**Turnabout Theatre Part 2**

**Scene 1**

***February 12, 9:20 AM***

***Manehattan District Court - Defendant Lobby No. 2***

PHOENIX  
I never thought I’d be coming back to this world, let alone to take on another trial. Come to think of it, I haven’t set foot in a courtroom in general for a good while.

TWILIGHT  
[confused] Oh? Why’s that?

PHOENIX  
Remember what Athena was talking about yesterday? That was our last case, and that was well over a month ago.

TWILIGHT  
[Warm and supportive] Oh. Well, I’m sure there’s no need to worry. You were disbarred for seven years like you said yesterday, but you’ve still taken on plenty of murder cases before and since, right? You have a lot of experience under your belt. Just because there’s been a little bit of a hiatus, it doesn’t mean you’ll revert back to being a rookie.

PHOENIX

*(She’s probably right, but I’m pretty sure I’ve felt like one several times throughout my career.)*

ATHENA  
[Peppy and energetic] There’s nothing wrong with a little refresher, though! Right, Apollo?

APOLLO  
Sure. I’m pretty confident Mr. Wright’s got this, though. [Coy/playful] Besides, I’d rather focus on making sure *you’re* up to speed on things.

ATHENA  
[Slightly annoyed] Hey, come on! I’m not a newbie anymore! I can keep up with everyone else, no sweat!

PHOENIX  
[notices Athena looking confident, but widget is in the fear stage] *(Athena, there’s no shame in being inexperienced. We’ve all gotta start somewhere...)*

TRUCY  
This is so cool! We’re about to watch Daddy defend in court in a whole ‘nother world! With cute magical ponies!

ATHENA  
You can say that again! I can’t contain my excitement!

TWILIGHT  
[Maybe a little exasperated?] Well, I’m happy to see that you’re all enjoying yourselves! [Fully sincere] And thanks again, everyone. I really appreciate you being here today.

TRUCY  
Of course!

APOLLO  
It certainly is going to be the experience of a lifetime, despite the circumstances. By the way, Twilight? There’s something I’ve been meaning to ask you.

TWILIGHT  
What is it, Apollo?

APOLLO  
You mentioned that murder is nearly unheard of in Equestria - the first one to supposedly happen was for the case where Mr. Wright defended Rainbow Dash. How advanced can your criminal laws be if such serious crimes rarely, if ever, occur?

PHOENIX  
Apparently, they’re nearly identical to ours. I remember Twilight saying something like Equestria’s judicial system was inspired by humans.

TWILIGHT  
That’s right! I’ve read many books on both humans *and* human law. The human legal system has been refined through countless years of study and practice, and yet it is STILL evolving. It’s why Equestrian law is practiced very similarly, and what influenced the designs of nearly all of Equestria’s courthouses!

APOLLO  
Well, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, as they say.

ATHENA  
Hey, Boss?

PHOENIX  
What’s up, Athena?

ATHENA  
I was just wondering...who’s gonna be your co-counsel for the trial? I don’t see anyone else who could be up for the task, and we don’t have the right badges.

PHOENIX  
I figured it’d be best to go with Twilight. She was my co-counsel during Rainbow Dash’s trial, after all.

ATHENA  
But doesn’t she need an Equestrian Attorney’s badge to be allowed to stand in court?

TWILIGHT  
Nope. Since I’m a princess, I can stand in court without the need of a badge.

ATHENA  
But, weren’t you just a unicorn during Rainbow Dash’s case? How could you be Mr. Wright’s co-counsel if you weren’t a princess?

TWILIGHT  
Well, since I was Princess Celestia’s student at the time, she gave me special permission. Phoenix had no experience in how Equestria worked, so we made an appeal to the Equestria High Council to allow me to be there to assist him.

PHOENIX  
I know you’d love to help out, Athena, but playing it safe for Miss Pommel’s sake is our best option. With Twilight by my side, we’ve got someone who knows the rules of this world like the back of her hand- er, hoof.

ATHENA  
I gotcha, Boss. Oh, speaking of Miss Pommel, she’s here.

