**PARENTAL GLIDEANCE**

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Note: All mentions of ponies in Cloudsdale refer to pegasi.

Prologue

(*Opening shot: fade in to a close-up of Sweetie Belle backing slowly up across a stretch of park land outside Ponyville. Her horn is glowing like a neon sign, and both her strained groans and those of Apple Bloom and Scootaloo come through loud and clear as they advance into view facing her. The three fillies are drawing back the payload pouch of a giant slingshot with considerable effort. It is daytime.*)

**Bloom:** (*between grunts*) Scootaloo, is this such a good idea?

**Scootaloo:** What are you talking about? (*Longer shot; they are moving toward a stake driven into the ground.*) This is the best idea I’ve ever had!

(*Pan quickly ahead of them and stop on a ramp that curves sharply up to vertical, then cut back to her and Bloom.*)

**Bloom:** (*grunting*) It’s just—

**Scootaloo:** You want to come. But we talked about this. Non-pegasus ponies fall through the clouds.

(*Cut to a “target’s-eye” perspective of the launch ramp and Cloudsdale floating high above it, rainbow waterfalls streaming from the periphery, then to the trio.*)

**Bloom:** Right, but— (*Zoom out; they finish the hookup and Sweetie cuts her spell.*)

**Sweetie:** I think we’re good.

(*The thick rubber bands attached to either end of the pouch creak and groan ominously under the considerable tension. Bloom darts to the supports that anchor the front ends, finding them badly bowed.*)

**Bloom:** We are?

(*Close-up of Scootaloo, donning her crash helmet, and zoom out to frame the other two on the start of the next line. She is wearing her saddlebags and standing within the pouch, and Sweetie floats her scooter to her.*)

**Bloom:** Scootaloo, I know you have to go to Cloudsdale to finish your report. (*twanging one band*) I’m just wonderin’ if this is the best way to get there.

**Scootaloo:** It’ll be fine. (*She steps aboard.*) Besides, how else could I get there?  
**Bloom:** A pegasus chariot?

**Sweetie:** A flock of birds?

**Bloom:** A hot-air balloon?

**Scootaloo:** Huh. Those do seem a lot safer. (*Extreme close-up of the backing stake on the end of this, then a long shot of all three.*) Maybe I should try to find another waaaaAAAAAYYYYY!!

(*Her last word goes haywire because the stake behind her uproots itself from the turf, releasing the bands so that the slingshot propels her forward at insane velocity. Bloom and Sweetie have no time to do anything except gasp in fright before she hits the ramp and gets launched straight up. Cut to high above the park, the camera backing quickly upwards as Scootaloo approaches it with wings buzzing like mad.*)

**Scootaloo:** Woo-hoo!

(*The screen fills with the inside of her joyously open mouth. Fade to black, then snap immediately to her zeroing in on the aerial metropolis and cut to a patch of cloud surface. Her head breaks through from beneath and she ends up stuck there, eyes rattling in their sockets.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*woozily*) Nailed it.

(*Zoom out slightly as a push-style or “cylinder” lawnmower buzzes to a stop just short of her. It has been modified to trim clouds instead of grass, with an outer housing that covers the blades and a small exhaust pipe to vent the water vapor. Cut to just behind her head, framing the operator as a vague stallion shape cast into near-silhouette by the bright sun. A bluish coat, short rainbow-striped mane/tail, the latter with one lock jaggedly cut as a lightning bolt, light yellow hoof tips, and open-collared shirt with a white T-shirt underneath can be discerned for the moment, and he speaks in an easygoing, older male voice. This is Bow Hothoof.*)

**Bow:** (*echoing slightly, setting mower aside*) Uh, little ma’am, are you all right?

(*Once Scootaloo shakes her head clear, she pulls in a sharp gasp and les her eyes pop in undiluted surprise. The camera cuts to an extreme close-up of Bow’s face and pans to various body parts, picking out the following additional features: a blue coat darker than that of Rainbow Dash and with a slight violet tint; bright brown eyes, pronounced beard stubble; the green color of his outer shirt, whose collar and rolled-up sleeves are in a lighter hue; cutie mark of a horseshoe against a rainbow arcing from a cloud. Cut to Scootaloo.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*with growing excitement*) You’re… (*Zoom in.*) …you’re… (*Again.*) …you’re…

(*Zoom out quickly as she pops up to hover above the lawn, situated in front of a sizable Cloudsdale house.*)

**Scootaloo:** *…RAINBOW DASH’S DAD!!*

(*She drops back and trots wildly in place, an ear-to-ear grin threatening to split her face in two.*)

**Bow:** Uh, yes. (*extending a hoof*) Bow Hothoof, at your service.

(*She stops her legs and shifts to a lip-chewing smile, then an eardrum-popping scream of sheer delight as she shakes the proffered hoof in two of hers. Bow looks around himself for help, but grimaces when he sees none coming. Fade to black.*)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(*Opening shot: fade in to an extreme close-up of Scootaloo’s wide-open, still-screaming mouth and zoom out. She is still pumping Bow’s foreleg at full steam, and she keeps going even after he pulls loose.*)

**Bow:** (*voice raised*) Uh, honey, somethin’s goin’ on out here!

(*The front door opens and a mare steps out: lighter blue coat, very nearly the same shade as Rainbow’s; short, two-tone light red-orange mane/tail; open yellow-orange jacket with off-white sleeve cuffs over a matching shirt, red-violet eyes with birdcatcher spots. This is Windy Whistles, whose cutie mark cannot be seen due to the placement of her wings. After almost a full ten seconds, Scootaloo winds down and gets a look at the puzzled pony—and then her lungs kick up to higher-pitched overdrive when the camera cuts back to her. Now she turns in place in addition to screaming.*)

**Windy:** (*from o.s.*) Oh! (*Cut to her crossing to Bow; both have feathers plugged into ears.*) Heavens to Celestia, what’s wrong with her?

