

Rising Tension

By Speccy



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Chapter 1

Quiet and well mannered, Fluttershy was obviously the type to be easily startled. She was also the type that was easy to break and because of that she always loved her solitude. Of course there are times when even a pony as quiet and as self-preserved as herself just wanted to have some fun. Despite her obvious flaw for being so timid, if you could call it a flaw that is, she was quite friendly once you got to know her. It was because of that trait that people noticed her for who she was.

Fluttershy had been looking all over Ponyville for someone, whom she still had not found after a good hour or so. Pinkie Pie was not an easy pony to track down, especially when you WANTED to find her. Fluttershy however always tried to make an effort to see her, even though she'd try to keep it secret from everypony else. She'd often lock her words and stammer when she did however.

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Pinkie and Rainbow had spent almost all day setting this one up, even something so basic took copious amounts of time to get right. They were, however, proud of the end result and could not wait to see the contraption in action.

They had set up a little trap prank for a poor unsuspecting citizen of Ponyville.

"So who do ya think we'll get?" Rainbow asked her pink companion

"Hmm, I really hoping we get Twilight with this one! I mean the look on her face!" Pinkie grinned

The pair were too busy talking that neither of them noticed that a certain pale yellow pony was just about to spring it. When she did, she got a bucket water all tossed over her as the pranksters gasped at each other, Fluttershy made off to her house in with a sob.

"I tried to tell you, didn't I?" Pinkie grunted slapping a hoof to the ground.

"We can't prank Fluttershy!"

"How was I supposed to know she was there?" Rainbow argued bolting into the air, watching the faint, drenched, yellow pegasus fly into the distance.

Pinkie raised a hoof to her eye, looking up at Rainbow "Duh, you have eyes, you gotta use them, now you gotta go say sorry"

"What!? Me? You set this whole thing up"

"Well yeah...but...you...I" Pinkie let out a frustrated squeal and headed off to catch up to the now distant pony.

She trotted along the faint dirt path heading toward Fluttershy's cottage, the sun setting low in the sky and the light quickly fading. She quickened her pace, in hopes of at least reaching her before dark. The cottage now just in sight, she approached the little house. Pinkie she became a little anxious, time seemed to stand still as she stepped up to the door quietly, trying to make as little noise as possible to keep from scaring the shaken pony more.

"Fluttershy?" Pinkie called raising a hoof to gently tap on the door.

She had no idea why, but she more or less was glad that they had accidentally set the prank off on her and yet at the same time, guilty.

"Don't be silly Pinkie" She said to herself slowly pushing the door open with her nose.

"Fluuuuuuuttershyyyyyyyyyyy?"

The place was quiet, only a light ticking of a clock could be heard. Pinkie looked around curiously, come to think of it; she'd never really taken a good look inside Fluttershy's house or even been in it all, well, that she could remember anyway. Pinkie shook her head and started to look under the chairs, tables and stairs, even inside the dressers and cupboards. A frown crossed her face as she headed upstairs into the bedroom. Making her way into the room she noticed a large lump stashed away under the covers of the bed.

"Fluttershy?" Pinkie asked as she stepped up to the quivering hidden mass with a concerned look. "Fluttershyyyy?"

The cover was quickly tugged off and tossed aside with a smile and a gentle nudge, which revealed the damp yellow pony huddled on her bed.

"There you are! Phew, boy am I glad I found you" Pinkie bounded around in her place

"I'm reeeeeally, really sorry about what happened, It wasn't really meant for you but Rainbow Dash wasn't looking and then when you came walking by I wasn't looking either so I couldn't tell her not to set the trap off"

Fluttershy watched intently with a very faint smile as Pinkie took a deep breath.

"And then I tried to tell Rainbow Dash to say sorry but she didn't want to for some reason, so I came instead and then I tried to find you downstairs but I couldn't find you anywhere, so I came up here and there you are!" Pinkie grinned.

Fluttershy wasn't all that sure what she had just said, her eyes lowered to look at her hooves, pulling herself up a little, almost toppling over doing so. She had this really warm feeling around Pinkie, it made it almost impossible for her to talk let alone keep a decent conversation. The pair stared at each other for a few minutes before one of them broke the silence.

"It's ok" Fluttershy nodded trying to keep her voice from trembling.

"GREAT!" Pinkie bounced around the room happily. "I was worried you might be mad or sad...or something"

"Really? Worried? About me?" Fluttershy's heart almost froze when she heard those words leave Pinkie's mouth.

"Yup, anyways I hafta get going! Look at the time"

Fluttershy quickly flinched back as Pinkie threw her hoof into her face as if to show her a watch. The hoof quickly receded as Pinkie darted for the door. "See ya later" and before she knew it, Pinkie was gone bouncing playfully on her way home in the silence of the night. A smile crossed

Fluttershy's face alongside a light tint of pink on her cheeks.

Fluttershy had a bit of a thing for Pinkie Pie, she was completely unsure of why she had that feeling. She knew girls were supposed to like boys, so why did she like Pinkie? She always wanted to spend time with her but they have such different ideas of fun it was hard to get any time with her at all. When she did though, she tried her best to make sure it counted. Pinkie seemed to be completely oblivious to Fluttershy's feelings, there was almost no chance she'd figure it out on her own...there was also next to no chance that she'd be told either. That's because nopony knew, the pair are so different it just seemed like trying to push a square into a circle. Of course, something had to give way eventually. She tried to ignore her feelings several times but it only made things worse than they were before. Although really, how would Pinkie react to a confession? This thought crossed her mind everyday and everyday she tried to build the courage to tell her.

She had to; she couldn't help it any more.

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The sweet smell of those cupcakes wafted through the air around Sugar Cube Corner in little pockets. Fluttershy slowly glided down to the large sweet smelling building and tapped at the door. Her heart was already racing as she lowered her head to push the door open.

"Pinkie Pie?" She stammered

As usual there was Pinkie happily baking away with several cupcakes laid across the table. She looked over at the yellow pegasus as a big smile stretched from one side of her face to the other.

"Hey Fluttershy, what's goin on?"

"Um, nothing, I just came to say hi" Fluttershy's eyes had a hard time staying focused at one place as she tapped at the floor nervously.

"Oooo, ok then, hey, hey, wanna try one of these cupcakes I made? I tried something different" Pinkie held out a hoof with a nicely decorated cupcake with green frosting.

"Oh, no, thanks Pinkie but..." Her voice was cut off with a loud crash as a familiar blue pegasus came crashing into the room, halting in mid-air.

"Hey Pinkie Pie, you ready for some..." She turned to Fluttershy, who was huddled behind her. "Oh...."

Rainbow gently landed on the floor as her face dulled with guilt
"Fluttershy...I'm sorry about yesterday" She apologized lowering her ears.

"Um, That's ok"

"Great! So Pink, you ready?" Rainbow Dash turned to Pinkie who now had a backpack slung over her and an umbrella hat placed firmly on her head.

"Mhmm! Oh wait, Fluttershy, weren't you gonna say something?" she said turning to look in her direction.

Fluttershy looked at Pinkie blankly for a few moments. She wanted to say it, why couldn't she say it? Her eyes looked around the room, at Rainbow, at Pinkie. She clamped her eyes shut, muscles tensing as she opened her mouth. Only to let a small squeak out, she sighed and hung her head in shame.

"Oh...It's nothing" She said taking to the air and leaving the store.
Pinkie looked at Rainbow confused.

"Don't look at me! I said I was sorry" Rainbow said crossing her hooves.
Pinkie frowned a little but thought nothing of it.

"Oh well, so, who we gonna get today?" Pinkie giggled

--

Fluttershy flew through the sky almost in tears. Why was it so hard? It was three measly words...three words that would never come out of her mouth no matter how hard she tried. She was so upset, furious even to the point where her mind wouldn't even think straight. She flew down to a nearby tree and perched herself under it, forcing herself from crying. She laid herself down, resting head on hoof.

"Oh, why can't I say it?" She whispered to herself

Her feelings were far too much for her to handle, but she couldn't just forget about them completely. Pinkie was always there in her mind and she just couldn't shake it. No matter what.

Chapter 2

Fluttershy's mind was racing, random strings of thoughts, words, images anything were whizzing around up there. She paced back and forth in her cottage, with a gentle clopping of her hooves. Her face slightly contorted into a dull frown with her wings slightly perched out.

"What am I supposed to do?" She sighed to herself

She'd been thinking for at least an hour now and had still come up with nothing.

"Hmm, well, like Rainbow Dash said, I need to be more assertive, I just go up to Pinkie...and..." She swallowed hard and sighed "There's no way I can do that"

With that, she left her cottage and took to the skies heading for Ponyville. Gliding over the outskirts of the little town, something caught her eye. She saw Pinkie, prancing about in a nearby field and swooped down to get a better look. She kept her distance, watching her intently as her heart picked up its pace. There Pinkie was, doing...whatever it is Pinkie Pie does, in this case it seemed to be rummaging through bushes. Fluttershy sighed before turning around and continuing on her way, just as she heard familiar voice.

"Fluttershy!" Pinkie called out

Fluttershy let out a loud squeal, her wings quickly locking up and snapping quickly to her sides. The pale yellow pony quickly fell to the ground with a thud as Pinkie gasped trotting over.

