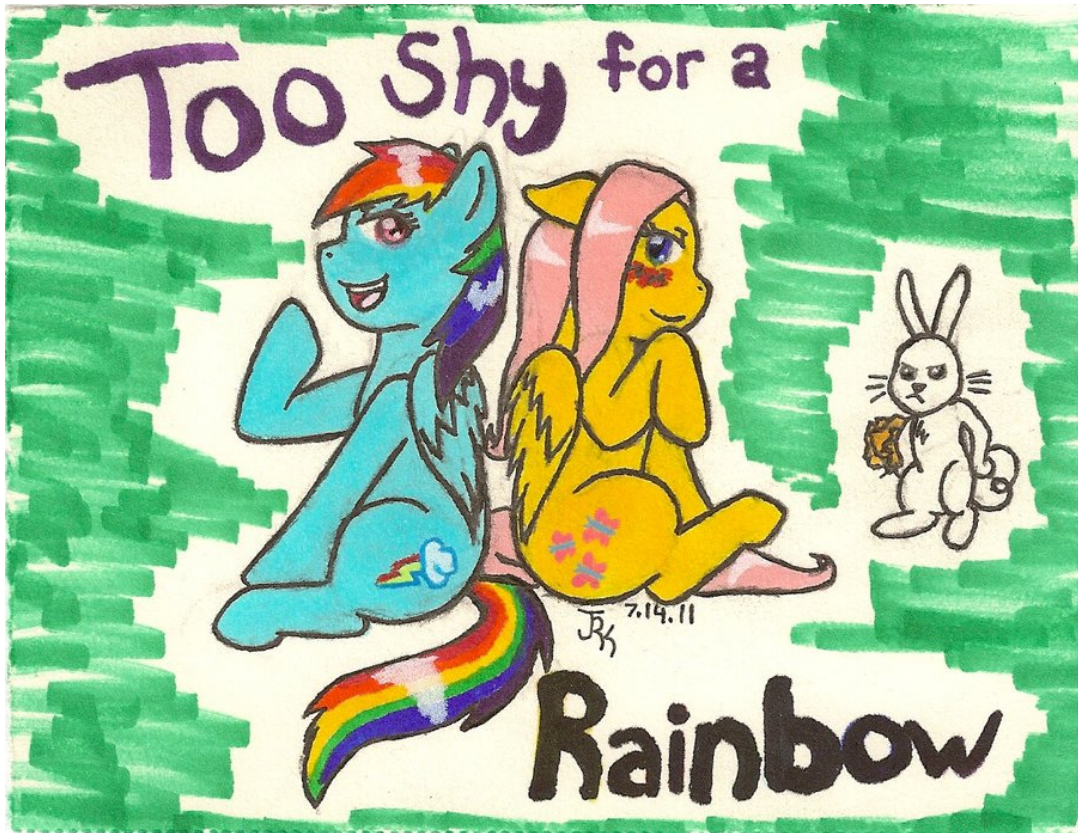


Table of Contents:

A Brief Editorial Note	3
~ Too Shy for a Rainbow ~	
Chapter 1	4
Chapter 2	13
Chapter 3	25
Chapter 4	35
Epilogue	53
~ The Rainbow's Surprise ~	
Prologue	59
Chapter 1	64
Chapter 2	73
Chapter 3	85
Chapter 4	95
Chapter 5	103
Epilogue	114

A Brief Editorial Note

It's increasingly clear, even to myself, a person who has yet to read any of his stories, that all of Mr. Jake Heritagu's fics exist in the same universe, so to speak. This includes his Silent Ponyville stories. Please keep that in mind when reading these stories; sometimes they will reference characters and events from his other works.

-MaxVeers

Too Shy for a Rainbow

Chapter 1

"Hey, are you down here?" Came the cracking voice of a developing Pegasus as she flew down from the cloud city of Cloudsdale.

Fluttershy's ear perked up as she looked up at the sky from the ground, the animal friends that had gathered around her beginning to move away, returning to their lives before she had arrived.

"There you are." The rainbow haired Pegasus said landing on the ground next to the skinny-legged yellow Pegasus, "What're you doing down here? You missed the whole race! Which I won, of course!" The Rainbow Pegasus back flipped in the air before landing on the ground next to her.

"Oh, I'm sorry. I'm not a very good flyer so when I fell I panicked and wasn't able to stop myself...but the animals down here stopped my fall. I helped them out for their kindness, and look," Fluttershy stood up and turned her body so the rainbow haired Pegasus could see, "I just got my Cutie Mark for it." she showed off the three butterflies that adorned her flank.

"Really? I just got my Cutie Mark too!" The rainbow pegasus said showing off the awesome lightning bolt, "That race showed me my serious need for speed!" Rainbow quickly zipped around the trees in the area, rustling leaves off of trees as she moved quickly. She stopped before Fluttershy again, smiling proudly.

"So how come you're not a good flyer? The whole point of the Summer Flight Camp is to get better, have you not been practicing?" The rainbow Pegasus asked curiously.

“W-Well...I...didn’t practice at home...” Fluttershy squeaked softly, “And...I’m not doing too well in my classes...” She shuffled her hoof against the ground. “I’ve been trying...but I was told if I don’t pick up my grades I’ll be kicked out...” she mumbled shyly.

“Well, how about I teach you then?” The eager Pegasus grinned.

“W-What? You’d...do that for me?” Fluttershy said, shocked at the kindness this filly offered.

“Sure! I love flying so much that I’d love to share the feeling with others!” The Pegasus let out a laugh, “It sounds like fun! My name’s Rainbow Dash, by the way.”

“O-Oh...I-I’m Fluttershy...” Fluttershy replied quietly.

“Nice to meet you Fluttershy, now come on, we should get back to the camp before one of the councilors starts wondering where we are.” Rainbow said quickly pointing to the cloud city above them.

“Oh...right.” Fluttershy having forgotten all about their supervision, she turned to her animal friends and waved to them, “Bye friends, I’ll come and visit, I promise.” She smiled softly. She then unfurled her wings and began to flap, picking herself up slowly.

“...Wow, you really are struggling, aren’t you?” Rainbow said inspecting Fluttershy’s technique.

“I-I’m sorry...” Fluttershy apologized as she did her best to fly next to Rainbow Dash.

“Are you sure you can make it back to the camp on your own?”

“I should be able to...” Fluttershy mumbled quietly.

“Well alright, come on then.” Rainbow said, dashing off, almost instantly out of sight. Fluttershy began her slow flight behind her. Rainbow quickly flew back next to Fluttershy, looking a little annoyed.

“You can’t fly any faster than that?” Rainbow asked impatiently.

"I-I'm sorry..." Fluttershy apologized again.

"Ugh." Rainbow put a hoof to her face, "Alright, we'll go at your pace...as boring as it is." The two of them slowly made their way back to the clouds.

"It's been a while since I last saw your cottage." Rainbow Dash said walking through the living room of Fluttershy's house, "I still think clouds make a comfier home though." She noted the wood flooring.

"Well, maybe, but then my animals wouldn't be able to stay inside." Fluttershy said, peeking her head around from the door to her kitchen, "Besides, I like being close to the ground. It's comforting." She chuckled softly before heading back to her boiling pots. She inhaled the aroma of what she was cooking, gauging where it was in its development.

She stirred one casually with a spoon, while another she poured in a tad bit of seasoning. She then carefully opened the oven door to check on how the things inside were baking.

'Everything looking delicious!' Fluttershy thought with a bit of glee, 'I just need to finish preparing the appetizers~' she closed the oven door and walked over to her counter, as she carefully prepared the salads. She had paid the extra expense for the freshest greens and flowers she could find, and then topped off with the fresh apples from Applejack, these would be the best salads she ever made. 'I hope Rainbow dash will like them.'

"Hey Fluttershy...why is this rabbit looking at me angrily?" Rainbow's voice came from the living room.

Fluttershy's attention was instantly diverted, as she quickly looked around the corner again. There was indeed the familiar white rabbit, standing on a table looking at Rainbow Dash with a glare, his arms crossed.

"Angel bunny!" Fluttershy quickly walked over to the angry bunny, who proceeded to look at her with an eyebrow raised, "You know better than to be rude to our guest." Angel simply huffed and turned his head

away from Fluttershy. “Now now Angel, be nice. I promise, I have a special treat for you for dinner as well, so promise me you’ll be good?”

Angel let out an exasperated sigh as he smacked his forehead. He then hopped off the table, heading for his bed.

“Heh, you sure do have a way with animals.” Rainbow said watching the bunny hop off, “But what’s with the attitude on that one?”

“Oh, he’s just always kind of been that way. He’s certainly the most opinionated of all the animals here, but he’s also been the most helpful.” Fluttershy smiled as she spoke, “He helps me take care of the other animals, helps me keep track of my schedule when I forget important events, he even helps me speak up when I don’t have the confidence to speak up for myself.”

“That little guy does all that?” Rainbow Dash said surprised.

“Oh yes. Angel’s a very big help, I don’t know what I’d do without him.” Fluttershy was smiling happily. However, her thoughts were interrupted as a pillow flew by, hitting her in the face.

“Uh well...your little helper just threw a pillow at you.” Rainbow Dash pointed out.

“Uh...” Fluttershy said, looking at Angel. He was pointing behind her to the kitchen. “Oh! That’s right! The food!” Fluttershy quickly ran back into the kitchen. She quickly went to the stove and turned down the heat, her soup was about to boil over and make a huge mess in the kitchen. It quickly settled down as she sighed in relief.

“The food smells great by-the-way.” Dash complimented as she walked into the kitchen, smelling the air, “I can’t cook very well, so the most I eat usually ends up just being quickly thrown together sandwiches.”

“Oh, well I don’t mind cooking for you at all.” Fluttershy said honestly, “You should vary up your diet more; it’s good for you.” Fluttershy smiled before carefully picking up a cloth in her mouth and opening the oven door. She reached in and gingerly pulled out the hot tray, on top of it were the fully cooked desserts of her own design, a special cherry-apple turnover

with the pastry sweetened with a cooked sugar coating. It was a simple recipe, but one she came up with herself and she was proud of it. She placed the hot tray down on the counter.

“Oh wow, those look awesome.” Rainbow Dash licking her lips at the dessert Fluttershy had just pulled out.

“Now now Dash, the desserts are for after dinner.” Fluttershy chuckled as she walked over to the salads, “It’ll all be ready in just a few more minutes.” She finished slicing up the apples to place on top of the salads.

“Yea yea, just hurry it up, I’m starving!” Rainbow said eagerly as she walked back into the living room.

Fluttershy carefully placed the apple slices on the salads, arranging them neatly. She couldn’t help but smile at her work, she had made sure to decorate them just for this occasion.

‘Okay, appetizers are done, Soup is done, and Dessert is done.’ Fluttershy said making a mental note of everything she had finished, ‘And the main course...’ she said looking over at the last pot on the stove. She pulled out a small portion of the pasta, tasting it. ‘Main course cooked to perfection.’ She smiled happily, turning the heat off and carefully pouring the contents of the pot into a strainer in the sink. She put the drained pasta into a bowl and began to carefully season the main dish.

‘Everything is coming together wonderfully!’ Fluttershy said cheerfully in her mind, ‘Oh, I hope she likes everything. She said it smelled good, but I hope she’ll actually like the taste. It’s been ever-so-long since I got Rainbow Dash alone to myself, I hope she’s enjoying herself...’

Fluttershy blushed at her own thoughts; she’d hadn’t realized how forward her thoughts felt. She lightly shook her head and finished preparing the pasta. She’d have plenty of time to think about everything once she’d finished having a pleasant time with Rainbow Dash.

She moved quickly to set up the table for the two of them, placing two plates, followed by the proper utensils needed, then placing the salads first next to the plates. She pulled out two bowls and quickly ladled the soup

into each, before placing them next to the soup. She then grabbed the big bowl of pasta and placed it in the center of the table.

Fluttershy scrutinized the table; she wanted everything to be absolutely perfect.

‘Am I missing anything here? Is there something I could add to make it better?’ She asked herself contemplating the table. She’d draped it with her favorite white table cloth, which was embroidered with a simple flower pattern. She knew it was likely to get a few stains on it tonight, with how messy an eater Rainbow could be, but she didn’t mind, she’d gladly wash out any stains.

‘Would candles be too much? Would she get the wrong idea...or would that be a good thing, but how would she feel about them?’ She rubbed her hooves together a little torn about setting up lit candles, it evoked images of a romantic candlelit dinner in her mind, but she still wasn’t sure if Rainbow Dash even felt anything similar to how she did...

‘O-Oh...I could set them up and say they’re for better lighting if she asks!’ The idea quickly popped into her head. She went into her pantry and pulled out two long-white candles and their stands, setting them up on either side of the table. She carefully lit them with the matches, the candles giving off a soft glow different from the light of the lanterns around the house.

‘Okay...I think that’s everything.’ Fluttershy inspected the table one last time, before finally being satisfied enough to invite the rainbow-haired Pegasus to join her for dinner.

“Alright, Dinner is read-” she stopped herself as she looked into the living room, surprised at what was happening.

“Oh, I’m going to get you, you pesky rabbit!” Rainbow laughed as she gripped a pillow in her mouth, chasing after the white rabbit, trying to smack Angel with it.

Angel was equally guilty, hopping away from Rainbow at top speed with a pillow in his forelegs. The two of them had caused pillow feathers to

start flying about the room; the two rough-housing critters were making a mess.

In a quick leap, Angel jumped into the air, bouncing off of the cottage walls and straight at Rainbow Dash. The two of them crashed, falling to the cottage floor sending a pile of feathers into the air. Rainbow Dash laughed as the feathers fell around her, the bunny lying on her back.

“Alright, you’re pretty fun, I admit.” Rainbow said standing up, the bunny sliding off of Rainbow’s back. The rabbit landed and turned its head away from Rainbow, dusting its hands before hopping off.

“What was that all about?” Fluttershy asked, frowning a little at the mess that had piled up in her living room.

“Oh, your rabbit threw a pillow at me after I came back out, so I had to show him who was boss.” Rainbow gloated while smiling, “Though it really worked up my appetite, is the food ready?” she asked eagerly.

“Actually it is, I was coming to get you.” Fluttershy smiled, ‘I’ll clean up this mess after dinner.’ The pile of feathers bothered her, but she had just prepared a fine dinner for Rainbow Dash, she wasn’t about to let that go to waste.

“Awesome! I’m starved.” Rainbow said quickly heading for the table.

“I just have to give Angel his dinner and then I’ll be ready to eat too.” Fluttershy smiled. She quickly walked over to where she had prepared a special dish for Angel tonight, so that he would be on his best behavior during the dinner. A special carrot and flower casserole, his favorite.

She quickly walked back over to Angel, who had found his way to his bed, kicking back with a proud grin on his face. Fluttershy placed the bowl down next to his bed.

“Now Angel,” Fluttershy said quietly so only Angel could hear, he looked up at her curiously, “I made you your favorite dinner, so will you please be on your best behavior tonight, for me?” Fluttershy smiled sweetly as she blinked her eyes, trying to get the bunny to cooperate.

Angel looked at her almost as if he was bored. He tapped his hands together, wiped his forehead, and then pointed at Fluttershy.

“I know you have the best of intentions for me...uhm, most of the time, but pretty please, just for tonight, let me handle it on my own?” She pleaded with her bunny.

Angel swept his arm over his chest, patted his back and pointed at Fluttershy.

“Alright, thank you Angel.” She smiled happily before heading back into the kitchen.

Rainbow Dash was already half-way through her salad by the time Fluttershy sat back at her end of the table.

“Wow Fluttershy, you really are a good cook.” Rainbow licked her lips as the last of the salad disappeared into her mouth. Fluttershy had slowly started to make a dent into her salad.

“Thanks, that means a lot.” Fluttershy blushed softly, looking off to the side, hoping Rainbow Dash wouldn’t see her red face.

“Hey, how come the pasta doesn’t have any sauce?” Rainbow said curiously, pulling a large glob of it onto her plate.

“Oh, I’m sorry, did you want sauce? I don’t really prefer them myself so I usually just give them extra seasonings and cover them in cheese. I-I can quickly make you some though.” Fluttershy almost panicked, ready to get up and cook again.

“Oh, no there’s no need Fluttershy.” Rainbow slurped up one of the noodles, “It’s different, but it’s good. I’ve just never had sauce-less pasta before is all.” Rainbow took a large glob of pasta into her mouth, chewing and swallowing along the way. She really was a messy eater, but she seemed to be enjoying herself. “How’d you get the noodles to taste so good? Usually their awfully bland.” Rainbow complimented.

“O-Oh, that’s easy, just add salt to the water you’re going to boil the noodles in, if you make the water about the same consistency as salt water

the salt will cook to the noodles. It not only adds flavor, but it makes it easier for seasonings, cheese and sauce to actually stick to the noodles rather than just slide off.” Fluttershy explained with her knowledge of cooking.

“Huh, salt? I never would’ve guessed! You sure do know a lot about cooking.” Rainbow Dash put the pasta down for a moment to begin sampling Fluttershy’s soup.

“Oh, it’s nothing really.” Fluttershy blushed again, “I just learned over time. A lot of the animals eat different types of food, so I just felt I should figure out what’s best.”

“It pays off.” Rainbow Dash said, picking up the bowl of soup and gulping it down, finishing it one big swig. “I’d love some more of this soup!” She grinned a sloppy grin at Fluttershy.

“Certainly.” Fluttershy chuckled happily as she grabbed Rainbow’s bowl and flew over to the stove. She was almost giggling internally, ‘She’s really loving my dinner~’ she thought as she felt like she was glowing. She quickly refilled Rainbow’s bowl with the soup, flying back. Fluttershy went to place the bowl down next to Rainbow Dash.

Suddenly, a ballistic carrot soared through the air crashing into the edge of the bowl, the dish falling forward and landing on Rainbow’s head. Rainbow let out a cry as in a panic she opened her wings and flew backwards, flailing her limbs. Her leg kicked the empty salad bowl, sending it launching across the room as her back hit hard against the wall. A shelf holding various knick-knacks fell down, sending more items hurling towards the wall. One of the knick-knacks struck the table, knocking one of the candles over onto the table. A loud crash echoed as the spices on the spice rack fell and began to roll on the ground, the little mice that had been living in their holes scurrying out in fright.

Fluttershy tried her best to help Rainbow, but was hit by flying spices, sending plumes of debris into the air.

“Ah-ah-ACHOO” She sneezed beyond her control, as she tried to land and stabilize herself, only to find her foot on a round cylinder, sending her careening backwards and latching onto her fridge door. The door

swung open, sending the contents spilling out. The unstable fridge door swung itself fully open, dragging Fluttershy along with it as she hit her pantry door. The door let out an audible crack as it fell inward; a large bag of flour that had been sitting at the top was jarred loose and fell on top of the frightened Pegasus.

Rainbow coughed loudly as she lifted the bowl from her eyes to see what had happened. From where she sat on the ground she could see a haze of white slowly clearing as the sound of frantic animals scattered from the kitchen. She could make out the sounds of mice and birds, though there were a few cries she was unfamiliar with.

In moments the kitchen settled down and the dust faded. Fluttershy groaned as she sat up from near the fridge, covered in splotches of white all over her mane and coat.

“Ugh...Fluttershy, you okay?” Rainbow asked shaking her mane, trying to get most of the soup off of her.

Rainbow only heard a terrified squeak reply. She wasn’t sure if that was good or not. She removed the bowl from her head and carefully navigated the wreckage that covered the kitchen floor over to Fluttershy’s side. She carefully closed the fridge as she looked at the shaking yellow Pegasus.

“Fluttershy? Are you hurt?” Rainbow asked, gently placing a hoof on her shoulder.

Fluttershy slowly shook her head. She wasn’t hurt physically. But there felt like there was a clamp on her heart. Tears were burning at the edge of her eyes as she felt the weight of her whole dinner ruined right before her.

“Oh, good, I was worried you were hurt.” Rainbow sighed as she began to dust Fluttershy off a little, “This is uh...quite a mess huh.” Rainbow chuckled, trying to make it not seem as serious.

“I-I’m...s-sor...ry...” Fluttershy mumbled quietly, almost inaudibly.

“What was that?” Rainbow asked, “I didn’t catch that.”

"I'm...sorry..." Fluttershy mumbled a little louder, but her voice trailed.

"Come on Fluttershy, I've told you before to speak louder. Now what're you trying to say?" Rainbow said nudging her shoulder, trying to get her to speak up.

"I'm sorry, okay!?" Fluttershy cried out as she turned her head away from Rainbow Dash. Rainbow was a little shocked to hear the outcry from her timid friend, "I'm...sorry..." Fluttershy said more calmly this time, "The...The whole dinner is ruined now..." her voice shook as she tried to hold herself back from crying, "I just wanted you to enjoy a good meal...a-and now it's all over the floor." She pointed to the pot that had been on the stove that had been knocked over in the chaos, soup covering the floor.

"Aw, come on Fluttershy, it's okay, really." Rainbow laughed as he tried to cheer up her friend, "I got most of it in me before the whole mess. I got plenty to eat, and what I did was delicious."

"...R-Really?" Fluttershy asked wiping on of her eyes with her hoof.

"Absolutely! Best meal I've had in ages! I can't even remember when I had a meal so awesome." Rainbow laughed excitedly.

A small smile appeared on Fluttershy as she heard those words. Despite the mess, she'd enjoyed herself. The clamp that had been tight on her heart seemed to loosen.

"...Well...I-I'm glad you enjoyed it..." Fluttershy said as she shifted to stand up, moving the flower bag from leaning against her. "But you're covered in my soup now...would you like a bath?" Fluttershy offered.

"A bath sounds great." Rainbow said wanting to shake herself, but didn't want to get more soup everywhere, "But what about you? You're a mess too."

"Uh...w-well I have to start cleaning first...I'll be a mess anyway, so you take a bath first and I'll start cleaning." Fluttershy said smiling.

“Well...alright, if you say so.” Rainbow said nodding, flapping her wings and heading for the bathroom so she wouldn’t leave too big of a messy trail behind her.

Once Rainbow Dash was out of sight she let out a big sigh as she looked around the messy kitchen. She then looked over at the table, seeing the remnants of the dinner. Her poor favorite table cloth, she had used it for such a special occasion, but not it was barely recognizable. She slowly walked over to it, noticing that the candle that had fallen over was still lit, burning her precious table cloth. She quickly smothered the flame with one of the wet napkins on the table.

“Oooh...the stains might have come out, but this never will.” She sulked as she looked at the burnt, black portion of her table cloth. “Well...at least she had a good meal.” Fluttershy said trying to look at things on the bright side. She had just wanted a quiet night together with Rainbow Dash, even if it was just as friends. She was glad for any time she got to spend with the rainbow-haired pegasus.