(*This shot picks out her mark as a gust of wind issuing from a cloud.*)

**Bow:** I don’t know, but you just made it worse.

(*The four-legged fire siren steps over to them and finally gives her lungs a breather.*)

**Scootaloo:** Sorry. It’s just…you’re… (*hovering*) …*RAINBOW DASH’S PARENTS!!*

(*Flopping down to the cloud lawn on her back, she uses her wings and hind legs to push herself around in a circle while letting off a fresh sonic assault. Both of said parents keep their ears covered.*)

**Bow:** She’s doing it again! (*Windy extends a hoof to stop Scootaloo’s head.*)

**Windy:** Oh, dearie, please! You might shatter my Princess Celestia commemorative plates! Ow!

(*Pan quickly to the house’s living room, whose furniture uses tufts of cloud for cushions and pillows. A fireplace is filled with the same glowing orange crystals that appeared during the title story told in “A Hearth’s Warming Tail.” A set of knickknack shelves on the wall behind the couch is loaded up with plates and figurines honoring Princess Celestia, and the three plates on the mantelpiece crack badly under Scootaloo’s sustained scream. Back to her, finally going silent and clapping a hoof to her mouth. When both parents are seen next, they will have unstopped their ears.*)

**Scootaloo:** I’m so sorry! I just— (*Short squeal.*) —I can’t believe I’m meeting you! (*standing, removing helmet*) My name’s Scootaloo, and I’m doing a school report on your daughter! (*Her huge grin bewilders them a bit.*)

**Bow:** Our Rainbow Dash?

**Scootaloo:** (*wagging tail*) The report’s on an inspirational pony in my life, and nopony inspires me more than she does!

(*One nip at her saddlebags later, she has a book clamped in her jaws; taped to the front cover is her rendition of Rainbow’s cockily grinning visage. As Bow and Windy lean in close, the camera cuts to a close-up and it is opened to show several photos on the first couple of pages. First up: Rainbow holding Scootaloo aloft while flying to Winsome Falls at the end of “Sleepless in Ponyville.” On the next line, a page flip exposes other photos, as well as newspaper clippings and drawings.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*from o.s.*) I’m putting together this scrapbook for my report. (*Zoom out quickly to frame all three.*) I’m her biggest fan!

**Bow:** Uh, little trotter, what you say is impossible— (*grinning*) —because nopony is a bigger fan of our Rainbow Dash than us!

(*He pulls his green shirt open as he finishes, showing Rainbow’s cutie mark emblazoned on the white one beneath. Windy underscores his declaration with a grin and nod of her own. Scootaloo, having set her book down, stares awestruck. When the mare speaks next, she reveals her normal tone of voice as being quite chipper.*)

**Scootaloo:** Whoa… (*eyeing Bow’s shirt*) Do you always wear that shirt?

**Bow:** (*chuckling*) Actually, it’s, uh, laundry day. But pretty great, right?

**Scootaloo:** (*nodding*) Yeah!

**Windy:** My name’s Windy Whistles, and I just have to say that it is a total blast to meet somepony that loves Rainbow Dash as much as we do.

(*She ruffles the filly’s unruly mane and hops over to Bow’s side as she says this.*)

**Bow:** What can we help you with?

**Scootaloo:** Well, I know all about Rainbow Dash’s time in Ponyville— (*shaking head*) —but I don’t know anything about her life before that. (*Cut to the couple.*)

**Bow:** (*chuckling*) Well, you came to the right place!

(*Zoom out to frame the entire house on this line. There follows the flash of a camera from below o.s.; cut to Scootaloo, who now has one mounted around her neck. The picture she has just taken slides out from a slot below the lens—an instant model—and she lowers the rig, pulls in a lung-bursting gasp, and grins.*)

(*Dissolve to a close-up of her seated at a table and pasting the photo into her scrapbook; she has put away the camera but is still wearing her saddlebags. This room is different from the living room seen previously.*)

**Windy:** (*from o.s.*) Here you go.

(*Zoom out on the next line to frame her and Bow; she flies over to the table, carrying a tall, overstuffed sandwich on a plate.*)

**Windy:** Rainbow Dash’s favorite meal. (*She sets it down and lands.*) A pasta and potato sandwich on sourdough. She just loved to carbo-load. (*Giggle.*)

**Scootaloo:** I can’t believe I’m eating Rainbow Dash’s favorite food— (*leaning toward Windy*) —made by Rainbow Dash’s mom— (*hooves to cheeks*) —while sitting in Rainbow Dash’s childhood kitchen!

(*On the end of this, the camera zooms out to frame all of this space for the first time. The table is in one corner, a couch following the contour of the wall to provide seating for her and Bow, and a couple of cloud-lined stools are drawn up as well. Across from the group are an oven and countertop; pictures and shelves line the walls at varying heights.*)

**Scootaloo:** *This is the greatest day of my life!*

(*She decides to celebrate by wolfing down half the sandwich in a single colossal bite, and she lets bits of it drop from her mouth as she chews blissfully.*)

**Scootaloo:** Mmm-mmm!

(*Close-up of the book on the end of this; she reaches into view and slaps a hunk of the sandwich against a blank spot on one page. The camera then shifts to frame all three again.*)

**Bow:** I think it’s time for a tour of the house.

**Scootaloo:** (*mouth full*) Okay!

(*Wipe to a hallway whose ceiling is formed from clouds. Bow, Windy, and Scootaloo step into view from around a corner; the filly has swallowed her food and broken out her camera.*)

**Bow:** (*indicating one wall*) Our little Dashie was an early learner.

(*Close-up of a sequence of pictures hung up there, panning slowly to follow her growth from baby to adolescent. Two adjacent snaps show her flying at the end of a tether wrapped around a hapless Windy.*)

**Bow:** (*from o.s.*) And so rambunctious. The combination was— (*Windy pops up into view.*)

**Windy:** (*singsong*) Exciting!

(*She moves ahead as the lens of Scootaloo’s camera extends into view and snaps a picture.*)

**Scootaloo:** Whoa…

(*Into the book it goes; she scrambles to catch up, finding the proud parents standing at a door set with Rainbow’s cutie mark.*)

**Scootaloo:** Is that…her room?

(*Cut to the other side of the door, which swings inward under Windy’s hoof. Scootaloo’s jaw drops open for a silent split second, and then she rears up with an ecstatic scream and dives in, wrapping herself in a curtain.*)

**Scootaloo:** Rainbow Dash’s linen closet! (*Fall on a rug, doing the backstroke.*) Her carpet! (*Move to a poster showing a tortoise and some text.*) Her inspirational poster! (*reading*) “When the going gets tough, the tough don’t notice because they have hard shells.” That’s so Rainbow Dash!