"I'm so sorry Fluttershy I didn't mean to scare you" she pleaded

Fluttershy grunted pulling herself up from the ground, giving her wings a little shake.

"Oh, um, that's alright, Pinkie"

"So, whatcha doin?" Pinkie grinned

Fluttershy lowered her head a little, gently digging at the ground with a hoof.

"I was just, going to go visit Twilight. You see, I have to talk to her about something"

"Oooooohhhh, what you wanna talk about?"

Fluttershy's eyes widened as she became noticeably uncomfortable.

"Uhh, it's nothing, really"

Pinkie gasped loudly, her eyes almost popping out of place ecstatically.

"A secret! Ok, Ok"

Fluttershy hesitated a little before nodding, she wanted to stay with Pinkie but she had to talk to Twilight. A little mental war took place in her head as she tried to decide on what to do.

"Well, I have to get to Twilight, bye bye Pinkie"

Fluttershy quickly took off heading to Twilights Library with a smile on her face.

"Excuse me? Twilight?"

Twilight looked up at the door from her usual spot, perched at her book stand with her face buried in the pages of a rather thick book.

"Hey Fluttershy, how're you?" Twilight smiled

"I'm good thanks Twilight"

Fluttershy took a few more steps into the library, carefully looking around at all the books displayed on the shelves around her.

"Looking for something?"

Fluttershy seemed shocked by the question, as though it were unexpected.

"Um , I was wondering, if maybe you had this book I was looking for"

"Oh? What book might that be?"

The yellow ponies head drooped down, unwilling to say what she wanted to.

"Sooo, what book did you want?"

"A book, about...love" her sentences trailed off.

Twilight leaned her head to one side and listened carefully.

"I'm sorry, what was that?"

"I was wondering if, you had a book, about.....love"

Twilight frowned and contorted her face.

"Doves?" She suggested "I have a few books about those"

Fluttershy shook her head taking a deep breath.

"Love, a book about love" she forced the words out.

Twilight looked at her in shock with a slight sense of enjoyment.

"Love? Why in Equestria would you need a book about love for?"

"Um, no reason"

"Are you suuure? You wouldn't happen to be in loooove with someone? Would you?"

The questions hit Fluttershy like hammers, each one hitting harder than the last. She turned her head away in shame as Twilight moved in closer.

"Oh my gosh! Who is he? I'm sure he's a very lucky colt!"

Twilight couldn't help but indulge in her secret, almost prying to get in. There was a brief moment of silence as Fluttershy built the strength to speak.

"Um, yes...he...anyway, so do you have a book about it?"

"I do but you gotta tell me, pleeeeeease"

Twilight's face turned googly as she begged for Fluttershy to tell her. A sigh left her mouth as she readied herself to speak again.

"You promise not to tell anypony?"

Twilight nodded violently "Pinkie Pie promise!"

Fluttershy jumped ever so slightly at those words, she shrugged it off and leaned towards her purple Unicorn friend.

"It's...."

"Yes?"

"It's...Puh"

Twilight couldn't contain her excitement; she was practically shaking in her hoofs.

"It's" Fluttershy took a deep breath "It's Pinkie"

Twilight's mouth dropped open, her body frozen solid. Fluttershy backed away a little looking at her petrified friend with embarrassment. Twilight refused to move, she stood there, silently with the same expression.

"T...Twilight?"

There more silence for a while, Twilight seemed to be unable to come to terms with what she had just heard. Her eyes locked in one place, she probably wasn't even breathing.

".....wow" Twilight finally sighed "Are you being serious? I mean this isn't a joke...is Pinkie behind this?" She said raising a hoof to point in her friends' direction.

Fluttershy looked at Twilight slightly hurt by her comments.

"I'll take that as a no...wow, I'm sorry I didn't mean anything by it, it's just..."

Fluttershy backed herself into a corner and sat herself down, looking at the ground. Twilight felt a little guilty, almost forcing the information out, she could see Fluttershy was severely uncomfortable and moved in to talk to her.

"Have you tried talking to Pinkie?" Twilight asked gently

Fluttershy gave a little defeated nod.

"I try, I try all the time, but I can never say it. I even tried to ignore it but it just keeps coming back, No matter how hard I try I can't stop thinking about it"

Tears began to well up in her eyes as she spoke. Twilight, now feeling even worse than before, sat next to her, in an attempt to comfort the poor pony.

"I want to say it, really, but the words...they don't want to come out. I'm scared, Pinkie probably doesn't even like me, so even if I do tell her, it'll be worse than it is now"

Twilight, now also beginning to feel her own tears coming on, forced a smile and looked at her.

"Oh Fluttershy, there's nothing you can do if Pinkie doesn't feel the same way"

Fluttershy looked up with a snuffle.

"But you'll never find out if you don't try" Twilight continued "All you can do now, is keep trying to tell Pinkie how you feel. There's nothing you can do

about your own feelings, so you just need to make sure Pinkie is aware of them"

The pair sat in silence for a while, as Fluttershy settled down a little. She wiped her face and tried to speak without stammering.

"But I can't..."

Twilight leaned in and places a hoof on her shoulder.

"If you really like Pinkie as much as you say you do, then it will come out, just give it time"

Fluttershy gave a light fake smile. That smile quickly faded.

"I just...can't" Fluttershy sobbed pulling herself up slowly trotting for the door.

"Fluttershy....If you want to talk, I'm always here" Twilight offered

Fluttershy paused for a moment "Thanks Twilight....you're a good friend" she whimpered, with tears slowly trailing down her face. She left the library and decided to take a walk through town to try calm down.

Twilight stood in her place, more or less worried about what she'd done.

Walking through the streets trying to stop sobbing, Fluttershy hid her face behind her mane. She made her way along the busy streets with head hung in depression. Her efforts to remain undetected were futile it seems, when she heard a voice yelling her name.

"Fluttershy!! Wait up!"

Fluttershy turned her head around, only to see Pinkie chasing after her. Pinkie galloped up, twitching with excitement.

"Fluttershy! I was talking to Twilight and she said that you were sad!"

Her eyes widened as she felt her heart skip a beat.

"Oh, no I'm fine, really" she blurted, sniffing

"Aww, you're crying? What happened?" Pinkie asked

"Nothing, nothing happened"

"Was it the big meanie pants griffon again?"

"No.."

"That meanie griffon won't yell at you again, I promise"

Fluttershy ducked her head down; unsure of whether or not she should take a try to confess.

"Pinkie?" Fluttershy asked quietly

"Mhmm?"

"Do...um...do you....like...anypony?"

"Of course!"

"Really?"

"Yup"

"Who? If you don't mind...that is"

"I like EVERYPONY!" Pinkie squealed

"No, Pinkie, I mean, like...umm....LIKE, like"

Pinkie let out a loud gasp before leaning in and quieting down to a whisper.
"You mean like a crush?" She asked softly

Fluttershy nodded slowly.

"Maybe, I think I do" Pinkie smiled and pulled away, turning up her voice

again with a giggle.

"Really?"

"Yup!"

"Um...Who is it?" Fluttershy's voice shook a little, this was as close as she'd ever come before.

"It's a secret" Pinkie winked

"Oh...ok then" Fluttershy smiled, she was more or less relieved that she at least had some chance.

"So, did I make you feel better?"

There was a moments silence between the two as Fluttershy smiled.

"Yes, thank you Pinkie"

Pinkie laughed loudly, dashing in to give her friend a hug. Fluttershy's face tinted pink as Pinkie stepped back.

"Well, see ya!" With that, Pinkie left happily prancing home.

Fluttershy still overjoyed with the hug.

"Thank you...Pinkie" She whispered to herself.

Chapter 3

Galloping through town was particularly unusual for somepony like Fluttershy. It was also unusual of her to forget her get together at the spa with Rarity. Already a few minutes late, she picked up her pace, her wings flapping furiously for that little extra boost in speed. She zipped into the reception area of the spa, startling almost everypony inside. She quickly lowered her head and apologized. Rarity pulled herself up off her chair, stepping up to Fluttershy with a small smile on her face.

"I'm so sorry I'm late Rarity"

"Don't worry about it, I just got here myself"

The pair took a few steps towards the counter.

"The usual please" Rarity exclaimed with a blink and twinkle of her eyes.

The blue pony behind the counter quickly pulled a curtain open revealing a large wooden tub, almost filled to the brim with warm water. Rarity quickly stepped up to the tub with Fluttershy not too far behind her. Fluttershy gave a flap of her wings gently settling herself in the warm water to one side of the tub while Rarity took the other. The pair let out a sigh simultaneously, Followed by a soft laugh.

That is until Fluttershy's smile quickly faded as her face dulled to a saddened frown. She never meant for it to be noticeable, but if there's one thing about Fluttershy, it's that her feelings are easily determined through her face.

"Fluttershy, are you alright?" Rarity asked leaning in a little

Fluttershy took a deep breath and sighed loudly nodding.

"Well, if you say..." She stopped mid sentence when she clearly realized something was up. "Are you sure? You can tell me you know" Rarity finished with a frown.

Fluttershy lowered her head to the surface of the water, her eyes looking away.