Fluttershy began to stack up the plates on the table as her thoughts ran through her head, ‘I doubt Rainbow will want to have dinner with me again after tonight...she already doesn’t hang out with me often because of quietness, being too shy to want to pull pranks, not being a strong flyer to fly together, hardly able to stand up for myself...’

Fluttershy stopped her stacking as she mentally kicked herself over every flaw. She sat down on the ground as she felt the depression setting back in, ‘But...I like her because she’s everything I’m not...’ she felt a twinge of pain, ‘But that’s also why she won’t like me back...isn’t it...’

Suddenly, a white blur appeared before her. Fluttershy was knocked out of her thoughts as she looked up, seeing a proud looking white bunny holding a hand up to his puffed out chest.

“...Huh?” Fluttershy said, almost shocked to see Angel standing there. “Angel? ...You...You didn’t have anything to do with this, did you?” Fluttershy asked in almost disbelief. Her question was answered by a rather proud nod from the little white rabbit.

Fluttershy felt her eye twitch as she stared at her little friend.

“Angel Bunny! What have you done!?” Fluttershy asked angry. She was truly angry. It was a feeling she was unused to, one she’d seldom felt before. “You ruined my dinner! You ruined my kitchen! You ruined my night with Rainbow Dash!” Fluttershy cried out at her little rabbit friend, as she felt the tears threatening to come back.

Angel looked uncaring back at the angry Fluttershy. He crossed his arms, before moving one of his hands in a circle next to his head before pointing at her again.

“I am NOT crazy! You’ve been a bad bunny Angel!” Fluttershy stomped her hoof. “Angel...I hate to do this, but you leave me no choice now!” Fluttershy moved forward and grabbed the rabbit by the back of the neck with her mouth. Angel squirmed and struggled against Fluttershy’s grip. She walked over to an empty bird cage she had set up in the living room that she would normally use to help her sleeping birds. She opened the cage door and dropped Angel inside and closed the door locking it.

“I’m sorry Angel, but you’re in time out!” Fluttershy said turning away from the cage and heading back to the kitchen as she could hear Angel rattling the cage in his attempts to escape.

Chapter 2

Fluttershy panted heavily as she lay on the cloud. Her wings were sore and her energy was low. She wasn't sure how much longer she could keep this up, it was exhausting her.

"Are you finished already? We've barely gotten any flying in today!" Rainbow sighed, hovering over the tired Fluttershy.

"I'm sorry..." Fluttershy squeaked as she shakily got up onto all four hooves again.

"You're never going to keep your grades up if you don't get into better shape." Rainbow said flying down and forcing her on to her feet, spreading her wings and getting her into a flight stance, much to Fluttershy's dismay. "Okay, give me another speed lap around the loops. And GO." Rainbow yelled out before blowing on a whistle.

Fluttershy let out a soft cry before flying forward as quickly as he wings could carry her. Her wings had developed early and grown larger, but they weren't very strong despite that. Rainbow could only groan at Fluttershy's top speed, not even being a third of what she could pull off in the air.

Fluttershy grunted as she flew through the floating loops, trying to beat her old time, her body aching and screaming at her with every beat of her wings. She felt herself slowing down as her body forced its actions. She panted through the last hoop, before finally landing and collapsing at the start line, gasping for breath.

"Ugh, alright, I can see you're tired." Rainbow rubbed her face a little annoyed, "You're really out of shape Fluttershy, take five minutes to rest then we'll do some lighter exercises. You won't be able to graduate if you stay so out of shape though."

"I-I-I'm...s-sorry..." Fluttershy panted between gasps of air. Her body wanted nothing more than to rest, this much physical exertion was beyond her.

"And that's another thing, stop apologizing for every little thing." Rainbow said rolling her eyes. "I'm going to go fetch you some water, you just relax." Rainbow quickly flew off, at a speed that if Fluttershy had blinked she would've missed where she went.

"W-Wow..." she muttered softly to herself as she watched Dash fly off. Nothing ever seemed to slow her down, she could fly anywhere at any speed at any time. Her mind constantly told her it was impossible for her to ever reach any level like Dash, but she wanted to, even if it was just once...

"Huh?" Something gently landed on the cloud in front of Fluttershy. It was a letter that had fallen from the sky. Fluttershy looked up, trying to see if she could spot who dropped it, but the sky was clear for the moment, with the occasional pegasus passing by. She carefully picked up the letter, examining it.

"It's addressed to me..." She said surprised, seeing her name written on the front of it. She carefully opened the letter, before pulling out the folded paper inside. She opened the letter and began to read:

Dear Fluttershy,

I have admired you from afar for some time now, but I'm too shy to admit my feelings to you in person. I don't know if I'll ever have the courage to face you directly about these feelings, but I had to at least let you know. Ever since I saw your sleek, beautiful yellow coat and glorious pink mane, you've inspired a confidence inside of me. Your grace and beauty are second to none, your eyes show such deep love and compassion that I could get lost if I were to look into them.

Your voice is that of an Angel, your tenderness makes me shiver and your being fills me with glee. I know this might seem confusing to you, but my heart throbs in your very presence. I don't think you've ever noticed me and that's okay, I can live happily just knowing you're there. So please

continue to live happily and hopefully one day I'll be able to at least say hello to you.

Your Secret Admirer

Fluttershy read the letter twice. She didn't know who sent the letter or that anypony felt that way about her. It was a new experience.

One that made her...angry.

She folded the letter back into its original shape and tore it into two pieces. She then tore the letter in half again.

As she went to tear it for a third time she stopped herself, realizing what she was doing. She stared at the torn letter in her hooves, shocked at her own actions. A pony had tried to tell her that they cared about her...and her initial reaction was to destroy it?

"Why did I..." she asked confused. She had no idea what had compelled her to tear the letter. She felt guilt riddle her at what she had done. She tenderly folded the remaining pieces of the paper and carefully tucked it into her mane. She would hold onto it, it was something precious someone had given her, even if she had destroyed it...

"Alright, here." A bottle of water was suddenly thrust into Fluttershy's face, much to her surprise as she fell backwards onto her back. "Yeesh, it's just water you scaredy cat." Rainbow rolled her eyes a little.

"O-Oh...thank you..." Fluttershy said gently taking the water and drinking it slowly.

"Okay, we're going to continue in a few minutes, so make sure you're ready." Rainbow said flying around in thought about what to do for Fluttershy.

'I wonder who sent me the letter...' Fluttershy sat there in confusion as she relaxed, trying to prepare for more training.

“Ah, that was refreshing.” Rainbow Dash said, stretching as she walked back into the living room. Her coat sparkled from her fresh cleaning, as she checked on how Fluttershy was doing. To her surprise, the kitchen was already starting to look normal again.

“Wow, you work fast Fluttershy.” Rainbow said walking up to the pegasus that was busy scrubbing away at the leftover soup on the floor.

“Oh, thank you.” Fluttershy smiled looking over her shoulder at Rainbow. “And sorry again about this whole mess, I hope you still had a good time.” Fluttershy meekly stated with a smile as her brush finished cleaning the last of the soup, before putting the brush back into her bucket of soapy water.

“Oh sure, it was a fun visit.” Rainbow Dash waved her hoof, “Good food and a good laugh, it was worth the trip.” Rainbow chuckled.

“Well I’m happy, if you had a good time then it was a good evening.” Fluttershy smiled as she brushed her hooves off on a towel by her sink before turning to Rainbow, “Thanks for having dinner with me.”

“Ah, no problem. We should do it again sometime, though perhaps with less projectile foods.” Rainbow chuckled.

“I’d like that very much.” Fluttershy smiled happily.

“Well hey, before it gets too late I’m gonna head home. You seem to have things wrapped up here, and I need to get to planning the weather forecast for next week, as much as I hate boring stuff, this was fun enough to make up for it.” Rainbow explained, “Was nice hanging out, we should do it again soon.”

“Yes we should.” Fluttershy smiled happily, “Oh, before you go!” Fluttershy said remembering, walking over to the counter and picking up a brown bag, before bringing it over to Rainbow, “My desserts managed to escape the destruction. I’d really like you to take them home.”

“Oh Awesome!” Rainbow said taking the bag smiling, “I’m sure they’ll be delicious.” Rainbow chuckled, before turning and walking towards the door, “Seeya later Fluttershy.” Rainbow said turning while waving.

“Bye Rainbow dash.” Fluttershy waved back smiling happily. She heard the door close as she let out a happy sigh. “Good, she had a good time. And I’m almost finished cleaning.” Fluttershy said walking back into the living room. She looked at the bird cage, sitting there in a huff with his arms crossed sat Angel Bunny.

“Alright Angel, have you learned your lesson?” Fluttershy asked walking up the cage. Angel looked over his shoulder, looking annoyed at Fluttershy, his arms still crossed. “Alright, you can come out now.” She opened the cage, the rabbit instantly hopping out and running up the stairs.

“I wonder what he’s off in a hurry about.” Fluttershy asked herself curiously. She just shrugged it off though, walking over to her couch and laying down on it letting out a quick sigh of relaxation. She wished the night had gone better, but it had turned out well enough to feel happy with it. She relaxed on her couch, letting the pillows comfort her.

A loud, throat clearing cough came from in front of her, opening her eyes to look down at the source. Angel stood there, holding out torn paper up to Fluttershy.

“Huh? What’s this Angel?” Fluttershy asked curiously, taking the paper from Angel. She examined the paper carefully. It was old, the paper had been crumpled several times, the color was fading from age, and the writing was starting to fade. But it was an old letter that she had read many times throughout her life.

“...Angel...you went through my private drawers again.” Fluttershy groaned as she looked at her bunny friend. The bunny hopped onto the couch next to her, uncaring for her groaning. He tapped the paper in her hooves repeatedly. “...What about this letter Angel? It’s a memory of my foalhood, but it’s not really important...”

Angel just tapped the paper again and then pointed at Fluttershy. He then imitated two people sitting at a table, before imitating an explosion.

“Huh? Are you trying to say...things would end badly between me and Rainbow Dash?” Fluttershy said, doing her best to interpret her bunny friend. Angel nodded his head. “But you don’t know that...Rainbow Dash

could like me...maybe...one day...in my dreams..." Fluttershy looked up at the ceiling.

Angel put a paw to his face in frustration. He tapped his foot against her, causing her to look at him again. Angel pointed at Fluttershy, then to the torn up note, then to his head and twirled his hand.

"Angel...a-are you trying to say...that I don't know what I want?" Angel nodded his head. "But...I've grown up a lot from when I got this letter Angel." She said looking at the torn up letter, "I understand a lot more about...emotions and...a-and love..." Fluttershy still seemed hesitant to say the word, "B-Besides...that doesn't excuse you from making a mess of my kitchen mister."

Angel just sighed as he hopped off the couch. He was done trying to help for the day, hopping off to his bed once more.

"...Oh...well...I should probably take a bath before it's too late." She said looking at her mane. She'd gotten most of the flour off, but she still needed to properly clean the rest of herself. "Alright, a good soak, and then its bedtime." Fluttershy got up from the couch, heading for her bathroom.

Fluttershy bolted awake by the sudden loud knocking on her door. It sounded like somepony was trying to break her door down.

"H-Hold on! I-I'm coming!" Fluttershy called out as loudly as she could, quickly hopping out of her bed and going over to her dresser; she grabbed her brush and quickly did up her mane. The knocking continued without stopping the entire time. Fluttershy quickly made her way to the door, opening it quickly. Several knocks hit her head as she collapsed to the floor.

"Oh, Ah'm so sorry sugar cube." Applejack's voice said as the earth pony helped pick Fluttershy up.

"I-It's okay Applejack..." Fluttershy shook her head lightly, then looked up at her orange friend, "What's the matter Applejack?"

“Oh, no problem, but exciting news!” Applejack grinned, “It’s Pinkie Pie! She’s back from her trip! And she’s hostin’ a big party over at Sugar Cube Corner!”

“W-Wait, Pinkie’s back!?” Fluttershy said in surprise, “She’s been gone a month though.”

“Right! So we’re celebrating her return! Come on, the party’s already started!” Applejack said before rushing back into town.

“O-Oh! W-Wait for me!” Fluttershy cried out, quickly following after Applejack.

“WAHOO! Cupcakes and Streamers and Friends oh my!” Pinkie Pie cried out, bouncing around the entire party. “Ohmygosh I missed you! And you! And you! Oh my gosh I missed everypony!” She bounced from Pony to Pony, giving each a big hug.

“FLUTTERSHY!” She pounced the yellow pegasus, knocking her to the ground, “Oh I missed you and the other girls the most! I’m soooooooooo glad you came to my welcome back party!” The excited pink pony rubbed her face against Fluttershy like crazy.

“I-Its...N-nice to s-see you...t-too Pinkie!” Fluttershy gasped against Pinkie’s hug, “B-But...I need..aaaaaaair...” Fluttershy gasped as best she could.

“Oh! My bad!” Pinkie laughed, letting go of Fluttershy, letting her stand back up, “How’ve you been? I haven’t seen you in what seems like forever! You have to tell me everything that’s been happening since I’ve been gone!” Pinkie talked a mile a minute as she normally did.

“O-Oh...N-Nothing much really...” Fluttershy rubbed her hoof over her leg, “It’s been really quiet without around. How about you? Did you have a good trip?”

“Oh of course! It wasn’t the best trip ever, but it was so nice hanging out with my sister and parents again! They really helped me feel like me again, and once I was ready to come back I just HAD to come back and

throw a big party for all my wonderful friends!" Pinkie bounced in place, "I'm just so...so...SO HAPPY!" Pinkie cheered.

"Well, I'm so glad to hear that Pinkie!"

"Pinks! You're back!" Fluttershy was interrupted by the cry of Rainbow Dash, who quickly flew over to the two of them.

"RAINBOW DASH!" Pinkie cried out, jumping up and hugging her dear friend, "I missed you and the other girls so much!" Pinkie swung on the flying pegasus, who struggled to hold them both up, before the two girls crashed to the ground, laughing together.

"It's great to see you again Pinkie!" Rainbow said standing up, while still chuckling, "You wouldn't believe how boring it's been around here without you! I didn't realize how much you liven the place up." Rainbow waved her hoof in exaggeration.

"Awwww, I'm sorry Rainbow. I promise that I won't be going anywhere for a long time now!" Pinkie giggled, smiling with a big grin.

"You better not." Rainbow chuckled, bouncing the end of Pinkie's mane with her hoof, "After all you still have that ribbon in your hair, so you better not forget how much you appreciate us."

"Oh, I'll never forget it ever again!" Pinkie smiled happily.

Fluttershy watched the two close friends chat away so naturally. She smiled as best she could if either of them looked at her, but she couldn't help but notice how naturally they were able to strike up a conversation. Rainbow Dash looked so natural talking to Pinkie and Pinkie matched her energy so easily.

She struggled to bring up a conversation with Rainbow, often too shy to think of something to talk about, she struggled enough inviting her to dinner last night. Plus Rainbow was always spending time with Pinkie since they always seemed to have fun goofing off together. Then if it wasn't Pinkie Pie, she'd be spending time with Applejack, always competing about one thing or another.

In fact, the last time she remembered Rainbow Dash coming to her to hang out was when she needed her to cheer for her at the best young flyer's competition.

'I guess she only comes to me when she needs me...' Fluttershy felt a little dejected. But this was still a happy occasion, Pinkie Pie was back. She walked over to the refreshments table, filling up a glass of punch for herself.

"Oh hey Fluttershy," Twilight's familiar voice came, as she walked next to the table, "It's nice to see you could make it on such short notice."

"Oh, of course, it's...nice to see Pinkie Pie again." It wasn't a lie, but she had to hide her jealousy. "I forgot how much fun her parties are."

"I'm relieved that she's okay, she left so suddenly. I was worried about her." Twilight explained to Fluttershy.

"...I was too." Again, it was true. 'But...I forgot how much time she spent with Rainbow Dash.' "I'm glad she made it home safe. The town will be more fun again." Fluttershy smiled happily at Twilight.

"It certainly will be hard to keep things quiet again." Twilight chuckled, "But I'm just happy everything worked out. I'm going to go play some games, want to join me?" Twilight asked.

"Uhm...sure, that sounds fun." Fluttershy smiled back at her friend.

'What am I going to do...' Fluttershy asked herself, watching Pinkie Pie and Rainbow Dash sharing a huge laugh as she walked with Twilight.

Chapter 3

“Hey Rainbow Dash.” Fluttershy flew over to her friend who was sitting on the cloud edge of the Flight School, “Aren’t we going to have a training session soon? We haven’t had one in a long time now...”

Rainbow Dash, who had been lying with her hooves crossed and head resting on her legs, lifted her head up and turned to look at Fluttershy. Rainbow had a dull, bored look on her face, before looking back out from the edge of the cloud, looking out into the blue sky and green land far beneath the clouds.

“What’s the point? You’ve pretty much reached how good you’re going to get.” Rainbow sighed, laying her head back against her hooves.

“O-Oh...” Fluttershy rubbed her leg awkwardly, “But...the sessions helped me so much back during our first Flight Camp together...and they’ve been helping me keep up with my grades since we’ve been in school...I don’t know how well I’d fair without them...”

“Well...if they’re that important, why don’t you just do them by yourself?” Rainbow groaned a little, “You don’t need ME to help you practice; you can do it by yourself!”

“O-Oh...I-I’m sorry...I-I didn’t mean to offend you...” Fluttershy backed up a little, shying away from Rainbow, “I-I just...thought we c-could do them...together...” Fluttershy tried to hide her face behind her mane.

“Ugh.” Rainbow put a hoof to her face as she groaned in annoyance. “Fluttershy...what would you do if I wasn’t around?”

“H-Huh?” Fluttershy blinked confused, “What would...I do?”

“Yea, what would you do?” Rainbow Dash stood up, looking out into the sky, “Say I was just gone tomorrow, and you never saw me again. What would you do?”

“...I...I’ve never thought about it...” Fluttershy wasn’t sure what to say, “I...just figured you’d always be here...”

“Well I can’t be here forever Fluttershy!” Rainbow stomped a hoof on the cloud, “You’re going to have to grow up and take care of yourself one day! I can’t hold your hoof forever! You’re older than me for Celestia’s sake!” Rainbow practically growled.

“I’m sorry, I’m sorry Rainbow!” Fluttershy squeaked as she felt herself curling up into a ball, not wanting to anger the person closest to her anymore, just wanting all this anger to stop.

“And STOP apologizing!” Rainbow turned around and walked up to Fluttershy. Fluttershy squeaked as she felt herself curl up tighter, as Rainbow’s angry face met hers, “You apologize for every insignificant thing! If you really ARE sorry about what you’re doing, stop using your words and DO something about it!”

Fluttershy was shaking on the cloud, unable to speak. Tears burned at the edges of her eyes as her dearest friend yelled at her.

“...Ugh!” Rainbow turned her head away from Fluttershy, walking back to the edge of the cloud. “Fluttershy...I can’t take it anymore.” Her voice was full of frustration, her wings wiggled as if in anticipation, “I want to fly! And not just based on the rules and regulations they’ve set up for us! I don’t want to be graded by letters or peers who think they’re better than me when they’re not!” Rainbow grunted in frustration.

“Can THEY fly faster than me!? No! Can they out maneuver me? No! Can THEY do a Sonic Rainboom?! Of course not!” Rainbow growled as she stomped a hoof repeatedly against the ground. She glared at the sky, almost panting from the anger she felt at being held back.

It was silent for a few moments. Fluttershy couldn’t get up or bring herself to say anything. She just shook, curled up where she was. She didn’t want Rainbow to be angry anymore, she didn’t like it when she was angry...

Rainbow let a sigh out as she turned her head to look at her quivering friend.

“Fluttershy...I’m getting out of here.” She then turned back to the sky.

“W-What...?” Was all she could squeak out.

“I can’t stand being here anymore. I’m too restricted, too confined, too belittled.” She flapped her wings, “So I’m leaving this school! I’m dropping out and I don’t care what happens because of it! I’m too good for this school! Maybe I’ll go find a weather job in a town or something, but I’ll be free to do whatever I want! Sleep, fly, do amazing stunts! And one day, when I can prove my stuff to everyone, I’ll join the Wonderbolts!” A fierce fire burned in her eyes.

“B-B-B-But...” Fluttershy stuttered too quietly for Rainbow to hear.

“Seeya Fluttershy. I don’t know where I’ll end up, but I hope we meet again someday.” Rainbow Dash spread her wings and flew off in a burst of speed.

“RAINBOW DASH!” Fluttershy cried out, bolting up from her curled position and running to the edge of the cloud. She stopped as she stared out into the distance, unable to see even a hint of where she had flown off too.

“R-Rainbow Dash...” Fluttershy whimpered as she fell to her knees, unable to believe her eyes. Rainbow Dash had really run off, not telling her anything of where she was going, leaving her there all by herself.

Her tears began to soak the cloud she sat on.

“Oooh, this bath is simply divine.” Rarity sat back relaxing in the spa’s giant tub. “It feels so good to relax after a day of partying.” Her hair was wrapped up in a pink towel as she let the warm waters sooth her entire being.

Fluttershy let out a soft sigh as she tried to relax on the other side of the bath. Her mind was still racing about Rainbow Dash. Dash had spent the rest of the party hanging out with Pinkie; she hadn’t had much opportunity to hang out with her. She played a few games, had some

sweets, but she had felt lonely at the party despite being surrounded by her friends.

“Fluttershy, darling, what’s the matter? You haven’t been able to relax this whole trip.” Rarity asked, eyeing her Pegasus friend curiously.

“I-It’s nothing Rarity, don’t worry about it.” Fluttershy said forcing a smile on her face, trying not to show her insecurities to her friend.

“Now come dear, I’ve known you long enough to know when there is something troubling you. What’s on your mind?” Rarity asked, wanting to know what was on her friends mind.

“...I-I...” Fluttershy turned her head, not sure how to say this, or how much she wanted to tell Rarity. She had no idea how she would react if she told her she had a romantic interest in Rainbow Dash, so what would be the best action to take here?

“...I-I’m not...really sure how to say what’s bothering me...” Fluttershy admitted.

“Well, put it into as few words as you can. Simplicity is best in these situations.” Rarity waved her hoof gently, making the water swirl a little in front of her.

“...I...guess I can say something like that then...” Fluttershy browsed her mind for the proper words without giving away too much, “...Do you promise you won’t tell anyone what I’m about to tell you?”

“Oh of course Fluttershy, I only want to help out my dearest friend; sadness does not suit you well dear.” Rarity said with her hint of sophistication as she was known for doing.

“...A-Alright...I...” Fluttershy gulped her words, “I...have feelings...for somepony.” She admitted. ‘Keep it ambiguous, don’t let her know its Rainbow Dash...’ Fluttershy thought to herself.