(*Now the room is seen in full as she zips to and fro, snapping a flurry of pictures. Rainbows painted along the base of the walls; cloud ceiling studded with stars and moons; bed framed by nightstand, bulletin board, and overhead shelf; more shelves lining the back wall, partly obscured by the curtains; a plethora of toys on floor and shelves; posters, pictures, and a basketball hoop on the walls; vanity with mirror in a back corner. The scrapbook is flung down on the bed, falling open to expose an unused page that gets the new images plunked onto it.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*jumping on bed*) Woo-hoo!

**Bow:** (*crossing room with Windy*) Scootaloo, want to see something *really* cool?

(*The adults stop at a set of starred curtains, and he pulls a hanging rope in his teeth to open them. Beyond them is another door; as Scootaloo moves closer, he pushes it open to expose a blinding white light beyond. A choir of unseen angels begins to sing, and she shields her eyes and steps gingerly closer. Fade to white, then in to her on the other side; the brilliance has faded somewhat, and trophies and medals are arrayed on the wall behind her. She forces her eyes wide open; once they have adjusted to the light, they pop saucer-wide and she pulls in what may be the deepest gasp of her young life.*)

(*Cut to just behind her and pan slowly across the room—a lavish tribute to the couple’s talented daughter. Trophies big and small, medals, photos, newspapers, a graduation mortarboard cap and gown, a star/rainbow/crystal mobile suspended from the ceiling, and an enormous image of Rainbow’s face decorating the carpet. Bow and Windy step in after Scootaloo, the stallion closing the door and the choir falling silent.*)

**Bow:** (*touching handle*) I, uh, installed the sound effects myself.

(*He opens and closes the door a couple of times with a chuckle, the heavenly voices making themselves heard on the openings and cutting off on the closings.*)

**Bow:** Pretty great, huh?

**Scootaloo:** So great!

**Windy:** And look at this!

(*She darts away; cut to a close-up of a diaper mounted in a frame. Zoom out to frame her and Scootaloo on the start of the next line; it rests atop a glass trophy case.*)

**Windy:** She was wearing it when she spoke her first words.

**Scootaloo:** (*stars in eyes*) So cool!

(*So, of course, she captures it on film. Windy then leads her across to a trophy topped by a gilded piece of cracked ceramic ware.*)

**Windy:** And this broken lantern is from when she first learned to fly. (*Picture; they cross to one featuring a half-eaten gold apple.*) And this bitten apple’s from when she grew her first tooth. (*sighing, wiping away a tear*) So many memories. (*The flash goes off again.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*to both adults*) You’re so lucky to have all of these.

**Windy:** (*pacing behind her*) Well, I may have a ton of Dash-mentos— (*poking her saddlebag*) —but I don’t have any of those “Rainbow Dash saves Ponyville” headlines like you.

**Scootaloo:** (*gasping happily*) Tradesies?

**Windy:** Dealsies!

(*After a high five to seal the agreement, Scootaloo passes over a clipping and gets the diaper—no longer in its frame—in exchange. The latter promptly goes in the scrapbook.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*looking around*) So where’s all the Wonderbolt stuff? (*Her question confuses them a bit.*)

**Bow:** You mean Rainbow Dash’s personal collection of Wonderbolt memorabilia? (*Book into saddlebags; cross to them.*)

**Scootaloo:** No, I mean, where’s all the stuff about Rainbow Dash getting accepted into the Wonderbolt Academy, and then getting chosen as a Wonderbolt?

(*An even more perplexed look passes between the two grown ponies before turning itself on her.*)

**Scootaloo:** Wait. You don’t know that your daughter’s a Wonderbolt? (*beaming*) And I got to tell you?

(*She gasps and grins from ear to ear as the news sinks in, prompting them to voice stunned little neighs.*)

**Bow,** **Windy:** Uhhhhhh…

**Scootaloo:** Oh, wow! You should see your faces right now!

(*A flash and shutter click deposit a photo of the thunderstruck couple on her hoof; close-up of it.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*from o.s., pointing*) See, that’s what your faces look like.

(*They are utterly frozen except for a brief flick of Windy’s eyes toward Bow and back again. Fade to black.*)

Act Two

(*Opening shot: fade in to the same shot of them.*)

**Bow,** **Windy:** *Our daughter’s a Wonderbolt?!?*

(*Confusion shifts to warm smiles and back again as the angelic choir sounds off; cut to Scootaloo, having opened the door. She slams it shut and silence reigns again.*)

**Bow:** Great timing.

**Scootaloo:** (*winking*) Great door. (*She crosses to them.*)

**Windy:** I just…it’s… (*hugging Bow*) …unbelievable!

**Scootaloo:** You two were kind enough to show me the Rainbow Dash *you* know. Now please allow me to show you the Rainbow Dash *I* know.

(*Husband’s smile is met by wife’s grin. Dissolve to a patch of blue sky and happy white clouds, against which Rainbow pulls into view, fully kitted out in her Wonderbolt flight suit and goggles. She and four others fly a V formation, first descending and then climbing. Spitfire is among the group.*)

**Spitfire:** Let’s make some thunder!

**Rainbow:** I was born to make thunder!

(*The five plunge sharply toward the plateau runway that forms part of the team’s headquarters, as seen in “Newbie Dash.” With only inches to go before hitting the pavement, they pull sharply up to generate a booming shock wave that ripples across the surface. Up and up and up they go, but a sudden visible distortion of the air brings them to an abrupt halt; it is accompanied by two boisterous voices calling encouragement from far below—Bow and Windy. This shot clearly establishes the other three members of the squad as Fleetfoot, Misty Fly, and Soarin’.*)

**Spitfire:** We’ve got turbulence!

**Rainbow:** How? Where’s it coming from? (*All look about.*)

**Misty:** (*pointing downward*) There!

(*A new angle picks out the proud parents and Scootaloo alongside the runway, and a zoom in reveals the megaphones that Bow and Windy are using to make themselves heard all too clearly. Scootaloo has stowed her scrapbook. A mortified Rainbow puts her goggles up on her forehead.*)

**Rainbow:** Oh, no.

(*They land, Rainbow well behind the others; the cheers die out.*)

[*Animation goof: Soarin’s goggles are seen both up and down during the following sequence.*]

**Spitfire:** Okay. Which pony broke protocol and invited guests to our training exercises?

**Rainbow:** I…guess they’re with me.

(*She claps a hoof to her face with a frustrated groan and clops away toward them; they have put away the megaphones.*)

**Rainbow:** (*with forced cheer*) Mom! Dad! So good to see you.

**Windy:** (*hugging her with vigor*) Oh, honey, it’s so great to see you too! And wow! You were so amazing up there with all of that flying!

