**THE WASHOUTS**

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Prologue

(*Opening shot: fade in to an extreme close-up of an orange hoof banging on a gavel block. A fringe of multicolored hair hangs into view behind it, and a zoom out frames Scootaloo behind the lectern of the Cutie Mark Crusaders’ clubhouse, wearing a Rainbow Dash wig.*)

**Scootaloo:** Order, order, everypony!

(*Longer shot: the place is packed with fans of the daredevil and bedecked with posters and paraphernalia.*)

**Scootaloo:** I hereby call to order this meeting of the Rainbow Dash Fan Club!

(*Excited murmurs race throughout the audience as the camera pans to one window, where Rainbow herself peeks in through the glass. Blue daytime sky can be seen.*)

**Scootaloo:** First order of business… (*rapid fire; zoom in slowly*) …let’s celebrate the one and only Rainbow Dash, yay, she’s amazing, now if there’s nothing else, that concludes this meeting of the Rainbow Dash Fan Club, thank you all for coming, any questions?

(*She hoof-gavels with a big grin, but the facial/verbal reactions of both Rainbow and the crowd are rather bewildered ones. Pan across them, then cut to Rainbow on the platform outside.*)

**Rainbow:** Huh?

(*She shifts position just in time to see the door open and the members being shoved out onto the ramp by the Crusader.*)

**Scootaloo:** Meeting adjourned!

(*She slams the door as they file out; cut to inside as Rainbow spies from the window again. The wig is tossed to the floor, a poster is swiftly torn down from the wall, and a new one goes up in its place. Cut to another extreme close-up of Scootaloo’s hoof striking the gavel block, then cut to her. The poster’s image is blocked by her head and shoulders, but a pair of spread green/yellow wings can be seen on a similarly striped background.*)

**Scootaloo:** I’d like to call to order the first-ever meeting of the newest and most exciting club—of which I am the president, founding, and only member…

(*Cut to frame the entire interior. She has ducked her head enough to reveal the poster as depicting a pegasus in a full-body flight suit, face totally hidden behind a helmet with an opaque visor. Balloons and strings of pennants decorate the place, with lightning bolts and the yellow/green motif dominating among flaming skulls. Other bits of merchandise in this same vein have been set up, including a circular rug, a cardboard standee display, and a banner hanging down the front of the lectern.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*hovering*) …the Washouts Fan Club!

(*She gazes dreamily upon the poster as the camera zooms in quickly on the window at which Rainbow is watching. The blue flyer gasps in undiluted shock before the view snaps to black.*)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(*Opening shot: fade in to a close-up of Scootaloo, turned away from the door and utterly lost in blissful thought. The opening latch and squeaking hinges snap her back to reality; on the start of the next line, she moves aside and turns to find Rainbow leaning against the frame.*)

**Rainbow:** (*casually*) Oh, hey, Scootaloo. I was just in the neighbor— (*feigning surprise*) —oh! (*She zooms in to point at the poster.*) What’s this?

(*An almighty grimace contorts the filly’s face as she rips the sheet down.*)

**Rainbow:** (*pointedly*) Did I interrupt your fan club meeting? (*Scootaloo straightens up with a forced smile and begins to roll it up.*)

**Scootaloo:** Hey! What are you doing here?

**Rainbow:** (*leaning hard into her face*) I could ask *you* the same question!

**Scootaloo:** (*stammering*) Oh, uh, you know…stuff. (*sweating nervously, grabbing poster*) Uh, definitely not starting a new fan club or anything.

**Rainbow:** Ha! It’s no use pretending! I heard everything when I was outside eavesdropping like I do for every meeting.

**Scootaloo:** You eavesdrop on every meeting? That’s…weird.

**Rainbow:** Well, sure, it *sounds* weird when you say it out loud, and I probably shouldn’t because eavesdropping is wrong, but still. (*leaning toward Scootaloo*) Why are you starting a new fan club?

**Scootaloo:** I just think maybe it’s time for me to explore other fan clubs.

(*Her lip-chewing grin is met with an incredulous gasp from Rainbow; now she slips out from behind the lectern and begins to sneak away, but Rainbow snatches up the poster and unrolls it for a look. The graphics are now seen in full detail: silhouettes of three suited/helmeted pegasi above the one rendered in full detail, yellow/green stripes slashed across behind them, a white shield at the bottom marked by wings, lightning bolts, and the flaming skull, all in lurid green. Zoom in on the featureless visor, then cut to a very puzzled Rainbow.*)

**Rainbow:** What is a “The Washouts”?

**Scootaloo:** Only the newest and greatest and only stunt troupe in Equestria!

**Rainbow:** (*folding poster*) Stunt troupe?

**Scootaloo:** How can I explain it? (*dropping to hocks, eyes shining*) Like the Wonderbolts, just twenty bajillion percent cooler! (*A tiny happy sound escapes her throat.*)

**Rainbow:** (*flabbergasted, dropping poster*) Twenty bajillion?

**Scootaloo:** They do all sorts of extreme stunts that focus on daredevilry and sheer guts— (*dismissively*) —rather than boring old flight and formation junk.

**Rainbow:** “Boring old flight and formation junk”?

**Scootaloo:** Are you just repeating everything I say?

**Rainbow:** (*flying slowly to a ladder*) Only because my brain feels like it’s strapped to one of those rockets about to explode. (*Scootaloo zips over to her.*)

**Scootaloo:** So you do get it! (*She picks up the poster.*) Aren’t they awesome?

(*The resident Wonderbolt just gnaws a hoof, her red-violet eyes broadcasting unease and apprehension clearly enough to be picked up ten miles away. Zoom in slowly and dissolve to a Ponyville street, where Twilight Sparkle and the gang are out for a stroll, Rainbow flying above them.*)

**Rainbow:** Can you believe she actually said that?

**Pinkie Pie:** Pfft! Well, yeah. Eavesdropping on every meeting *is* kinda weird.

**Rainbow:** I mean, she basically said that the Wonderbolts aren’t cool! And—and it kinda sounded like she didn’t think *I* was cool either. But, pah. We all know that’s crazy. I mean, I’m definitely not worried about her looking up to somepony else. (*chuckling, but slowly going unhinged*) Nope, not at all.