“Oh Fluttershy! How romantic! You simply MUST tell me who it is! Who is this debonair pony that has caught your heart?” Rarity said, leaning

in to get a good listen. Rarity certainly was always a buzz for gossip like this.

“O-Oh...no, I-I couldn’t say...” Fluttershy tried to hide behind her hair, “B-Besides...I’m pretty sure they don’t even notice me...not that I’m noticeable...I’m certain nopony could really have feelings for me back...” her words became more and more mumbled as she lowered herself slowly into the tub, trying to shut herself up.

“Oh Fluttershy, of course you’re noticeable darling!” Rarity quickly moved closer to her friend, lifting her up out of the water, “All you need is some advice on how to attract this glorious stallion of your dreams!” Rarity chuckled.

“...M-Maybe...” Fluttershy blushed a little, looking away from her friend, ‘B-But it’s not a stallion...’ she thought to herself.

“Come now Fluttershy, no need to be shy. I, Rarity, shall give you all the advice you’ll ever need for attracting the eye of that special someone.” Rarity chuckled to herself as she prepared to get out of the spa tub.

‘...I hope this ends well.’ Fluttershy thought to herself, not sure what to expect.

“Welcome to Rarity’s ‘Attracting a Debonair Gentlecolt’ 101.” A floating piece of chalk wrote the words in big, cursive letters on a chalkboard behind Rarity. They had returned to the Carousel Boutique for her lesson. She had adorned herself in a rather well-designed business suit, striped with white and a slightly frilled skirt that hung over her flank. Her hair was tied up in a bun, matched by a pair of black glasses that adorned her face.

“O-Oh my...” Fluttershy said sitting at a desk that had been set up for her. This was all very elaborate on Rarity’s part.

“Now, in today’s class we shall be talking about proper Gentlecolt courting etiquette.” Rarity walked graciously across the board as her chalk wrote, “Now, can anyone tell me, what is the first thing you do when you see a proper Gentlecolt?” She turned and looked at Fluttershy.

“Oh! Uhm...” Fluttershy fidgeted in thought, “Wait for them to notice you?” She asked quietly.

“Wrong!” A loud smack rose from her desk as a ruler was smacked down hard on it. Fluttershy let out a yelp as she jumped in her seat.

“While it is true that a proper Gentlecolt should ALWAYS make the first move, they cannot make a move on that which they cannot see.” Rarity explained as her chalk began to write once more, “The Approach is the first step in proper courtship. You must present yourself elegantly before the eyes of the one you wish to attract. He must know your presence has been made, and then he will approach. A proper Gentlecolt will always raise his hoof to you first.” Rarity mimed her words, turning her head as she lifted her hoof up, blinking her eyes flirtatiously at the air.

“...B-But...what if he doesn’t?” Fluttershy asked sheepishly.

“Hmm, well honestly I would never wish to attract such a stallion that was not a Gentlecolt, but I suppose if he did not see such an opportunity before him that you could initiate conversation yourself.” Rarity spoke while gently tapping her mane, “Never show yourself to be too eager. You want your Gentlecolt to always think he has to earn your heart, never just give it away.” Rarity smiled as she wrote a few more notes on the chalkboard.

“Now, let’s talk about the actual act of gaining your Gentlecolt’s attention.” Rarity gave her hair a good flip to show off her features, while fluttering her eyes some more, “Presenting yourself so that he can approach you is all about form, physique and attitude. You must present yourself at your most *magnifique*. Dress up in proper style, give your hair a wondrous makeover, and make yourself look as beautiful as possible. You simply must make yourself stand out.”

‘Looking...beautiful?’ Fluttershy contemplated this advice, ‘Would Rainbow Dash really care about how I looked?’ She focused on her thoughts.

Fluttershy’s attention was grabbed once more by the smack of the ruler on her desk.

“Pay attention dear.” Rarity said striding over once more. “Now tell me dear, what should be done about the actual time spent together with your affection?”

“...Uhm...do something...you both enjoy?” Fluttershy did her best to answer.

“Mmm...yes and no dear, good try though.” Rarity said pushing her glasses up on her face, “Doing something you both enjoy will certainly be something to come later. However, you must first get to know your Gentlecolt, make sure he shows you his true colors. You must make sure that he is truly the Gentlecolt you desire.” Rarity adjusted her glasses as if remembering a previous date that she would wish to forget.

“...Well, what do you suggest then?” Fluttershy asked after a moment of seeing Rarity lost in thought.

“Oh of course, excuse me.” Rarity cleared her throat. Her chalk floated up and wrote more notes, “For a first date you should simply get to know each other. Do so through conversation, perhaps go to a delightfully elegant *soiree*, getting in some close and romantic dancing always helps with this. A romantic dinner is also a wonderful idea, perhaps over some candlelight at a five-star restaurant, though on a budget I suppose a four-star could work as well.” She chuckled at herself.

‘...She didn’t react too much to the dinner I made her myself, besides liking the food...’ Fluttershy thought about the dinner idea.

“You can also set up a wonderful night for star gazing, or wandering a beautiful garden of flowers. Set up a night that’s about the two of you and let the magic spark!” Rarity chuckled to herself as she thought about such a wonderful night.

“All of this really works?” Fluttershy asked, a little confused on all the small details.

“Oh but of course dear. I’ve had several Gentlecolts ask me out to several wonderful nights.” Rarity complimented herself, “But of course I was mostly practicing with them. I’m still waiting for a true, proper prince that will sweep me off of my hooves. Being married into royalty is truly my

life-long dream.” Rarity said as she softly bobbed her mane in her hoof again.

“Oh...I-I see...” Fluttershy thought about this advice.

“And of course, this is all an introductory course.” Rarity continued, “I have lots more advice, but it all gets much more advanced from here. I wouldn’t want to overwhelm you with too much before you’ve had a chance to let it sink in.”

“I see...thank you Rarity, I’ve never had dating advice before...well, and I’ve never really been on a date before either.” Fluttershy said thinking about that.

“Exactly. Now, we simply MUST make you a brilliant outfit to attract your affections attention!” Rarity said pushing her chalk-board aside and walking over to her work desk, pulling out paper and markers, beginning to sketch away.

“Uhm...a-are you making me a...new dress?” Fluttershy stood up from the desk she had been sitting at, walking towards Rarity.

“Oh but of course!” Rarity laughed as she sketched, “We can’t use any pre-made dresses for this! This is a special occasion Fluttershy. We shall make your affection say ‘Wow, what a beautiful mare, I simply must know you better!’” She happily sketched away as she amused herself.

“A-Are you sure something like my Gala dress wouldn’t work?” Fluttershy said, admitting to having become partial to the dress, even though at first she hadn’t liked it. It was still the dress that had helped her enjoy a bad night with all of her friends.

“Absolutely dear, I will make you look more magnificent than you have before!” Rarity chuckled, “Not an easy task, all of my previous outfits made you look simply amazing! And I’m planning to out-do myself once more!” Rarity had a big smile on her face as she worked.

‘Oh...I hope Rainbow Dash will notice all this...’ Fluttershy worried as Rarity began to work on stitching cloth together. She rubbed her hoof over her leg, ‘...I’m going to have to ask her out though, Rainbow would never

come to me and ask.' She felt frustrated at the thought, but she could handle it.

Fluttershy began to trot back and forth in the shop in contemplation as she heard the sound of the sewing machine hum.

'But what kind of a date should I take her on? Should I let her know it's a date? No, no if I let her know she probably won't want to go out on it. So what should I do?' Fluttershy walked over to the window of Rarity's bedroom and looked out of it, 'Perhaps a night star gazing? Would Rainbow find that boring? There's no star-showers planned so she might get bored...if she gets bored she won't want to be on the date anymore.'

Fluttershy sat down as her mind began to whirl a mile a minute.

'I should do something special, but what can I do that's special? I already know the kind of things Rainbow Dash likes, but I'm no good at all those things. Can I get her to like me? Should I even be trying? Would she hate me for what I'm doing? Is trying to understand my feelings really worth the possibility of ruining our friendship?'

Fluttershy closed her eyes as she lowered her head for a moment. She desperately wanted this to work, but she had a bad feeling in her gut.

"Now Fluttershy, don't look so down, everything shall be alright." Rarity walked over and patted her on the back, "Everything will work out just wonderfully, I know they will."

"...Thank you Rarity." Fluttershy smiled at her friend.

"Now come, I need to re-get your measurements; I can't seem to find where I kept them from the last time." Rarity said walking over to her desk and pulling out her measuring tape.

'I hope she's right, I hope everything will work out.' Fluttershy sighed softly.

Chapter 4

The crowd cheered as the final words were spoken. With a quick movement of the hooves a sea of hats flew into the air. Music played loudly through the entire auditorium as hugs and cheers were spread far and wide. Some were crying, some were laughing, and some could only just smile broadly.

Fluttershy's hat sat, still adorned to her head. She let out a soft sigh. It was graduation day from Flight School. She had barely passed, her flying skills were nothing impressive, but they were enough that the school deemed her ready to face the world. But despite that, she couldn't feel happy.

The one pony she had hoped would be there cheering her on, that would be in the stands praising her for how much she had accomplished wasn't there. She hadn't heard a single word from Rainbow in over a year and she had given up hope that she would hear from the hero that had saved her from failing a long time ago.

The crowd around her began to fan out, heading into the stands to meet with family and friends. Fluttershy looked around as she stood there, everypony seeming to walk away from her. She imagined all the celebrations most of them would be having, having 'Congratulation' parties, spending late nights playing games or enjoying food, looking forward to the futures they had coming.

There was none of that for her. Her marks had barely allowed her to pass; her flying ability was too weak to help out with most of the jobs Cloudsdale had to offer. She didn't want to return home and she hadn't really made any friends in the clouds. Instead of spending time with other ponies in the clouds, she had often spent any free time she had either on the ground tending to animals or practicing her flying ability by herself; though her motivation to practice flying had almost faded out completely with Rainbow leaving.

With another sigh she began to leave the auditorium. There wasn't anything more for her there; all the happy faces were only making her sadder.

"Hey, Fluttershy, hold on a moment." Came a voice from behind her. Fluttershy turned around, not having expected to be stopped. One of the graduating colts flew down before her with a light tan coat and a red mane; his green eyes looked like they tried to offer comfort, but for some reason they scared her.

"O-Oh...h-hello?" Fluttershy mumbled quietly as she backed up a little, she didn't know who this colt was, and she didn't want to look foolish before him.

"You're leaving already? You don't want to stay for any of the festivities?" He asked curiously.

"N-No...that's alright...t-thank you though..." Fluttershy was barely audible, even over the massive amount of talking happening all around them.

"Oh...well alright, I understand. You have things you need to do." The young colt tried to smile, though it looked forced. Fluttershy just turned her head away, trying to hide a wince on her face, "Well hey, I just wanted to talk to you before you left. And, I wanted to give you this." He reached into his graduation gown and pulled out a piece of paper, holding it out for her.

"W-What's this?" She asked quietly, taking it from his mouth and unfolding it. It was a map that showed a route from Cloudsdale to a small town called Ponyville that stood beneath the mountain city of Canterlot.

"I've been asking around for you, and what I heard from a very reliable source is that a certain blue rainbow-haired pegasus has been seen working a weather job at that town." He said casually.

"W-What?" Fluttershy's eyes went wide as she looked at the colt before her, then back down to the map.

"I figured you'd like to know where she was before we all left. I didn't think I'd get another chance to talk to you, so I figured I'd go for it now." He nodded with a small smile on his face.

"...B-But...h-how did you know...I was looking for her?" Fluttershy looked up at the colt with large, pleading eyes.

"Well..." The colt said turning away from Fluttershy, "Let's just say I gave you a letter once." He let out a quick chuckle, "Goodbye Fluttershy, I hope I see you again someday." And with that he flew off into the crowd of ponies, likely to join his friends and family.

Fluttershy blinked confused. She didn't understand what he meant by that. She looked at the map again, almost unable to believe what it meant.

'So...if I go to Ponyville...I'll be able to meet up with Rainbow Dash again? Will she really be there?' Fluttershy asked herself, not sure what to make of the map. She didn't know of any reason the colt had to lie to her, but in all her time at flight school only a few ponies had ever approached her, and most did it to make fun of her. She had been teased so much about her poor flying she had just given up on the idea that she'd make any good friends since Rainbow had left.

'...What do I have to lose?' She thought to herself as she headed out of the auditorium. The fresh air hit her, giving her a sense of refreshment. The auditorium had gotten stuffy from how many ponies had been inside. She quickly began to walk her way across the clouds, looking around the buildings that sat atop the clouds, accentuating the sky.

She looked around at the school she had flown in for the past few years and what it had all meant to her. She had put the challenge out to herself to graduate from the flight school; she had done it because she wanted somepony to be proud of her, somepony like Rainbow Dash.

It didn't take her long to leave campus, continuing past the rest of the buildings in Cloudsdale and walking to the edge of the city. She looked out over the edge at the ground far below. She checked the map once more, figuring which direction she would have to fly to reach Ponyville.

“...I guess this is goodbye then Cloudsdale.” She said turning to look at the cloud city that had been her home since she was born, “Thanks for everything.” She bowed courteously to the city, as if it was a living thing that had feelings. She gently placed her graduation hat on the cloud edge, before slipping out of the graduation gown and folding it gently and placing it next to the hat. She picked the map up before stretching her wings out.

She jumped, taking flight, heading for the pony she wanted to be closest to.

Fluttershy tapped her hooves awkwardly. She had been waiting outside of the restaurant for half an hour now waiting for Rainbow Dash. She had gotten there early because her nerves had gotten to her, even though Rarity’s advice was to be fashionably late, she couldn’t bear the thought of having to keep Rainbow waiting.

Out of the corner of her eye she noticed the quickly approaching blue pegasus. She tried to gulp down the tensions that had been building up, it was now or never to give Rainbow her best impression. She had to make tonight the night she found out if Rainbow would like her the same way she did, or if they were meant to be just friends.

“...Oh!” Rainbow Dash said stopping, almost having passed Fluttershy. She stopped and landed before her, “I...almost didn’t recognize you...what’s with the gettup?” Rainbow eyed Fluttershy curiously, pointing to her dress.

“Oh...Rarity made it for me. I-I wanted to show it off b-because of how well it looked.” Fluttershy said her white-lie. The dress was rather elegant, the center piece was a red rose, elegantly wrapped around her neck and circling around her wings. Light pink cloth clung to her body yet flowed loosely over her legs, the skirt light in the air over her flank. The dress accentuated the pattern of petals and leaves, colors that blended with her hair and eyes while showing making her coat stand out. Her shoes complimented the dress with a mixture of red, with green wrapping up her legs. Her hair was adorned with red, pink and green flowers, a red rose hung from her ear. All the colors blended subtly, yet strikingly bold to view, Rarity had worked her heart out on making it work just right to accentuate her beauty.

“Huh...well it uh...it looks good on you.” Rainbow Dash said trying to compliment her friends fashion.

“Really?” Fluttershy perked up hearing this.

“Yea, but uh, how about we get to eating? I’m starved from all the flying I’ve been doing.” Rainbow said while looking at the restaurant they stood before, “Though I’ve never heard of this place before. How come we’re eating here?”

“Oh, Rarity gave me a pass so we could eat here, apparently they owed her a favor and she gave it to me.” It wasn’t a complete lie.

“Now darling, you simply must start the night out right. Before you do anything else you must make sure you’ve set the atmosphere for the night. Here, this is a 5-star restaurant that is almost always booked but they gave me a free pass to eat there any night I wished. They’ll make room for your date.” Rarity’s words echoed in Fluttershy’s mind.

Fluttershy walked over to the doorcolt as she carefully pulled out a ticket and presenting it to him; he took it and read it over carefully.

“I see, follow me please.” The doorcolt nodded at them as he walked inside the restaurant. Fluttershy and Rainbow Dash quickly followed after him. The restaurant was very formal indeed, all of the patrons were dressed in their best, making Rainbow stand out being so informally undressed. The carpet was a beautiful deep velvet red; the tables were magnificently decorated with white clothes surrounded by red chairs. The silverware and plates were of the highest quality and the lights were dimmed above with candles alight on every table. Soft classical music played live throughout the restaurant from several ponies.

“...This place seems kind of...high class.” Rainbow said feeling a little awkward about the atmosphere.

“Well, it is a restaurant recommended by Rarity...” Fluttershy smiled softly, “She wouldn’t recommend any place that didn’t have a certain amount of class to it.”

The two of them were lead to a balcony just outside the restaurant; it faced the setting sun that lit the sky a glorious orange. Most of it was already filled with properly dressed ponies dining, but there was a recently set up table as if made special for them. The idea made Fluttershy happy, a table made specifically for the two of them.

“Here is your table.” The doorcolt placed two menus on the table as Fluttershy and Rainbow Dash sat down, “Your waiter will be with you momentarily.” With that he walked off.

“...I can’t read what’s on this menu.” Rainbow Dash said looking through the list, practically flipping it upside down. Fluttershy looked at the menu herself and instantly understood Dash’s problem. Most of the names of the food were in a different language, the descriptions described them in no clear detail. Even the pricing of the food wasn’t made perfectly clear.

“Ugh...they can’t have something simple like vegetable buns or hay fries?” Rainbow dropped the menu onto the table and looked at it dully.

“I-It’s alright Rainbow...I can order for the both of us.” Fluttershy said quietly, “I’m sure you’ll like the food.”

“Yea yea, I’m sure it’ll taste better than it sounds.” Rainbow sighed as she closed the menu, “How come we had to come here to eat anyway? I don’t really like all this atmosphere.” She groaned.

“...I’m sorry; I choose this place because of Rarity.” Fluttershy blushed turning her head away.

“Well, I guess I can’t blame you for that.” Rainbow played with her spoon bored, “Though I would have just preferred another meal like you had cooked. That dessert you made was amazing, I’ve been meaning to ask you to make me some more.”

“You really like them that much?” A big smile came to Fluttershy’s face, “Of course I’ll make you some more, anything for you.”

“Hey, what’re ya’ll doin here?” Fluttershy and Rainbow turned their heads, seeing Applejack with an empty cart standing next to the balcony looking at them.

‘Oh no’ Fluttershy thought seeing their earth pony friend there.

“Hey Applejack, apparently Rarity suggested we should have dinner here, but it’s too upscale for my taste. What about you? Why’re you here?” Rainbow asked curiously.

“I was just finishin’ mah delivery of apples to this place. They order twelve barrels of our finest apples.” Applejack explained.

“Well hey, how’d you like to have dinner with us? This place is a bit of a drag anyway.” Rainbow invited.

“Well shucks, that sounds mighty fine. Don’t mind if ah do.” Applejack slipped the cart off and hopped onto the balcony.

‘...B-But!’ Fluttershy felt her heart sink as Applejack sat down next to them, ‘M-My d-date with...Rainbow Dash...’

“Hey Fluttershy, how come you’re all gussied up?” Applejack asked tilting her head at Fluttershy. Fluttershy’s hoof met her face.

“-And then Big Macintosh said ‘Well that ain’t no barn that ah’ve ever seen.’” Applejack’s story erupted a chorus of laughter from her and Rainbow Dash. Fluttershy didn’t feel much like laughing though. She slowly ate the meal that had been brought out for her, mostly playing with tidbits of her food. She was grateful it was free thanks to Rarity; otherwise she would feel like she was wasting her money.

“Ah, we laughed for a long time once they left.” Applejack chuckled before turning to look at the sky. The sun had set a while ago; the night was beginning to wrap the town. “Oh shoot, ah’ve stayed a bit too long, ah still got some work left to do before the night is over.” Applejack lowered her head and quickly finished her food in her usual manner.

“Mmm, that is some good eats.” Applejack licked her lips, before looking at Fluttershy, “You said this was on the house right?”

“Y-Yea...” Fluttershy meekly answered.

“Well alright then, I’ll see you girls later then.” Applejack nodded before hopping off of the balcony. She quickly reattached her cart and headed off.

“Well, that certainly was fun.” Rainbow chuckled as she finished her own food. Fluttershy didn’t respond to this, just letting out a sigh.

“Something wrong Fluttershy?” Rainbow asked as she quickly wiped her mouth with the cloth that had wrapped her utensils.

“Oh uh...n-no, nothing’s wrong.” Fluttershy quickly thought about the situation, “H-Hey...I uhm...would you like to go for a walk? It’s a beautiful night out after all.” Fluttershy said, wanting to move on from the wrecked dinner, hoping the rest of the night she had planned would fare better.

“...A walk? Are you sure?” Rainbow looked curiously at Fluttershy, “That doesn’t sound like it’d be all that fun.”

“Uh...w-well...I have a surprise waiting at the end of it. It won’t be ready till a little later, so I figured it’d help pass the time.”

“A surprise?” Rainbow said thinking about it, “Well alright, I don’t have anything else to do.” Rainbow said getting up from the table, “Lead the way Fluttershy.”

Fluttershy took a deep breath and brought a smile to her face. She hoped her surprise would impress Rainbow.

The park was lit up by torches and the moonlight. All the flowers seemed to glow in the gentle light they bathed in, the trees and the shrubbery gave off a gentle glow. Fluttershy loved the look of nature in the night lights, the gentle coolness of the night air, and the subtle chirpings of a summer’s night. It all seemed so beautiful to her.

“So what’s my surprise anyway? Is it some rad gift? Or perhaps its plans for a new trick? Oh! Maybe you’ve set up a party.” Rainbow Dash flew around in the air as she was trying to figure out what Fluttershy had planned.

“You’ll just have to wait and see.” Fluttershy explained with a smile as she continued to walk. She kind of wished Rainbow would just enjoy the scenery like she was, but she already knew that wasn’t Rainbow Dash’s style.

“If you ever need to just spend some quality time with your date, a romantic gesture is always a simple walk through the park. It’s beautiful, romantic and sure to inspire awe in their eyes.” Rarity’s words echoed in her mind once more.

‘I don’t know if the dating advice Rarity gave me is work for Rainbow Dash...’ Fluttershy thought, looking at the pegasus doing loops in the sky out of anticipation and boredom. However, the antics still made her smile, ‘But...it’s still that about her that makes me like her.’

PWANG. Fluttershy felt something soft, yet hard hit her head, sending her crashing to the ground. She coughed at the dust that flew into her face, as she turned her head, seeing a red bouncing rubber ball bouncing away from her.

As she tried to stand up a can fell in front of her face that proceeded to burst open, spewing snakes at her.

“KYAAAAA” she screamed rushing backwards, ending up crashing into something that proceeded to collapse on top of her.

“Whoa, you alright Fluttershy?” Rainbow asked, swooping down to the pile of stuff that had fallen on top of her.