"Well...You see...Rarity, you want to marry 'him'...right?" She asked nervously with almost a slight shiver in her voice.

"Of course! The wedding! The glamour! The royalty!" She squealed almost leaving off into a fantasy world.

"Oh, well um, how would you tell him how you felt?"

"Well, I'd trot in wearing one of my finest dresses; I'd confront him and confess my love. He'd confess back of course and we'd both be so happy together!"

Fluttershy watched as Rarity brought her hooves to her cheeks and stared off into nothingness.

"Oh...ok then"

"Why do you want to know?"

"Oh, no reason really, just...wondering"

Rarity let out soft gasp "You aren't thinking of confessing to somepony are you?" she asked slyly, gently leaning intowards Fluttershy with a grin.

Fluttershy drooped her ears and turned her head in embarrassment.

"You can tell me, of course, only that is if you should want to"

There was a brief moment of silence before Fluttershy gently nodded her head keeping turned away. Rarity let out another squeal of excitement before quickly leaning in even closer.

"Who is it?!"

"Promise not to tell anypony?"

"I swear!"

Fluttershy waited for a few seconds before responding. Turning her head back to face her friend.

"Pinkie Pie" she whispered

Rarity let out a little laugh, the water splashing around a little "No really, who is it?"

Fluttershy ducked half her head into the water forcing a few bubble out where her mouth was.

"Oh...well" Rarity sighed with a hint of sadness in her voice

"When did you realize this?" She continued

Fluttershy brought her head out of the water, still uncomfortable talking about the topic but continued for her sake.

"Um, a long while ago"

"I see" Rarity brought a hoof to her mouth and thought deep and hard on ways to help. "Well....have you tried talking to Pinkie?"

Fluttershy nodded.

"Hm, Well I suppose you could try giving her a gift?"

"Oh no, I could never. Besides I don't even know what she'd like and what if she didn't like it?"

"How will you know if you never try?"

The comment was returned by a blank, yet shy stare.

"Ok, well are you doing anything interesting sometime soon?"

There was a good moment of silence as Fluttershy took some time to think. There was a gentle hissing noise coming from the room next door as water

was poured onto some heated rocks.

"Well, I was going to go into the Whitetail Woods to try find a golden blue flower. They're supposed to be in full bloom around this time and I've never seen one before"

"Excellent! Invite Pinkie to come with you!"

Fluttershy gave a gentle frown "Oh, I don't know Rarity"

"Come on, you'll get to spend some time alone with Pinkie AND see your flower, why not?"

A bright pink tint covered Fluttershy's face as the thought of spending time alone with Pinkie crossed her mind and for once, excitement flowed through her.

"See I told you it was a good idea" Rarity bragged

"Right, thank you so much Rarity!" Fluttershy smiled happily "Do you mind if I leave early? I'd like to ask Pinkie now...if that's alright with you"

Rarity brought a hoof out of the water, gesturing for her to go ahead.

"Oh, thank you" Fluttershy exclaimed pulling herself out of the tub.

The water trailed behind her as she quickly made her way out of the building. Thought she didn't seem to care much, she had too much on her mind to worry about water. Rarity sat back with a saddened sigh.

The air was particularly fresher in the skies, something that Fluttershy had only just noticed. She soared through the sky searching for her infamous little crush furiously. She'd never been more excited in her life then she was now. She looked all over town from the sky but couldn't find her anywhere. She saw Applejack at her farm slamming away at those trees. Fluttershy swooped down low and halted to a hover.

"Excuse me, Applejack?" She asked as she gently lowered herself to the ground beside her.

Applejack spun around, gently placing her apple bag on the ground.

"Hey there Fluttershy! What can I do ya for?"

"I was just wondering, if um, maybe you've seen...Pinkie around?" Almost squealing trying to say her name out loud.

"Hm, I think I might'a seen her down near the lake just outside'a town"

"Ok, thank you so much"

"No problem, happy to help" Applejack gave a warm smile and turned back to her tree.

Fluttershy took to the skies yet again in search of the lake Applejack had mentioned. She didn't have much time to let Pinkie know, as a matter of fact, it was already a bit late to be asking anypony to come with her. She pressed on none the less; she was determined to spend some decent time alone with her hyperactive crush. The lake was now vaguely in sight, Fluttershy squealed with excitement as she saw the blurred pink figure in the distance.

"Oh this is going to be so much fun" She exclaimed to herself She took a gentle dive down and planted her hooves on the grass, slowly approaching Pinkie, who seemed to be staring into the lake. The closer she got, the more she regretted this decision. Her heart picked up and panic crossed her face. Still she stood her ground a proceed to talk.

"Um, excuse me, Pinkie"

Pinkie quickly spun around, jumping back in shock. Her face quickly relaxed when she saw who startled her.

"Oh, it's just you Fluttershy...you scared the cupcakes outta me!" She sighed as she took a few steps closer. "So what's goin on?"

"Oh, I'm sorry for scaring you Pinkie, but I was wondering." She took a breath and tried to relax "You see, I was going to go into Whitetail Woods to find this special flower that in bloom and I..."

Her words seemed to tangle in her mouth, like they refused to come out. A quick frown crossed her face as she tried to continue.

"I was wondering, if maybe, you wanted to come with me?" there was a brief pause as the pair looked at each other. "I mean, if you're not busy of course"

A saddened look crossed Pinkie face.

"Sorry Fluttershy but I have plans with Rainbow Dash"

Fluttershy felt her body become almost instantly cold as her excitement was shattered into pieces.

"Oh...That's alright then, sorry for bothering you"

She spun herself around, her head lowered in shame and disappointment.

"Why did I even bother, I knew she wouldn't want to go with me" She sighed

Pinkie stood in her place, somewhat guilty, unsure of what to do, how to react.

"Fluttershy! Wait!" She called out swiftly galloping up to her

"I'd love to go with you, just let me tell Dashie that I can't go with her okay?" Pinkie smiled with reassurance.

Fluttershy's heart skipped a beat as her ears stiffened at the words she'd just heard. She forced herself around facing the grinning pink pony.

"That's all right Pinkie, you don't have to come if you don't want to"

Pinkie furiously shook her head taking a few steps closer.

"No, no, no, no, I want to go, really! Just lemme tell Dash, Okay?"

"Okay" Fluttershy nodded

"GREAT! I'll meet you back at your cottage then?" Pinkie stated, already darting off into the distance.

Fluttershy watched Pinkie disappear into town heading for Rainbow Dash's house. She felt her chest heat up and a smile cross her face as she lifted herself into the sky, heading to her cottage.

Her mind was going berserk thinking of being alone, with Pinkie, for all that time. She let out a soft squeal in excitement, almost losing focus on her flying. She approached her cottage, only to find that Pinkie had already beaten her there. She propped herself on the ground and quickly trotted up to Pinkie, who was eagerly waiting for her.

"Pinkie, you're already here?"

"Yup!" Pinkie nodded "So when are we going?"

"Oh, um, I should have told you before but I'm going tomorrow" She responded, giving her hoof a little kick in embarrassment.

"Hmm...in that case I guess I could go play with Dashie...but since I'm here why don't I sleepover? We play bingo!"

Fluttershy's eyes shot wide open, her head jerking backwards.

"S...sleepover? Um, I don't know, I was going to...um..."

"Oh come on Fluttershy, pleeeeeease it'll be fun, I promise"

"But, but"

"Pleeeeeease" Pinkie pleaded with big eyes

Fluttershy sighed "Okay"

"YAY!" Pinkie cheered dashing into the cottage.

"What should we do first?"

Fluttershy slowly followed her closing the door behind her. Panic began to fill her mind, she was completely unprepared for this. Although, anytime with Pinkie Pie was good time, she was unsure of whether to be happy or worried.

"Well.....What do you want to do Pinkie?"

"Oh oh oh oh we should...um....I don't know" Pinkie put a confused look on as she tried to think of something to do. "Hey Fluttershy?"

"Yes Pinkie?"

"Why do we have to wait until tomorrow to find this flower?"

"Well...there's not much day time left"

"Oh is that all?" Pinkie raised a hoof and wavered it at Fluttershy.

"Don't worry about that, let's just go now!" Pinkie suggested making her way to the door.

"Um, are you sure about that?"

"Sure I'm sure...well, as sure as I can be!" She smiled

"I don't know Pinkie, I we should wait until morning tomorrow"

"Why? You aren't scared are you?"

"Maybe...a little...yes" Fluttershy whimpered

"Don't worry!" Pinkie jumped to a sturdy pose with her head held high "I shall protect you" She called before cracking to a giggle.

There was a brief moment of silence as Fluttershy finally agreed with a nod. Pinkie darted outside, jumping in her place.

"Let's go! Let's go!" She called

Fluttershy slowly made her way outside, approaching Pinkie with

uncertainty.

"So, where are we going Fluttershy?"

"Um, we have to go into the Whitetail Woods, the flowers are there, but hard to find" Fluttershy explained, her voice trembling a little.

"OK! I'll meet you at Whitetail Woods then!" Pinkie stated quickly bolting off. Fluttershy was left standing outside her cottage, unsure of herself.