*Rarity and Coco enter. Coco has a rather sullen expression on her face - quite unlike her rather jovial appearance on the previous day.*PHOENIX  
*(Huh? What’s up with Coco all of a sudden? She seemed fine yesterday.)*

RARITY  
Good morning, Mr. Wright.

PHOENIX  
Morning, Rarity. What’s wrong with Coco?  
  
  
RARITY  
I’m not sure myself. I saw her being escorted here by the guards with this rather despondent look upon her face. It pained me to see her looking like that just before her trial, so I thought I’d to steal her away from them with a little “pony charm.” I was hoping I could figure out what’s been plaguing her mind, but I’m afraid I haven't been able to get a single word out of her.

PHOENIX  
(*This place is in serious trouble if someone genuinely dangerous is ever trusted to guards like those.)*

COCO  
...

PHOENIX  
Hey, Coco. How are you holding up?  
  
  
COCO  
…  
  
  
PHOENIX  
*(Wow, she’s really out of it today.)*  
  
  
RARITY  
The poor thing! The trial has her worried sick!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
I guess that’s understandable. *(It can’t just be that, though. Can it?)*

TRUCY  
[Loud and boisterous] All right, Miss Pommel, you’ve got nothing to fear! You’re innocent, and Daddy here will prove it! He’ll show everyone that you had nothing to do with Overall Concept’s murder!

*Coco starts crying, Rarity closes in to comfort her.*

RARITY  
[Supportive and caring, very sensitive] Oh, darling. It’s okay. It’s okay. I know how much you cared about him.

TRUCY  
[Remorseful] Ah! I’m so sorry. I didn’t mean to-- I’m SO sorry.  
  
COCO  
[Still crying] I-I-It’s f-fine.  
  
  
RARITY  
[Rarity notices the glitter in Coco’s mane] Hmm? Darling, there’s something stuck in your mane.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
*(What is that? It looks like...glitter?)*

COCO  
[Still crying, but trying to calm down] Oh, s-sorry. I haven’t had a chance to clean myself since I got arrested.

RARITY  
[Upset and angry] \*Gasp\* Oh, Coco! How dare they allow you to stay dirty in detention, especially in your state! Why, that’s horrible!

COCO  
R-Rarity, can you give me a second? I...I need to calm myself down...before the trial b-begins.

RARITY  
[Understanding] Of course, dear. Go lay on that couch over there and mellow out. It’ll help, I promise.

TWILIGHT  
[Dryly] Well, *you* would know.

COCO  
Okay, Rarity. If you’ll excuse me…

*Coco leaves.*

TWILIGHT  
Overall Concept… must have been very special to her.

RARITY  
He was - the two always seemed so happy together, if both of their letters to me were any indication. Everypony who worked with them thought so too.

TWILIGHT  
It must be hard to lose such a good friend like that. I can’t even imagine how she feels.

APOLLO  
[Empathetic] Yeah. It's… rough.

PHOENIX  
It’s something I wouldn’t wish on anyone. And it only makes it worse that she’s accused of murdering him. But that’s exactly why we need to fight for her! It’s the only way to get her out of this, and bring her some peace of mind.

TWILIGHT  
[Determined] You’re right, Phoenix!

PHOENIX  
So Twilight, do you have any information on who we’re up against?

TWILIGHT  
You mean the prosecutor?

PHOENIX  
Yeah. Any idea who it’s going to be?  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
I believe it’s going to be Princess Celestia’s nephew.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
She has a nephew?

ATHENA  
[Curious] Wait… Does that make him a *prince*?

TWILIGHT  
Yes [aaaaa]and yes. In fact, his name is Prince Blueblood.

*Rarity overhears and reacts.*

RARITY  
WHAT?!

*Phoenix, Twilight, Apollo, Athena, and Trucy yelp.*

RARITY  
[Incensed] THAT POMPOUS EXCUSE FOR A STALLION!?

PHOENIX  
[Shushing] Rarity, please! Inside voice! This is a courthouse!

TWILIGHT  
Ohhh, right. I’m guessing you’re still on bad terms with him, then?