(*By the time she reaches this last word, her eyes have constricted to points and a fixed, crazed grin has peeled lips back from teeth.*)

**Applejack:** Well, I’d understand if you were. It’d be like if Apple Bloom started lovin’ bananas more than apples.

(*She chuckles richly at this, but all levity disappears in the fragment of a fraction of a second that it takes the camera to zoom in to an extreme close-up.*)

**Applejack:** (*softly, viciously*) Y’all tell me if that ever happens, you hear?

**Rainbow:** But what could the Washouts possibly have that I don’t? (*Pinkie jumps up to her level and shows off a flyer.*)

**Pinkie:** Why don’t you find out?

(*She passes it over before dropping back to earth, and Rainbow finds it to contain time/place details for a performance, laid out next to the head/shoulders image of a Washout turned partly away from the camera.*)

**Rainbow:** They’re doing a show in Ponyville *this weekend?!*

(*The pink mare hops up and yanks the page back; by the time she lands, it is rolled up and tucked under a foreleg. Next she opens it for Twilight, Applejack, Fluttershy, and Rarity to peruse.*)

**Twilight:** Wow! They *do* look pretty amazing… (*noticing Rainbow’s disgusted expression, quickly shifting gears*) …uh…ly un-amazing. (*Weak laugh.*) “Trying so hard to look amazing” is what I mean.

**Pinkie:** (*aside, to her*) Nice save, Twilight!

(*She backs off with a wink and a big squeaky grin, and the ground/air perambulation continues. Dissolve to a close-up of a flag fluttering in a breeze—the shield from the poster, now rendered in white/green/dark gray on a jagged-edged, vertical yellow stripe that splits the dark gray ground behind it. Zoom out and tilt down to ground level, where the six and Scootaloo are emerging onto a fairground filled with tents and spectators. A slow pan reveals that the bleacher seats are nearly full, to Scootaloo’s dismay, as seen a close-up of her and a blasé Rainbow.*)

**Scootaloo:** Aw, I knew we shoulda lined up last night.

(*Pan to the other five, who let their eyes roam in assorted directions to scan for any openings. Applejack is first to hit paydirt, smiling and pointing to an unoccupied patch at the top rows of one section. She, Twilight, Fluttershy, and Rarity head that way as Pinkie crosses to Rainbow and Scootaloo.*)

**Pinkie:** I’m sorry for making us late. Who would’ve guessed extreme chocolate airshow cupcakes would take an extremely long time to bake?

(*During this line, she fishes in her man and produces a tray of six cupcakes, each sporting /yellow/orange frosting styled to resemble a mass of flames. One is swiftly scooped up on her tongue and chomped down as she sets off to join the others, and Rainbow proceeds to airlift Scootaloo toward the bleachers. The filly’s mood brightens noticeably as she is set down in a free spot; the rest of the group is now up here as well, and Pinkie has disposed of the treats.*)

**Rainbow:** Look at this. It’s a total Wonderbolts ripoff. (*She lands on a seat.*)

**Scootaloo:** What do you mean? The show hasn’t even started yet.

**Rainbow:** (*leaning down close to seats*) Yeah, but look at what we’re sitting on. (*She thumps a hoof against the surface, then sits up to face Scootaloo.*) Hel-loooo? The Wonderbolts have bleachers too. We practically invented sitting on bleachers.

(*Cut to Applejack, Rarity, and Scootaloo.*)

**Rarity:** Ugh.

**Rainbow:** (*from o.s.*) And look at that!

(*In the next row down, Bon Bon and Lyra Heartstrings are enjoying popcorn and cotton candy, respectively, but get them yanked away by the blue pegasus.*)

**Rainbow:** Popcorn *and* cotton candy? (*tossing them aside; Lyra glares at her*) Ripoff!

(*A squeal of feedback interrupts before she can grouse any further; all eyes turn toward the pole-mounted loudspeakers.*)

**Scootaloo:** Uh? (*waving forelegs wildly*) YEEEAAAHHH!!

(*The thundering, macho voice of an announcer stallion asserts itself.*)

**Announcer:** This is the time! This is the place! (*Green fog gradually fills the arena.*) This is the team! This is…

(*The haze slowly clears to frame three pegasi stepping grimly forward. All wear flight suits in green and dark gray that leave only their wings and tails exposed, with lightning bolts running down the chests and standing up from the helmets’ temples. One is short, red-orange, with a short-cut, glossy yellow tail; the second is of medium height, blue-green, with a two-tone yellow-brown tail; the third is tall, purple, with a curly tail in white and pale blue. Zoom out as they strike dramatic poses amid a mélange of extremely dangerous equipment: ramps, cannons, suspended weight, and so on.*)

**Announcer:** …THE WASHOUTS!!

(*Cheers erupt from all sides as the short one pops up to a hover and pyrotechnics explode behind the trio, finishing with a double cannon blast of confetti. Pinkie catches a few bits on her tongue.*)

**Pinkie:** Mmm! Quality confetti cannon work!

(*Rainbow just groans and slumps in her seat, forelegs crossed petulantly. A torch at the center of the whole setup ignites in a surge of flame, and the Washouts execute a low pass over the bleachers to high-five every crowd member in reach. Scootaloo regards the hoof they touch with eyes full of admiring stars.*)

**Scootaloo:** Oh, yeah! (*Her enthusiasm rattles Rainbow badly.*)

**Announcer:** Say it with me now—the Washouts’ official motto…

**Announcer, Crowd:** LEAP BEFORE YOU LOOK!! (*Cheers.*)

**Scootaloo:** Woo-hoo!

**Rainbow:** Lame.

(*They come in for a landing at a giant catapult strung between two poles, Shorty sitting in the payload pouch so Medium and Tall can pull it back almost all the way to the front row. Tall flips up the visor just long enough to tip a wink, exposing a flash of deep blue eyes and lashes that mark her as a mare. The pony on the receiving end swoons blissfully into one seatmate’s forelegs; an instant later, Medium and Tall have released their grip to send Shorty flying.*)

**Announcer:** Remember, ponies! While they’re amazingly awesome, the Washouts are highly trained professionals with protective fireproof flight suits! Do not try this at home!