"What have I gotten myself into?" She whined softly

"It's getting dark, I'm going into the woods, looking for a flower that's almost impossible to find"

Her face lit up a little as she took off into the skies again, flapping her wings, with the afternoon air getting cooler.

"At least if anything happens...I'll be with Pinkie"

She tried to take as much comfort as possible from that fact.

Chapter 4

The sky slowly began to fade into darkness; the faint glow of Ponyville in the distance was the only light aside from the moon. Pinkie had herself propped up eagerly on the grass just outside the Woods, almost a little impatient. She swayed her head from side to side and tapped at the ground, as though she had to move. Not too far away, Fluttershy was making her way through the skies, still a little antsy about going out so late. She wasn't particularly fond of the dark but she didn't want to upset Pinkie.

"This can't be good at all" she muttered under her breath.

Lowering her height, she approached Pinkie slowly. Her hooves landed on the grass with a light crunch as her wing folded back.

"Fluttershy, there you are! I've been waiting for sooo long!"

"But Pinkie, it's only been a few.." her voice was cut off

"Never mind, let's go find your flower!" Pinkie grinned

Fluttershy leaned out a little peering into the Woods, which wasn't as intimidating as the Everfree Forrest but it's still a dark area, especially at night. She frowned at the sight before her.

"Umm, are you sure about this Pinkie? Maybe we should...um...go get some...supplies or something"

Pinkie jerked her head back.

"We don't need that! Come on, come on" She darted into the woods, fading into the darkness.

"PINKIE!" Fluttershy squealed, her mind was rattling. "Oh my goodness...Pinkie?" She called

There was no answer or nor sight. She took a few steps forward before

quickly retracing those steps backwards.

"FLUTTERSHY! COME ON!" Pinkie called out

The yellow pony took a deep breath and forced herself forward. She clamped her eyes shut as she made her way into the woods. She continued along with her eyes shut until she bumped into something.

Pinkie spun around "Oh, there you are" She smiled

Fluttershy calmed down a little now that she had her friend nearby, still a bit jumpy, but a little better.

"Pinkie, please don't run off like that"

"Why?"

"Because...." She trailed off

"Are you still scared?"

Fluttershy just looked at her with a scared look. Pinkie looked back at her, feeling a little guilty.

"Sorry Fluttershy, I promise I won't do it again" She smiled

A shiver ran down Fluttershy's spine as she straightened herself up. It was about then that Fluttershy became completely aware of her surroundings. The trees hung over them creating a lot more darkness than there should be. There were sounds of swaying leaves and crickets all around them. It started to make her feel very uncomfortable.

"Well then, let's go!"

Pinkie took a bound forward before turning around to wait for Fluttershy, who quickly ran up beside her. The pair slowly trotted along, Fluttershy trembling with each step. The fact that Pinkie was right beside her ogling at the dreary surroundings did almost nothing to comfort her. Pinkie looked at her friend, feeling somewhat useless, she wanted to comfort her, but she had nothing in mind.

"Hey Fluttershy?"

Fluttershy flinched a little at the sudden sound of her voice before slowly gazing up at Pinkie.

"What exactly are these flowers and where do we find them?"

"I, um.....I don't...know"

"Then, how are we supposed to find them?"

"I don't know" Fluttershy ducked her head a little lower "It's too dark"

Pinkie frowned a little, gently leaning her body over to give her a little nudge.

"Don't worry about it, it's just dark, it can't hurt you"

"No...but the things in it can"

By now Pinkie's guilt had gotten the best of her, why didn't she think about how Fluttershy would feel? Now she just felt like a jerk. There two of them continued along reaching a small clearing with only very few trees scattered in it. Fluttershy lightened up a little in the moonlight.

"Places like this..." She whispered

"Huh?" Pinkie looked at her confused

"The flowers....grow in places like this"

"Oh, well, are there any around here"

Fluttershy raised her head a little and took a quick look around herself.

"None that I can see"

They both frowned in sync.

"Well...how rare are these things anyways?" Pinkie asked tapping at the grass

"I don't know, I've never....seen one before"

Pinkie stopped in the middle of the clearing.

"Ok, Fluttershy, you wait here and I'll try find your flower ok?" Pinkie suggested

"It's nice and bright hear so you should be fine"

Pinkie lowered her nose under Fluttershy chin and pushed it up.

"You'll be fine, I swear"

"O.....ok then"

Fluttershy took a seat on the cold grass staring at her pink friend trotting off into the darkness yet again. She lowered her head down to the ground, feeling a little tired and it wasn't much longer until she had fallen asleep.

A loud grumbling roar shook Fluttershy wide awake. Her ears perked up with her eyes wide open in shock. She was already wide awake in less than a few seconds. Until the roar wavered through the night air, she quickly darted around for any sign of Pinkie. She couldn't see her anywhere, instinctively she began to panic. The loud growl struck again, forcing Fluttershy to her hooves. She galloped in the direction of the noise in hopes of finding her companion.

The zipped through a dark wooded area, the growling roars were getting louder, until one was followed by a loud crash, which startled her into tripping. When she looked up she could see another small clearing in the distance. She abruptly trotted up to the edge of the clearing, quickly dropping to the ground again when she saw what was there.

There was a large, blue, dragon, not quite fully grown but much much much larger than spike. Fluttershy panicked even more, and even more so when she saw Pinkie standing directly in its line of sight. The dragon roared

again, this time it was ear shattering.

"Pinkie!" Fluttershy called out

Both the dragon and Pinkie looked at the yellow pegasus laying huddled on the grass. The dragon started to walk towards her with loud crushing footsteps. Fluttershy squealed as Pinkie made a break for her as well.

"Fluttershy! Move! You gotta run"

Fluttershy looked at the looming dragon getting closer, she wanted to move, but her body wasn't cooperating. Pinkie raced in quickly nabbing Fluttershy's tail and tugging her deeper into the trees as fast as she could. She quickly ducked down beside her.

"What are you doing here?!" Pinkie whispered harshly

"I , I, I heard the...roar"

The dragon stopped at the edge of the woods peering into the trees. There was a loud rustle as he reached in and started to feel around for the pair of ponies. Pinkie noticed something glimmer in the distance, just outside in the clearing, her face lit up.

"Fluttershy, stay right there ok?" She said pulling herself up darting off between the dragons legs.

"Wait! PINKIE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?"

The dragon abruptly spun around at the pink pony galloping behind him. Fluttershy stood herself up running after them. She saw Pinkie come to a halt before a thick blue tail swung around slapping Pinkie into the air. Both the dragon and Fluttershy sprung into action quickly taking to the air to catch her. The dragon took a swipe at her with its claws, the very tip of her right wing was clipped, her flight unbalanced, she came crashing down. She quickly looked up at Pinkie as she landed with a thud and rolled several times, crashing and smacking into the ground, before coming to a stop. Fluttershy let out a gasp as the dragon took a step over to Pinkie and raised a fist beside his head.

A loud roar instantly got the attention of the young dragon. It quickly took to the skies leaving the clearing with just the two ponies left behind. Fluttershy watched the dragon fly away in the night sky before quickly turning to Pinkie galloping over to her as fast as possible.

She slowed to a halt beside the sprawled pink pony; she was covered in scratches and bruises.

"Pinkie?" Fluttershy whispered

There was no answer. Fluttershy stepped closer and lowered her head, giving Pinkie back a little nudge with her nose.

"Pinkie? Please, get up"

Pinkie let out a faint cough, as she forced herself to rollover as she dropped a half crumpled blue flower with yellow tipped petals onto the ground beside her.

"Is...that....that flower?" She rasped

Fluttershy felt tears welling up in her eyes as she nodded.

"That's it....but.....I don't care about the flower right now" Her voice shaky with worry

Pinkie shut her eyes barely breathing but still alive. Fluttershy grabbed her tail and tried to fly, only to be greeted by a shock of pain. She looked back to see her right wing in all kinds of mess. All out of ideas she looked around, there was a very small cave just past some trees not far from where they were.

"Pinkie...can you move?" She asked

There was no answer again.

Fluttershy lowered her head under Pinkie's belly and pulled her legs over her head. Pinkie landed on Fluttershy's back with a sharp jolt of pain as she crushed her injured wing. She let out a faint yelp before making her way to the cave. She began to cry as she walked, the tears streamed down her face, dripping off onto the grass. Each step harder than the last, when they finally reached the cave, Fluttershy gently lowered herself down to rest Pinkie on the ground. She looked at the beaten up pony again, laying

herself down next to her.

"I'm sorry" She whimpered "This is all my fault"

The cave echoed her words ever so slightly. Her eyes shut, tears still slowly finding their way to the ground as she cried herself to sleep.

Chapter 5

The birds chirped, the bees buzzed, all completely oblivious to the pale yellow pony hiding away in a cave with the heavily wounded friend. The faint glimmer of light seeping in from the caves entrance made Fluttershy stir in her sleep. She rolled around a little before slowly opening her eyes. For a moment she thought she was home, that none of this had happened. Until she realized, that she was still in her dark cave, with Pinkie lying beside her. She let out a loud sigh and just watched as Pinkie struggle to breathe.

She felt useless and she hated it. She crossed her front legs and rested her head, just watching Pinkie suffer.

"Please be ok" She whispered

"What would Pinkie do right now?"