RARITY  
[Fuming] “Bad terms”?! I’ve never met a stallion whom I had such high hopes for, only to have them all come CRASHING DOWN! Of course I’m still on bad terms with him! And you’re saying that HE’S the prosecutor?!

TWILIGHT  
Rarity, I’m sure he’s just doing it for experience.

RARITY  
[Over-the-top] But out of all the ponies it could have been, why HIM?! I swear to Celestia, he better keep that horse’s mouth shut about my little Coco! Or I will show him what it truly means to be a ROYAL PAIN!

TWILIGHT  
Ooookaaay, getting hostile. [Soothing] How about you go join Coco on that couch to calm yourself down? She could use your company.

RARITY  
[Settling down a bit] Yes, you’re right. Goodness, I cannot believe how mad that stallion still makes me!

*Rarity leaves.*

PHOENIX  
Just as dramatic as ever, isn’t she?

TWILIGHT  
[Exasperated] You don’t know the half of it.

ATHENA  
That screaming almost rivals your Chords of Steel, Apollo!

APOLLO  
For real. She’s about as soft as a marshmallow at first glance, until you anger her and she comes at you with the fire and intensity of a thousand suns.

TRUCY  
So...you’re saying she turned into a *roasted marshmallow*? Hahaha... [sighs] Now thinking about it makes me hungry. I wish I had s’mores with me...

PHOENIX  
Twilight, what did you mean just now when you said this “Prince Blueblood” is doing this for experience? What would warrant someone like him prosecuting a case?

TWILIGHT  
Well, he IS royalty. Like I said, he’s probably using this murder trial as an opportunity to gain some trial experience. After all, if you’re ever going to rule a kingdom in Equestria, you’re going to need extensive knowledge on the law and how to uphold it. [proud] As a matter of fact, I’ve been studying a lot of law since I became a princess myself!

PHOENIX  
No kidding! How are you finding it?

TWILIGHT  
Oh, it’s been so enjoyable! I can’t tell you how amazing it has been, learning about all the laws that are in place!

TRUCY  
So it’s like an exam, then. You study, then the trials you take part in test how much you’ve learned and what sorta knowledge they’re after. Like the one this Blueblood guy is taking part in today!

TWILIGHT  
[sheepish] Is it embarrassing if that comparison makes me even *more* pleased that I’m doing it?

PHOENIX

*(I certainly don’t remember my law school experience being so fun… I’m envious.)*

APOLLO  
So, based on the location of your castle, does that mean Ponyville is technically your kingdom?

TWILIGHT  
I wouldn’t exactly say that. It’s just a place where all of my friends live, so I figured why not have the castle there, too? [trailing off] Then again, the castle sort of, uh, gre﹘[as in starting to say grew] I mean, built itself there, I had no say in it..

PHOENIX  
[Confused] Your castle...built itself? Do I even want to know how that’s possible?

TWILIGHT  
Umm… a *lot* has happened in the year and a half since you were here last.

PHOENIX  
*(You transformed into an alicorn, became a princess, and now have your own castle that apparently* ***built*** *itself. I thought my life was crazy, but your life* ***really*** *got turned upside down...)*

BAILIFF  
The trial is about to begin. Will the defendant and their attorney please enter the courtroom?

TWILIGHT  
As much as I’d love to talk about what’s been happening in Equestria, we have a trial to take on. I hope you’re ready, Phoenix.

PHOENIX  
Ready as I’ll ever be.

APOLLO  
Good luck, Mr. Wright!

ATHENA  
We’ll be cheering you on from the gallery!

TRUCY  
Break a leg, Daddy!

PHOENIX  
Thanks, everyone! Alright, Twilight, let’s head inside.

TWILIGHT  
Right behind you, Phoenix.

**Scene 2**

***February 12, 9:30 AM***

***Manehattan District Court - Courtroom No. 2***

***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble….***

JUDGE  
Court is now in session for the trial of Coco Pommel. Are the prosecution and defense ready?

BLUEBLOOD  
The prosecution has, naturally, been ready and waiting.

PHOENIX  
The defense is ready, Y-.

*Phoenix quickly realizes the Judge is presiding.*

PHOENIX  
[Shocked] Y-YOUR HONOR?!!