(*Accompanied by the following. Shorty flies over the suspended weight and a pair of midair buzzsaws, bounces off a trampoline carefully angled by Medium and somersaults onto the high end of a seesaw; Tall, standing on the low end, is launched into the air; a switch is thrown , electrifying three hoops through which Tall easily swerves; she swipes an unlit torch from its holder and cuts a wide U-turn over the crowd. Once the loudspeakers go quiet, she flies through the central torch to light the one she now carries, emerging intact from the roaring flames. Rainbow cannot help but sit up and take notice, jaw dropping so far open that Twilight leans forward down from the next seat up to close it for her. The torch is put to the fuse of a cannon from which one Washout’s head and forelegs protrude; when it goes off, this pegasus is revealed to be Medium, who zigs and zags through a line of spinning spiked poles without so much as a scratch.*)

**Rainbow:** Whoa.

(*Medium zeroes in on a group of swinging sharp objects—four buzzsaw blades and a deadly curved pendulum—and clears them with ease, darting through the oversized central hole of one blade for effect.*)

**Rainbow:** (*frightened, nervous*) Come on, come on…

(*As she gnaws both hooves, the performer approaches three pairs of heavy plates set up in a line. The upper plate of each pair pistons up and down to slam against the lower, and both contact surfaces are studded with lethal steel spikes. Just before Medium can enter the first pair, the camera cuts to a wildly grinning Scootaloo, who finds herself being grabbed up by a freaked-out Rainbow.*)

**Rainbow:** She’s not gonna make it!

(*Medium clears the first…then the second…and then the third smashes down mid-pass to send out only a scatter of blue-green feathers. Voices gasp and eyes are covered to block out the imminent horrible sight of a freshly flattened flyer—and after a long, silent moment, Medium emerges unscathed and buzzes past the crowd. Fear and trembling turn to full-throated cheers as Rainbow just stares straight ahead, her mind truly blown by this display of bravado.*)

**Rainbow:** (*hovering out of seat*) That was *insane!* Woo-hoo!

**Scootaloo:** I told you!

**Rainbow:** (*composing herself*) I mean… (*Clear throat; settle down.*) …it was pretty cool. (*to herself*) Who *are* these guys?

(*Dissolve to a long overhead shot of the grounds and zoom in slowly. The central torch is out, the bleachers are empty, and nearly all of the spectators have either headed home or are doing so. A few have gathered to get autographs in the post-show quietude, and a cut to ground level frames two of the three Washouts obliging them with helmets removed. The runt, Short Fuse, has a short mane/tail styled to resemble flames, and a turn of the head identifies him as a stallion with light brown eyes. The tall mare, Rolling Thunder, wears her mane as a pile of curls. Pan away from them to Rainbow, pushing a suddenly timid Scootaloo across the dirt.*)

**Scootaloo:** I can’t just go up and talk to them!

**Rainbow:** You can if you’re with me. (*nudging her*) After all, one of the reasons there’s a Rainbow Dash Fan Club is because I’m fearless. (*picking her up*) Observe.

(*She swoops away toward the gathering. Cut to Rolling and Short as they fly to a backstage area; now an X-shaped scar can be seen intersecting Rolling’s left eyesocket. Short helps himself to a bottled beverage, while she dumps a bucket of water over her head to cool off. The left hind leg of her suit now sports a small rip. Here comes Rainbow, who sets Scootaloo down in front of the two.*)

**Rainbow:** Heeeey!

(*She is met with a complete lack of recognition; meanwhile, Scootaloo just boggles at the two, stunned beyond the capacity for rational thought.*)

**Rainbow:** (*touching down*) Uhhh…so as a fellow aerobatic professional, I really enjoyed your show. (*Close-up.*) Heh. Actually, you might recognize me since I’m, uh… (*whispering, to Scootaloo*) …pause for dramatic effect… (*aloud, to Rolling/Short*) …a Wonderbolt.

(*The gale of mocking laughter that comes her way is definitely not what she was expecting to hear. Rolling speaks up with an Australian accent.*)

**Rolling:** Ha. Join the club.

(*Scootaloo goes into a fit of excited panting like a dog offered a free run at five tons of ribeye.*)

**Rainbow:** O…kay.

(*Rolling kicks the bucket she dumped over herself so that it lands upside down.*)

**Rolling:** (*sitting on it*) No, I mean literally. Join the club. We’re called the Washouts because we all used to be Wonderbolts just like you—heh, until we washed out.

(*She adds quotation marks with one front hoof on these last two words.*)

**Rainbow:** No way!

**Rolling:** Yep. (*Sigh; pick up a roll of bandages with one feather.*) Name’s Rolling Thunder. (*wrapping torn spot on hind leg*) I got booted out of Wonderbolt Academy ’cause of flagrant disregard for hazardous weather.