**Rainbow:** Uh, how did you know I was here? (*Bow crosses behind her.*)

**Windy:** Scootaloo filled us in on everything. (*pinching her cheeks; Bow ruffles her mane*) You modest pony, you!

(*A flash gives away the filly’s desire to immortalize the moment. Cut to her, photo sliding out of her camera.*)

**Scootaloo:** I can’t believe I’m documenting the moment your parents first saw you as a Wonderbolt!

(*Into her bags she goes; out comes the book onto the grass; onto an available page goes the photo.*)

**Windy:** (*to Rainbow*) And these must be your Wonderbolt friends! (*flying to them; all with goggles up*) Hello, team! (*Land; zip to Misty.*) I’m Windy Whistles… (*To Soarin’.*) …the mom of the best Wonderbolt ever! (*To Fleetfoot.*) Yeah! (*Pause.*) Just kidding. (*Rocket up to a hover.*) You guys were great too. Go, team!

(*Across the way, Bow has draped a wing across Rainbow’s back; red-violet eyes roll wearily.*)

**Rainbow:** (*half-whining*) Moooooom! (*Hoof to face; Scootaloo giggles. Windy lands to face Spitfire.*)

**Spitfire:** (*holding out a wing to shake*) Hello, ma’am. Nice to meet you.

**Windy:** (*pumping it with gusto*) Nice to meet you as well. (*Let go.*) And love those goggles! (*Extreme close-up of the lenses, reflecting her.*) Love ’em!

(*Both again, Spitfire backing up ever so slightly in the face of the other mare’s ardor.*)

**Windy:** You know, I have goggles too, but they’re mostly just for swimming. Oh, and bath time. (*Rainbow grabs a mouthful of her tail and drags her back.*)

**Rainbow:** Mom, please! They don’t want to hear about your bath time!

**Bow:** (*tearing up, pulling her in with a wing*) I can’t believe it. My daughter, a Wonderbolt! So proud. (*She extracts herself.*)

**Rainbow:** Dad, hold it together! We’re in public!

**Bow:** I know, I know. (*wiping eyes*) It…but it’s…just…you had a goal, and… (*crying again*) …you achieved it!

(*The fresh gout of overjoyed tears comes with another crushing embrace. She pats him awkwardly on the shoulder as the camera zooms out to put Windy and Scootaloo in the fore, Scootaloo taking a picture. On the start of the next line, pan away from them to the other four flyers.*)

**Spitfire:** All right, Wonderbolts! Let’s hit the showers and give Rainbow Dash some time to spend with her family. (*Slightly teasing looks on the end of this; then they move off.*)

**Rainbow:** Okay, yeah! Great practice! I’ll, uh…uh, catch up with you guys in a minute. (*Fleetfoot hangs back.*)

**Fleetfoot:** (*saluting Bow*) Sir, you really raised a great flyer. (*She exits; his eyes brim anew.*)

**Bow:** Oh, no. (*Choke back a sob.*) Tears…welling up again!

**Rainbow:** (*rolling eyes*) Daaad!

(*With considerable effort, she manages to wrench herself free of his grip and pop up into a hover. Surprise turns to irritation as she shifts her gaze from the rest of the team, now approaching their barracks, and back toward his direction. Scootaloo takes a picture of the couple as Rainbow lands next to her.*)

**Rainbow:** (*ushering her away*) Could you give us a sec?

(*Both parents wave using their wings; cut to the informal sisters.*)

**Scootaloo:** Is something wrong?

**Rainbow:** Yeah! You should’ve warned me that you were bringing my parents, or talked to Twilight or something, not just shown up! (*She paces a bit.*)

**Scootaloo:** Why?

**Rainbow:** (*groaning*) It’s just, my parents and I have a delicate relationship. I love them very much, and we’re really close, but there’s a reason I didn’t tell them I’m a Wonderbolt. They can be a little bit…embarrassing.

**Scootaloo:** Huh? (*She sees them waving.*) Really?

**Rainbow:** Yeah, really! (*pacing toward them, hiding face briefly behind wing*) And now you’ve invited a whole lot of crazy into my life!

**Scootaloo:** What’s wrong with a little support?

(*She walks toward the family. Dissolve to a long shot of the cloud racetrack in Canterlot, last seen in “Rarity Investigates!”, and zoom in slowly. The stands are filled with spectators, and a small group watches from the adjoining mountainside courtyard as a couple of pegasi fly in to take their seats. Bow and Windy are among those in the highest box, Windy looking at a program, and the Cutie Mark Crusaders enter. Scootaloo has put away her camera.*)

**Scootaloo:** Bow and Windy— (*All three sit.*) —I’d like you to meet Apple Bloom and Sweetie Belle.

**Bloom:** Hi!

**Sweetie:** (*waving*) Hello.

**Bow:** Greetings, small ponies!

**Bloom:** Are you excited to see Rainbow Dash?

**Windy:** Oh, my, yes! (*Bow nods.*) And to think we never bothered to come to a Wonderbolt event!

**Bow:** We said, “If Rainbow Dash isn’t a Wonderbolt, then what’s the point?” But now she is!

**Scootaloo:** And she earned it.

(*Out comes the scrapbook from her bags; she lets it drop, open, onto the seats. As she continues, Bow and Windy move closer and she flips a page, the camera shifting to a close-up of photos showing two moments from “Wonderbolts Academy”—Rainbow receiving her acceptance letter, then enduring Spitfire’s verbal abuse.*)