Fluttershy groaned as she sat up, looking at everything that had fallen on top of her. There were toys, decorations, pranks and games all within the pile. She turned her head and saw the wagon she had run into.

“Oh my gosh, you’re not hurt are you?” Pinkie Pie suddenly appeared in front of Fluttershy’s vision, “I couldn’t see anything in front of me so I was hoping I wouldn’t run into any pony.”

“Y-Yea...I’m okay Pinkie Pie...” Fluttershy said as Pinkie Pie helped Fluttershy stand up. Fluttershy felt something tug on her dress, as if caught

by something in the pile. She pulled a little trying to get it loose, when she heard it rip. She looked over and saw the rather long rip down the skirt of her dress, showing more of her back leg through the fabric. Fluttershy let out a sigh as she looked at it.

“Hey Pinkie Pie, what’s with all the stuff?” Rainbow asked picking up a jack-in-the-box from the pile and looking at it curiously.

“Oh! I’m setting up this park for a super-big party tomorrow! I was gone for a while so I’m trying to catch up on all the partying opportunities I missed.” Pinkie bounced in explanation, “What’re you girls doing out here though?”

“Oh, well Fluttershy said she has a surprise for me.” Rainbow explained proudly as jack burst from his box before putting him back in the pile.

“Ooooh! A surprise? I love surprises! Is it candy? Or some kind of gift? Oh! Maybe its some kind of midnight party!” Pinkie said excitedly, “Can I come? Can I can I?”

“Sure, I don’t see why no-” Rainbow Dash was interrupted by a blur of wind as Fluttershy and Pinkie Pie seemed to disappear.

“Pinkie Pie! Y-You can’t come with us.” Fluttershy said in a hurriedly quiet breath behind a tree she had drug Pinkie behind.

“Huh? Why not?” Pinkie pouted.

“It’s just...its...” Fluttershy stumbled on her words, “This is...it’s a very important surprise for me, a-and its supposed to be only for Rainbow Dash.”

“Awww...you couldn’t make a surprise that fits in more of your friends?” Pinkie asked tilting her head.

“I-I could...b-but...t-tonight’s special to me...” Fluttershy turned her head blushing, “I-I want things to be...perfect...but they don’t seem to be going that way...” she shook her head lightly, “I-It’s not that I don’t want to

hang with you...j-just tonight I want it to be just...m-me and Rainbow Dash.”

Pinkie Pie looked at Fluttershy carefully. Fluttershy felt herself wanting to back up and curl away from Pinkie Pie’s stare, as if she was seeing through her.

“W-Well I-“ Fluttershy started, but was stopped when Pinkie raised her hoof.

“Look me in the eyes Fluttershy.” Pinkie said with a smile. Fluttershy blinked in confusion as she did as Pinkie asked. Pinkie seemed to be staring at her intently, as if trying to look into her mind. Fluttershy felt uncomfortable by the staring.

“...I see.” Pinkie closed her eyes smiling.

“Y-You do?” Fluttershy asked nervously.

“Don’t worry Fluttershy, I understand.” Pinkie said walking next to Fluttershy and wrapping her hoof around her shoulder, “I can see how important this is to you. So I’ll make sure to stay out of your way, just make sure you make it special. After all, your Auntie Pinkie Pie has your back!” Pinkie chuckled before bouncing out of the trees.

“I-I’m still a year older then you...” Fluttershy mumbled as she slowly followed after Pinkie.

“Sorry Dashie, I’d love to come and see the surprise but I just realized I’m too busy setting up for the party. Enjoy it though!” Pinkie told Rainbow as she started picking up the fallen objects and putting them back in the wagon.

“Oh, well that’s alright then.” Rainbow smiled, “Looking forward to your party though. You know I’ll be there.”

“Oh it’ll be a great party!” Pinkie cheered once she had everything stacked back up. She began to pull the cart deeper into the park.

“Pinkie Pie is always so random.” Rainbow chuckled looking at Fluttershy.

“Y-Yea she is.” Fluttershy awkwardly smiled back, “B-But come on...the surprise isn’t too much farther.” Fluttershy said waving at Dash to continue walking with her.

“Awesome, I can’t wait.” Rainbow grinned.

The park gave way to a large, open grassy field. There was a small hill raised towards the center that was often used for star gazing and picnics, though tonight the field was mostly empty. There were a few random ponies enjoying the night, but what seemed the most unusual was a small gathering of uniformed unicorns near the hill.

“This is the place.” Fluttershy smiled.

“...Here? This is my surprise?” Rainbow asked confused.

“Well, no, THIS isn’t the surprise. But it’ll happen here.” Fluttershy smiled, “I promise you won’t be disappointed.” Fluttershy said as she trotted towards the hill. Rainbow Dash shrugged as she followed behind Fluttershy.

“Excuse me sirs, but we’re here now, will you be ready to begin soon?” Fluttershy asked the uniformed group of unicorns. They quickly turned to each other; spoke quickly amongst each other, before their leader turned to her.

“Give us five minutes and we can start the show.” He nodded.

“Excellent.” Fluttershy smiled before heading up the hill.

“So what exactly is this?” Rainbow asked, floating over the hill.

“You’ll see.” Fluttershy smiled, “But it’ll be about five minutes before it starts.”

“Five minutes? Alright, I’ll practice one of my tricks then to pass the time.” Rainbow said quickly dashing high into the sky. Fluttershy watched her fly in amazement. She always enjoyed watching Rainbow Dash practice, though she rarely had the opportunity to, since she often practiced during the day.

Rainbow was flying fast through the sky, looping around and barrel rolling her way through the night sky. Fluttershy sat in awe as Dash went into a barreling backflip, before racing straight for the ground. She sped at the ground, before the last moment turning sharply, her hooves skidding against the ground as she came to a sudden stop before the unicorns.

“Oh, heh, sorry.” She apologized for kicking dirt around them. They just huffed at her, but seemed to be ready to start their show. The leader turned to his group and instructed them, as the horns on their heads began to glow.

“Oh! Rainbow Dash, it’s starting!” Fluttershy called over to her, patting the ground next to her.

“Excellent.” Rainbow Dash said sitting down next to Fluttershy, “Let’s see what this is all about.”

The horns of the unicorns flared up, before one of them launched an orb of light quickly into the sky. It went high up before exploding in an eruption of lights, spewing the multi-colored embers into multiple directions. Another bolt of light quickly fired into the sky as well, erupting into another burst of colored light.

“Whoa! Fireworks!” Rainbow said amazed at the site. Fluttershy couldn’t help but grin at Rainbow’s reaction. It had cost her quite a few bits to get the firework ponies to do a special show for her, but seeing Rainbow Dash enthralled by the spectacle made every bit worth it.

The fireworks continued to burst in the sky, entralling all the ponies that had just happened to be visiting the park that night. The fireworks lit up the night sky and the ground bellow in a beautiful flash of color, the booms of the exploding magic echoed throughout their bodies giving a majestic feel.

“How do you like it?” Fluttershy asked, looking over at Rainbow quickly.

“...Incredible.” Rainbow said with a grin on her face, completely enthralled by the fireworks.

‘Success!’ Fluttershy thought while grinning as she pumped her hooves a little to herself. This night was going to end well, despite all the screw ups till that point; this was going to make up for it!

“LOOK OUT.” Came a frantic yell.

“Huh?” Fluttershy was knocked out of her thoughts as she saw a bright orb of magic appear right in front of her face. A bright flash of light filled her vision as the firework exploded merely a foot away from her, the hill becoming the center of a bright star-like object for just a moment. The entire park was lit up by the beautiful light for a moment, before it faded away.

“What was that!?” The leader unicorn yelled at the unicorn that had stumbled, sending a stray firework into the crowd.

“S-Sorry sir, my hoof slipped on this.” He pointed down to the tracks in the ground that had been dug up when Rainbow Dash had landed before them.

“Ugh, what have I told you about stepping forward when you’re working?” The lead unicorn groaned putting a hoof to his face.

“Hey, Fluttershy, you alright?” Rainbow Dash asked flying back to the top of the scorched hill, having been able to dodge the firework, thinking Fluttershy was going to do the same.

Fluttershy sat there, her face black and her dress a charred mess. Her hair was frizzled and the flowers in her hair had disappeared. She certainly looked like she’d been hit with a firework.

“Fluttershy?” Rainbow stepped closer to her pegasus friend.

Fluttershy's eye twitched, before she suddenly stood up. She lowered her head as her teeth began to clench. She took a deep breath, before screaming into her mane.

"Whoa, Fluttershy, are you hurt?" Rainbow asked, trying to get close to her friend.

Rainbow didn't get a response though. Fluttershy turned on her heels and began to run in no particular direction.

"H-Hey! Fluttershy! Wait up!" Rainbow said opening her wings and going after her. Fluttershy made it to the edge of the field before Rainbow stopped in front of her, "Hold up there, why are you running away?"

Rainbow finally got to see Fluttershy's face, tears streaming down her cheeks.

"This...This whole night was ruined!" Fluttershy shook her head as she cried.

"Ruined?" Rainbow asked confused.

"What was the point of getting dressed up? It didn't make a difference!" Fluttershy threw her head up, "Dinner was a fiasco, the walk was nothing special, the show was supposed to go off without a hitch!" Fluttershy didn't care anymore; she just had to say everything on her mind.

"But no! At every turn the whole night something had to step in and make my plans go wrong! Nothing can ever go right!" Fluttershy collapsed to a sitting position on the ground as she sobbed.

"...Whoa...I think I missed something." Rainbow said looking at her friend in confusion, "Fluttershy, what's going on here? Why was all of this so important?"

Fluttershy grit her teeth as the tears kept flowing. 'I guess it's now or never...' her mind told her.

"Because...because I...I-I...I...lobgh..." her words were quiet and muffled.

“Because what? You went quiet.” Rainbow said, turning an ear towards Fluttershy.

“...I...I luhb...hyu” Fluttershy was barely understandable.

“Speak up, I can’t hear you.” Rainbow demanded.

“I LOVE YOU, OKAY!?” Fluttershy threw her head up as she finally said it. Rainbow’s head instinctively snapped backwards a little, not having expected that. “Tonight was supposed to be the night I figured out where we stood, if we’d just stay friends or if we could have something deeper, but no, I can’t be granted that.”

“...You...love me?” Rainbow repeated the first words as if lost in thought. Fluttershy wiped her face with her hoof, trying to get rid of some of the tears as she sniffed.

“I-I’m sorry...” Fluttershy hiccupped, “I s-shouldn’t have said that...y-you probably don’t feel that way about me...” she said as she turned her head away from Rainbow Dash. “I-I even understand...i-if you don’t want to be friends anymore...” She closed her eyes, as she already jumped to the worst conclusion.

There was a soft silence between the two of them. It was Rainbow Dash that eventually broke the silence.

“...Fluttershy...I’m going to have to be honest with you...” Rainbow spoke, hesitation in her voice, as if unsure of what she was about to say.

‘Oh no...here comes the rejection.’ Fluttershy squeezed her eyes close as she tried to brace for the emotional impact.

“...I don’t know how to feel about this.”

“...Huh?” The words escaped Fluttershy’s mouth as she felt herself stumble out of bracing for impact, looking up at Rainbow Dash.

"I've...never thought about ANYPONY romantically. Not a filly or a colt, not a mare or a stallion." Rainbow explained, as she seemed to be looking into her own past.

"Huh?" Fluttershy repeated.

"But...you're also a very close, dear friend of mine Fluttershy; one that forgave me for running away, who is always willing to help me when I need it and even will feed me when I can't feed myself. You put up with a lot of my selfishness without a word of complaint...And I can't just turn you down if I don't know for sure how I feel about this."

"...Huh?" Fluttershy's brain was stuck on loop.

"Stop saying 'Huh' for a moment and hear me out." Rainbow said putting a hoof to Fluttershy's mouth. Fluttershy simply nodded, looking dumbfounded. Rainbow removed her hoof and continued talking.

"I care about you, like a friend. Right now I don't have any feelings for you beyond that." Rainbow explained as Fluttershy clung to her every word.

"But...for you Fluttershy, after everything we've been through together...I'm willing to give being with together a shot."

Fluttershy's mouth opened to say something, but proceeded to be filled with a blue hoof again.

"However, this is still new to me. I don't know if I'll ever feel the same way, or even if I'll be head over hooves for you. Now...if you can accept that, then I'll give dating you a try. Deal?" Rainbow lowered her hoof from Fluttershy's mouth.

Fluttershy stood there staring at Rainbow Dash, not sure what to think. This was a situation she never thought she'd be in. She desperately tried to gather herself and speak back up.

"...W-Well..." Fluttershy said, after taking a deep breath and trying to calm her beating heart, "...If this...doesn't work out...w-will we still be...friends?" Fluttershy asked meekly.

“Of course, I could never lose you as a friend.” Rainbow grinned at her.

“...T-Then...” Fluttershy turned her head away from Rainbow, before looking at her from behind her mane, “W-will...Will you take my feelings...seriously...in t-this experiment?”

Rainbow let out a soft chuckle and stepped closer to Fluttershy. Fluttershy wasn't sure what to expect, but Rainbow put a hoof to her cheek and made her turn to put them face to face. Fluttershy's eyes went wide as she felt Rainbow's lips press against her own, her face flushing a bright red.

“What do you think?” Rainbow asked with a grin after separating. Fluttershy's lips quivered for a moment, before she showed a small smile, small, but one that was so very big in her heart.

“Thank you, Rainbow Dash!” Fluttershy cried happily as she hugged Rainbow.

“Hey, it's the least I could do.” Rainbow hugged her dear friend...no, she hugged her marefriend in return.

Epilogue

“Okay, so what’re some things we both like doing?” Rainbow asked looking at a blank sheet of paper.

“W-Well...I really like watching you practice.” Fluttershy thought.

“And I *a/ways* like showing off.” Rainbow said writing down ‘Flight practice’ on the paper.

“You really like my cooking...so dinners are always an option.” Fluttershy said while thinking about possible new recipes to try for Rainbow Dash.

“Full bellies, check.” Rainbow said writing down ‘Dinner’ on the paper.

“Uhm...we both like hanging out with our friends, going to Pinkie Pie’s parties and getting a good sleep.” Fluttershy listed off the most obvious things first.

“Check, check and check.” Rainbow said listing off ‘Hanging out’, ‘Parties’ and ‘Napping’.

“Uhm...” Fluttershy said tapping her chin thoughts, “How do you feel about the weather you make for Ponyville?”

“Well, I love having a good thunderstorm! Flying past lightning as it strikes is one of the most intense things ever! The wind and rain in your mane is just incredible!” Rainbow grinned thinking about it.

“O-Oh...I just kind of prefer it when there’s a light summer shower of sorts. Watching the calm rain is rather soothing.” Fluttershy said thinking about it.

“Eh...close enough.” Rainbow said writing down ‘Weather fun’ on the paper. “What about pranks?” Rainbow asked looking up at Fluttershy.

“Oh...uhm...well I guess as long as it's in good fun and no one is offended that they're okay...I-I'm just not good at coming up with ones.” Fluttershy admitted.

“I'm counting it. You could join me and Pinkie in doing some awesome prank fests.” Rainbow chuckled as she wrote down ‘Pranks’.

“Well...I know you're not too interested in taking care of animals like I do...how are you about swimming?” Fluttershy remembered enjoying a good swim every so often.

“Swimming? Well...it's not as fun as flying, but I suppose its fun, can't say I have anything against it.” Rainbow wrote down ‘Swimming’. “I know you're not much for competitions like me and Applejack tend to have, but is there anything physical you enjoy?”

Fluttershy couldn't help but blush at the way Rainbow worded that, “Oh uhm...W-Well...” Fluttershy rubbed a hoof over her leg as she thought, “P-Physical...I-I like h-hugging and cuddling...being close b-but...I'm not very strong or anything. I-I'll mostly be a cheerleader for you...a-as best I can though.”

“Mmm...” Rainbow chewed the pencil in thought, “I've never been too big on stuff like that...” she tilted her head while crossing her hooves, “But, we are together now. I'll have to try some of that with you, see if I like it.” Rainbow wrote down ‘Hugging?’ on the paper.

Fluttershy blushed again, thinking happily at the thought of cuddling with Rainbow Dash. She was really sticking to her word and giving this a serious try, it really made her happy.

Suddenly there were several knocks on Fluttershy's door.

“Oh, I'll get it.” Fluttershy quickly got up, heading for the door. Just as she was about to open the door, it flew open suddenly.

“Oh, there you are Fluttershy-dear. It took me forever but I was finally able to get your new dress looking as good as new. I even spruced up some of the finer edges, so it should shine ever more now.” Rarity said walking into Fluttershy's house with a white box.

“O-Oh. Thank you Rarity, I appreciate it.” Fluttershy smiled.

“Now, you didn’t give me any of the details about what happened that night, so you simply MUST tell me now. How’d it go? I can’t imagine it going too well with the state your dress was in.” Rarity said before turning to see Rainbow Dash looking at Rarity with a pencil in her mouth, “Oh, good evening Rainbow Dash, I wasn’t expecting to see you in Fluttershy’s house.”

“Well I’m here.” Rainbow grinned before putting the pencil down.

“Oh...well uhm...about that night...” Fluttershy said, not sure what to say. She looked nervously at Rainbow Dash. “You see...I...” Rainbow could see Fluttershy’s invisible question of ‘What do I do?’

“Hey, go ahead and tell her Fluttershy, she is our friend, I’m sure she’ll understand.” Rainbow Dash with a grin, not really wanting to hide anything.

“What? You’ve already told Rainbow Dash?” Rarity said amazed, “Oh you simply MUST tell me now!”

“W-Well...I didn’t really tell her...s-see, it’s like this...” Fluttershy said nervously beginning her story.

“-And then she kissed me saying ‘What do you think?’ And we just kind of went from there.” Fluttershy finished her story, scrapping her hoof against the ground.

“Yea, it was shortly after that the Unicorn team came up and gave Fluttershy a full refund for the show. Man, those guys had egg on their faces.” Rainbow laughed nonchalantly.

“O-Oh...you mean...the pony you were trying to impress was...Rainbow Dash?” Rarity said still trying to process everything.

“Well...yea...I-I’m sorry I wasn’t forthcoming about it...” Fluttershy apologized softly.

“Good Heaven’s Fluttershy.” Rarity said shaking her head, “Why didn’t you tell me sooner?”

“Hey, what’s with that tone?” Rainbow asked not liking the way Rarity said that.

“I-I’m sorry Rarity...I was just nervous.” Fluttershy rubbed her leg gently.

“Oh my, no WONDER your night was terrible.” Rarity sighed, “I gave you dating advice on how to attract a *Gentlecolt*, not Rainbow Dash. Rainbow Dash is far from a good Gentlecolt.” Rarity said in her usual sophisticated matter.

“Hey! I can be fancy when I need to, I just don’t feel like it.” Rainbow Dash huffed.

“Never the less, I gave the wrong advice for the suitor Fluttershy was trying to attract.” Rarity addressed Rainbow Dash before turning to Fluttershy with a smile, “And something simple would’ve been much better for attracting Rainbow Dash. Perhaps something with a rainbow flare to it, something that would visualize to her ‘I’m thinking of you’. Yes, it truly would make a gorgeous piece.” Rarity said smiling as she thought about it.

“S-so wait...you’re okay with Rainbow Dash and I...dating?” Fluttershy said a little surprised.

“But of course dear, whatever made you think I wouldn’t?” Rarity smiled at her dear friend, with a warming smile.

“Oh...I guess I was just nervous that you or the others wouldn’t like the idea...” Fluttershy admitted.

“Oh darling, you shouldn’t ever feel that way. We are your friends! We love you for who you are, and if you like mares then that’s fine by us. If it’s what makes you happy, then of course we support you!” Rarity said

happily, "Though I must admit, I was hoping you'd fall for someone with a touch more grace, but not everypony is me I suppose." Rarity chuckled.

"Oh haha, very funny." Rainbow Dash rolled her eyes before walking up to Fluttershy, before showing Rarity a big grin, "But if you wouldn't mind, Fluttershy and I were in the middle of some important 'relationship' business." This comment elicited a large blush from Fluttershy as she tried to hide her face in her mane.

"Oh, but of course. How rude of me, I'll go ahead and escort myself out." Rarity smiled before heading back for the door. "Oh, and one more thing Rainbow Dash."

"Yea, what is it?" Dash asked raising an eyebrow.

"You better treat Fluttershy right. She's my dearest friend and I would hate to see anything sadden her." Rarity glanced at Rainbow from the corner of her eye.

"You kiddin' me? I'd rather lose my wings then do anything to hurt Fluttershy." Rainbow grinned at Rarity.

"Very good. I leave her to you then." Rarity nodded before her horn lit up, closing the door behind her.

"T-Thank you...Rainbow...t-that means a lot to me." Fluttershy blushed as she spoke quietly.

"Hey, what's a marefriend for?" Rainbow grinned before nuzzling up against Fluttershy. "Now come on, we need to finish this list before I figure out a good date to take you on." Rainbow quickly walked back to where she had placed the paper before sitting down.

"Y-You? T-Taking me...on a date?" Fluttershy sounded surprised.

"Well yea. I'm taking this seriously, so it's only fair that I take you out sometimes." Rainbow picked up the pencil before scribbling on the paper again, "Besides, I may not know a whole lot about being mushy and romantic, but it requires effort on both parts right? You put the effort in, so it's my turn now."

Fluttershy blushed as a smile came to her face. "I guess you're right." Fluttershy happily headed towards Rainbow again. However, this time she sat down next to Rainbow, nuzzling up against her. A soft blush appeared on Rainbow's face.

"H-Hey, that tickles." Rainbow chuckled as Fluttershy nuzzled in close.

'I have the best marefriend ever.' Fluttershy thought to herself happily.

~~~

## *The End of Too Shy for a Rainbow*

~~~

The Rainbow's Surprise

Prologue

"Alright, hello everyone and welcome to the Wonderbolt Auditions!" Spitfire announced walking before the group of eager young fliers before her, "We've never really done this 'open auditions' thing before so it's kind of a new experience for everyone. However, we're confident that you're going to show us your stuff and the best of the best will have the honor of joining us, the Wonderbolts!"

Rainbow Dash felt tense as she stood amongst the crowd of fliers around her. There was a lot more potential new recruits than she had thought there were going to be. And she knew well enough that there was only maybe two or three positions open on the team at best. Out of all the potential flyers to get in, she felt like a single rain drop in a storm trying to hit a tiny target.

She knew it didn't make sense to feel nervous, that she'd only fly worse because of it. She knew she had to be confident, but something wasn't letting her be. She knew Spitfire was still talking but the words felt like they were being drowned out by her doubt. What was holding her back?

"You can do it Rainbow Dash, I believe in you." Fluttershy encouraged her.