(*Quotes with her front hooves on these five words.*)

**Rolling:** Pfft! If doing barrel rolls through nine hundred million volts of electricity in a raging thunderstorm is wrong… (*slightly crazed*) …then I don’t want to be right. (*Scootaloo grins hugely.*)

**Rainbow:** Cool!

**Rolling:** Heh! (*She finishes bandaging herself.*) This here’s Short Fuse.

(*He sets his bottle aside and crosses to Rainbow, offering a wing; nothing particularly distinctive about his voice.*)

**Short:** Oh, nice to meet you. (*They shake.*)

**Rainbow:** What’s your story?

(*With no warning, he hovers in her face and jumps to the top of the shrillness and volume scales.*)

**Short:** ANGER ISSUES!! GET OFF MY BACK!!

(*The onslaught leaves her cowed and huddling on the grass.*)

**Rainbow:** Uh…okay. (*Stand up.*) So…who’s the leader?

**Rolling:** (*standing up*) Only the most reckless ex-Wonderbolt of all time.

(*Her pointing hoof draws the Ponyville pair’s attention to the airborne, rapidly approaching figure of the third Washout, who touches down and skids to a stop just short of the backstage area. Rainbow shields her eyes from the stirred-up dust and flying clods as Scootaloo stares in wild wonder. The new arrival straightens up and pulls off its helmet to reveal the face of Lightning Dust—the mare whose thrill-seeking and lack of concern for safety procedures got her tossed out of the titular program in “Wonderbolts Academy.” Narrowed yellow-brown eyes radiate contempt for her former wing pony, who allows herself one gasp of purest disbelief before adopting the same attitude.*)

**Rainbow:** Lightning Dust. (*Lightning gets in her face.*)

**Lightning:** Rainbow Dash.

(*They butt heads, Rainbow snarling quietly through gritted teeth, until Scootaloo pops up between them and just below chin level.*)

**Scootaloo:** Scootaloo. (*They back off; she addresses Lightning.*) I’m Scootaloo. Hi.

(*Her placating grin does nothing to reduce the tension between the mares. Fade to black.*)

Act Two

(*Opening shot: fade in to the standoff and its young witness and zoom in slowly.*)

**Rainbow:** Lightning Dust. I should’ve known you were the brains behind a crazy idea like the Washouts— (*tapping her temple*) —or should I say “lack of brains”? (*Lightning snarls at her.*)

**Scootaloo:** You two really know each other? (*giddily, dropping to haunches*) Oh, my gosh! This is so cool!

**Lightning:** Your friend got me kicked out of the Wonderbolts.

**Scootaloo:** Oh. That’s, uh, less cool.

(*Two horizontal panels slide in from opposite sides to fill the screen, each presenting one flyer’s eyes in extreme close-up.*)

**Lightning:** And it was the best thing that ever happened to me!

(*On the end of this, Rainbow’s panel slides away to fully frame Lightning and the broad grin that has come over her face. She flies down to throw a foreleg across Rainbow’s shoulders.*)

**Lightning:** Great to see you, wing pony. (*Who pushes her back a notch and brushes herself off.*) I heard you’re a full-fledged ’Bolt now.

(*She lands next to a padded table on which Short is treading on Rolling’s back to deliver a massage.*)

**Rainbow:** Yeah, well, I’m still—

**Lightning:** —mad at me? Look. Was it wrong of me to endanger the lives of your friends? Yeah. But hey— (*gesturing at her teammates*) —now I only endanger *these* knuckleheads. (*Both laugh.*)  
**Short:** (*under his breath, menacingly*) Don’t call me knucklehead…

(*Rainbow watches, confusedly and concernedly, as Scootaloo nips up a picture of the crew in her mouth and holds it out to Lightning.*)

**Lightning:** (*taking it*) Come on, you know you miss me. (*stamping on a hoofprint, tossing it back, hovering*) Me and her? We blew everypony out of the sky.

**Scootaloo:** Really?

**Lightning:** Actually, *yeah*, really. All that wind was totally dangerous, but we had fun, right? Two fastest times on the Dizzitron. (*Rainbow rises to face her.*)

**Rainbow:** If I remember correctly, I had you beat by half a second.

**Lightning:** Only because when I went, I cranked up the dizziness factor.

(*Referring to the spin-out recovery exercise they and the other cadets underwent in “Wonderbolts Academy.” Laughing, they touch down on opposite sides of Scootaloo.*)

**Rainbow:** Well, I’m glad it all worked out. Your show was pretty dynamite. (*Lightning throws a conspiratorial wing around the filly’s shoulders and pulls her close.*)

**Lightning:** Want to know the secret? We basically ignore everything the Wonderbolts ever taught us about safety.

**Rainbow:** (*wing-pulling Scootaloo to her side*) Well, we do have safety rules for a reason.

**Lightning:** Don’t listen to her, kid. (*Rainbow scowls at her.*) All their rules were just ways of keeping their little club exclusive so they could feel good about themselves.

(*She adds feather quotation marks on “rules” and ends the line by speaking directly and pointedly into Rainbow’s face.*)

**Rainbow:** It’s not about making anypony feel bad. (*lifting off*) It’s about finding the best flyers. The best of the best.

**Lightning:** (*pacing toward her*) I started the Washouts because I believe anypony can be the best of the best.

(*She looks away with a sly little smile as a big wobbly one of shiny-eyed worship stretches across Scootaloo’s cheeks.*)

**Lightning:** You know— (*Rolling is now sitting up, towel on head; Short continues the massage.*) —Rolling Thunder is gonna be out for a while.

(*The purple pegasus chucks the towel as the stubby red red-orange one climbs down from the table.*)

**Rolling:** Ah, during the finale I caught the old hind leg in the Crushinator Jaws of Smashalot—patent pending. (*Wink.*)

**Lightning:** (*to Rainbow*) There’s a spot on the team if you want to join up.

(*The suggestion jolts Scootaloo into a lung-bursting gasp and a jittery trot in place.*)

**Rainbow:** I appreciate the offer, but I’m already a Wonderbolt. (*Scootaloo hovers in front of her.*)

**Scootaloo:** I’ll do it! Can I do it?

**Rainbow:** (*dryly, pulling her back*) Uh, let me think. *No.*

**Scootaloo:** (*scoffing, pushing her away*) I wasn’t asking you!

(*The violet eyes grow a few sizes over the hopeful grin that she aims at Lightning.*)

**Lightning:** (*playfully thumping Scootaloo’s chin*) Aww, you’re cute. But technically, you haven’t washed out of the ’Bolts, which is kinda our thing.