She took a moment to think but it wasn't too long before she gave up.

"Oh I don't know what she'd do..."

All of a sudden her face lit up.

"I know, I'll fly back and get help!"

She quickly pulled herself up and headed for the cave entrance. She stopped in her place not too far away just as she tried to lift her wings. A little squeak left her mouth as she remembered her injured wing.

"I...guess I'll walk"

After a few steps she turned around and looked at her helpless friend lying in the dirt with a saddened look. She couldn't bring herself to leave her alone for that long. By the time she'd walked back to Ponyville and come back with help, who knows what kind of monster could get to her in that time.

"I can't"

She made her way back to Pinkie and propped herself on the ground next to her. She rested her head beside Pinkie's, nose to nose.

"I can't leave you here....I won't leave you here"

She sighed again

"The others will come looking for us" She said in an attempt to reassure herself, as well as Pinkie

"I'm sure of it"

The seconds ticked by which gradually turned to minutes and then minutes to hours. Fluttershy refused to move from her spot determined to make sure Pinkie was alright. Feeling the need to stretch was the only discomfort aside from her wing and a growing need for food. It was already late in the afternoon and neither of the ponies were set to survive any longer than a few days.

"I knew I shouldn't have let you come here"

For once, Fluttershy had the need to talk, even if it was to somepony who was unconscious.

"You know....Pinkie...."

She left a gap of silence, as though to wait for a response.

"You never told me who it was you liked" She joked to herself

"I....um...."

She pause for a few moments.

"I'm going to go see if there's anything to eat somewhere, I'll be right back I promise"

Fluttershy gave Pinkie's nose a little nudge with her own before heading out into the late afternoon sun. She couldn't stray too far, the last thing she wanted was to lose the cave. The clearing where they first saw the dragon had a few good flowers. She gathered a few pink, blue and red flowers for them to nibble on should they get hungry. She came across a crushed and slightly dried blue flower, the petals tipped with a now faded yellow. She started at the flower for a few minutes. She picked up the small flower and headed back for the cave.

The sun almost just out of the sky, the night sweeping all over Equestria, the stars slowly began to show themselves, one by one. Fluttershy placed the flowers on the ground and took one in her mouth. She threw rested one next to Pinkie to try an entice her to eat, but she still didn't move. The flowers slowly getting devoured, there was only the crushed golden blue one left.

Looking sadly at the flower and at Pinkie, she rested her head down on the dirt.

"You didn't have to run out there for the flower you know..." She whispered
Still nothing.

"Pinkie, are ok? Is there anything I can do?"

Nothing

"This isn't fair, why did YOU get hurt looking for MY flower?" She whimpered

"Pinkie...please, say something...anything?"

There was a brief moment of silence until Pinkie's leg kicked back a little.

"Pinkie?! Are you ok now!?"

A small mumble escaped her mouth but nothing more.

"At least you're getting better, I wish I could take better care of you"

It was unsettling to have Pinkie sitting so still for such a long time. Not because she was usually active, not because she was injured and not because they were in a cave...but because she blamed herself. If she hadn't invited Pinkie, none of this would have happened, she shouldn't have let her go at night or go out alone while she slept.

"I'm sorry Pinkie, I didn't mean for any of this to happen"
She closed her eyes, drifting off to sleep.

Not too long into the night, Fluttershy woke up at the sound of what she thought to be Pinkie's voice. Her eyes widened and her head jerked back a little as she saw Pinkie shivering the slightest bit.

"Pinkie? Are you ok?" She asked

It took a while but she finally got an answer.

"c...c.c...c....col...d" Pinkie managed to choke out.

"Oh my goodness!"

Fluttershy abruptly pulled herself up and looked around to find something to drape over her. There was nothing around in sight. She crouched beside Pinkie and hesitated a little before laying herself down. She shuffled in as close as possible, snuggling up to Pinkie. She smiled as a small pink tint coated her cheeks. Pinkie curled up a little and her shivering stopped. The pair lay quietly for a few minutes.

"I hope...you don't mind this, Pinkie" She whispered

It didn't take long for her to fall asleep again.

It was already about noon when Fluttershy finally woke up. She noticed Pinkie sitting up next to her. Still a little sleepy, it took her sometime to come to terms with what was going on.

"P...Pinkie Pie?"

"Hi!"

"Pinkie!" She jumped up and pounced Pinkie, knocking her on her back.

"Pinkie! I'm so glad you're alright!"

"Ow, ow"

"Oh! I'm so sorry" Fluttershy apologized quickly pulling herself away

"It's ok" Pinkie said pulling herself up "So...what happened?"

"What do you remember?"

"I remember being carried in here, then you saying some stuff...how long has it been since that dragon attacked us?"

"two days"

"TWO DAYS!?"

"Yes"

"Wow...we should get back home"

"I tried to bring you home but I couldn't carry you all the way...and I can't fly" Fluttershy said extending her hurt wing out.

Pinkie gasped.

"Is it ok now?"

"I, I don't think so, it still hurts"

"Did you get your flower?"

"No but..."

Pinkie quickly interrupted

"What?! So we did all this for nothing?" She exclaimed

"No"

"What? Why?"

"Because...because....be....."

There it was again, even after all this, she couldn't say it. Her brain refused to pass the message to her mouth.

"Yes?"

"It just...wasn't for nothing, even if we did get hurt, you're ok now, that's all"

"Ok then, well we better get home...I'm not sure if I can walk that far though, I'm still aching alllll over!" Pinkie sighed raising a hoof

"I'll help you...if you like, or we can just stay here for a little longer"

"We should really get back though...are you ok to carry me if I start hurting?"

"Of course" Fluttershy smiled

"Kay, then let's go!"

Pinkie quickly bounded towards the caves opening, Fluttershy trailing not too far behind.

The pair slowly trotted through the clearing where the dragon had attacked them, Pinkie trying her best to ignore the pain from walking. Her slight limping had Fluttershy worried carefully watching her for any signs she might be tired. She'd been worried almost the whole time they were out here and never really got a chance to talk to Pinkie.

"So Pinkie...you never...um"

"Hm?"

".....um...told me who you had a crush on"

"I didn't?"

Fluttershy shook her head

"Oh, well it's supposed to be a secret"

The air grew silent for a moment.

"Oh, well that's alright then"

"Why do you wanna know?"

"No reason"

"Okie dokie"

They could see the second clearing up ahead there wasn't too much further until they reached Ponyville. Pinkie stopped all of a sudden and sat herself down for a moment to take break.

"Are you ok Pinkie?" Fluttershy asked her

"I dunno, it's starting to hurt everywhere"

"Do you want me to carry you?"

"It's that ok?"

"Of course it is"

Pinkie pulled herself up and climbed up onto Fluttershy's back, who cringed as the weight pressed on her wing. Fluttershy pressed on carrying her friend out of the clearing, with Ponyville not too far away now.

"Hey, Fluttershy?"

"Yes Pinkie?"

"Who do you like?"

Fluttershy's knees almost gave way as her eyes shot open. Her cheeks blushed as she tried to sway the conversation.

"We're almost there now" She said quickly

"Yup....so?"

"So?" Fluttershy asked trying to be oblivious to her question

"Who do you like? Come on you can tell me"

"Um...no pony, I don't like any pony"

"Aw, I know you do, you pretty much told me a few days ago"

"I, um...."

"Is it a secret? If it's a secret just tell me, I know you can't tell secrets"

"Yes! It's a secret"

"Oh, alright then"

Fluttershy let out a loud sigh. Her legs were beginning to tire and her wing not getting any better.

"We're here! I think I can take it from here!" Pinkie shouted

Pinkie quickly slipped off grinding Fluttershy's wing against herself. She tried not to say anything, letting only a small yelp come out. Pinkie took off to the entrance, Fluttershy slowly catching up to her trying to stretch her back out. She folded her wing back up and looked at Pinkie, who seemed to be standing still staring out at something. Fluttershy slowly approached Pinkie, slightly confused.

"Pinkie? What's wrong?"

The injured pink pony raised a hoof to point out at Ponyville not too far in the distance. Then Fluttershy saw it, the town was in ruins.

Chapter 6

The pair of ponies stood, staring in shock for quite some time. The town had a faint glow of flames and even from this distance they both could tell that no building was spared. Pinkie took a few steps forward, trying to get a better look. Fluttershy was terrified, frozen stiff, all sorts of thoughts crossed her mind. Was her cottage ok? What about everypony else? Angel? Twilight? What was going on?!

"What...What happened?" Pinkie sighed faintly

Fluttershy didn't answer.

"We....We, should go see if everything's.....ok" Pinkie finished

The fact that even Pinkie was shattered and unsure of what to think was nowhere near re-assuring. She felt sick, scared, sad and angry all at once. It was like whoever controlled her emotions was rapidly hitting all the buttons at with no continuity whatsoever.

Pinkie slowly walked towards town, calling out for her pale yellow friend to follow. Fluttershy quickly found herself slowly walking to town with Pinkie by her side. As the pair got closer and closer to the aftermath of the town, they both realized they were in some serious trouble. Every building had been either completely flattened or at least had a good deal of damage dealt. It was almost ten times as bad as the parasprite attack.