Oh right...that was what was holding her back.

"-So if you all understand we'll be starting to the tryouts." Spitfire's voice finally reached her and dragged her back to reality, "You'll each have five minutes to tryout. Good luck everyone." Spitfire smiled to the group before turning to rejoin the other Wonderbolts.

All at once the group of aspiring young fliers began to file into the preparation room, awaiting their chance to show off and impress the Wonderbolts. Dash moved along with them, her mind whirling with confusion.

The waiting room was packed full of the young fliers, all nervously chatting away with each other about their hopes and aspirations, making friends amongst possible rivals while others seemed to wish death upon all of them. Male, female, young, old, there seemed to be so many different types of ponies here, all with different types of flying styles.

But none of that was going through the rainbow-headed pegasus's mind.

"Fluttershy I've kind of been...thinking." Rainbow Dash said nervously.

"What's the matter?" Fluttershy asked curiously, looking at her marefriend.

"About this whole...you having a foal thing..." Fluttershy blinked curiously, "I...I was thinking we should maybe...wait...you know?"

"O-Oh? Is something that matter?" Fluttershy asked, looking a little hurt.

"D-don't get me wrong! I'm all for the idea!" Rainbow Dash quickly spoke up seeing that look on her face, "But the Wonderbolt open auditions are happening soon. A-And..." Dash rubbed her front leg looking away, "I don't know what my schedule will be like if I get accepted...o-or if I'll even be accepted...so...before we go making a big commitment like this, I...I want to make sure I'll have time to be around for our kid...you know?"

"Oh...I understand." Fluttershy smiled softly, but Dash couldn't tell if it was sincere or not. "I guess we shouldn't rush this after all. It is a big decision."

"Yea, exactly. I know you want to hurry, but we've got plenty of time." Dash smiled trying to comfort her marefriend.

“Hey.” Rainbow was snapped from her thoughts as she felt someone push her from behind. She quickly whipped her head around, “They’re calling you! Get out there!”

“Number thirteen!” Came the announcers voice once again.

“O-Oh, right.” Rainbow looked at the number on her flank, reading the thirteen that was placed there, before quickly moving to the front of the crowd. Had she really lost that track of time that much in her own thoughts? ‘There’s no way I’m ready for this.’ She felt herself gulp as she stepped out into the fresh open air, walking across the clouds toward a small table that was set up. Behind which she could see her idols, waiting to judge her performance.

“Oh hey, it’s you again. Rainbow Dash right?” Spitfire smiled from behind the table.

“You...you remembered my name?” Rainbow asked stunned looking at her idol. The gala had been at least half a year ago at this point. Winter was going to be around the corner and yet Spitfire had remembered her name from their brief encounters.

“Of course, it’s not easy to forget the name of the one who won the best young fliers contest, saved us and crashed the gala.” Spitfire chuckled softly recalling everything.

“And she saved my pie!” Soarin grinned next to Spitfire.

“Ah-haha...yea...” Rainbow said trying to laugh off her embarrassment, “I guess all that is kind of...memorable.”

“So, are you ready to audition? We’ve been impressed with your flying so far after all.” Spitfire complimented Rainbow Dash.

“Oh...uh...audition...right...y-yea I guess I’m ready.” Rainbow said taking a deep breath to try and steady her nerves.

“You guess?” Spitfire asked stopping Rainbow in her tracks, “Are you nervous?”

“...I...I...” Rainbow hesitated, “I guess I am...but not really about my ability to audition. I guess I’m nervous about what happens after my audition.”

“You’re worried you won’t get accepted?”

“...Actually...no...” Rainbow steadied herself and began to explain, “See, back home I have a marefriend that, well, things are getting pretty serious between us. And joining the Wonderbolts has been my dream for as long as I can remember and I know how much time you guys spend traveling Equestria to perform shows, practicing your routines and that new recruits have a one year training program to ensure they can learn the formations and build unity amongst the team.” Rainbow took in a breath, “And I’ve been worried that joining the Wonderbolts would mean that...I wouldn’t have time for her anymore...that I’d lose her because I couldn’t be there for her.”

There was a moment of silence after Rainbow’s quick breathed rant. The Wonderbolt’s seemed to look at each other in thought and Rainbow was sure what was going through their heads.

“Hey Soarin, aren’t you dating some girl long distance?” Spitfire asked curiously.

“Yea I am!” Soarin grinned, “She’s a sweet piece of pie she is.” He boasted proudly.

“How’s that working out?”

“It’s working out great! She sends me a letter, I send her a letter. Usually I get and send about two a week.” Soarin chuckled while grinning broadly, “And since our shows will be stopping for winter soon and her tour will be over around the same time we’re going to be spending our vacation together.” He said excitedly.

“Well, that works for Soarin and his girl, would that work for you?” Spitfire asked curiously turning back to Rainbow Dash.

“I...I dunno...I uhm...” Rainbow stumbled again trying to think over her options.

“Tell you what, we’ve still got a lot of auditions to go through, and we’ll be here till our last show of the year next month. Why don’t you go home, talk it over with your marefriend and when you’re ready come back and audition for real?”

“Really? You’d do that for me?” Rainbow asked shocked yet excited by this proposal.

“Sure. We already know you can fly well, you did win the Best Young Fliers competition after all. Once you’ve figured things out feel free to come back. Just be sure you come back before our last show alright? If you don’t we’ll assume you choose to stay with your marefriend till we look for a new member of the team again, which, who knows when that’ll be.” Spitfire chuckled.

“Oh thank you! Thank you so much!” Rainbow said jumping into the air and flapping her wings excitedly, “I promise you won’t regret letting me come back and audition! I’ll figure something out and then I’ll come back and knock your socks off!” Rainbow said grinning excitedly, before turning to the sky and flying off.

‘So...I have a month to figure this out. To join the Wonderbolts, to keep Fluttershy...what do I do...’ Rainbow dash pondered as she streaked through the sky, heading back to Ponyville.

Chapter 1

The cool fall air sent a breeze through Fluttershy's mane as she slowly walked through the streets of Ponyville. Winter would be here soon, the streets would be covered in the beautiful blanket of white snow that embraced it every year. This was always one of her favorite times of the year, when everything was quiet and calm, the soft chill giving the world a sort of serene beauty. Even though most animals would be hibernating for the winter leaving her without much work, she always spent her time simply admiring the beauty the landscapes had to offer.

She felt a constant sense of awe in the simple wonders of the world this time of year, the way the leaves would change colors from their luscious green to the beautiful harmony of reds, oranges and yellows. The air would almost always have a wonderful smell to it as somepony would have a small fire going, or perhaps would be wood roasting some new savory dish or even the simple crisp air that nature provided.

However, things were not so calm for her this fall day. It felt like a knot had been tied around her heart and every day it was growing just a little tighter.

Fluttershy looked around Ponyville. Many of the houses were still decorated from Nightmare Night that had just come and past two week ago. She saw several ponies taking down the celebratory decorations to make way for the next holiday, while others were still enjoying the efforts of their work, their houses did look magnificent.

All the spooky decorations sent a shiver up her spine. She had remembered a time when she used to be able to enjoy Nightmare Night for all its wonder and spectacle. She even had helped the young ones with their festivities that night so that they could have a wonderful time. But the decorations only reminded her of things she'd like to put behind her now.

Of a certain fog-filled Ponyville and what it had told her of her past.

Fluttershy shook her head quickly, trying to let the thoughts go. She accepted what happened to her, she knew that well. She was thankful for it because of everything her experiences had given her in life...

It was exactly for that reason that it felt like the knot on her heart grew a little tighter.

She took a deep breath and kept walking through Ponyville. She didn't want to keep stopping every few feet to reassure herself, someone was waiting for her and she didn't want to be deterred any further.

The familiar smell of heated air, scented lotions and herbs, the very image of relaxation wafted all about her. The very presence of the spa did wonders for her nerves.

"Ah, there you are Fluttershy darling." Rarity greeted her dear friend happily as she entered the familiar building, "I was getting worried I'd have to go in without you."

"Sorry Rarity, I got a little caught up on things. The usual?" Fluttershy smiled cheerfully.

"The usual!" Rarity repeated cheerfully so the spa attendants could hear. Aloe and Lotus showed up in their usual promptness and quickly lead the two mares into the back.

"Ooooh, this is always so relaxing." Rarity stretched on the wooden seats as steam billowed from the coals, "Don't you agree Fluttershy?"

"Oh...yes, everything's fine." Fluttershy smiled as kindly as she could to her friend.

Rarity suddenly drew closer to Fluttershy, as if inspecting her face carefully.

"W-what's the matt-" Fluttershy was interrupted as she suddenly felt herself go stiff. Rarity placed her hooves against Fluttershy's back and rubbed up and down it carefully.

“My goodness Fluttershy, I knew SOMETHING was up, but you’re so *tense*! Your back is riddled with knots! We simply *must* get you a massage right away! Masseur!” Rarity cried out quickly. Before Fluttershy could even blink, the spa ponies whisked into the steam room and grabbed them, quickly bringing them to the usual massage tables. Fluttershy did her best to say a word of protest, but the moment the talented hooves hit her back she felt as if she was melting on the table.

“Isn’t it heavenly Fluttershy?” Rarity asked as hooves began to work wonders on her back.

“Oh...oh yes...” Fluttershy cooed softly as she closed her eyes resting against the table. For a moment it really felt like her worries could be lifted away simply by the massaging of hooves on her back, as if the world just seemed to slip away and there was nothing else to worry about.

“Now...what is troubling you this time Fluttershy?” Rarity asked, cooing to her own feelings of comfort, “You know I don’t like seeing you troubled.”

Fluttershy was quiet. She wanted to feel upset at Rarity for having brought it up while she was relaxing, but she was doing a poor job at it. She simply just couldn’t find a way to bring up a single negative emotion while those hooves did magic on her. She let out a reluctant sigh, there was no point in hiding anything from Rarity.

“It’s Rainbow Dash.” Fluttershy finally admitted.

“Her again?” Rarity mused as the set of hooves on her back began to strike just the right spots, “Mmm...she’s not giving you trouble is she?”

“Well...no...just the opposite actually...” Fluttershy lifted her head to look at her friend, “She’s actually been very distant...e-ever since she came back from the Wonderbolts audition she’s barely said a word to me.” She laid her head back down, trying to concentrate despite the miracle being performed on her back. “This whole week she’s been avoiding me...if I try to talk to her she says she’s busy, if I try to invite her somewhere she’d turn me down...I even got her a gift and she just thanked me for it and went off.”

“Oh my, this sounds serious.” Rarity tapped a hoof against her chin. “Mud bath!” She suddenly called out to the workers. In the next instance Fluttershy was whisked from the table and placed before the warm pits of mud. She gasped as the sea weed was wrapped almost too tightly around her body, but as they let go the sea weed fit snugly against her. She was always impressed with the accuracy and speed of their work.

With grace Rarity hopped into the bath, elegant as ever. Fluttershy carefully lowered into the bath, feeling the warm mud wash over her fur and sea weed. The mud seemed to reach each of her muscles, the heat being welcomed into her body. She could feel her muscles relax and loosen all over eliciting a soft sigh from her lips as she indulged in the relaxation.

“Now, do tell me more dear, what exactly does she do when she avoids you?” Rarity turned to her friend, “I *must* know the details.”

“W-Well...okay, as you know it started the night she got back from the Wonderbolts audition...she came back and told me they were going to give her a second audition in a month and then she spent the night with me, but when I woke up she had left a note for me saying she had to take care of her weather duties.”

“Huh? Rainbow Dash getting up early to take care of the weather?” Rarity asked almost in shock.

“I was just as surprised as you were. Usually when she spends her nights with me she sleeps in later than usual. But when I checked outside the clouds were cleared.”

“How odd...and she didn’t come back afterwards?”

“No, I didn’t see her the rest of the day.”

“Alright, well what happened the next time you saw her?”

“Well...the next time I saw her...”

“Rainbow Dash!” Fluttershy called out seeing her streak across the sky.

“Oh!” Rainbow said stopping to turn to Fluttershy, “Hey Fluttershy, I don’t really have time to stop right now.”

“You don’t? What are you doing?” She asked confused.

“Oh you know, places to be, ponies to see, clouds to clear.” Rainbow waved her hoof dismissively. Fluttershy looked around the sky curiously.

“But the sky is clear...there aren’t anymore clouds to clear.” Fluttershy asked a little worried about Dash’s story.

“Well...some clouds are...uh...expected to wander in! Yes! Cloudsdale has been overproducing them and they’ve been caught in the air currents! Yea, that’s it. So I gotta be around to clear them up when they come around. Yup.” Dash laughed awkwardly.

Something was clearly wrong with what she was saying. Fluttershy was sure she could tell when Dash was lying by now, but it wasn’t a situation that came around that often. The last time they had to lie was for Pinkie’s birthday, and that lie had even been more awkward than this one.

“Is that...really what you have to do today?” Fluttershy crossed her front hooves and gave her best big-sappy eyes she could, blinking them softly at Rainbow Dash.

Rainbow Dash instantly seemed to hesitate, rubbing a hoof against her neck as she looked around.

“Oh, hey, look at the time!” Rainbow said quickly pointing to a non-existent watch on her hoof, she apparently didn’t even have time to draw one this time, “Would love to stay but I got things to do BYE!” Rainbow disappeared in a blur in the next instance, escaping from Fluttershy’s sight.

“Oh...she escaped my gaze...I guess this really is important.” Fluttershy thought to herself. “Well, I’m sure she’ll have time for me when she’s done then.” She smiled thoughtfully as she continued with her day.

“She just left? With *that* flimsy excuse?” Rarity sounded appalled.

“Well...yea...I mean it was only the second day that we didn’t spend much time together. I don’t mind spending time apart, I just would like to know why, you know?” Fluttershy asked meekly.

“Oh but of course dear, it’s only appropriate.” Rarity nodded her head sagely, “Now do go *on*. What happened the next day?”

“Well...much the same. I got a chance to see Rainbow around town but she made another excuse and flew off. So I thought, maybe I could invite her to lunch the next day, I mean she constantly tells me how much she loves it when I cook for her...but she turned that down as well.” Fluttershy said with a hint of disappointment in her voice.

“What about the gift? What happened with that?”

“Oh, well, see what happened there was...”

Fluttershy looked around the skies of Ponyville. She was carrying a small box in her mouth, inside of which was a scarf she had painstakingly sewn together just the day before. She had carefully stitched it together with rose colored yarn, embroidered with a soft yellow pattern. She made it to match her eyes, while still giving her something extra to think about her while she worked. Winter would be coming soon after all and Rainbow would be in charge of the weather as always. She wanted to make sure her marefriend would be warm and it’d be an excuse to see her, since she’d been avoiding her all week.

She continued to scan, looking for the single sign of her marefriend. It seemed that Rainbow had become craftier in her ability to be elusive, as if Rainbow knew she was looking for her.

“Ah-hah!” She mumbled, seeing the streak of Rainbow going through the town at a high speed. She adjusted her flight and then flew as quickly as she could to catch up to the speeding rainbow. The rainbow streak came to a stop just before a house. Fluttershy smiled as she quickly came up from behind her.

“Rainbow Dash!” she cried out quickly, interrupting Rainbow who was just about to knock on the door, “There you are, I’ve been looking for you.”

“Oh! Fluttershy...heeeeeeeeeey.” Rainbow Dash laughed awkwardly, stepping away from the yellow Pegasus, “You found me...”

“Of course, I’ve been looking for you.” She smiled before carefully holding out her decorative box, “I made this for you.”

“O-Oh...uh...thanks...” Rainbow quickly reached over to grab the package. Fluttershy tried to lean into a kiss as Rainbow took the package, but she slipped back away escaping the embrace. Fluttershy felt herself pout a little. “Thanks for the gift, really! I gotta go though.” Rainbow said as she turned spreading her wings.

“Wait, you’re not even going to open it?” Fluttershy felt hurt at the gesture, after all the time she’d put into making the gift, “And weren’t you about to go into that house?”

“...Well I just remembered that this is the wrong house.” Rainbow said, though this time it was obvious she was lying, “And I will look at it, I promise just...I can’t right now.”

“Why not? I...I worked really hard on making it Rainbow Dash...” Fluttershy said softly, feeling tears start to form at the edges of her eyes at Rainbow’s words. They felt like they bit into her, even though she knew Rainbow wouldn’t hurt her on purpose...would she?

“...H-Hey, don’t do that.” Rainbow said quickly brushing a hoof against Fluttershy’s face, wiping the forming tears. Fluttershy looked surprised at this, “I’ll look at it, okay? Here.” Rainbow put the gift down quickly, grabbing at the ribbons and pulling it off. She opened the box before staring at the scarf inside.

“Whoa...Fluttershy...you...you made this?” Rainbow picked up the soft rose colored material, looking at it in awe.

“I did.” Fluttershy nodded proudly, “I haven’t seen you much the past few days and I know winter will be starting soon...so I wanted to make sure you’d be warm.” She blushed softly, rubbing a hoof against her leg.

Rainbow's lips quivered as she stared at the gift. She then forced herself to swallow, as she quickly wrapped it around her neck.

"Thankyoualotforthegiftbutlhavetogonow." Rainbow said all in one breath, as if she was trying to hold herself back from saying anything more, before vanishing in a streak of a rainbow once more. Fluttershy stared as she left, her mouth opening slightly.

"Wait...but Dash...don't you want to spend time with me?" She asked quietly to the air where Rainbow had disappeared to.

"She just ignored your gift!?" Rarity asked appalled, taking a hoof out of the hoof-soaking tub to try and cover her expression.

"Yea...and I didn't see her yesterday so I haven't seen her since." Fluttershy admitted gently swirling a hoof around her own tub, mixing the bubbly waters.

"That ruffian!" Rarity said gracefully stomping her hoof back into the water to minimize the splash, "I simply cannot stand by and watch my best friend be neglected in such a way by the pony she cares for most!"

"I-It's okay Rarity, I'm sure things will work themselves out." Fluttershy quickly tried to reassure her friend, that she would most likely be okay by the end of all this.

"Oh don't try to hide your pain darling; I've known you long enough now that I simply cannot let such crude behavior hurt you any longer." Rarity lifted a hoof from the tub and examined it, "This will *have* to do for now. Come Fluttershy, let us wrap up." Rarity said stepping out of the tub onto a towel, carefully drying her hooves.

"Leave? So soon?" Fluttershy said surprised. Usually they spent at least another thirty minutes in the spa with their 'usual' treatments.

"But of course Fluttershy, we have an expedition to go on! We're going to hunt down Rainbow Dash and figure out just what she's been doing from behind your back!" Rarity's eyes seemed to gleam with

mischievousness, “She can’t hide her delinquent activities from the eyes of Rarity the *magnificent*.”

“No, really, that’s not necessary Rarity. I-I’m sure things will work out on their own...” Fluttershy hesitated, her heart was telling her it was wrong to try and find out what Rainbow Dash was up to, as it was her private business and she shouldn’t pry into it. She wanted to trust that Rainbow Dash had the best intentions in mind, even if it hurt not know what was going on.

“Nonsense. If Rainbow Dash hasn’t said a word to you and made it a POINT to avoid you, then we have no choice but to find out what she’s up to. There is no excuse for hurting your loved one this way!” Rarity carefully shook her mane before checking it in the mirror. She quickly spruced herself up, making sure she was in perfect working order. “Come Fluttershy, we must find out what in Equestria your marefriend has been up to.”

“I...I guess I can’t stop you then.” Fluttershy murmured quietly stepping out of the tub and onto a towel, drying her hooves off, “Just promise me you won’t do anything drastic?”

“I promise you dear. We’re just doing a little...*espionage*.” Rarity seemed to give a devil’s smirk at the word, “We’ll find out what she’s up to before she even knows we’re following her.”

It felt like butterflies had started flying all around Fluttershy’s stomach. She admitted to being curious, wanting to know why Rainbow Dash had been avoiding her, but she still held reservations about invading her privacy. But Rarity wasn’t going to be stopped and they were already leaving to find out what was going on.

‘I hope you can forgive me for intruding Rainbow Dash...’ Fluttershy thought quietly, quickly following Rarity out the spa doors.

Chapter 2

With a small bag containing a pair of binoculars in it strapped on, Rarity set forth into Ponyville in search of her prey. She kept her eyes scanning through the sky, looking for any possible hint of their elusive prey rainbow haired creature.

"I still don't think this is such a good idea." Fluttershy hesitated as she followed Rarity, who looked more like she was openly prowling than searching.

"Nonsense Fluttershy, we have everything that we'll need to properly find out what Rainbow Dash is up to." Rarity said mulling through things in her mind, "All we have to do is catch a simple glimpse of our elusive target and then we can track her." Rarity took another glimpse around the sky, "Fluttershy darling, why don't you fly up and see if you can spot her?"

"Uh...well...okay." Fluttershy agreed quickly spreading her wings and heading into the skies of Ponyville. As it had been for the last week it was cloud free, Rainbow Dash had been working hard every morning to ensure the skies would be cloud free. This allowed the winds more freedom, sending a soft chill down Fluttershy's back as the fresh fall air swept through her fur and between the feathers of her wings.

The added benefit of the clear sky was that it was easier to search from anypony you were looking for in town. As Fluttershy scanned the streets of Ponyville it didn't take long to spot the streaks of a rainbow moving quickly through the town square in an unusual manner.

"She's in the town square moving kind of...sporadically." Fluttershy told Rarity after quickly flying back down.

"Very well! We shall sneak to the edge of the town square and see what she's up to!" Rarity grinned before heading off in full gallop.

"W-wait for me!" Fluttershy quickly said flying as best she could to keep up with Rarity.

It didn't take long to reach the edge of town square. A good thing too, as it seemed that whatever Rainbow Dash had been doing she had about finished when they got there.

"Alright, let's see what we can find out." Rarity quipped quickly while pulling out a pair of rather fancy gold and silver binoculars laced with a few gem stones. She levitated up to her eyes and adjusted them carefully to get a better look at Rainbow Dash, who seemed to be standing outside of city hall.

"What do you see?" Fluttershy asked curiously.

"Well...it seems that Rainbow Dash is talking to the Mayor." Rarity seemed a little confused by this.

"The mayor? I wonder what she wants..." Fluttershy said trying to see what was happening from the distance they were.

"Well it looks like they're just talking...wait!" Rarity said moving forward and adjusting the binoculars again, "It looks like the Mayor is giving Rainbow Dash some kind of a gift."

"A gift?" Fluttershy squeezed her eyes to try and see it. The two figures looked like they were exchanging something, but it was hard to tell. "What's it look like?"

"It's a small bag. I couldn't say...Rainbow is putting it in her shoulder bag...oh, it seems they're done talking." Fluttershy could see Rainbow heading away from the town hall. With a flap of her wings she was streaking through the sky once more, this time heading for the outskirts of town.