**Rainbow:** (*crossing to Scootaloo*) And also, *no!*

**Scootaloo:** (*to Lightning*) Oh! What if I joined and dropped out super-quick?

(*Every last good nerve in her honorary big sister’s mind snaps at once.*)

**Rainbow:** That’s it! You’re coming with me! (*She scoops Scootaloo up and flies off.*)

**Scootaloo:** Where are we going?

**Rainbow:** To hear what the actual Wonderbolts think about you joining just to drop out for the Washouts!

**Lightning:** (*calling after her*) Say hi to Spitfire for me!

(*She turns to face Rolling and Short, sneaky little smiles passing from one face to the next. Dissolve to a stretch of blue sky filled with happy white clouds, against which a formation of suited-up Wonderbolts zooms into view with smoke trailing behind. They rearrange into a circle and hurtle toward the camera, barely missing it on all sides as they rocket past, and loop gracefully toward the team’s headquarters and plateau runway. Cut to Rainbow and Scootaloo watching the approach, the filly cutting loose with an uninterested yawn.*)

**Rainbow:** (*hovering, turning a slow and complete flip*) Ever seen two simultaneous inverse displacement rolls before?

**Scootaloo:** Pfft! Woulda been a lot cooler through the Crushinator Jaws of Smashalot—patent pending.

(*She produces a Washouts tour book and begins to look through it as Rainbow does her best not to blow her top then and there.*)

**Rainbow:** You…*what?!*

(*She backs off slightly, the camera panning to bring Spitfire into view as the recipient of her next words. The captain is dressed in her uniform jacket/shirt/tie, with sunglasses propped on forehead and whistle hanging around neck.*)

**Rainbow:** See? This is what I was telling you about.

**Spitfire:** (*smiling*) I got this.

(*The tinted lenses go down over the eyes; a moment later the book is struck from the orange filly’s grip. She looks up to find Spitfire hovering just off the deck, any trace of geniality wiped from her visage and voice.*)

**Spitfire:** You know what happens when something goes wrong with the Crushinator Jaws of Smashalot? (*Rainbow peeks out from behind her…*)

**Rainbow:** Patent pending. (*…and ducks away.*)

**Spitfire:** (*leaning hard into Scootaloo’s face*) You end up in a full-body wing-and-hoof cast, drinking through a straw!

**Scootaloo:** But with enough practice— (*Spitfire does it again.*)

**Spitfire:** Practice? (*landing, trotting around her*) Well, la-de-doodle-da! (*hovering*) Let me give you a different scenario. You’re probably saying to yourself, “I’m young, I’m strong, I’m gonna go out there and *stunt* some *tricks* with my new friend, Lightning Dust.” Well, I’m here to tell you that if you play *that* game, you’re gonna find out it’s pretty hard to stunt tricks— (*Hoof quotation marks on these last two words.*) —in a FULL-BODY WING-AND-HOOF CAST, DRINKING THROUGH A STRAW!!

(*This tirade, whose last four words carry enough force to shake the camera, puts a genuine fright into Scootaloo and even has Rainbow a bit unnerved.*)

**Rainbow:** I-I think she gets the point. (*Now Spitfire gets in her face.*)

**Spitfire:** I’M NOT FINISHED!! (*turning to Scootaloo*) Listen. I get it, kid. (*She touches down and puts a hoof to an orange shoulder.*) I used to be like you, telling myself, “I’m gonna touch the sky.”

**Scootaloo:** I don’t— (*Spitfire corks her mouth with a hoof.*)

**Spitfire:** Well, whoop-de-doodle-doo! (*peering over sunglasses at her*) You think you got it made in the shade? (*lifting her off ground*) Well, things *are* gonna be pretty shady indeed when you can’t go out in the sun ’cause you’re in a FULL-BODY WING-AND-HOOF CAST, DRINKING THROUGH A STRAW!! (*shaking her*) DO I MAKE MYSELF CLEAR?

(*Scootaloo’s eyes spin in their sockets as she utters a woozy moan, which Spitfire takes as an affirmative and her cue to let go.*)

**Spitfire:** Excellent.

(*Rainbow swoops in to catch Scootaloo; close-up of the disoriented little pony.*)

**Spitfire:** (*from o.s., plunking a Wonderbolts baseball cap on her head*) Have a hat.

(*Scootaloo worriedly tips it back and away from her eyes; behind her, the background dissolves to a scrolling expanse of blue sky against which the tips of Rainbow’s wings cycle up and down. Zoom out to frame both on the start of the next line; she is getting a ride back to Ponyville.*)

**Rainbow:** Uh…heh. Sorry that was a little…intense.

(*She dives toward the Crusaders’ clubhouse, the cap falling loose.*)

**Rainbow:** (*landing near it*) I just want to make sure you don’t get hurt. (*Land; Scootaloo climbs sullenly off her back.*) That way, you can follow in my hoofsteps. (*Chuckle.*) Everypony’s dream, right? (*Wink.*)

**Scootaloo:** More like “follow your wing flaps.”

**Rainbow:** Same difference.

(*She begins to climb the ramp, but stops halfway up at Scootaloo’s next words.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*very snarky*) Thanks, super-talented flyer, for clearing up what *I* should do.

**Rainbow:** Clearing things up is one of my specialties. Now come on. Let’s go rip up all your Washout posters into tiny pieces and throw ’em off a cliff.

(*Up she goes, the sound of the opening door drifting back to a suddenly pensive Scootaloo. Cut to a close-up of the Washout-logo rug being rolled up by Rainbow inside, then cut to her looking over the rest of the fan gear. A trash can in the center of the floor is already full to overflowing with discarded bric-a-brac.*)

**Rainbow:** I just thought of a great way to raise awareness for your original fan club—you know, the one about me?

(*The rug is pitched in, its weight nearly tipping the can over.*)

**Rainbow:** (*removing a picture from its frame*) How about a silent auction where every item is just a picture of yours truly? (*Chuckle; rip it to shreds.*) Nah. I’m just kidding.