The pair walked among the wreckage of the town, flames flickered and burned in some buildings and they had yet to see another face.

"What...what happened?" Fluttershy stammered

"I have no idea"

"This...this is...awful"

They both continued down to what looked like the town hall...which

surprisingly was still somewhat intact. They both peered inside to see if anyone was there only to find Twilight and spike sitting in the centre. Who seemed to be having a conversation until interrupted.

"PINKIE! FLUTTERSHY!" She squealed as she raced over to them giving them both a big hug.

"You guys are alright! Thank goodness!"

"Twilight! What's going on!? What happened?" Pinkie demanded

"It's a long story, where were you two? And why are you so...messy? Oh my, your wing looks broken Fluttershy...doesn't it hurt?"

Fluttershy nodded with a tear in her eye.

"Hey, what's the wrong?"

She turned her head away in shame and sadness.

"We...were attacked. We went out looking for this flower that Fluttershy wanted to find, but this huge dragon found us, and, well I can't remember it slapped me with its tail. I guess...Fluttershy must have scared it off"

Fluttershy abruptly shook her head.

"I....I heard a roar, and...and then the dragon left"

Twilight listened in shock, her mouth wide open.

"What's going on?" Spike waddled over impatiently

"Two dragons attacked the town I tried to stop them but there's only so much one unicorn can do against 2 dragons. AppleJack's gone missing and Rarity and Rainbow Dash went out looking for you two. The rest of the ponies were taken to Canterlot for the time being. Princess Celestia told me to stay here and watch over the town while she searched for the two dragons."

"This is terrible....I should....I should have stopped that dragon" Fluttershy

complained

"Oh, I hardly think any of this is your fault, Fluttershy" Twilight explained

"Yeah, It's not your fault" Pinkie said pressing her nose against Fluttershy's cheek.

Twilight smiled "So I take it you told her then Fluttershy?"

Fluttershy's eyes widened as she shot her head up in shock.

"Told me what?"

Fluttershy rapidly shook her head at Twilight, her pink mane swaying backwards and forwards.

"Oh....um...nothing"

"Are you talking about who Fluttershy likes?"

"What? No, of course not. I wasn't going to tell you" Twilight giggled in panic

"Cus you know, Fluttershy told me that it's a secret and you know you can't break a promise like that" Pinkie said giving Twilight a slightly menacing look

"I know, I know"

"Good" Pinkie smiled "Now is there anything to eat here? I've been going 2 days without anything to eat and Im starving!"

"Sorry Pinkie, all the foods gone" Twilight frowned

"Awwww"

The trio began to make their way inside the town hall. The inside seemed to be a little worn out but it was definitely a lot better than the rest of the buildings. Most of the walls were intact and there were only a few cracks here and there. The floor creaked and it was particularly cold. They could

feel small gusts of air from the ruined town outside.

"Princess Celestia said she'd be back soon, to help me fix up the town, until then, we have to wait here"

Pinkie had already wandered off looking around, a few sighs and gasps wafted through the air as she searched the building from top to bottom. Twilight approached Fluttershy with caution, she knew how gentle she had to be with her.

"Hey Fluttershy?" She whispered

Fluttershy sat herself on the ground and looked at Twilight sadly. Her mind was like a jumbled mess. She had no idea what to think about. The town was in ruins, she had yet to tell Pinkie about her feelings and half of her friends were missing.

"What's wrong?"

There was a moment of silence as a tear fell from her face onto the cold wood below.

"It's all my fault, If I didn't bring Pinkie she wouldn't have gotten hurt" Fluttershy cried

"That may be true, but, she's alright now isn't she? And you got to spend time with her didn't you?" Twilight sat herself down next to the saddened yellow pegasus in an attempt to comfort her.

"I...I guess so"

"So don't worry about it, you did the best you could"

There was dead silence for a moment as Fluttershy recouped herself with a few sobs.

"So, Why haven't you told her yet?" Twilight pried gently

"I...I...just, can't. Even when she was unconscious....I couldn't say it. It's so frustrating but.....I can't help it"

Twilight leaned in and nuzzled her friends cheek.

"Don't worry about it, It'll come in it's own time, for now, just try to be her friend, okay?"

Fluttershy nodded with a smile.

"Twilight Sparkle, would you care to help me revive this wreckage of a town?" a more or less regal voice called

The pair spun around only to see a large white pony standing at the halls entrance, a faint glow radiating from her body.

"Princess!" Twilight called "Fluttershy, you should go keep an eye on Pinkie"

"Spike! Lets go"

"O.K"

Twilight and Spike headed outside leaving Fluttershy alone. She pulled herself up and walked over to Pinkie who was staring at a bookshelf intently. Her head twisted and contorted as though she was reading an unknown language.

"Oh, hey Fluttershy, what's up?"

"Pinkie...."

Fluttershy looked at the ground fiddling with her hoof.

"I...um...so, do you...mind if you tell me...who it is you like?" Fluttershy squeaked out.

"You promise not to tell anyone?"

"Yes, I promise"

Pinkie leaned in close and brought her hoof up to her mouth. A faint twinkle and light tapping and crashing sounds could be heard from outside. As the Twilight and Celestia attempted to restore the town.

"I'm not sure yet" Pinkie whispered

Fluttershy sighed with relief but yet still felt a little frustrated at not knowing.
"What about you? Who do you like?"

Fluttershy panicked a little "Oh...um...well you see"

"Fluttershy! Pinkie!" Twilight called gently trotting in the room

"Twilight!" Fluttershy gasped

"Really?" Pinkie smiled looking over at the purple pony walking towards them.

"Hey Twilight! Fluttershy said she likes...oops, no, secret, ok"

"So she told you now?" Twilight asked

Fluttershy pulled herself back with a hard pink tint on her face.

Pinkie nodded rapidly.

"Finally!" Twilight sighed

"So, you know? How long have you known Twilight?"

"Oh she only told me the day before you two left on your trip"

"Awww does that mean I've been keeping you two apart? I'm so sorry"

Twilight took a moment to think as Fluttershy backed herself to the ground, her eyes clamped shut.

"Wait what are you talking about?" Twilight asked

"Fluttershy said she likes you, I can tell you know since you already know!"
Pinkie grinned

Twilight jerked her head backwards "What?!" She looked down at Fluttershy.

"But I thought you told me you like Pinkie!?"

Pinkie's grin got wiped clean off her face.

"What?!" Pinkie gasped

"I...I do..." Fluttershy squeaked

"But...but then..." Pinkie stuttered

"I...I...I...love you" Fluttershy managed to force out. Her mane drooped over face, hiding the bright red tint on her cheeks. Twilight took a step back to give the pair some space, how Pinkie reacted was obviously the make or break point. Fluttershy began to shiver ever so slightly, her heart raced, and her eyes clamped shut.

Pinkie stood in silence, unsure of what to say.

"I.....you...you do?" Pinkie asked somewhat calmly

Fluttershy looked up through her mane with teary eyes.

Pinkie stepped over to her and laid herself on the floor in front of Fluttershy, her mind throwing all sorts of thoughts around.

"Are you sure?" Pinkie asked

Fluttershy clamped her eyes shut again, forcing a single tear to run down her cheek. Her body was trembling and very faint squeaks could be heard as though someone was shaking a mouse.

"Hey guys!" Spike called from the hall entrance

Twilight quickly spun around giving a menacing glare sending Spike quickly on his way. She quickly turned back to the couple on the floor not too far in front of her.

"Is...is that why you tried to help me when the dragon attacked?" Pinkie asked softly.

Fluttershy didn't respond directly but she made a feeble attempt to nod her head, despite the state she was in. Her uninjured wing was twitching frantically, signaling a severe amount of panic and discomfort. Her injured wing had no choice but to lay lifeless by her side. Pinkie was all of a sudden hit with a wave of guilt as she realized what she'd put her through. Even though they'd lost the flower, been beaten almost to death and had to tough it out for 2 days...Fluttershy still had no regrets. Pinkie couldn't help but pull up a few tears herself as she leaned in a little closer, pressing the tip of her nose against Fluttershy's through the small gap in her pink mane.

"You know Fluttershy..." Pinkie started

She looked at her yellow coated friend with a sense of confidence.

"When I said that I didn't know who I liked"

There was a brief pause as Fluttershy slowly opened her eyes to see Pinkie's faint smile.

"Well, I think I know now..." She continued

Fluttershy sniffled, beginning to settle down a little, raising her head just a bit. Twilight still standing back tried to hold off a few tears of her own. Pinkie shuffled just a little bit closer, with a heart warming smile. Time seemed to slow as Pinkie opened her mouth to speak.

"You"

Fluttershy's eyes fluttered as a smile slowly crossed her face. Pinkie stood up and held a hoof out to her partner with a grin. Fluttershy quickly jumped up and hugged her bright pink friend as tightly as she could, her tears were gone and her head clear of any doubt.

"Girls" Twilight intervened

"I'm very happy for you, two but we still need to find Applejack and the others. The town seems fine but they're still missing"

"Right..." Pinkie agreed

"Well Rainbow Dash and Rarity must have gone off into White Tail Woods...but where would Applejack go?"