"Quickly! We have to keep following her!" Rarity said following after the streak, "Keep an eye on her from the sky Fluttershy." She ordered.

"R-Right." Fluttershy said taking to the sky. She watched that wondrous rainbow streak away as it seemed to fly straight for one of the houses just outside of Ponyville, one that belonged to one of the vegetable

growers in Ponyville, Carrot Top. "She's headed for Carrot Top's place." Fluttershy called down to Rarity.

"Let us make haste then!" Rarity said not wanting to miss a moment of what Rainbow was up to.

It only took them about a minute to reach Carrot Top's place. At this part of town there was plenty of nature around the area, and Rarity seemed to have found the perfect bush to hide behind.

"What business could she possibly have at Carrot Top's house?" Rarity mused to herself as she once again took out her binoculars. Fluttershy watched Rainbow Dash as she talked with the orange furred and haired Carrot Top. The two seemed to share a quick laugh before moving to different parts of the garden Carrot Top managed.

"Is Rainbow Dash...gardening?" Fluttershy blinked in confusion, watching her rainbow haired marefriend digging at the dirt with her hooves, pulling out a few carrots that looked ready to be harvested. "It's awfully late in the season to be harvesting carrots too...this must be Carrot Top's last one for the year." Fluttershy thought curiously, "But why is Rainbow helping her with her harvest? She hates gardening..."

"I can't blame her, getting all that icky mud on your hooves must be dreadful." Rarity shivered at the thought, before turning back to watch Rainbow Dash carefully, constantly adjusting her binoculars, "Though she seems fully enthused to work on the garden here. Honestly I don't think I've ever seen her with such work ethic."

"She has been working hard lately, it's weird." Fluttershy commented before going back to watch her marefriend toil away hard at the ground in front of Carrot Top's house. Her and Carrot Top were very quickly mulling back and forth, pulling out carrots from the ground and placing them in her cart. There was a surprisingly large crop that they were pulling and it certainly seemed that at the pace Carrot Top was pulling that she'd have been there all day pulling. Rainbow Dash, however, was pulling quickly and efficiently and was pulling carrots at least three times the speed Carrot Top was.

Rarity and Fluttershy continued to watch until every last carrot had been picked, a task that took a surprisingly short time thanks to Dash's efforts. She was covered in dirt almost completely as she walked up to Carrot Top.

"Argh, I still can't hear what they're talking about." Rarity said frustrated, still not wanting to get closer in fear of giving away their position.

Fluttershy tried to listen carefully, but even to her it just sounded like mumbled gibberish. Carrot Top then seemed to gesture that they go inside, but Rainbow Dash shook her head. Carrot Top seemed to frown a little and question Dash's decision pointing to all the dirt on her body, but Dash just nodded her head. Dash then stepped away from Carrot Top before shaking herself free of the dirt she had accumulated. She spoke up now, letting Fluttershy and Rarity hear a bit of the conversation.

"Thanks though, I do appreciate it. I just can't spend too much longer here; I got others to see today." Rainbow nodded.

"Well alright, I understand." Carrot Top smiled, "I'm sure they'll be more than willing to 'help' you too."

"What did she mean by 'help'?" Rarity whispered quietly, "She seemed to have phrased that weirdly..."

"Shh." Fluttershy said quickly, trying to listen in more.

"Well if you need me again, don't be afraid to ask! The sooner the better though." Dash nodded.

"Alright, I'll keep that in mind." Carrot Top grinned happily.

"Seeya later Carrot Top." Dash said waving to her before heading into the sky once more, Carrot Top waving back.

"Drat, come on Fluttershy, we can't lose her." Rarity said quickly running out from behind the bush, Fluttershy quickly doing her best to follow after Rarity in such a rush.

“...Huh? Was that Fluttershy and Rarity?” Carrot Top blinked watching the two ponies heading into town after Rainbow Dash.

Rainbow landed quickly before the entrance to Sugar Cube Corner. She looked around the streets quickly, seeing ponies around, but seemed to be looking out for specific ones. Satisfied with her scan she briskly walked into the delectable bakery.

“She clearly wants to make sure what she’s doing is kept secret from somepony. Most likely you.” Rarity pondered the actions from behind the house corner they were currently stationed.

“Other than her work ethic...I didn’t really see anything wrong with her helping Carrot Top with her garden...I’m sure she’s just buying something from Sugar Cube Corner.” Fluttershy mumbled softly, starting to think even more now that they were just invading Rainbow’s privacy.

“Nonsense Fluttershy, that alone is enough to warrant more research. She acted out of character with Carrot Top, meaning she’s up to something.” Rarity pondered more, “What reason could she have for doing something she dislikes?” Rarity went quiet for a moment as her mind mulled it over.

Fluttershy caught the undertones of Rarity’s words. The only time Dash did things she disliked is when it made somepony else happy. After all, in the half a year they’d been dating Dash had done so many wonderful things for her that Dash didn’t like to do that much. Be it simply sitting around and watching nature, or quietly cuddling into the night...she only did that for somepony that she loved...

“Come on; let’s see if we can sneak a peek into Sugar Cube Corner.” Rarity said quickly prancing over to the sugar coated building. Fluttershy followed quickly as the two of them carefully peeked into the bakery.

The window revealed the kitchen within filled with a blue Pegasus and a pink earth pony busy mixing ingredients. They seemed to be working quickly while conversing the whole time. Rarity tried pressing her ear against the window to listen in, but the sound was simply too distorted by

the clashing of spoons mixing, hooves walking behind them and conversations all over.

“Well...it just looks like Rainbow is helping out at Sugar Cube Corner...” Fluttershy mumbled quietly to Rarity.

“Yes...but that doesn’t answer the question of why she would avoid you for this.” Rarity squinted her eyes watching the two ponies in question. It seemed like simple baking enough, until a mishap with a bowl sent it flying and landed on Rainbow’s head. Rainbow quickly shook her mane and seemed to get a grin, before throwing her bowl full of flour back at Pinkie.

In perhaps one of the quickest manners possible, the situation inside went from a simple ‘help bake’ to a full on food fight. The kitchen was quickly becoming a mess as the two goofed around, just playing around inside of the kitchen.

“Oh look at that ruffian! She’s making an absolute mess! And all that flour and sugar in her mane...oh its simply dreadful!” Rarity shivered watching the display. “What on earth do they think they’re doing?” She asked turning to look at Fluttershy.

Fluttershy had placed a hoof against the window as she watched the two mares playing inside of the bakery. Rarity stopped speaking as she saw the look in Fluttershy’s eyes. It seemed sadness was starting to wash over her, a sense of loneliness over the fact that Rainbow Dash didn’t want her around while she was off having fun.

‘Am I...holding her back from having fun?’ The thought ran through Fluttershy’s head as she watched them play around. Rainbow wasn’t this rough around her; it was as if Rainbow Dash always made sure to take care of her by being delicate and gentle. But here she was free to be as rough as she wanted, Pinkie Pie could handle it and it looked like she was having so much fun...

“Fluttershy dear, I don’t know if this means anything just yet.” Rarity said putting a hoof against her shoulder for comfort, “I’m sure there’s a reason for all of this. Let’s just keep observing, alright?” Rarity did her best to smile, realizing how things were starting to look.

“A-Alright...” Fluttershy said quietly, turning back to watch the two playing inside.

The play fight lasted for a few minutes before the two collapsed together on the floor of kitchen laughing over their escapades. Once they’d had a moment to calm down, Rainbow looked around the room and spoke to Pinkie quickly. Pinkie nodded and the two of them briskly went to work cleaning up the mess they had made of the kitchen. The two working together didn’t take long and were soon pulling freshly baked goods out of the oven to decorate.

Rarity and Fluttershy watched for about an hour in total, getting strange looks from passing ponies but were left alone to their spying. Rainbow had finally finished her business in Sugar Cube Corner and headed for the front door.

“Move move!” Rarity said quickly to Fluttershy, the two of them quickly moving around the corner of the building and out of sight.

“Thanks again Pinkie Pie.” Rainbow said as the front door opened and she stepped out.

“I should be the one thanking YOU Dashie! I got so much work done, it was worth it! You should really come by again sometime to make MORE treats!” Pinkie said cheerfully.

“I probably will. But I still have some things I gotta do first. I’ll catch ya later alright?” Rainbow grinned to her friend.

“Okie Dokie! Bye Dashie!” Pinkie waved as Rainbow took off into the sky once more, before Pinkie disappeared back into Sugar Cube Corner.

“Okay, so her little adventure here seems to have come to an end.” Rarity said peeking her head around the corner, “We should follow her before we lose sight of her.”

“Right.” Fluttershy nodded.

“Spy mission accepted.” Pinkie said saluting.

“EEP!” Fluttershy said jumping back from the sudden appearing pony.

“Pinkie Pie!? What’re you doing here?” Rarity asked turning to look baffled at their friend.

“Oh don’t be silly, you’ve been watching us for a while now.” Pinkie giggled, “Why didn’t you come inside and play? It was a lot of fun!”

“Pinkie, we’re following Rainbow Dash. We’re trying to find out why she’s been avoiding Fluttershy.” Rarity explained quickly.

“Huh? Rainbow Dash has been avoiding Fluttershy?” Pinkie sounded shocked as she tapped her chin in thought. “Oh! I know why!” Pinkie grinned happily.

“R-Really?” Fluttershy blinked confused.

“You do?” Rarity asked shocked, “Then why don’t you tell us already?”

“Oh well you see it’s because...” Pinkie had been bouncing in place before stopping herself as if she realized something, “Oh...uh...sorry, I know but I can’t tell you. I promised Dash I wouldn’t.”

“...O-Oh...w-well it’s okay then Pinkie...” Fluttershy mumbled rubbing her hoof against her leg.

“Ugh.” Rarity put a hoof to her face, “Pinkie Pie, you do know that *sometimes* it’s just better to tell the truth than to let your friends be hurt, right?”

“Sorry Rarity, no can do. I Pinkie Pie swore, so I can’t go back on it or else I’ll get a cupcake in my eye.” Pinkie motioned her hoof into her eye, “Though I already had my face covered in cupcakes for the day. They were just tasty though, not because I broke my promise. Hey, do you guys want some cupcakes? We just baked some fresh ones and they’re really delicious!” Pinkie licked her lips happily.

“Sorry darling, maybe next time. If you’re not telling us what she’s up to we have to keep following her.” Rarity nodded, not wanting to let this go till she got some answers.

“W-Well...we’ve lost track of her now...we don’t know where she went...” Fluttershy said in dissapointment, looking around.

“Oh, that’s easy. She went over to Lyra and Bonbon’s house.” Pinkie smiled.

“Wait, I thought you weren’t allowed to tell us?” Rarity raised an eyebrow curiously.

“Oh silly, I didn’t tell you what she’s up to, just where she went.” Pinkie smiled happily, “Well good luck with your spy mission! I’d join you but I don’t think Dash would like that very much. So I’ll just keep baking some treats in Sugar Cube Corner.” Pinkie then bounced off merrily towards the store.

“Hmmm...” Rarity thought about Pinkie’s actions carefully.

“What’s the matter Rarity?” Fluttershy asked confused.

“I don’t know...that just seemed...how do I put this...odd? I’m not sure what’s going on at all now. Let’s go find Rainbow Dash and see what she’s up to. I’m CERTAIN we can get more answers before the day is done.” Rarity said, quickly walking in the direction of Lyra and Bonbon’s house.

Fluttershy followed quickly, not sure what to say either, only able to take the events that had transpired for what they appeared to be.

Rarity and Fluttershy stood outside of Lyra and Bonbon’s house for what seemed like an eternity. At first they had thought perhaps Pinkie had lied to them to throw them off of Rainbow’s trail, but they had spotted the Pegasus passing by a window and knew she was in the house. Though it

felt like a lot of time had passed, only about thirty minutes had actually passed since they had started watching.

At that time the door clicked open and the two spying mares hid themselves as best as possible, viewing what would happen next.

“Huuuuuu...” Rainbow let out a deep breath as she exited the house; it was obviously noticeable that she had been perspiring, a lot. “Thanks you two, I really needed that.” Rainbow laughed softly, a little out of breath as she adjusted her shoulder bag and stretched.

“Oh no, no need to thank us, we couldn’t have done this without you.” Bonbon smiled to the Pegasus.

“Yea, you were a BIG help! That would’ve been impossible if it had just been between the two of us.” Lyra grinned happily.

“Well no problem guys, just give me a shout if you need me again! I promise I’ll give you the same excellent Rainbow Dash service.” Rainbow patted her chest happily.

“We’ll do just thank. See you later.” Bonbon waved.

“Thanks for everything!” Lyra waved as well. Rainbow spread her wings and carefully took off into the sky this time, breathing a little heavier than she had been before, as if she had just been tired out.

Rarity and Fluttershy stared quietly, taking what just happened.

“I’m...I’m sure that WASN’T what it just seemed like.” Rarity laughed awkwardly, looking around shiftily.

“Y-Yea...Rainbow...Rainbow Dash isn’t that kind of mare...” Fluttershy swallowed carefully, trying to control her emotions. She had to keep telling herself she trusted Rainbow Dash, that she wouldn’t do anything to hurt her on purpose. She loved her after all, Rainbow wouldn’t do bad things behind her back...right?

“C-Come on Fluttershy, I’m sure if we see where she’s going now it’ll clear this whole fiasco up.” Rarity tried to laugh in comfort, placing a hoof

on Fluttershy's shoulders. Fluttershy nodded slowly to her friend and the two quickly followed after their rainbow colored target.

Rainbow Dash hadn't gone too far from Lyra and Bonbon's house. Just about two streets away and was currently talking with a cream coated pony with burgundy hair they knew named Rose. As Fluttershy and Rarity hid behind a conveniently placed bush in town watching them, it seemed that the two were arguing over a piece of paper in Rainbow's hands.

"What do you think they're arguing about?" Fluttershy asked, confused watching Rainbow Dash push her hoof against the paper she was holding as she seemed to argue with Roseluck.

"I'm not sure..." Rarity rubbed her chin in thought, "She does seem to be very passionate about her case though."

It was true. Rose was walking back and forth before Rainbow Dash, flicking her head around, waving her hoof in the air, twirling her mane as she spoke. Rose was very animated for whatever she was talking to Rainbow Dash about. Once again, they couldn't get too close, if they got within speaking distance there was a strong possibility of getting caught spying.

"Hmmm...I don't suppose this could be any kind of property dispute or...wait!" Rarity said stopping herself watching the scene suddenly change. Rose drew closer to Rainbow Dash as the conversation continued. Rainbow didn't really seem to notice, just reading away at the paper before her.

Suddenly Rose placed a hoof against Rainbow's shoulder, making Rainbow look up in surprise. In that instance, Rose pressed her lips against Rainbow's.

Fluttershy suddenly felt as if the world had shattered around her. She hadn't wanted to believe it, but she was seeing it with her own eyes now. Rainbow Dash wasn't hanging out with her anymore because she wanted the company of other ponies. Not just one, but many other ponies. Her face grew hot as she could feel the tears instantly begin to burn at the edges of her eyes.

“Fluttershy, I-” Rarity began to say but she didn’t want to stick around anymore. She turned and ran, flapping her wings as she took off into the sky, feeling the cold splash of her tears streaming down her face.

“RAINBOW *DASH!*” Fluttershy heard the loud yell of her dear friend, but she didn’t stop. She didn’t want to be around anypony right now. It felt like a gaping hole had opened in her chest and it hurt to breath. She flew straight for her house, as fast as she could fly.

Nothing felt real anymore as she slammed her front door closed and isolated herself from the world.

Chapter 3

The only sound that could be heard in Fluttershy's house was the very faint, very soft sound of sobs. Even the animals had grown quiet, as if in understanding of Fluttershy's plight. The only animal that hadn't kept quiet was Angel, who had tried several things to cheer her up, but nothing did the trick.

She just lay curled up on her bed, hiding under the covers. She was sure she'd cried enough tears to fill a bucket and now her eyes just felt tired and dry. She just wanted to stay curled up in her bed and be forgotten. She felt so insignificant.

"Rainbow Dash..." She murmured quietly under her covers, sniffing as memories began to pour into her mind. Memories that made her think back to perhaps, there was some warning, some moment that showed that Rainbow was tired of their relationship...

The rain was coming down gently around them as they watched through the window of Fluttershy's cottage. Rainbow let out a soft sigh, perking Fluttershy's curiosity.

"What's the matter? Are you bored?" She asked curiously, never actually quite sure what was going through Rainbow's mind.

"A little." Rainbow stretched, before trotting over to Fluttershy's bed and leaning against it, "How do you stand being cooped up all the time?"

"Oh... I... I just like solitude sometimes." Fluttershy looked down, listening to the soft patter of the rain, "I like having other ponies around, and I always enjoy being with you Dash... it's just..." she turned slowly to look back out the window, "I used to not know myself but... I think it has to do with when I just a filly. Being quiet and by myself... it meant that I was being good, that I wasn't upsetting my father and that I wouldn't get hurt."

Rainbow Dash went quiet for a moment before walking back over and nuzzling up against Fluttershy.

"Sorry, I didn't mean to bring that up." Rainbow apologized quickly.

"It's okay; you know I accept what happened." Fluttershy nuzzled back, smiling softly.

"Still doesn't make it right." Dash said sighing softly, "And I don't want to sound disrespectful to what happened, but it's hard for me sometimes. I love flying, being in the free open air." Dash moved away, stretching her wings, "You like being cooped up and I like flying free..."

"I'm sorry... I love watching you fly, you know that." Fluttershy rubbed her leg awkwardly.

"Yeah, I know... and you know I like making you happy..." Dash sighed softly, turning to smile softly, "Sorry, maybe I'm just feeling a bit pent up."

"Oh... well..." Fluttershy smiled blushing, "We can fix that... you know..." she almost didn't say it out loud, though around Dash she certainly felt bolder. And it took Dash a moment for the idea to ring through her head, before a grin formed on her face, her wings extending up.

"Yeah... yeah we can fix that." She said closing in on Fluttershy and kissing her deeply.

Fluttershy quickly shook her head, trying to stop the memory from playing anymore. She didn't want to think about being happy with Dash right now. The memories stung like needles jabbing into her. But they didn't want to stop.

"Hey Dash... I-I've been thinking lately..." Fluttershy said putting down the food she had been eating.

"Hm? What's up Shy?" Rainbow said her mouth half full of the sandwich Fluttershy had prepared them for lunch.

"Well... it's just that... well, you know everything about my foalhood... but I still barely know anything about yours." Rainbow stopped munching

half way through her sandwich, "And just after everything that has happened... I-I was just curious..."

Rainbow grew quiet for a moment, before flipping the sandwich into the air and devouring the whole thing, swallowing it quickly.

"Well... there's not much to say. I was kind of a grumpy filly who just liked having fun and didn't like being tied down by rules." Rainbow shrugged, "I'm not even sure what made me feel compelled to stick around you so much. Seeing you get picked on by bullies just didn't seem right so I wanted to help you..." Rainbow stopped in thought thinking about that before looking down at her plate, "Though... I suppose those bullies were the least of your problems back then, huh..."

"You're making this about me again." Fluttershy said moving a hoof across the table to place it on top of Rainbow's who looked up at Fluttershy with a bit of surprise, "How come you were so willing to leave Cloudsdale Dash? You left behind everything... why?"

Rainbow hesitated once more. She seemed reluctant to say anything about it.

"Honestly, I don't remember too much about my foalhood. Once I came to Ponyville I put most of it behind me. I wasn't happy in school because they always wanted to control HOW I flew and I just wanted to fly however I pleased. Home was okay, but it wasn't exceptional either. It eventually got to me and I took my frustrations out on you in the end and left." Rainbow looked away, "And then you came to Ponyville to find me. I honestly wasn't expecting to see you ever again after I'd left." Rainbow let out a soft chuckle at this, "And here we are, marefriends all these years later... I have to admit Fluttershy... if you hadn't come back for me... I might not be as loyal as I am today. You inspired me to be this way."

"Oh Rainbow Dash..." Fluttershy sniffed quietly, wiping her face. Everything she said hadn't been a lie, right? She had been important to her. What had she done to change that? Was it the Wonderbolts? But she'd always supported that dream...

She felt a gentle nudge from outside the covers, like a small paw prodding her. She carefully wriggled to the edge of the covers and winced

as stronger light opened up under the blanket. She could then see Angel, holding up a plate with a daisy sandwich on it for her. She smiled softly, thankful for her small friend's sympathy.

"Thank you Angel... but I'm not hungry right now..." She said softly to him, though Angel just seemed to give a small disapproving smile. He just placed the plate on the night stand and hopped off to who knows where. She never really knew what kind of mischief he got into on his own.

She just let out another soft sigh as she returned to the comfort underneath her blankets. It was true, she wasn't hungry, maybe a little thirsty but she just didn't have the energy to get up. She was just hoping no one needed her services today. Not only was she not up for it, she worried that she wouldn't be able to take care of what they needed properly.

Her ears flattened as she felt a soft groan escape her throat at the familiar hard knocking on her front door down below. She curled up tighter into a ball, just asking for the knocking to go away and leave her alone. However they only seemed to become more insistent, getting louder and faster with each set. Fluttershy thought she could hear a muffled voice from outside calling out to her, but she didn't try to listen for who it was. She put her hooves over her head and waited for the noises to die down.

It seemed to take forever but the knocking finally died down. She waited a minute or two before letting out a sigh of relief, whoever it was had thankfully given up and gone elsewhere.

Suddenly she heard the frames of her windows open followed by four hooves landing in her bedroom.

"Hey Fluttershy, you under there?"

'Oh no...' The words raced through Fluttershy's mind, it was the last pony she wanted to see right now. The ball under the covers gave a noticeable twinge in reaction to Rainbow's words.

"Ah-hah, so you are under there. How come you didn't answer the door?" Rainbow asked curiously.

The only response Fluttershy could give was a rather strong “Hmph” before turning her body to face away from Dash.

“Uhhh... kay... hey listen, I need to talk to you. It’s kind of important too.” Rainbow said as if trying to word herself carefully.

‘Oh I’m sure you do.’ Fluttershy thought feeling another twinge of pain in her chest. She shifted under the covers, keeping herself wrapped up in them. She sat up on her bed, bundled up tight and moving the covers just enough so that she could see Dash. It seemed she was still wearing that saddlebag from earlier. She also seemed... groomed?

That was strange... Rainbow’s mane was brushed neatly. It had also been styled to flow longer and sleeker. The bangs on her head were neatly folded over with a pink-flower hair clip. She was also wearing the scarf she had made her and... was that makeup? It was barely noticeable but it seemed to add to her feminine features. The normally tomboyish Rainbow Dash looked... girly.