(*Her next move is to aim a hair dryer at a Washouts sticker for a moment, softening the adhesive.*)

**Rainbow:** (*peeling it away*) That makes me seem too egotistical, doesn’t it? (*Drop it.*) Oh, oh! (*Pick up a framed black-and-white photo of herself.*) Maybe if they’re framed, it’s like— (*Hold it before her face.*) —“Wow, she’s so humble!” (*Lower it.*) You think?

(*She has completely cleared the walls by this point, and her eyes pop in surprise at a complete lack of any verbal response to this extended blowing of her own horn. An overhead shot of the clubhouse interior reveals that she has culled every bit of Washouts swag into the trash can, with an audience of none.*)

**Rainbow:** Scootaloo?

(*Long shot of the clubhouse, whose door flies open so she can zoom down to ground level, no longer carrying the photo.*)

**Rainbow:** (*zipping here and there*) Uh, Scootaloo?

(*After she has flown o.s. the camera cuts to a Ponyville street and pans to keep pace with her when she swoops into view.*)

**Rainbow:** Anypony seen Scootaloo?

(*She collides head-on with a walking, poster-carrying Twilight; both are knocked backward.*)

**Rainbow:** Ow! (*She sits up, rubbing her head.*) My fault, my fault! Sorry, I— (*noticing the dazed, fallen Princess*) —Twilight?

(*Twilight copies the gesture, adding a pained moan for good measure. One of the posters she was hauling has unrolled to reveal it as a Washouts souvenir.*)

**Twilight:** Sorry, I was just… (*seeing poster, deflating*) …um…

(*Her magic re-rolls the piece, and she cradles it uneasily as Rainbow hovers and fixes her with a searching look.*)

**Rainbow:** Please tell me you got that stuff so you could rip it up and throw it off a cliff. (*Twilight stands up with an embarrassed smile.*)

**Twilight:** They were doing an autograph session before practice. (*Rainbow hovers in her face.*)

**Rainbow:** Seriously? (*Drawn-out, slumping groan.*) You haven’t seen Scoot, have you?

**Twilight:** Actually…

(*Her slightly fearful grin finishes the sentence for her. Wipe to a patch of sunny sky as Rainbow barrels across and Twilight scrambles after her, no longer carrying the posters.*)

**Rainbow:** I can’t believe Scootaloo ditched me to watch them practice! Why can’t she see how dangerous they are?

**Twilight:** That’s kinda the whole draw. It’s exciting.

**Rainbow:** But it’s like, the harder I try to convince Scoot they’re dangerous, the more she likes them!

**Twilight:** You can’t control her actions, only yours. (*turning/stopping to face her*) Teach her what’s safe and what isn’t, like a good role model. (*catching up again.*) Then hope she makes the right decisions.

**Rainbow:** But what if she chooses them over me? She’s gonna get hurt! (*She gazes dejectedly toward the ground.*)

**Twilight:** I think I know somepony else who might get hurt if that happens.

(*Rainbow pulls ahead and turns to face her as both stop.*)

**Rainbow:** Um, maybe you’re right. But this isn’t about me. I’m just worried about Scoot.

(*Two sets of spikes slam together from the top and bottom of the screen to fill the view, then part to return the scene to the fairgrounds. A plethora of new deadly implements has been set up, and a helmetless Lightning hovers to work on a sketch of a trick propped up on an easel as a fully kitted-out Rolling zooms past in the foreground. Zoom in slowly as the purple flyer doubles back, a bear trap snapping shut and barely missing her tail, then cut to a close-up.*)

**Short:** (*from o.s.*) Wow.

(*She glances back over her shoulder; he flies to her from a nearby tent, head exposed and holding a sandwich.*)

**Short:** You’re really working hard on this new stunt.

(*He chomps into his meal with gusto, but immediately spits out the mouthful and goes into full rage mode.*)

**Short:** WHAT KINDA SORRY EXCUSE FOR A TOMATO SANDWICH IS THIS?!?

(*The remains are hurled to the ground just in front of Rainbow’s approaching hooves; Twilight touches down a moment later.*)

**Lightning:** (*dryly*) Sorry, Dash. Autograph session’s over— (*smirking*) —unless you want to buy Short Fuse’s limited-edition half-eaten tomato sandwich.

**Short:** I’M NOT SIGNING THAT ABOMINATION!!

**Rainbow:** You haven’t seen Scootaloo, have you?

**Lightning:** Ohhh! Isn’t she that pony that used to respect you?

(*The current Wonderbolt snarls at the former cadet, looking ready to take a chomp out of her face, but Twilight uses her magic to drag Rainbow back and head off any further unpleasantness.*)

**Rainbow:** (*sullenly*) I’d appreciate you helping me find her, so I can apologize for trying to make her quit liking you.

(*A snicker from Lightning as Rolling, without her helmet, flaps over to her and Short.*)

**Lightning:** Oh, I’m pretty sure she still likes us.

(*A hoof points to one side, red-violet eyes turn in that direction with fear to spare, and the camera pans quickly to a closed tent flap just in time for the prodigal filly to emerge. She is wearing a pint-size copy of the team’s flight suit and a devil-may-care grin and has a helmet tucked under one foreleg—the newest Washout has just made the scene. Cut to a long shot of Twilight and Rainbow and zoom in quickly, all four eyes widening as the pegasus utters a prolonged, incredulous gasp, and snap to black.*)

Act Three

(*Opening shot: fade in to the standoff between the five grown ponies, with Scootaloo standing partly in view at the fore.*)

**Rainbow:** Lightning Dust, I know we go way back, but I can’t let her do this! (*Cut to Scootaloo on the start of the next line.*)

**Scootaloo:** I don’t need you standing up for me!

**Rainbow:** (*flying to her, poking chest*) Obviously you do, because you can’t see how dangerous this is! Do you not remember what Spitfire said? (*Lightning flaps across to them.*)

**Lightning:** Ugh. Let me guess.

(*She dons a pair of sunglasses that are an exact match for those used by Spitfire during her haranguing of Scootaloo in Act Two.*)

**Lightning:** (*imitating her*) “You’ll be in a full-body wing-and-hoof cast, DRINKING THROUGH A STRAW!!”

(*Delivered with sufficient ferocity to make Rainbow stumble and fall on her back.*)

**Rainbow:** That doesn’t even sound like Spitfire. (*She zips across to grab the laughing Scootaloo’s foreleg; the helmet sits on the ground.*) That’s it! We’re leaving!