The three ponies had a brief discussion until their words were abruptly cut short by a familiar dragons roar. All three of them gasped as they galloped to a window. Sure enough there was the source of the roar, tearing through the skies. Not 1, Not 2, but 3 dragons headed straight for the town!

Chapter 7

The thunderous wing beats of the dragon trio grew louder and panic filled the three ponies cowering at the window. The town only freshly repaired, was nowhere near ready for another attack like that.

"Princess!!!" Twilight called

The purple unicorn was quickly galloping outside in panic. Pinkie spun around and gave a light tug on Fluttershy's mane and headed after Twilight. The pale yellow pony hesitantly trotted after them.

"Princess Celestia! 3 dragons....."

"I know, my faithful student, I hear them too" Twilight was cut short by Celestia's soft voice.

"What are we supposed to do?"

"Nothing" Celestia sighed in anguish.

Twilight and her friends remained silent, as three loud thuds were heard and the ground shook. The sound of crushing wood and shattering glass tore through the air.

"Oh no! They're already here" Twilight yelled spinning around to go after the 3 beasts.

"Twilight!" Celestia called, stopping her in her tracks

"There is nothing you can do"

"But"

"Please, just take your friends out of town, I'll try my best to reason with them, Spike stay with me, I'll need you"

Spike gripped Celestia legs tightly, and gave a nervous salute.

"Princess...."

"Please go"

"Twilight!" Spike called

"I'll see you again, right?"

Twilight looked up at her mentor with teary eyes, before turning to her friends giving a gentle flick of her head gesturing for them to go. Twilight took a step forward and paused for a moment. She looked at Spike, the poor baby Dragon was terrified. She gave Spike a nod as the crunching grew louder and the crackling of fire joined the score of crunching and crashing.

Twilight took off after her friends, leaving Celestia and Spike behind to deal with the dragons. Twilight soon found herself running alongside Pinkie and Fluttershy as they left the doomed town behind. Fluttershy looked behind her, three large dragon heads could be seen towering over the small buildings of Ponyville. They seemed to have stopped tearing up the town for a moment, as though distracted. For a moment, she thought Celestia had convinced them to stop. Until they abruptly resumed their carnage with a spectacle of purple, red and blue flames alongside thick flailing arms.

The three were abruptly interrupted by a loud thud not far in front of them. A of the dragons stared intently with a ravenous look at the three ponies. T took a step towards them.

"T..T..Twilight...what do we do?" Fluttershy stammered

There was no answer.

"Over here!" Pinkie called from inside an empty house. Twilight and Fluttershy ran in with zero hesitation. They hid themselves in a corner hoping the dragon would let them be. The thuds of the dragon's footsteps grew louder, then softer, then louder again. He was looking for them, until the thuds finally stopped.

"We need to get out of town...but if he sees us..." Twilight couldn't finish her sentence.

There was a loud crunching noise followed a set of claws that came crashing into the sides of the house. The dragon tugged, in an attempt to tear the roof off the house. Twilight pulled herself up in panic as she darted her head around.

"We need to get out of here! FAST!" She squealed

Pinkie pulled herself up, looking for a way out. The cracks spread all over the house he almost had the roof clean off. Pinkie nudged Fluttershy telling her to get up.

"C'mon Fluttershy we need to get out"

Twilight galloped over to a window, almost tripping at the shattering structure of the building.

"Out here! GO!" Twilight called leaping out of the window.

Pinkie ran to the window looking back, Fluttershy hadn't budged. She ran over ducking her head down to lift her on to her back. The pegasus gave a little yelp as they jumped out of the window running after Twilight. The 3 of them were some distance away as the roof of the house was torn off. The dragon engulfed the interior with flames in fury.

The trio reached the edge Everfree Forrest, slowing to a stop. The sun was low in the sky as the faint orange glow of the afternoon started to show and the air growing colder.

"Well....what now?" Pinkie asked

She lowered her body a little allowing Fluttershy to hop off.

"Th..thanks Pinkie"

Pinkie smiled.

Twilight looked away, unsure of what to think.

"I...I don't know"

Fluttershy sat herself on the grass with a sigh.

"What's going on?" She muttered

"I have no idea, but there's no way it can be good, even the Princess couldn't stop them....there's more to this I meets the eye I think" Twilight explained propping herself on the ground.

Pinkie stood looking at both of her downed friends...unsure of what to do what to say. She'd always be the one to cheer her friends up but this time she felt she couldn't do that so easily.

"Come on guys, I'm sure everything will be fine, Twilight, Princess Celestia and Spike will be fine"

Twilight didn't answer.

Pinkie frowned, taking a few steps over to Fluttershy. She sat herself down slowly next to her, giving a playful nudge.

"Cheer up silly, I don't wanna have two ponies feeling sad" She smiled Fluttershy gave a faint smile.

"There we go!"

That smile was quickly torn straight off with worry.

"But what about AppleJack? Rainbow Dash.....Rarity?" Fluttershy asked

"I'm sure they're fine as well, you guys really need to stop thinking the worst"

There was a long awkward silence between the three of them. Nothing but the faded sounds of havoc could be heard in the distance.

"So...where are we gonna sleep?" Pinkie asked
She looked to her side only to find Fluttershy fast asleep resting against her. Pinkie noticed her wing lying lazily over her side. It looked terrible, it

definitely need serious attention and soon.

"Hey Twilight?"

There was a moments silence as Twilight stared out into the orange skies.

"Is there any way to heal with magic?"

"Not that I know of...sorry. If we had the library I might be able to study something for you but even then I don't think it's something easy to learn"

"Oh"

"Why do you ask?"

"Well...Fluttershy's wing looks kinda bad"

"Of course, it's obviously broken. There's not much we can do about it though"

Silence filled the air once again, even the distant crushing and cracking sounds had stopped. Twilight's mind however was far from silent. Why were the dragons attacking Ponyville all of a sudden? Why did Princess Celestia need Spike? Something just didn't sit right in her books and she was determined to get to the spine of it.

"I wonder if Ponyville's ok" Pinkie pondered

"I doubt it"

Twilight turned herself around to face Pinkie. The sight of the yellow and pink pair brought a long awaited smile to her face.

"I still can't believe she actually came forward...at such an awkward time too" Twilight giggled

Pinkie looked at the snoozing pony lying beside her.

"I also can't believe that you actually love her back, I honestly thought it was a lost cause when she came to the library asking for help"

Pinkie blushed a little with a smile, Her head lowered a little, as though trying to duck away from Twilights words.

Fluttershy's soft wheezes were the only sound amongst the crickets for quite sometime. The sun had long gone and a plume of smoke was towered over town.

"Well...I guess we should just sleep here" Twilight suggested resting her head on her forhooves.

Pinkie nodded keeping awake for quite some time, thinking, carefully on what Twilight had said to her.

"I also can't believe that you actually love her back"

Pinkie frowned, "Do I? I'm sure I do...I hope I do....."

She lowered her head down to the ground and shut her eyes. Those thoughts waded through her mind as everything faded to a black haze.

Fluttershy lay staring at the morning sun for a quite a while now. Despite what they'd been through, she still found it in her to enjoy the much smaller things. She pulled herself up off Pinkie, giving a quick stretch before cringing at her wing. She'd never realised how much she actually used her wings and now that she was without them, she felt severely debilitated, impaired, going for a quick flight was always a nice feel.

She sighed and looked at her lifeless wing draping over her side like a mangled yellow curtain. She grunted a little trying to move it but only managed a twitch. She sighed again, lifting her head to look around. The smoke still hung over Ponyville in the distance a little less dense then when it first showed up. Twilight and Pinkie were sprawled out over the grass still sleeping.

"I wonder if Angel is ok..." She said to herself

"He's fine" Twilight murmured

Fluttershy gasped, staring at Twilight with large eyes.

"Relax, all the animals were taken away with all the ponies to Canterlot"
Twilight finished

She hadn't realised she stopped breathing until she let out a deep breath of air.

"We should start looking for the others" Twilight suggested, pulling herself up off the ground.

Fluttershy nodded.

"You better get Pinkie up it's almost mid day already" Twilight pointed a hoof at the pink pony lying down before stepping off towards the forest.

Pinkie laid with her back to the ground, her hooves in the air. There was something about her that made Fluttershy blush. She had a sudden urge to just give her a huge hug. Instead, all she could muster through that thick shade of pink in her cheeks was a small prod to Pinkie's side. The sleeping pony gave a out a little peep, like a little squeaky toy as she twitched her leg.

"Pinkie..." Fluttershy whispered

"You have to get up now"

Pinkie rolled herself over, giving a groan. Fluttershy gave her side another poke.

"Pinkie...Pinkie?"

Pinkie grunted, stretching her limbs out with a few cracks and a yawn. She quickly rolled over to her belly and swung her head around to Fluttershy.

"Oh hey, Fluttershy, what's up?" She smiled

"Come on you two!" Twilight called from the edge of the forest

The pair looked behind them.

"Oooooo, Where are we going?!"Pinkie exclaimed

"We're going try and find everypony else"

"You mean Rainbow Dash and all them?" Pinkie smiled jumping up on her hooves.

"Yes"

"Wee! Let's go then!" She said dashing after Twilight. Fluttershy trailed not too far behind her trying to keep up with the hyperactive pink pony.