“...Huh?” Was the first word to come out of Fluttershy’s lips as she blinked back her confusion, “What happened to you?”

“Uhhh...” Rainbow looked down at herself as a blush crawled onto her face and looked away, “I-It looks terrible right? Ugh, I knew it was a bad idea to let Rarity give me a makeover.” Rainbow looked physically unnerved, as if this stark change in her appearance was uncomfortable.

“N-No... it looks... fine...” she said flatly. She didn’t want to admit she was hiding a blush under the covers now. She’d never seen Rainbow so neatly done up and it was genuinely attractive. But she was trying to hold on to her resentment from earlier, not wanting her body to defy her mind. “What do you want to talk about?” she closed her eyes trying not to be distracted by Rainbow’s beauty.

“Well, first I gotta talk with you about why I’ve been avoiding you this last week and what you saw today.” Rainbow let out a sigh, “Yes, Rarity told me everything you saw and how you reacted. But I assure you, just as I told her, I have a GOOD reason for everything. You have to believe me.”

Fluttershy looked back at the rainbow pegasus her heart held such affection for. Rainbow had mentioned that Rarity gave her a make-over and it showed. If Rarity had forgiven Rainbow Dash for what they'd seen then... did that mean she really did have a good reason for everything she did?

"...Okay... I'm listening." Fluttershy said quietly, still not leaving the safety of her covers.

"...Ugh... I don't want to do it here Fluttershy. I want to go somewhere special for this conversation, just the two of us." Rainbow explained, getting closer to the covers, Fluttershy felt herself back up instinctually a little at Rainbow getting closer.

"Is it... is it absolutely necessary? We can't just... talk about it here?" Fluttershy whimpered softly, fairly certain she was a mess.

"It is. Please Fluttershy, I need you to come with me." Rainbow smiled. Fluttershy couldn't say no to that face.

"...F-Fine... just... let me freshen up first." Fluttershy said slowly moving off of the bed still covered in blankets. Rainbow watched this with strange curiosity as Fluttershy slowly wriggled into the bathroom in some kind of bed slug. It was one of the oddest sights Rainbow had seen.

Once in the bathroom Fluttershy unwrapped herself from the covers and looked in the mirror.

Her mane was everywhere, an unkempt ragged mess she could barely call hair anymore. Her face was covered with tear stains and her eyes were still blood shot from all the crying she'd done.

"Yup... I'm a mess..." She sighed softly, quickly turning on the sink and quickly washing her face. It didn't take long for her to comb her mane back into a manageable state, but what worried her was the state of her eyes. It'd simply take time for the bloodshot look to vanish. She sighed defeated; at least the rest of her looked fine. She quickly gathered up the blankets off the floor before returning to her room and dumping them on her bed. She'd make them up later.

“Okay... let’s go Dash.” She said with a soft sigh, before looking at her marefriend. Dash simply seemed to smile.

“Trust me, you won’t regret this.” Dash said spreading her wings and flying out the window. Fluttershy followed quickly after her.

When they reached the hill Rainbow Dash was taking them to, the sun was getting ready to sink into the horizon and flare the sky with its brilliant colors. As they landed, Fluttershy couldn’t help but notice that this was that same hill, the one where they had talked the first time after having met her father in Cloudsdale, where she had told Rainbow Dash everything about her past.

“Alright, we’re here.” Dash smiled, turning to face Fluttershy, “So I guess I can explain myself now.”

“Well... I’m all ears.” Fluttershy said quietly, still having a bit of difficulty with Dash’s new look. She wanted to keep herself on an even emotional level, but her looking so good was making it difficult.

“Alright. Here goes.” Rainbow said taking a deep breath, before starting to pace, a habit Fluttershy knew meant she was nervous about the subject she was talking about. “As I told you, the Wonderbolts gave me a second opportunity to audition for them in a month, it’s been a week since then. The reason they did so was because I was nervous during my audition and they could see it. I explained to them that I was worried, that if I got accepted into the Wonderbolts that I’d be giving up my love for you for my dream.”

Fluttershy opened her mouth to react, but Dash held up a hoof.

“Please just let me finish, if I get interrupted I might say something before I’m ready to.” Dash said before taking another breath, “And yes I know you’ve said before that me joining the Wonderbolts won’t mean I’m abandoning you or my other friends in Ponyville, but I was still worried. That’s why I asked you to hold back on us having a foal, because I wanted to make sure I’d be able to have enough time to be there to help raise them

AND live the dream. But that's a bit off topic..." Fluttershy could tell Rainbow was getting a little flustered with her rambling; her hooves were scrapping against the ground a bit more than usual.

"SO! As I was flying back from the audition opportunity they had given me I was thinking about what I could do to possibly calm myself and fully make me realize what I could do to know for sure I would always come back to you despite being a Wonderbolt. So the moment I got back I started doing odd jobs around town and taking my job seriously so that I could gather up as much money as I could quickly." Fluttershy raised an eyebrow curiously at this. The edge of the sun hit the horizon as Rainbow continued.

"And I've been avoiding you all week because I didn't want to say something I wasn't ready to. You have a way of drawing things out of me and I didn't want to spoil the surprise of what I had in mind. Which goes into what you saw today." Rainbow said taking a deep breath, "I was sweeping up the plaza of Ponyville for the mayor; the 'gift' she gave me was a bag of bits. I helped out Carrot Top with gardening for the same reason; she paid me to do it. Pinkie Pie also said she was going to help me with money in exchange for helping her with Sugar Cube Corner. At Lyra and Bonbon's house I was helping them move furniture, they basically asked me to help redecorate their whole house which they couldn't do alone."

Rainbow then reached into her side bag and pulled out a sheet of paper that she then gave to Fluttershy, who looked at it curiously.

"And THIS is the paper you saw me reading with Roseluck. Basically she was paying me to help her rehearse for a play. At the bottom you can see it says her stage directions are to kiss her opposite actor. Essentially she got too into the role while practicing with me."

It was true; Fluttershy's eyes scanned the script and saw exactly what Rainbow was talking about.

"It was then that Rarity started yelling and berating me. Once she was done I got to tell my side of things and well..." Rainbow brushed her hair with a hoof, "This kind of happened."

Fluttershy blinked in confusion, looking up at Rainbow Dash.

"I... I guess that makes sense..." Fluttershy said softly, feeling some of the pressure being lifted from her chest at Dash's words. None of it seemed like a lie, at least not from her body language. "But why were you doing all this? Why did you need the money? What couldn't you tell me about?" She asked confused at everything.

Rainbow took a moment to take in a deep breath and calm down. She had certainly just spoken a mouthful and needed a moment. She then smiled softly.

"I was doing this all for you. And well... once I talked to Rarity she loaned me the rest of the money I'd need. I guess maybe I should've asked her in the first place, but I wanted to do this on my own, to make it even more special for you." Rainbow chuckled softly, "I still promised to pay Rarity back, but thanks to her I can do it now." Rainbow turned her back to Fluttershy and walked towards the sunset.

"Do what? What are you doing Dash?" Fluttershy was still very confused.

"Well Fluttershy, I'm showing you that no matter where I go, how far apart we are, or how tough times may get that you'll be in my thoughts and my heart." Rainbow seemed to be grinning as she then stretched out her wings before taking off into the sky. Fluttershy watched with a mix of awe and curiosity as Rainbow went to work gathering stray clouds in the sky, thinking about her words as Rainbow worked.

The sky began to flare with different shades of orange and red as it began to sink into the horizon. Rainbow aligned the clouds in two single file lines in sky, angling them just right.

Then, in a resounding burst of speed and color, Rainbow flew straight at the clouds, kicking and striking each into a specific shape at break neck speeds. Fluttershy had never seen such quick cloud forming, but Rainbow was doing it masterfully.

Rainbow sculpted each cloud into shape, making them just thin enough so that they changed colors with the setting sun washing the sky with color, but thick enough to be seen from land. With one final hoof kick

Rainbow came careening straight down for the hill, her head in her saddlebag to grab something.

Fluttershy quickly guarded her fast as Rainbow came into a skid landing before her, kicking up dirt around them. A small box seemed to land on top of Dash's head as it opened up.

Fluttershy turned to look at the box, seeing a magnificent golden hoofband covered in different colored gemstones, including all the colors of the rainbow and a few pink gemstones.

"So, what do you say?" Rainbow grinned, making Fluttershy look up at the magnificent scene of orange and reds.

Written in the clouds were two simple words.

"Marry Me."

Chapter 4

It was decided that the wedding would be held the day after first snow fall, meaning the wedding would be held in two weeks' time. It didn't take long for the news of the wedding to be spread throughout Ponyville. Rarity had made a fuss about the suddenness of the date, but Rainbow explained that after her Wonderbolts audition she wanted to spend every possible moment with Fluttershy before she went off to her training. This seemed to pacify Rarity and Rainbow left for her audition the next morning.

For the small town of Ponyville weddings weren't that common despite the amount of relationships the town seemed to harbor. It seemed most ponies enjoyed the simple dating scene over making that final step of commitment, but whenever a couple did make that decision it was news the whole town heard about. You could be certain everypony who could show up was going to.

The moment Pinkie knew the wedding was confirmed she'd set in motion to prepare for it. She'd been going all around town gathering materials and decorations they would need. She also said she was going to take care of the music, saying she'd already sent a letter to her sister Octavia to provide some proper classical music. The dance music would have to be saved for the reception.

Applejack had taken it into her hooves to provide the buffet and refreshments for the wedding. Pinkie Pie had been insistent on doing that as well, but Applejack had convinced her that they all wanted a part in the wedding of their closest friends and she was already taking care of most of the partying. Pinkie was saddened by this, but Applejack promised that she could help bake the big wedding cake, which cheered Pinkie right up.

Twilight took charge of organizing the event, making sure they would have everything they would need. Since this was the first wedding she ever had attended, let alone was in charge of organization for, she wanted to make sure everything would go absolutely perfectly. She even took a short break from her studies to read up on weddings and how they were meant

to play out. With her at the helm, there was no doubt this would be a picture-perfect wedding... at least she desperately hoped.

This left Rarity with the ever so essential task of fitting Fluttershy with the best possible wedding dress she could manage.

"Hmmm..." Rarity tapped her hoof to her chin in thought as she carefully measured and re-measured as much of Fluttershy's body as she could possibly wrap her measuring tape around. "No no no, this simply won't do." Rarity said levitating the white fabric from Fluttershy's back, "Your dress must make you look simply divine, after all this is going to be THE most important day of your LIFE! I will not have you looking like a fashion faux pas!"

"I trust you Rarity, I know you'll have me looking my-mph!" Fluttershy squeaked softly as the measuring tape tightened around a tender spot, "- looking my best." She smiled softly.

"Oh absolutely darling. I haven't had the opportunity to design a true wedding dress just yet, so this is going to take most of my...no, ALL of my cunning! Everything has to be just right! Not a seam or stitch out of place! Everything about this dress must shine! You will be a radiant angel once I'm done with you!" Rarity bemused with herself as she sorted through her various assortment of white fabrics. Each one had a different, intricate pattern or was made out of various fine materials. Each one seemed to have slightly different woven patterns, as Rarity had gone all out with her fabric choices this time around.

"Well, I'm sure it'll be lovely." Fluttershy smiled as she looked into the mirror she stood before. Rarity had already started on the undermost layer of the dress, giving each of her legs special stockings. They each had a beautifully ornate flower decoration embroidered into the silk. They felt wonderful on her legs; Rarity truly knew the right materials to use.

"Ah-hah, these will be perfect!" Rarity almost purred with a devious tone causing Fluttershy to raise an eyebrow curiously. She suddenly felt her flank being surrounded by magic as it was rather quickly lifted into the air. A blush crawled onto her face as she felt something both frilly and silky soft slip up her haunches.

"O-Oh my..." Fluttershy blushed harder as she saw the fabric Rarity had placed onto her in the mirror. They were some rather risqué undergarments. "I-Is that really necessary Rarity?"

"Oh but of course." Rarity said giving her a devilish eye once more that seemed to sparkle, "After all the undergarments aren't for the company of the crowd to see, they're for... after the wedding." Rarity chuckled and turned to grab more material. "And you want to look your best for *everything*." Fluttershy felt her whole face turn red at Rarity's word, causing her to gently tap her hoof against the ground.

"Now do hold still dear, I need to figure out the perfect design for your dress." Rarity amused herself further, gently laying some lengthy patterned silk onto her back that flowed well past her legs, lying against the floor. Rarity quickly went to work piling different patterns and styles of cloth onto her back, lining up several pieces in preparation of sewing them together. She kept glancing at several different sketches of possible dress ideas as she worked, making absolutely sure they would look fabulous on Fluttershy.

"Okay Fluttershy, I'm going to do some sewing with the cloth still on you. I'd normally use a dummy for this, but I want to make sure everything is absolutely perfect so I can minimize how much I have to redo. Wedding dresses use absolutely precious materials and I can't afford to waste too much. So I'm going to be as delicate as I can and we might be here for a while, is that alright?" Rarity asked levitating up her needle and thread.

"I understand. Do as you need to." Fluttershy smiled as Rarity pushed her glasses closer to her face and prepared to thread the needle with thread and begin her delicate work.

"NO AH WANNA BE THE BRACELET BEARER!"

"You can't be the bracelet bearer! I have to be the bracelet bearer!"

"Can't you both be the bracelet bearer?"

"NO!"

Rarity instantly halted her advances with the needle as three familiar young fillies burst into the room, apparently arguing over their roles in the wedding.

"Listen, Rainbow Dash is MY idol here! I HAVE to be the bracelet bearer!" Scootaloo's argument was flawless.

"So!? The bracelet bearer is THE MOST important job in the wedding! And ah want to have it!" Applebloom's retort was just as flawless.

"You guys can just share the role! That way you both get to do it!" Sweetie Bell rolled her eyes with the amazing nugget of wisdom she provided.

"NO!" Applebloom and Scootaloo fired back with their amazingly well thought out retorts.

"Girls, girls, girls, whatever is the matter here?" Rarity asked gently placing down her materials before walking over to the bickering crusaders.

"Applebloom's trying to take my job as the bracelet bearer!" Scootaloo pointed an accusatory hoof at the offender.

"Take it!? Ah am not! The job rightfully belongs to me! Ah'm the only one here who can pull off the bracelet bearer's job correctly!" Applebloom stuck her nose up in the air defiantly.

"Are not!" Scootaloo yelled pressing her nose comically against Applebloom's.

"Ah'm too!" Applebloom pressed back.

"Are not!"

"Ah'm too!"

"Are not!"

"Ah'm too!"

"Okay, okay, break it up girls." Rarity said pushing them apart, "There's plenty of roles in the wedding for each of you. And they're ALL important. A wedding is about the love being shared between the two, about the elegance and grace of the entire event." Rarity poised her body in emphasis, "Everyone who is part of the ceremony plays a key role. Everything must go perfectly and that includes your roles."

"Even the flower girl?" Sweetie Bell asked looking quite happy at this.

"But of course Sweetie Bell, and you'll make a fantastic flower girl." Rarity smiled.

"Well...okay, but who gets to be the bracelet bearer then?" Scootaloo asked, looking at Rarity curiously.

"Oh, that's not up for me to decide. Fluttershy darling, who do you think the bracelet bearer should be?" Rarity asked turning to her friend who still stood before the mirror, doing her best to not move with the materials still draped around her.

"Oh...uh well..." Fluttershy turned her head to look at the two little fillies that were looking up at her with pleading eyes, "Well..." Fluttershy looked back at the long piece of cloth that was lying against the floor behind her, before thinking about the jobs she could give each of them during the wedding. A light bulb appeared in her head.

"Oh, I know. Scootaloo, since you are Rainbow's number one fan and it's mainly her ring, I'm going to let you be the ring bearer." Fluttershy smiled.

"Yes!" Scootaloo pumped her hoof into the air.

"Awww..." Applebloom said dejectedly.

"And Applebloom, I need you to do a job just as important for me." Fluttershy smiled, perking the young fillies curiosity, "As you can see, my dress is going to be really long once its finished. So I'm going to need you to hold my dress to keep it from dragging as I walk down the aisle. How does that sound?"

"Ah'd love to!" Applebloom perked up happily, "That sounds super important!"

"Oh and it is. I don't want to trip and fall on my dress during the wedding after all." She gave a kind smile.

"Alright! We all have our jobs for the wedding!" Applebloom said excitedly turning to the others.

"We've got to make sure we can perform them flawlessly!" Scootaloo said excitedly.

"This is going to be the best wedding ever!" Sweetie Bell said excitedly.

"CUTIE MARK CRUSADERS PERFECT WEDDING MAKERS! YAY!" The three fillies cried out loudly together before quickly rushing out of the room.

"My, my, my, you do have a way with foals don't you." Rarity chuckled softly before closing the door behind them.

"I didn't used to think I did...but I suppose I just have a way with small creatures." Fluttershy chuckled softly, happy for the compliment. "I really can't wait to be a mom myself...it's going to be so wonderful." Fluttershy looked up at the ceiling in thought, her eyes sparkling with joy at the thought.

"I know you will make a wonderful mother." Rarity smiled walking over to her friend once again, her magic stirring as she picked up the materials to continue her dress making work, "Have you thought about what you'll name your foal?"

"Oh...well for a boy I was originally thinking of naming him Lance. But Rainbow Dash would have a fit." Fluttershy chuckled to herself.

"Lance...your father's name right?" Rarity looked at her curiously.

"Yes. I was thinking it might be nice to name my child after someone so important in my life, but I think Dash wants a more... original name." It

was a bit of a white lie. Although her friends knew who her father was now, Dash was still the only one who knew about her past with him. Fluttershy wanted her other friends to like her father if possible, after all she still loved him despite everything and wanted him to be a part of her life. "So my other choice for a boy was Blitz. I think it's a name Rainbow would like."

"Yes, it does fit her ruffian nature." Rarity chuckled as she carefully levitated a new piece of cloth over as her needle finished sewing up a small section. "What would you name a girl?"

"Serenity." Fluttershy smiled happily.

"That's a beautiful name." Rarity smiled as well.

The room was quiet for a moment as Rarity began to sew away, humming quietly as she worked. Fluttershy watched the mirror carefully as the dress came together on her back. Rarity really was doing what she could to make her look spectacular.

"So...speaking of parents..." Rarity suddenly spoke up as if something came across her mind, Fluttershy's ears perking up, "Are Rainbow Dash's parents going to be attending the wedding? I assume they are, but I haven't heard a word about them for as long as we've been friends." Rarity thought about it as she carefully sewed a particularly difficult seam.

"...Well...actually I don't know either. Even though I was around Rainbow Dash a lot in my foalhood I never went over to her house or saw her parents...and as far as I know, she left them behind like everything else when she left Cloudsdale. And she hasn't said a word about if they are or aren't." Fluttershy explained to Rarity what she knew.

"...You don't think that's a little odd?" Rarity asked, turning to look Fluttershy in the eye, "My parents would kill me if I didn't invite them to my wedding, and aren't yours coming?"

"Well...I sent the invitation to my Dad along with the rest, but I don't know if he'll be coming, he's usually so busy." Fluttershy smiled softly, looking at the mirror.

"What about your mother?" Rarity asked curiously.

"O-Oh...I guess I didn't tell you. I'm sorry." Fluttershy smiled softly, "My mother will be there, I'm sure, but you won't be able to see her." She turned her head to look up at the ceiling, "I'm sure she has a special seat where she'll be watching me, and I'm sure she's proud of my decisions in life." She closed her eyes in remembrance.

"O-Oh...Oh Fluttershy...I'm sorry, I didn't mean to-"

"It's okay Rarity." Fluttershy turned to look at her smiling, "You didn't know and I've accepted what's happened in my past. There's no reason to feel sorry."

Rarity put her tools down carefully before giving her friend a hug. Fluttershy blinked curiously, before returning it.

"I know I was doing this already, but now I have even less of a choice." Rarity said letting go, seeming more determined. "I have to ensure that this truly will be a perfect wedding for you!"

"...Thank you Rarity. I know you'll do wonderfully." Fluttershy smiled happily, turning to look at herself in the mirror once more. She could see an adult, yellow mare with pink hair gently laying against her neck. A mare that had a lot happen in her past, from a tormented foalhood, to living on her own after school, to finding so many friends she could enjoy time with, and finding real love. And there she stood, heading into one of the happiest days of her life, alongside the one pony who made her happier than any other pony in the world.

She had come a long way since she was a foal, and one day soon she would have a foal of her own. She could feel her heart swelling as she looked at herself.

'I hope I've made you proud mother. I've lived my life doing my best to be happy and make others happy. And I want to keep making you proud.' Fluttershy closed her eyes, listening to the happy humming of Rarity as she worked.

Chapter 5

When Rainbow Dash returned from the Wonderbolt's audition, it was cause for celebration.

She had passed her audition; her lifelong dream had finally come true. Her training would begin one week after Winter Wrap Up. True to form, Pinkie threw a party to celebrate. It was a small one though, as the real celebration was right around the corner and they would need all the resources they could spare for it. It promised to be a truly monumental celebration.

Rarity continued work on Fluttershy's dress and insisted that she would make something special for Rainbow Dash as well. Rainbow tried to persuade Rarity into thinking that she didn't need anything too fancy, but Rarity simply refused to have it any other way.

Then, before anypony knew it, it was the day of the wedding...

"Oh dear oh dear." Rarity said, looking like she was sweating bullets, very carefully and meticulously adding the final details to Fluttershy's dress.

"Calm down Rarity, it looks amazing." Fluttershy said trying to calm her frantic friend. She had been working meticulously on the dress for the last two weeks, everything leading up to the moment just a few minutes away now.

"No no no no no no no no, it has to be perfect! All the ponies out there are going to see MY work on you and if they can see even so-much as a sliver of a stitch out of place they're going to realize how awfully I screwed up and it's going to be on MY head that I ruined your wedding day! Oh that would just be THE. WORST. POSSIBLE. THING!"

"Rarity!" Fluttershy put her hooves up against her friends face, "It's okay, I watched you make the dress, you didn't leave a stitch out of place." Fluttershy smiled, "I look amazing, you made sure of that."

“Oh... thank you Fluttershy.” Rarity sighed smiling, “Forgive me, I’m just so nervous. This is my first wedding dress and I want everything to be magnificent. Not just for me, but for you as well.” Rarity said carefully sewing on the last bit of fabric she was adding to the dress.

“I know Rarity, but trust me on this one, I look lovely and everypony is going to think so.” Fluttershy reassured her friend kindly.

“Alright... well I’ve done just about everything I can anyway.” Rarity sighed happily, taking a step back to look Fluttershy over.