(*After a few yards’ drag, the little Washout furiously jerks her hoof loose.*)

**Scootaloo:** Just because I look up to you, doesn’t mean I have to *be* you! (*Rainbow recoils in horror.*) But based on *your* definition of what makes somepony great, I have bad news. I’ll never be the best of the best or a Wonderbolt, because *I can’t fly!*

(*The camera zooms in by steps on each of her last three words to stop on an extreme close-up of her bitter, anguished face.*)

**Scootaloo:** Is that what you wanted to hear? (*Rainbow recoils again; Scootaloo smiles suddenly.*) But not being able to fly doesn’t mean I can’t do something awesome, like strapping my scooter to a multi-stage, liquid-fuel rocket and jumping twenty-two wagons lined up in front of a roaring crowd!

(*She ends this line on her hocks, lost in the sheer coolness of the spectacle.*)

**Twilight:** That was awfully specific. (*Here comes Lightning.*)

**Lightning:** (*resting a foreleg on Scootaloo’s head*) That’s ’cause it’s what she’ll be doing in the show tonight.

(*Cut to Twilight; one blue-green wing extends into view toward her, a ticket lodged between two feathers.*)

**Lightning:** (*from o.s.*) Half off for princesses! (*She sidles up to whisper the next words.*) Bring your friends! (*Back off.*)

**Twilight:** Scootaloo, are you sure that’s what you really want to do?

(*The other three Washouts gather into a hover behind the rookie.*)

**Scootaloo:** Absolutely! (*getting in Rainbow’s face*) And there’s nothing you can do to stop me!

**Rainbow:** (*calmly*) You’re right. (*Zoom in slowly.*) You’re your own foal, and you have to make your own decisions.

**Scootaloo:** Good. (*Turn away from Rainbow.*) Because I already have.

(*Lightning escorts her away with the rest of the departing team, and Rainbow wings slowly off the grounds with a crushed moan, looking more like a brokenhearted rag doll than a cocksure ace flyer. Dissolve to a long shot of the fully reset fairgrounds, the central torch blazing bright for a capacity crowd. Zoom in slowly as the three adult Washouts do a few warm-up maneuvers, then cut to Twilight and all her friends save Rainbow in the bleachers.*)

**Pinkie:** Sorry for making us late again. Who would have guessed Scootaloo’s Super-Difficult Stunt Special Cupcakes would have been so super-difficult to bake?

(*On the second half of this line, she roots around in her mane and whips out a box containing a half-dozen cupcakes, each marked by a three-dimensional icing copy of the running board and handlebars of Scootaloo’s trusty scooter. Wheels are attached to the base of each treat. As Applejack watches wide-eyed, the magenta forelock lifts one of them free and snaps it upward so that it drops neatly into Pinkie’s waiting mouth. One quick swallow, and it is gone.*)

**Applejack:** (*shading eyes, looking skyward*) Hoo-wee! Looks like all of Ponyville’s here. (*Pinkie snags another cupcake as she turns to the empty spot on her other side.*) Except for Rainbow Dash.

(*Twilight sighs glumly as the loudspeakers come to life with a shrill of feedback.*)

**Announcer:** And here to introduce the most dangerous stunt we’ve ever performed, it’s your fearless captain…L-L-L-L-L-L-L-L-L-L-LIGHTNING DUST!!

(*Ecstatic cheers rise to greet the mare’s looping aerial arrival through a belch of fire from the torch. She has donned her helmet, but soon removes it.*)

**Lightning:** In just a moment, the newest member of the Washouts will be rocket-sledding down that hill…

(*She turns to point behind herself on the end of this. Cut to a long shot of a sizable hill in the near distance, its top obscured by clouds, and zoom out to frame her in the fore. A trail leads down from the summit and ends at an upward-curving ramp.*)

**Lightning:** …up that ramp…

(*She flies over a row of covered wagons set up in the space between this ramp and a second one set up as a landing point.*)

**Lightning:** …and over all twenty-two wagons to land on the other side, in one piece! Heh—if she’s lucky. (*A round of gasps.*) Put your hooves together for Half-Pint Dynamite!

(*Pan quickly to a paper-covered hoop emblazoned with the team’s logo and held upright by Rolling and Short, both wearing their helmets. Scootaloo breaks through from behind with her own head covered and somersaults to a standing wave, earning a thunderous roar of cheers and applause. Applejack waves her hat enthusiastically as all four gather at center stage; “Half-Pint” climbs onto Lightning’s back and is carried off toward the hill where the big stunt is to begin.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*lifting visor, removing helmet*) Lightning Dust, I have to tell you. I actually started Equestria’s first Washouts fan club—as far as I know—so this is a real honor, ma’am. Uh, do I call you “ma’am”?

**Lightning:** You land this jump, you can call me whatever you want.

(*They push through the clouds and descend toward the youngster’s scooter atop the hill. It has had a gargantuan, heavily duct-taped rocket engine attached behind its rear end, a large red button installed between the handlebars, and a small booster module mounted on either side. A couple of equipment boxes stand nearby. The sight of the unorthodox soup-up job throws a jolt of fear into Scootaloo.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*as Lightning lands*) Wow. That sure is…dangerous?