**Scootaloo:** Did you know it all started when she won a spot in the coveted Wonderbolt Academy— (*Zoom in on the second picture.*) —training under Spitfire! (*Cut to the couple.*)

**Windy:** I didn’t know that! How wonderful!

**Scootaloo:** (*from o.s., pushing book closer*) But then, she had some heavy competition—

(*Cut to it, the top of her head visible behind. New pages, both showing Rainbow and Lightning Dust in their cadet uniforms and goggles, on the runway and in flight.*)

**Scootaloo:** —especially against another pegasus named Lightning Dust.

**Windy:** Oh, no!

**Scootaloo:** (*turning page*) But of course, Rainbow Dash proved to be the best—

(*Close-up of one photo: Rainbow saluting and wearing the gold lead-pony badge confiscated from Lightning upon her expulsion.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*from o.s, pointing*) —and later made it into the Wonderbolt Reserves! (*Cut to Bow and Windy.*)

**Windy:** Hooray again!

**Scootaloo:** (*from o.s.*) But…

(*The entire group again, then a close-up shot of the suavely grinning Wind Rider as seen in “Rarity Investigates!” as she continues, pointing it out.*)

**Scootaloo:** …jealous ex-Wonderbolt Wind Rider was worried that Rainbow Dash might break speed record. And so…

(*Tilt down to the next one: Rainbow hovering uneasily at the center of a knot of accusing Wonderbolts, including Wind. Scootaloo points to this as well.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*from o.s.*) …he framed her for a crime she didn’t commit.

**Windy:** Oh, no!

(*Scootaloo turns the next page, exposing a picture with a large red X drawn over it.*)

**Scootaloo:** But thanks to Rarity, Rainbow Dash proved her innocence and became a backup Wonderbolt—

(*Close-up of this snap: a white Wonderbolt stallion in full gear, with a two-tone orange mane/tail and eye color hidden by the X.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*from o.s.*) —until Firestreak retired—

(*Flip; now the closing shot of “Newbie Dash” is on display—Rainbow flying with Spitfire and Soarin’ under an image of her own grinning face.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*from o.s.*) —and she became an official Wonderbolt! (*The five again.*)

**Windy:** Hooray! Wow, what a gripping tale.

**Bow:** You really know your Rainbow Dash history. You’re going to do great on your report. (*Wink.*)

**Bloom:** (*pointing ahead*) Show’s about to start.

(*The distant sound of pegasi in flight makes itself known, and here come five team members in a V-formation: Rainbow, Spitfire, Fleetfoot, Soarin’, and a fifth. They round a bend in the track, passing out of sight, then go into a steep climb followed by an even sharper dive. As the crowd applauds, Bow and Windy don jerseys in Wonderbolt blue/yellow, rainbow scarves, and headwear to support their daughter—Bow sporting a rainbow-striped visor with a small copy of Rainbow’s head attached, Windy using a larger one as a hat. They hoot enthusiastically and pump their hooves.*)

**Bow:** Come on, ’Bolts! Let’s start this thing!

**Windy:** Wonderbolts’ big showcase! Here—we—GOOOOOO!!

**Bow:** (*standing on hind legs*) Rip it up and tear—it—down!

**Windy:** (*ditto*) Then build it back up again and tear it back down again! (*Next two lines overlap.*)

**Bow:** Woo! Yeah!

**Windy:** Yeah!

(*Throughout this overly pumped-up show of support, they utterly fail to notice the very funny looks coming from every other pony in the box save Scootaloo. In fact, all but the Crusaders slide away from them on the final two lines, which echo over the entire facility. Cut to a long shot of it as the five Wonderbolts execute a new pattern, leaving short contrails of dark blue clouds that form a five-pointed star. Wild cheering drifts from every seat in the house.*)

**Bow:** (*from box*) Yeah! Uh-huh, uh-huh! Go, go, go! Yes!

(*The star dissipates; back to him and Windy.*)

**Bow:** Go, Rainbow Dash! (*waving a pennant with her cutie mark*) Best Wonderbolt ever!

**Windy:** Woo-hoo! That’s my daughter! Go, Rainbow! Go, Dashie! Go, go, go, go, go!

(*Spitfire, Soarin’, and the unnamed teammate fly parallel courses and trace out a giant lightning bolt, and Rainbow and Fleetfoot add a pair of wings on their pass to complete the team logo. All five then hurtle toward one another and pull apart, breaking up the display. Windy’s next words overlap with a hearty cheer from her husband, the camera zooming out from the box to frame Rainbow staring incredulously at them from her hovering position.*)

**Windy:** Woo-hoo! Woo! You go, girl!

(*Close-up: the ace flyer raises her goggles and cringes. Fleetfoot pulls in next to her, goggles also up.*)

**Fleetfoot:** Your folks were definitely loud, but they weren’t *that* bad.

(*Something very small and very fast sings through the space between, forcing them both to dive backward. It bursts into a shower of sparks—a fireworks rocket—and the other three gather in, very much off guard and with goggles on foreheads.*)

**Spitfire:** Whoa! Since when did we add fireworks to the show?

**Rainbow:** Uh…we didn’t.

(*She points down toward the stands; cut to Bow and Windy, now equipped with plenty of ammunition and a launcher similar to an artillery mortar. The unfortunate stallion seated directly in front of them is covering his ears. The next two lines overlap, and Windy loads and fires off another one during them.*)

**Bow:** Attagirl! Yeah! Go, go, go, go!

**Windy:** Woo-hoo! You go, girl! Go, go, you got it! You’re a Wonderbolt!

(*On the last of Windy’s words, the camera cuts to a long shot of the box, with the team hovering in the fore and watching the pyrotechnics—first a gold trophy set with a large 1, then Rainbow’s face. The team member with the varicolored mane now looks as if she would be quite happy to live the rest of her life under a very large rock.*)

**Fleetfoot:** (*awed*) Wow.

(*Dissolve to a pan along a sizable line of ponies and stop on a table at the head end. Surprise, the blond-maned white mare seen as part of the team in “Newbie Dash,” is already behind it, and Rainbow, Spitfire, Fleetfoot, and Soarin’ fly down to join her. Of these five, only Spitfire and Fleetfoot have their goggles over their eyes.*)