"Wait" Pinkie paused at Twilight "Why are we going into the Everfree forest?"

"Well, we already know where Rarity and Rainbow Dash are..sort of, so, we should find Applejack first...and since we're here we may as well look in there"

Pinkie gave a blank look as though giving a quick thought.

"Okie dokie lokie!" She said bounding into the dull forrest

Fluttershy cautiously followed in after her, her head lowered just a bit. Twilight took another look at the ruined town behind her. She spun around heading into the forest, with a mask of sadness on her face.

Chapter 8

The forest seemed to be far duller than it usually was. Or maybe it was just because the ponies had grown so used to bad news, that everything around seemed to emanate the same aura. A light grey mist hung around in the air like a flock of flies to manure. Not so much that it was thick, but there was something about it that just made them feel choked and lost for air. Twilight led the small band of ponies through the trees and hanging vines.

"Where exactly are we going Twilight?" Pinkie asked looking at her surroundings

"I'm not really sure, but since the Princess couldn't stand up to them, my best guess is it's something to do with the Elements of Harmony again"

Pinkie got lost in thought for a few moments. Fluttershy hung close behind her trying her best not to look out into the darkness.

"Wait a second....don't we have the elements inside us or something?"

"Your guess is as good as mine Pinkie"

"So you think Applejack is going to be at those ruins then?"

"It's worth a shot"

"And Rainbowdash?"

"Sure, I guess"

"Rarity?"

"Uhhh...possibly?" Twilight grumbled

"What about gummy?"

"The animals were taken to Canterlot" her frustration was getting the better of her

"Ohhh...."

There was more silence again. Nothing could be heard other than the light steps of the ponies on the grassy forest floor and the occasional snap or crunch of branches.

"What about Ang..."

"PINKIE!" Twilight shouted "please be quiet...I'm trying to think"

Pinkie pulled her head back a little somewhat startled while Fluttershy gave a mild peep.

"Sorry Twilight, I'm just wondering"

"Well so am I" Twilight replied stubbornly

The trio came across a familiar river, only this time around there was no sorrowful serpent to be seen. They carefully trotted in, wading through the water. It wasn't as deep as they'd expected. Pinkie looked back at Fluttershy, she seemed to have gotten used to the dreary surroundings and was looking around. Twilight turned around to look at her friends.

"There wasn't much further after that river was there?"

Pinkie and Fluttershy pulled themselves out of the water.

"I...um....I don't think so" Fluttershy said as she thought about her words mid-sentence.

"Right, then we're almost there" Twilight smiled a little and trotted off at a faster than normal pace.

Pinkie looked back at Fluttershy and gave her a warm smile, tilting her head as to suggest for her to get moving. The pair of them followed after Twilight. The sky was already beginning to darken. Night was falling and the forest became cold and damp. A faint breeze could be felt through the twists and turns of the vines and bushes as the trees swayed ever so

gently and the occasional rustle of some small critter in the woods would alert the three ponies.

A light fog began to settle in as the moon shone silver light down on the forest. With which a few beams of light would stream through the canopy that the trees formed. Fluttershy and Pinkie walked side by side, with Twilight not too far in front of them. As the three ponies saw a clearing in the distance their pace picked up as they reached the bridge.

"There it is!" Twilight called

"But... Twilight...the bridge, kinda.." Pinkie frowned pointing at the large crevice in the ground

Twilight turned around to look at what she was talking about and sure enough, the bridge was broken.

"Shoot! We can't fly over and fix it now either" Twilight stamped her hoof
"Fluttershy your wing is still broken isn't it?" She finished

All three of them turned to look at the mess of feathers hanging by her right side.

"Well....what now?" Pinkie asked

"Hmm" Twilight thought "Well, I can teleport myself over there but I don't know if I can manage to get you two over as well"

There was a brief moment's silence as Twilight brought her hoof to her mouth.

"I could also try use my magic to hold the bridge up while you two walk across then teleport myself"

Twilight sighed "Both are difficult, which would you rather?"

Pinkie and Fluttershy looked at each other with worried faces.

"I um...I don't really....like the sound of teleporting" Fluttershy murmured

"I guess that means...that you'll have to try hold the bridge up Twilight"

Twilight took a deep breath "ok you two, I don't know how hard it's going to be to hold it up or how long I can do it so once its up get across as fast as you can, ok?"

Pinkie nodded stepping towards the edge of the cliff, Fluttershy right behind her. Twilight closed her eyes as the tip of her horn began to sparkle. Small sparks flung off like little fireflies as the glowing became more intense. Pinkie could see the bridge slowly being brought up to them.

"Ready Fluttershy?" Pinkie asked

"...Um....no?"

The bridge made a loud crack as it came into contact with their side of the cliff.

"Too late lets run!"

Pinkie galloped onto the bridge Fluttershy panicked and ran after. The pair only made it half way when loud crashing noises from in the temple made Twilight lose her focus. The bridge slipped away from their feet as they went plummeting into the crevice with panicked screams.

Twilight saw the two fall as her eyes flashed white with a spectacle of purple beams surrounding her. She raised her hooves, slamming them to the ground sending a light quake through the ground as the two air borne ponies came to a stop and began gently floating upwards. At first the pair were baffled but as they came over the top of the cliff they saw.

Twilight stood there, her hooves slightly dug into the ground with small cracks around her. Her head was held high and at the tip of her horn was a swirling inferno of lights, almost double the size of her body. Sparks of white light flew off her horn like lightning as she gently placed them on the other side of the crevice.

The lights faded and Twilights stance drooped as she fell to her knees.

"Twilight! Are you ok?!" Pinkie called

She didn't respond

"Twilight?!"

Twilight raised her face, pulling herself up almost toppling over.

"I...I'm ok" She muttered "You two go on ahead...I'll...I'll catch up"

"Ok then...be careful Twilight" Pinkie said spinning around to the temple they had not seen on some time.

The temple hadn't seen sunlight in quite some time, the structure seemed to have been even more torn apart then when they last saw it. The grey stone looked ragged and unstable; the vines had clearly taken a larger hold over the building now. Bits and pieces, both large and small, of crumbled stone lay scattered around the ruins.

Fluttershy kept close behind Pinkie staring at her eerie surroundings, not so much as scared anymore but getting hit with nostalgia.

"This place has changed a little" Pinkie whispered as the pair entered through the large stone arch.

Fluttershy gave out a murmur of agreement as she looked over to the pedestal that once staged the physical forms of the elements of harmony. Two of the five prongs had been broken off and lay on the stone ground at its base. There seemed to be what looked like glitter scattered around it.

"It doesn't feel like it's been long since we were here last huh?" Pinkie's words echoed ever so slightly off the cold stone walls.

Under better circumstances, the pair would probably have been happy they were back here. Had Dash, AJ and Rarity not gone missing they might even be able to cheer the place up. This is technically where all six of them had really been linked together, where they all stood up to Nightmare moon.

The thought made Fluttershy sniffle a little as tears built up in her eyes. She wasn't certain if they were of happiness, doubt, sadness or despair but she was certain of one thing. Fluttershy slowly trotted up to Pinkie with a smile

and nuzzled her pink, poofy mane. Which turned out to be much more of a pleasant surprise than she'd expected. Even after all this, the scent was a little dulled down, but she still smelled sweet.

Pinkie tilted her head up and back a little, turning to look at the yellow pony.

"What's up silly?"

Fluttershy pulled away and shook her head. She was about to speak when Pinkie noticed something just behind the pedestal.

"Hey? What's that?" She said walking over to what seemed to be a darkened archway. Fluttershy followed behind her unsure of what to think.

"That.....wasn't there before...was it?" She asked Pinkie softly

"Nope"

Without hesitation Pinkie was already headed off into the darkness. The moment she stepped through she was momentarily blinded by a sudden change in lighting.

Pinkie let out a sharp gasp

Fluttershy waited at the arch, her eyes widening at the sound of Pinkie's squeal. She shifted her head forwards a little, swallowing hard.

"P...Pinkie?"

"Fluttershy...you need to see this" She heard Pinkie call almost immediately after Fluttershy's call.

Fluttershy took a few slow steps toward the dark abyss. She was shocked by the fact that the darkness seemed to be an illusion. Something someone set up to prevent others from finding it. All with good reason as well, Fluttershy realized as she saw what was beyond the magic dark curtain.

There was a long wide corridor still made of stone, much like the rest of the structure. At its end was a throne and what looked like a pony cloaked in a rather dark cape seated neatly on it. Three platforms were on either side of

the corridor. One of the platforms on the right had a large pillar of red light and hovering in the centre of the light was Rainbow. The second pillar on the right was similar only its light was orange, AppleJack was floating helplessly in the middle of it. One platform on the right had a deep purple light and sure enough there was Rarity, immobilized. Each of the ponies had the necklace they had gotten from defeating nightmare moon hung around their necks.

Fluttershy gasped when she saw her friends hung up like that. They seemed to be fine, apart from being unable to move or talk. The cloaked figure moved the slightest bit.

"Perfect!" A familiar voice called

The cloaked figure stood up and slowly edged forward, stepping into the light.

"T...Trixie!?" Pinkie squealed.