(*This camera angle frames the wheeled dolly on which the engine rests; the tape holds the two together, and a coupling attaches the dolly to the scooter.*)

**Lightning:** Naaah. (*Scootaloo climbs down.*) Well, maybe a little.

**Scootaloo:** Has anypony tested it before?

**Lightning:** Where’s the fun in that?

(*The filly’s nerves jump straight up to the ultimate octave and she forces down a hard swallow, but Lightning pays no mind. Instead, she retrieves a roll of tape from one box, pulls its end loose with her teeth, and affixes a booster to the main engine.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*shakily*) There’s…more?

**Lightning:** (*accusingly*) You’re not thinking of backing out, are you?

**Scootaloo:** No! I’m just thinking about drinking through straws.

**Lightning:** Are you the president of my fan club or not?

**Scootaloo:** Of course! It’s just—

**Lightning:** You wouldn’t want to get impeached for dishonoring my wishes, would you?

**Scootaloo:** I—is that a thing?

(*She is plucked off the turf and plunked behind the handlebars, and she has time for one popeyed stare before Lightning jams her helmet in place with visor lowered. Cut to a long shot of them on the hilltop, seen from near the base.*)

**Lightning:** (*hovering, echoing*) Light it up!

(*Fire is put to the wagon at one end of the line, spreading quickly from one to another until every last one is ablaze; the flames reflect off Scootaloo’s visor in lurid detail.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*flipping it up*) Okay, now I *am* thinking about backing out. (*Lightning leans into her face, grinning savagely.*)

**Lightning:** Too late!

(*One hoof slams down on the red button, igniting all the engines in quick succession and sending Scootaloo down the hill at ludicrous speed. She barrels toward the jump ramp as the crowd cheers in anticipation, but all she can manage for her part are a few utterly terrified whimpers. One wheel catches on a loose coil of rope and begins to pay it out as she flashes up the ramp, and an instant later she and the jury-rigged craft are fully airborne and arcing over the burning wagons. Collective excitement gives way to a chorus of fearful gasps, Applejack having donned her hat again…Scootaloo rises higher and higher…Lightning watches confidently from the hilltop, shading her eyes with a hoof…and then a varicolored contrail hurtles past with enough speed to very nearly blow her off the peak. It traces Scootaloo’s path downhill run and launch from the ramp and resolves into Rainbow, who pulls the rider bodily from the scooter so that her helmet falls off. The ridiculously overpowered rig is left to sail on into the wild blue yonder.*)

**Rainbow:** I know I was supposed to let you make your own decisions— (*winking*) —but that doesn’t mean I can’t swoop in and save you from time to time.

(*The two have time enough for a smiling cheek-to-cheek nuzzle before coming in for a landing. Short has ditched his helmet and is spraying the wagon debris with a fire extinguisher.*)

**Lightning:** (*indignantly, flying down to them*) If I’d known you were gonna bail, I would have done the trick myself! (*She lands, planting one hoof within the coil of rope*.)

**Rainbow:** (*smiling, pointing*) Great! So you won’t mind how that rope’s about to coil around your hoof.

(*The blue-green stunt flyer throws a panicked glance down at her leg just in time to see the end snag around her hoof and pull taut. She is dragged backwards into the sky after the scooter with a yelp.*)

**Lightning:** (*fading out*) RIVALS FOR LIIIIIIIFE!! (*Rolling and Short, both helmeted, take off after her.*)

**Rainbow:** (*calling after her*) Wouldn’t have it any other way!

**Scootaloo:** (*contritely*) I’m sorry for joining the Washouts. Lightning Dust wasn’t who I thought she was. She didn’t care about me being scared, or putting me in danger. She only wanted a good show, even if it meant I got hurt. That’s not the kind of pony I want to look up to.

(*The one she has looked up to circles around in front and hunches down to eye her straight on.*)

**Rainbow:** I’m the one who should be apologizing—for not acting like somepony who deserves a fan club. (*standing, ruffling Scootaloo’s mane; both smile*) I’ve been lucky enough to have somepony who thinks I’m the coolest, but there’s nothing cool about making you feel like you’ll never be as awesome as me.

(*The big hug that Scootaloo lays on her tells more than any words of forgiveness ever could.*)

**Rainbow:** I think we should cancel the Washouts Fan Club—because I know a fan club that could use some new members. (*A playful poke at Scootaloo’s nose.*)

**Scootaloo:** The Rainbow Dash Fan Club!

(*Rainbow shakes her head as Twilight, Applejack, and Rarity fall in behind her. Dissolve to an extreme close-up of a sky-blue hoof banging against the lectern’s gavel block in the Crusaders’ clubhouse, then cut to Rainbow standing behind it. On the wall behind her is a poster marked by a starry, blue/white sunburst background and bits of Scootaloo’s physiognomy visible to either side of her head; orange wing/lightning-bolt ornaments hang from the ceiling.*)

**Rainbow:** (*clearing throat*) Welcome to the first-ever meeting of the newest fan club for the awesomest, previously underappreciated pony in Ponyville. With founding member and president Rainbow Dash presiding, it’s the…

(*Zoom out slightly as she hovers off to one side. The poster depicts the orange pegasus, as does a picture attached to a length of overhead bunting; a framed picture of her with scooter and crash helmet adorns one wall, and a balloon sculpture of her stands on a table.*)

**Rainbow:** …Scootaloo Fan Club!

(*Cut to frame the rest of the interior as cheers erupt all over the place. Foals and full-grown ponies alike have gathered for the meeting, all sporting varied bits of gear to show their support: wigs, winged headbands, shirts, and the like. Among them are Rainbow’s parents, Bow Hothoof and Windy Whistles. Twilight and Scootaloo are just outside a window, looking in happily; zoom in on their happy smiles, then cut to them—the Princess in a hover and holding the filly up so she can see all. Scootaloo is no longer wearing her flight suit.*)

**Scootaloo:** You know, Rainbow Dash was right. Eavesdropping on your own fan club isn’t weird at all.

(*Twilight allows herself a good-humored eye roll. Cut to a long shot of the clubhouse, zooming out slowly, and fade to black.*)