**Bow:** (*from o.s.*) Go, Rainbow Dash!

(*Pan away from the table to frame him, Windy, and the Crusaders gathered nearby. Both adults are back in their normal clothes, and Scootaloo has done away with her camera and saddlebags—the latter for the first time since this episode began. All five are in quite high spirits. Bow clamps his teeth onto his T-shirt collar and pulls, ripping off a swatch that includes Rainbow’s cutie mark.*)

**Bow:** (*twirling it on a hoof*) You sign that photo! (*throwing*) Woo!

(*It lands squarely on the face of the filly at the front of the line, augmenting Rainbow’s humiliation. In a burst of panicked haste, the Technicolor-maned mare pounds a hoof onto a red ink pad, stamps the top sheet of paper on a stack, and passes it across with a pat on the head and the shakiest smile she has ever given. The filly begins to fumble her way off as Spitfire aims a cocked-eyebrow smirk at Rainbow.*)

(*Wipe to the front entrance of a building that has drawn a crowd and is set up for a ribbon-cutting. Rainbow and Spitfire are on duty here, the former with goggles up and hovering with a pair of scissors, the latter on the ground with goggles down.*)

**Bow,** **Windy:** Cut the ribbon, cut the ribbon, cut the ribbon, cut the ribbon!

(*During the previous line, the camera cuts to these two and Scootaloo—Bow using a megaphone and wearing a fresh T-shirt—and back to a close-up of Rainbow. The sound of the scissor blades hissing together is heard as she glares toward them, but a longer shot reveals that she has missed the ribbon entirely and taken off a chunk of Spitfire’s tail instead. A sheepish grin is met with a vexed glower that might translate as “get ready for a month of KP duty.”*)

(*Wipe to a photo shoot set up in a street. The original five from the practice session—Rainbow, Spitfire, Fleetfoot, Misty, Soarin’—sit on the end of a cloud-marked backdrop drape long enough to trail the ground, and a filly sits with them to have her picture taken by a photographer. Fleetfoot is the only one with her goggles down. Quite a few other young fans have lined up, and as the filly makes way for the next one, here come Bow, Windy, and the Crusaders.*)

**Bow,** **Windy:** The camera loves you! Yeah!

**Bow:** (*to Crusaders*) Now let’s do the pyramid!

(*He hops onto the backs of Bloom and Sweetie, who are side by side, and Windy flies up to perch on his. Rainbow’s grimace makes her state of mind all too clear.*)

**Bow:** Scootaloo, get up there! (*flipping her up onto Windy with a wing*) You’re the top!

**Spitfire:** (*to Rainbow*) You really do got yourself your very own mega-fans. (*poking her*) Lucky you.

(*The blue aviator just groans softly and covers her face with a wing. Dissolve to a long shot of the barracks at the Wonderbolts’ headquarters, zooming in slowly, then cut to the locker room. Fleetfoot has stripped out of her flight and hung a towel around her neck, and is talking with a stallion on the side opposite a suited-up Thunderlane—evidently his stint as a cadet in “Wonderbolts Academy” paid off. He shuts his locker and flies off as Rainbow trudges in, out of suit, towel around neck, and very much down in the dumps. She voices a long sigh while crossing to her locker and opening it in close-up. Teeth clamp onto terrycloth to hang it over the top of the door, and she ducks her head inside to retrieve something. Zoom out quickly to frame Bow, Windy, and Scootaloo now standing right behind her, Scootaloo with camera and saddlebags slung up.*)

**Windy:** You hung that towel! (*Rainbow bangs her head on the shelf and glares.*) Yeah!

**Bow:** Greatest towel hanger of all time!

(*He goes into a hoof-pumping chant of “Tow-el! Tow-el!”, Windy quickly joining in, and Rainbow looks across the room to find Fleetfoot and the other stallion clearing out, their smirks showing just how much fun they will have ribbing her later. Having the camera thrust into her face and a picture taken is the very last straw; once she shakes herself back to proper vision, she completely blows her top.*)

**Rainbow:** *STOOOOP!!* (*They do so; she backs them up onto a bench.*) This is ridiculous! Mom and Dad, you are both too supportive! (*hovering*) This is exactly why I didn’t tell you I was a Wonderbolt! You’re just…*too much!*

**Windy:** (*stunned*) Did…did we do something wrong? (*Rainbow lands.*)

**Rainbow:** *Yes!* (*counting off on feathers of one wing*) The fireworks, the cheerleading, and…and… (*hoof to face*) …how do you even compare who was better or worse at hanging up *a towel?!?* (*They climb off the bench.*)

**Bow:** (*holding out a hoof*) We’re…just trying to be supportive.

**Rainbow:** (*slapping it away*) Well, I’m tired of it! I’ve had enough of you two being so proud of every little ridiculous, insignificant thing I do!

(*She finally pauses to catch her breath, completely missing the horrified look that has taken root on Scootaloo’s face. Cut to within her locker, the camera pointing out at the family; she turns away and looks in.*)

**Rainbow:** I think you should leave.

**Windy:** (*voice breaking*) First of all…. (*Cut to her and Bow; she smiles weakly.*) …great job yelling at us, sweetie. (*Both tear up.*) No one… (*Sniffle.*) …can make their parents feel more worthless than you. (*She covers her eyes with her wings.*)

**Bow:** (*ditto*) Your words were direct, clear, and…so painful. (*sobbing, as both exit hastily*) Is there nothing you can’t do?

(*Scootaloo watches them quit the field of battle, then turns to Rainbow.*)

**Scootaloo:** Why? (*Rainbow pivots to face her.*)

**Rainbow:** Scootaloo, you don’t understand.

**Scootaloo:** (*tearing up*) I met your parents hoping to learn more about you… (*wiping eyes*) …but I don’t like what I found out!

(*The scrapbook is yanked from the saddlebags and thrown down, landing open at Rainbow’s hooves.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*walking out*) I’ll find somepony else to do my hero report on.