The dress hugged Fluttershy’s natural curves like a charm, the white silky material was carefully bunched in sections, with frills and lace in others. The materials of the dress were painstakingly sewn together, the back of the dress rising over her haunches before flowing down below her legs, draping across the floor. There were several layers of the dress, causing several sections to fray out with patterned lace. All of her legs were ornately decorated with lengthy patterned silk socks ended off with delicate white roses. Her hair was delicately tied back and styled to show off her face. A white veil waited to be drooped over her face and lay on top of her head.

Fluttershy truly seemed to take the form of an angel standing before her.

“Oh my... darling... you are simply radiant!” Rarity mused, looking upon her friend. Fluttershy softly blushed in embarrassment at her compliment.

Just then, a knock was heard from the door to the preparation room.

“Fluttershy, Rarity, it’s Twilight,” came the familiar sound of the bookish mare’s voice.

“Oh, what is it dear?” Rarity called back through the door.

“I just wanted to let you know that the ceremony is starting. Octavia’s already started playing the music and the Mayor and Rainbow Dash are heading for the altar.” Twilight explained.

“Oh! Oh goodness! That means I have to get ready!” Rarity said now flustered, looking around the room to locate her dress. Finding it, she levitated her dress off of the nearby coat rack quickly, “I was far too busy with Fluttershy! Oh curse my work ethic!” Rarity quickly turned to Fluttershy, “I have no choice, I have to get dressed quickly if I’m to walk down the aisle as your bridesmaid. You’ll do fantastic dear, I can’t wait to see you walking down that aisle!”

With that Rarity quickly flung the door open, racing towards the nearest changing room, with Fluttershy able to hear as she fled, “AUGH, THERE’S NO TIME FOR MAKEUP.”

Fluttershy chuckled softly as Twilight walked into the room, dressed up magnificently in a starry, night-themed dress.

“Wow Fluttershy, you look fantastic. Rarity really did an amazing job on your dress.” Twilight smiled.

“Didn’t she though?” Fluttershy said, looking back at her dress happily. Her ear perked softly as she could hear the fine-tuned strings of Octavia’s cello playing down the hallway. She was playing beautifully. She couldn’t wait to walk down the aisle listening to such wonderful music.

“Oh, and one other thing. Your father is here, he wanted to speak with you before walking out with you.” Twilight smiled, turning her head as a certain amber coated pegasus with a dark red mane appeared in the doorway.

“Oh, thank you Twilight. I can take it from here.” Fluttershy nodded to her friend before looking at her father with a smile.

“Alright, I’ll call you when it’s time for you to walk.” Twilight smiled walking out of the room as the older stallion walked by. Twilight closed the door behind her and the room went quiet for a moment. Lance seemed a little unnerved at the situation presented to him and was just staring at his daughter as she smiled back to him.

“I’m glad you could make it Dad. I know how busy your schedule gets, but it really wouldn’t be the same without you.” Fluttershy smiled happily.

Lance cleared his throat, shifting the collar on the suit he was wearing for the occasion. The suit was one of his best, Fluttershy remembered it from when he would dress up for his formal meetings. However, he was also wearing an oddly shaped saddlebag that was a faded purple and made with some fairly obvious poor stitching. It clashed with his suit.

“So... you’re really getting married to Rainbow Dash huh...” he said in his usual gruff manner, though that was more a fault of how his voice had aged than of his feelings of the situation.

“I am.” Fluttershy nodded, “It’s almost weird... I never really expected to get married. In fact, the idea had never crossed my mind.” She chuckled softly, “But when Rainbow Dash proposed... I... there was just no way I could say no.” She blushed softly thinking back to that moment. Lance’s mind seemed to be racing a mile a minute, or so it appeared to Fluttershy. She never really was able to figure out what was going on in his mind.

“So... do you... still hate colts?” He asked awkwardly. Fluttershy thought the question odd. She looked at her father carefully. He was giving her the same serious look he always seemed to give, but she could see very small, very subtle hints of an odd twitch in some of the muscles on his face.

‘Wait... is... is my father... nervous?’ Fluttershy thought in realization to her father’s behavior and actions. Fluttershy put a hoof up to her mouth as she tried to suppress her laughter. The idea of her father being nervous was hilarious to her.

“What?” Lance notably twitched annoyed, “I didn’t tell a joke, I asked a question.”

“I know... it’s just I can tell you’re nervous.” Fluttershy chuckled softly, causing her father to look away from his daughter with a soft grunt. “But no, I don’t hate colts anymore.” She answered honestly, causing her father to look back at her curiously, “But I found true love in Rainbow Dash. It’s not a matter of gender to me anymore. It’s a matter of finding love, and... Rainbow loves me with all of her heart and I feel the same. If I didn’t feel that I wouldn’t have agreed to marry her.” Fluttershy smiled with all of her heart.

"I see." Lance closed his eyes in thought, "Well... as long as you're... happy." He spoke softly before opening his eyes to look at her. For a moment he seemed physically shaken and took a step back, as if he'd seen a ghost.

"What's wrong?" Fluttershy asked a little confused by this.

"I... its..." Lance shook his head softly, "Sorry... for a moment you looked just like your mother."

Fluttershy smiled warmly.

"I miss her too Dad. But... I know that if she was here right now she'd want us both to be happy." Fluttershy carefully walked up to her father and nuzzled up against his neck, "And I'm sure she's watching us right now. I just want to make her proud Dad."

"...Yeah, she was always that kind of a mare." He sighed, softly moving his head down to nuzzle against his daughter in return. It had been far too long since he had last embraced her this way, in a way that was loving and gentle.

They stood in their embrace for a few minutes before Lance broke it, taking a step back.

"I brought you something." Lance spoke before reaching into his saddlebags and pulling out a wreath of white flowers. Fluttershy looked at them in awe before Lance carefully pulled them around her head, causing them to land gently onto her chest. Fluttershy looked at her wreath of flowers and smiled happily. "After all, what's a bride without her bouquet?" He smiled softly.

"Thank you Dad." Fluttershy smiled happily, trying to hold back tears of joy.

A knock interrupted the two of them as Twilight's voice was heard once more.

"Fluttershy, it's time for you to go on!"

“Alright.” Fluttershy called back before looking at her father, “Are you sure you want to wear those bags with that suit? Rarity will have a conniption if she sees you.” She chuckled.

“I guess I’ll leave them in here then.” Lance said walking over to a table and quickly slipping the saddlebags off and placing them on top, “If it keeps the rest of your friends from glaring daggers at me, I might be able to enjoy the rest of my stay.” Fluttershy couldn’t help but laugh at this.

“Sorry Dad, I don’t think Rainbow’s ever going to warm up to you.”

“And I don’t expect her to.” Lance nodded walking next to his daughter, “Shall we?” He smiled softly.

“Let’s.” Fluttershy smiled in return.

The two walked into the hallway of town hall. Twilight was holding up her clipboard as she checked off something on her list, Applebloom bouncing up and down beside her, dressed up in a very simple red dress.

“Alright! Ah’m ready to perform my Cutie Mark Crusader Dress Carrier duty!” She saluted happily.

“I’m counting on you.” Fluttershy nodded as Applebloom grinned while quickly rushing behind Fluttershy and picking up the slack of her dress with her mouth so Fluttershy could walk better.

“Alright, I’ll quickly go signal Octavia to change the music.” Twilight nodded headed towards the aisle doors, opening them a crack to send the signal.

“You nervous?” Lance asked, reaching a hoof up to pull Fluttershy’s veil down in front of her face.

“A little. But all my friends are here and Dash is waiting for me. So I have to be strong right now.” Fluttershy’s heart felt like it skipped a beat at her own words. And as if on cue, the music changed from the harmony that had been playing to the rarely heard piece of ‘Here comes the bride’.

“Alright, break a leg!” Twilight winked as she opened the door for the two.

Lance and Fluttershy began their walk down the aisle that had been set up in the large town hall center. Benches were set up on either side so everypony had a place to sit; a velvet red carpet was draped across the floor covered in rose petals that then ended at the small stage where the proper decorations had been set up.

Fluttershy could see Sweetie Bell finishing throwing the flower petals across the carpet at the end of the aisle before taking her seat. Fluttershy's gaze then fell upon the altar and the ponies that were waiting for her there.

The Mayor stood center, and just before her stood Rainbow Dash dressed in a rather dashing tux (much to Rarity's distress). To Rainbow's right was Applejack, dressed in her gala dress (this gave Rarity some split ends). Standing opposite them was Rarity dressed up in her magnificent dress (though not too magnificent she would note). To one far side she could see Octavia playing her cello, making beautiful music dance across the room. On the opposite side of her, sitting in a seat that was made especially for her, was the Princess herself, Celestia watching the ceremony with a smile.

Rainbow had been smiling, but her face instantly scrunched into a scowl seeing the detestable creature that dared to call itself a pony walking alongside Fluttershy. She was fortunate that all eyes were on Fluttershy, or else somepony might have questioned her for the look.

The walk felt like it took ages, though truly it took only a moment. At the end Lance gave a soft bow to his daughter before turning to take his seat amongst the crowd, quickly followed by Applebloom. Rainbow's face lightened up as she watched him walk away, before smiling, finally able to appreciate Fluttershy in her beautiful dress. Fluttershy stood opposite of Rainbow and looked up at her smiling.

“Hey,” Rainbow whispered quickly, so only Fluttershy could hear, “He didn't try anything funny while he was back there, did he?”

“No Rainbow, he was a perfect gentleman.” Fluttershy chuckled, softly whispering back.

“Good, I’d hate to have to make this day messy.” Rainbow whispered back, not holding back her desire to beat that no-good father into a bloody pulp, especially on this day that was supposed to be special.

She was about to respond as the music finally died down, Octavia stepping further to the side, allowing the mayor to speak up.

“Fillies and Gentlecolts. We are gathered here today to witness and celebrate the joining of Rainbow Dash and Fluttershy in sacred matrimony. Through their time together, they have come to realize that their personal dreams, hopes, and aspirations for the future would become more attainable and more meaningful through their combined efforts and mutual support provided by their love, commitment and family. So they stand before us today, to declare their love and admiration and to become a union of one.” The mayor spoke elegantly and with poise, not even stuttering in her presentation.

“And now I shall read a passage from the book Love: The Eternal Pledge written by Archduke Gentle Passion.” The mayor cleared her throat, opening a parchment she had been keeping secure, “True matrimony forms in the hearts of those being wed well before the day of their marriage and continues beyond the end of the ceremony. Marriage is but a brief moment in time and the brief stroke of a pen is all that is needed to formally bond two ponies together. However, it takes a lifetime of love, commitment and compromise to make the marriage everlasting. Although you may commit to each other verbally and on paper today, those vows shall stretch till your dying days. Know that you make the ultimate commitment not out of respect, or even simple love, but out the desire to see your loved one expand your horizons for the rest of your days.”

“Now these two have decided that they shall read their own vows.” The mayor smiled, looking at Rainbow Dash to start.

“Right.” Rainbow said clearing her throat, holding out her hoof as Applejack placed a sheet of paper into her hoof. She unfolded it and looked at it, she was obviously nervous about being so emotional before a large crowd of ponies, many she knew personally and interacted with on a daily basis. She could already tell she was going to get some flak about how her

normally tomboyish demeanor was about to be blown to shreds, but she had to do this for Fluttershy.

“Fluttershy,” Rainbow Dash began, obviously sounding like she was reading from the paper, “when I first met you many years ago I had no idea that we would end up where we are today. I was just an over-active filly with the dream of being the greatest flier Equestria had ever seen. However, because you’ve been in my life so much about me has changed. I’m a better pony for having known you and without you I doubt I would’ve been able to make my lifelong dream come true.” As Rainbow spoke she grew more confident, speaking less like she was reading a paper and more like she was speaking from her heart.

“Next year I’m off to become a member of the Wonderbolts, but that doesn’t mean our journey ends there. Today I choose to marry you so that you can be reassured in knowing that no matter how far away I am, or how long I’m gone, or whatever may happen while I’m separated from you that I shall return to your side. Every vacation I get, every bit of down time before my next show, anything that allows me the opportunity to see you I will come back for you. Marrying you today is my promise to you that you are with me forever in heart, spirit and body. I shall forever remain loyal to you.” Rainbow put the paper down, smiling at Fluttershy.

From the crowd could be heard a soft sea of “awwwwww”s that elicited a blush on Rainbow’s face.

Fluttershy chuckled softly as Rarity held out a paper for Fluttershy. She gave a quiet thanks and took the folded paper, looking at it carefully.

“I wrote down my vows too, so that I would always have a copy of them.” Fluttershy smiled at the paper, before looking up at Dash, “But the words I wrote are engraved into my heart, so I just want to speak them rather than read them.” Fluttershy smiled taking in a small breath.

“Rainbow Dash, you’ve always been the one closest to my heart. Even when we were fillies I felt closer to you than anypony else. Life was tough growing up for me, but you were there for me. As we grew closer I wanted nothing more than to spend all my time with you. I moved to Ponyville just to be with you. Although I have so many wonderful friends now, you were always the one I wanted to be closest with. You taught me

how to fly with strength, to not be afraid of every little thing, strength to face my fears when it was needed of me, to look into the future and to achieve my dreams. And going into the years ahead I know they'll be the happiest I've ever known. With you by my side, there's nothing I can't do. I want you to know that I'll always love you."

Another set of "awwwww"s softly came from the crowd and Rainbow Dash's face grew hotter, but she smiled happily.

"With the vows spoken, will the bracelet bearer please bring to us the item that will bond these two ponies." The mayor spoke up.

"I got it! I'm coming!" Came Scootaloo's energetic voice from the end of the aisle. The crowd turned to look at the orange filly in a purple dress, trying to balance a pillow with the bracelet on her head. It was obvious she wasn't used to wearing the dress and was walking far too quickly with the pillow.

"EEP." Scootaloo cried as she tripped on the fabric, her chin hitting the ground sending the bracelet flying into the air. The crowd gasped as the bracelet did several flips in the air. Scootaloo's eyes opened quickly and spotted the flying bracelet, before rushing up from her position and diving, skidding across the carpet as the bracelet landed gracefully back onto the pillow. The crowd let out a collective sigh as Scootaloo awkwardly chuckled.

"H-Here you go Rainbow Dash." Scootaloo grinned finally making it to the altar and holding the pillow up.

"Good job kid, you did well." Rainbow grinned taking the bracelet from the pillow.

Scootaloo gasped as her eyes went wide and giddy, before quickly running to her seat, shouting happily, "I DID GOOD! RAINBOW DASH COMPLIMENTED ME!"

Rainbow chuckled at the display before turning to Fluttershy.

“Now, Rainbow Dash, do you take Fluttershy to be your partner in life, sharing in the joy and troubles, hardships and happiness?” The mayor asked.

“I do.” Rainbow smiled.

“And Fluttershy, do you take Rainbow Dash to be your partner in life, sharing in the joy and troubles, hardships and happiness?”

“I do.” Fluttershy held out her hoof, as Rainbow Dash gently slipped the bracelet onto her, the bracelet fitting just right.

“Then by the power invested in me by the fair Princess Celestia, I pronounce you as Mrs. And Mrs. Dash. You may now kiss the bride.” The mayor said happily. Dash reached over to Fluttershy’s veil and pulled it up to see her face. Then she leaned in and closed her eyes.

The two shared a binding kiss under the altar, before all their friends and fellow citizens of Ponyville, before the mayor and the Princess.

The crowd erupted into applause and cheers as Octavia took her cue to begin playing the music once more. The joyous atmosphere swelled inside the room as the Fluttershy and Rainbow Dash looked upon each other with renewed love and vigor. They then began to walk together back down the aisle towards the hallway, the crowds of ponies tossing confetti and bird seed into the air before them.

Ponies began to file out cheerfully after the newlywed couple. After all, everypony was heading to the same place.

There was a huge reception party to attend, hosted by the town’s number one party pony!

Epilogue

The music blared as the guests danced on the dance floor. Pinkie Pie had pulled out all the stops for this one. The dance floor was done up with a disco flare, flashing lights to raving music played as Pinkie passed records to the music host of the reception. The white unicorn with messy blue hair was very good at getting the guests to get up and dance. Of course the recently married couple were on the floor quite often as the guests of honor, Rarity constantly worrying about the state of Fluttershy's dress.

"Ugh, it's hard to believe what passes for recreational music these days." Octavia groaned over her wine glass. "It's nothing more than a loud ruckus to flashing lights." She sipped the red liquid gracefully.

"Oh lighten up a little 'Tavi, it's a party!" Soarin grinned as he looked up from his plate filled with apple desserts, "After all if the couple are enjoying it you should too!" His grin was big and goofy.

"Perhaps." Octavia gave a soft sigh before smiling looking at Soarin, "How do you always know just what to say to cheer me up?"

"I dunno, just natural charm I guess." Soarin grinned before sticking his face back into his plate, happily munching away. Octavia couldn't help but chuckle at the display before turning to look back at the dance floor. Certainly the music wasn't to her taste but it really did look like the other ponies were having a great time dancing to the music. The sight at least reminded her that having fun was truly the most important part, even if she didn't like the screeching that white unicorn was playing.

"Hey sis!" Pinkie said bouncing over the table wearing one of her fancier party dresses, "I'm so glad you could make it! You really made that scene in the church like two hundred percent more amazing!" She threw her hooves into the air, "It just added to the emotions! I think I cried two oceans worth during that wedding! It was just so beautiful!" Pinkie's eyes sparkled happily as she spoke.

“Well thank you sis.” Octavia chuckled, “I’m glad that I was able to make it better, and that I had the free time to do so.” She nodded.

“Well it was really worth it! And thank you for being able to make it too Mr. Soarin! Dash really appreciated you being here.” Pinkie grinned happily.

“No problem! Between Dash being a new member and Octavia playing, there was no way I was going to miss this!” Soarin grinned.

The current song ended as the ponies on the dance floor let out an applause to their DJ. Fluttershy wiped some sweat from her forehead before letting Dash know she was going to sit down for the next song. Dash nodded as she watched her new wife head towards the buffet table. Rainbow then turned her attention to the opposite room, where two certain ponies were sitting that she wanted to talk to.

“...I don’t know how she does it, but this cake is heavenly.” A pretty blonde haired white mare dressed in a rather attractive pink dress mused as she devoured her third slice of cake that evening, “It’s like she figured out the science behind making the perfect cake and uses it to hypnotize her clients into buying more.”

“I’m sure she’s not that devious.” Lance rolled his eyes at his hypnotized nurse, “She just makes a lot of treats and knows how to overload them with sugar.”

“But that’s just it!” Soft Cure said looking up at Lance with stars in her eyes, “It doesn’t taste OVERLY sweet! It’s like she found the perfect balance of sweet to the dough of the cake!”

“Hey, you two.” Rainbow huffed walking up to their table, both of them turning their attention to the dressed up rainbow pony before them, “I need a word with both of you.”

Soft Cure slinked back in her chair trying to make herself seem small as Lance showed his usual lack of fear at the display of toughness from Rainbow Dash.

“We’re listening.” Lance grunted.

"I know no one else here knows about your past with Fluttershy. Only me, her and you two. However, that doesn't mean I've forgiven you for what you've done to her even though she has." Rainbow glared heavily at the two, showing her obvious hatred for her new 'father in-law', a title she despised that he had.

"And? We already know this. What is your point?" Lance grunted again, not amused by Rainbow's brash nature right now.

"My POINT is, that if I ever find some much as a hair out of place on Fluttershy because of either of your hooves that things will get messy and quickly." Rainbow turned her head to see her new wife across the room, sipping at a cup of punch, "But only until you do so. Fluttershy loves you and I'll never understand why, but that means I only have to tolerate you because of her. I won't deck you in the face, FOR HER, so long as you don't lay a hoof on her."

"I think we can handle that. Right Soft Cure?" Lance turned his head to look at the frightened nurse, who quickly nodded her head in response. "There. We'll tolerate you as long as you tolerate us." Lance held out his hoof for Dash, "May we continue our existences with a mutual dislike."

Rainbow Dash growled at his words before quickly taking his hoof and shaking it, before letting go and shaking it like there was grime on it. She then turned around and headed back to go hang out with her wife.

"...That girl is frightening when she's angry." Soft Cure shuddered, "Ugh... when did I become so spineless?" She groaned shoving cake into her mouth, "I swear there was a time I wouldn't have been frightened by that."

"Times change." Lance shrugged looking over at Soft Cure, "I assume you were frightened because you had no intention of fighting her today."

"...That's probably true." Soft Cure mumbled softly chewing at the cake in her mouth, "I'm good at confrontation when I'm ready to confront somepony, but not if I have no desire." She sighed softly.

The song shifted once again, the ponies clapping. The DJ announced that the next song was a special song for just the newlywed couple. The happy couple made their way onto the stage as the slow song began to play, the two dancing slowly to the beats.

"They truly do make a lovely couple." Celestia commented before chuckling softly, "Though I must admit my surprise. I had no idea two of the bearers of the elements of harmony would take their lives together a step further like this."

"Yeah, I didn't see it coming either." Twilight smiled, watching them. "Honestly...I don't know much about love, but even I can see that they truly love each other."

"Have you learned anything from all this?" Celestia asked a little amused.

"...I think I have Princess." Twilight smiled, "I've learned that love is truly a beautiful thing. It brings out the most joyful times in a pony's life and can let them have some truly amazing journeys in their future. Both of them are going to help each other to achieve their dreams because of their love."

"Does this mean I'm going to see my student with a new colt or marefriend?" Celestia chuckled softly, causing Twilight to break out in a blush.

"Ugh... I-If you need me to for my advanced studies C-Celestia... b-but that's awfully embarrassing." Twilight looked around unsettled, suddenly very nervous at the idea that she'd be forced to go on dates.

"No worries my student, I would never force you to find love." Twilight let out a sigh of relief, "Love is something you should find on your own to make you happy. Never forget that."

"I won't princess." Twilight smiled happily now, watching her friends lovingly dance away. "It's a shame Princess Luna couldn't come."

"Well, she had to remain behind to continue royal duties in my absence." Celestia nodded slowly, before her face grew slowly more

serious as she turned to look at her student. "Twilight, there is a serious matter that I need to discuss with you though."

"What is it princess?" Twilight looked up at her teacher, blinking a little confused at the shift of tone.

"Well, the truth is...is that since my arrival, something has felt off. Like something is wrong with Ponyville." Celestia spoke quietly and gravely, a small shiver went down her spine. She didn't like the way the princess had worded that. She carefully spared a glance at the happy couple dancing, before looking up at her teacher.

"What is it?" Twilight asked cautiously.

"I'm not sure...and honestly, that is what scares me right now." Celestia's words bore a heavy weight to them.

No pony knew at that moment that the happiness and joy they were experiencing would be so fleeting. But, that is a tale for another time.

~~~

## The End of The Rainbow's Surprise

~~~