(*Rainbow turns her eyes toward the book and finds, waiting for her, a picture of her happy toddler self being hugged by both her parents. At the sight of it, her whole face crumples into tear-sodden remorse. Fade to black.*)

Act Three

(*Opening shot: fade in to the runway plateau at headquarters. Scootaloo buzzes across the grass on her scooter, helmet on, camera packed, and face set in sullen resentment. Rainbow flies after her, carrying the book, but pauses.*)

**Rainbow:** Scootaloo, wait! (*She catches up.*) I know I wasn’t myself back there, and I shouldn’t have snapped at my parents. (*circling to face Scootaloo*) That’s exactly why I didn’t tell them I’m a Wonderbolt.

(*The gentle push of a blue hoof on the handlebars brings the filly to a stop.*)

**Scootaloo:** I don’t understand. They’re so proud of you.

**Rainbow:** (*sighing*) Can I tell you something?

**Scootaloo:** (*turning face away*) Sure.

**Rainbow:** Okay, but you might want to hold on to your wings, because this could rock you to your very core.

(*Scootaloo swivels to face Rainbow, her expression softening a bit, and the mare flies over to sit near a log and opens the book. After beckoning with a foreleg, the camera cuts to a close-up.*)

**Rainbow:** Believe it or not— (*Scootaloo walks to her, helmet off.*) —there was a time when I wasn’t the best at everything.

(*The youngster gasps sharply, to which Rainbow simply nods and picks up the book.*)

**Rainbow:** See this picture?

(*Close-up of the pages, zooming in on the one she is indicating: her filly self, standing on a cloud and laughing amid the shreds of a broken ribbon.*)

**Rainbow:** (*from o.s.*) It looks like I won something awesome, but actually…

(*Once the snapshot fills the screen, a wavering dissolve shifts the action back to that moment in time; the ribbon pieces fall away. The voice of a stallion announcer booms out.*)

**Announcer:** And last but not least, it’s time to hand out our participant stickers!

(*A hoof reaches into view and slaps one of these items onto her forehead, confusing and irritating her greatly. The pony who affixed it walks past—the same white mare who announced the Equestria Games venue decision during her childhood flashback in “Games Ponies Play.” A zoom out frames her and the younger selves of Dumbbell, Score, and Thunderlane standing off to one side of a medalists’ podium. Three steps run down either side from the topmost position in the center, which is occupied by Derpy Hooves. Lightning and Soarin’ are on the second level, Cloudchaser and Spitfire on the third, Flitter and the gray stallion-to-be that Fleetfoot was speaking to in the locker room on the fourth. A set of cloud bleachers is full of parents, including Bow and Windy with different clothing and mane styles; Windy has a camera around her neck, and both have rainbows painted on their cheeks. The ribbon pieces are attached to two poles that evidently served as the finish line for a race whose course is visible behind the tableau—one that Rainbow did not win. The three colts standing next to her have their participant stickers on their chests. The next two lines overlap, Windy snapping pictures, and the rest of the onlookers are left rather put off by their antics.*)

**Bow:** YEAH! Woo-hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo! Yeah, Rainbow Dash, you show ’em! Greatest participant ever!

**Windy:** WOOOOO!! Go, Rainbow! Go, Rainbow! Woo-hoo! Yeah!

**Colt Dumbbell:** (*to Filly Rainbow*) Uh, your parents realize you didn’t win, don’t they?

(*Zoom in slowly on Filly RD’s shaky expression; a camera flash, and the scene has returned to the present.*)

**Rainbow:** Granted, I was the youngest pony in the *senior* competitive circuit. Most other ponies my age were still in the *Junior* Flappers Club. (*closing/setting down book, her smile vanishing*) I thought it was utterly mortifying, having my parents cheer me on even when I lost.

(*Wavering dissolve to the podium, the camera positioned to frame Filly RD as the only non-winner standing next to it.*)

**Rainbow:** (*voice over*) But then, when I started to win competitions—which didn’t take very long, by the way—things got even worse.

(*During this line, a series of four dissolves shifts her up one level at a time until she reaches the first-place position. Sure enough, her parents are still in the stands, waving placards marked with a heart and rainbow, and still getting odd looks from those around them.*)

**Bow:** YEAH! Woo-hoo-hoo-hoo-hoo! Yeah, Rainbow Dash, you show ’em!

**Windy:** WOOOOO!! Go, Rainbow! Go, Rainbow! Woo-hoo! Yeah!

(*The cheers continue from o.s. as the camera cuts back to the podium, on which the other colts and fillies are shooting their own quizzical/annoyed glances up at Filly RD.*)

**Rainbow:** (*voice over*) Being the best came with consequences. (*All others clear off; zoom in as she hangs her head.*) Very loud, very embarrassing consequences.

(*Wavering dissolve to the present; now the book lies open before Rainbow and Scootaloo. The mare sighs and half-flops back against the log.*)

**Scootaloo:** You know, some ponies would dream of having parents like that.

**Rainbow:** Yeah, right. Name one.

**Scootaloo:** (*sighing*) Me. (*Rainbow sits up and takes notice.*) Growing up, I never thought I’d be the best at anything because nopony ever told me. (*turning a page*) But your parents told you over and over again. Look.

(*Close-up of the pages, her hoof shifting from one picture to the next as she describes them; each depicts Rainbow as a baby. First: Windy holding up a little “#1” trophy as Rainbow sits in a sudsy bathtub. Second: she wears a blue “#1” ribbon while gnawing on a carrot. Third: Bow holds up another such ribbon while she sleeps, a pacifier in her mouth.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*from o.s.*) Best bath taker ever…best carrot eater under three…greatest napper of all time? (*Back to her and Rainbow.*)

**Rainbow:** (*lounging against log*) Yeah. I *am* pretty good at napping. I can fall asleep anywhere.

(*She proceeds to demonstrate this dubious talent by conking out and snoring loudly where she sits, a runnel of drool working its way down from one corner of her mouth. A poke from Scootaloo’s hoof startles her awake.*)

**Rainbow:** Huh? (*She wipes her mouth.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*sitting next to her*) For your entire life, your parents gave you the confidence to believe in yourself.

(*Now it is Rainbow’s turn to flip a page, exposing the photo she found at the end of Act Two.*)

**Rainbow:** (*with growing conviction*) You’re right! I was always so embarrassed by my parents that I didn’t realize their support actually made me the awesome, confident, amazing, awesome, and awesome pony I am!

(*Her unofficial little sister cocks an eyebrow at the adjective overuse, prompting her to deflate with a little sigh.*)

**Rainbow:** And I took them for granted.

**Scootaloo:** And you yelled at them.

**Rainbow:** (*groaning*) I gotta make this right.

(*She gets upright, takes a look around the plateau, and lets her eyes come to rest on a set of bleachers adjacent to the runway. It brings a calculating smile to her face.*)

**Rainbow:** I have an idea, but I’m gonna need your help—that is, if you’re willing to help me after I acted like that.

(*The flash of Scootaloo’s camera catches her totally off guard, and in no time the little pegasus has extracted the photo and held it up.*)

**Scootaloo:** Now *that’s* a great picture! (*passing it across*) “Rainbow Dash Learns the Error of Her Ways”!

(*Rainbow gives her a small smile. Dissolve to one front corner of the bleachers; Bow and Windy, both blindfolded, walk toward them with Scootaloo in between to guide the way. She has put away her camera.*)

**Windy:** I’m telling you, I just can’t see a thing. Scootaloo, you are just so great at blindfolds.

**Bow:** It’s true. You must tell me what kind of knot you used. (*Close-up.*) A falconer’s knot? Wait, no! A farmer’s loop! (*Pan to Windy.*)

**Windy:** What’s this all about, anyhoo?

(*A squeal of loudspeaker feedback stops her cold.*)

**Voice of Rainbow:** (*amplified*) Windy Whistles and Bow Hothoof! (*Pan/tilt up quickly to a pair of speakers on a pole.*) Please be seated for a super-private Wonderbolt event!

(*All three have now stopped, and the two wearing the blindfolds throw them off. Zoom out to the middle of the runway as they seat themselves and Scootaloo hurries off. She and Rainbow return from opposite directions, the filly carrying a pole-mounted microphone in her teeth and setting it down to generate a feedback whine. She walks away as Rainbow steps up to it and faces her parents, in her flight suit and with goggles on forehead.*)

**Rainbow:** (*amplified, clearing throat*) Mom and Dad, welcome to the… (*rapid fire*) …“I Love My Parents and I’m Sorry That I Took Them for Granted and I Know That They Made Me Who I Am Today So I Really Want to Make It Up to Them”… (*normal speed*) …Event!

(*Scootaloo slides in between Bow and Windy and gives each of them a bag of popcorn. Bow wastes no time in chomping into his.*)

**Rainbow:** (*amplified*) Enjoy!

(*Flipping her goggles down, she takes off and is soon joined by four other Wonderbolts, including Spitfire with her tail still cropped from the Act Two ribbon-cutting goof. These two end climbing side by side.*)

**Rainbow:** Thanks for doing this.

**Spitfire:** (*saluting*) Happy to help.

(*Thundercloud contrails stretch behind them, punctuated by crackles of lightning, and they curve down to blast by the three spectators.*)

**Bow,** **Windy:** Ooooh…ahhhh…

(*The camera shifts to the flyers, who swing behind a rainbow waterfall and burst out through it. Rainbow, in the center, comes out tinted half yellow and half green; the other four each take on the single color of the stripe they hit.*)

**Bow,** **Windy:** (*from o.s.*) Ohhhh…

(*Back to the bleachers; they pass overhead, rolling sharply to shake off the tints. Bow and Windy have dispatched their snacks.*)

**Bow,** **Windy:** Ooooh…

(*Bow murmurs appreciatively to himself. Now the aces swoop up to a cloud and fly tight circles around it at high speed, visible only as a set of blue/yellow streaks until they break away. The mass of water vapor bursts apart into likenesses of both parents’ heads. The next two lines overlap as Rainbow traces a heart-shaped path around them with her rainbow contrail.*)

**Bow:** (*from o.s.*) Oh, wow!

**Windy:** (*from o.s.*) Oh, my!

(*More impressed sounds float up; cut back to them and Scootaloo, then to the runway. All five touch down on the far side, except for Rainbow on the tarmac. She puts her goggles up.*)

**Rainbow:** Mom and Dad, I want you to know that I’m *your* biggest fan. (*Windy flies over to her.*)

**Windy:** (*touching her cheek, hugging her*) Oh, honey, thank you! (*Bow joins in on the embrace.*) But you didn’t have to do all this. It’s kind of… (*whispering, smiling*) …embarrassing.

**Bow:** Eh, it *is* a bit much.

(*A camera flash fills the screen and clears to show the image captured as a picture in Scootaloo’s scrapbook. On the next line, zoom out to show her at the front of the classroom in the Ponyville schoolhouse; the book is set on an easel, and she has shed all her gear.*)

**Scootaloo:** And that’s why Rainbow Dash is the most inspirational pony in my life.

(*The rest of the students bang hooves on desks for applause, and she bows as Cheerilee steps into view.*)

**Cheerilee:** Thank you, Scootaloo. Very well researched, but a little heavy on the pictures—

(*A different angle frames the trash can sitting next to the blackboard. Resting within it is the chunk of sandwich that Scootaloo stuffed into her book during Act One.*)

**Cheerilee:** —and there was a moldy sandwich in your report. (*Chuckle.*) Hmm—I’ll give you a B.

(*Rainbow and her parents crowd up outside the nearest window. Bow and Windy are both wearing orange jerseys and red/pink/magenta-striped scarves, and Rainbow is out of her flight suit and goggles. Bow wears an orange cap with the stripes and a model of Scootaloo’s head, and Windy has donned a bigger copy as a hat. In addition, Bow waves an orange pennant set with the filly’s cutie mark.*)

**Rainbow:** Yeah! Greatest report giver of all time!

(*All three fly into the classroom, chanting her name, and she is swiftly hoisted up on the forelegs of mother and daughter.*)

**Cheerilee:** (*voice raised*) Keep it down! Okay! This isn’t a rock-and-roll concert! Please!

(*They pay her no mind at all throughout. “Iris out” to black, centered on Scootaloo’s proud smiling face; the aperture pauses briefly on her before closing altogether.*)