JUDGE  
[Pleased] Hohoho! I knew you’d be surprised to see me, Mr Wright!

PHOENIX  
Knew?! I...but...WHAT?!

APOLLO  
*[in the audience]* Wait...why is the Judge here?!

ATHENA  
*[in the audience]* Oh, wow! Hiya, Judge!

JUDGE  
[Surprised] Mr. Justice and Ms. Cykes?! Is that you over there?

TRUCY  
Don’t forget me, Your Honor!

JUDGE  
Oh, Ms. Wright! It seems as though Mr. Wright’s brought the whole gang along!

PHOENIX  
Twilight, what exactly is going on here?!

TWILIGHT  
[Sheepish] Oh, did I forget to mention that I summoned the Judge here again?

PHOENIX  
Yes, you did!

TWILIGHT  
[Sheepish] Sorry, there’s been so much going on, I guess it just slipped my mind. But, hey. It is a nice surprise, seeing him again? Right?

PHOENIX  
*[exasperated sigh] (Even the Judge is more aware of what’s going on here than I am. THAT’S a new low.)* So, why did you summon him *again*? I thought you said Princess Celestia is the one who usually presides as the judge. Was this another decision made by the High Council?

TWILIGHT  
No, I just thought that you would be more comfortable having a familiar figure presiding, much like before. So, I put in a request to summon him again, and the court agreed! Besides, your judge loves being in Equestria! He stayed a while after you left last time, you know? Apparently he really wanted to see the Summer Sun Celebration. I knew he’d jump at the chance to come back!

PHOENIX  
Oh. That’s very thoughtful of you, Twilight. I certainly do feel at home with him sitting up there. And I can’t think of a judge more fair than him, if I’m being honest.

JUDGE  
Ohhh, being here again brings back memories! I hope you all have as wonderful a time here as I did, Mr. Wright!

PHOENIX  
[Sheepish] Well, they were kinda dragged along, so they had no choice.

BLUEBLOOD  
*[Clears throat rudely: a “Harumph” sort of sound]* If I may interject, may we cease this chit chat and get on with the trial already?

JUDGE  
Oh, of course. My apologies, mister… um, Prince Blueblood, correct?

BLUEBLOOD  
Yes, Your Honor. I am like no other prince in Equestria.

PHOENIX  
*(Oh great, another prosecutor who looks like they’re going to ensure an unpleasant experience...)*

BLUEBLOOD  
That being said, what are YOU supposed to be?

PHOENIX  
[Confused] Umm, me? (***What*** *am I supposed to be?*) [Politely] My name’s Phoenix Wright. I’m Miss Pommel’s defense attorney.

BLUEBLOOD  
Ah, so it IS you, then? The famous Phoenix Wright? The human lawyer who served as the defense in... the TS-5 Incident?

PHOENIX  
The TS-5 Incident? (*Sounds like our legal system isn’t the only human thing ponies imitated…)*

BLUEBLOOD  
The trial that took place a year and a half ago, following that unfortunate incident near Ponyville.

PHOENIX  
*(He must be talking about Rainbow Dash’s trial. I suppose it must have been big news, considering the circumstances.)*

BLUEBLOOD  
I must say, it was an impressive victory, especially since you proved that there wasn’t even a murder to begin with. [Haughty] Unfortunately for you, your defeat here is guaranteed, as this case could not be more open-and-shut. I’d recommend giving up before I bring the same shame and humiliation upon you that I have brought upon the rest of the attorneys I have encountered! As a stallion of royal blood, losing to a commoner such as yourself is something I am simply incapable of doing!

PHOENIX  
(*Just ticking every box on how not to make a good first impression, aren’t you, buddy?*)

JUDGE  
*[hits gavel]* Now, now. I think it’s about time we got on with the trial. Will the prosecution please begin their opening statement?

BLUEBLOOD  
Of course, Your Honor.

TWILIGHT  
Here we go, Phoenix.

BLUEBLOOD  
The crime took place in the Bridleway Theatre, located in the heart of Manehattan, where the play “*Hinny of the Hills”* was being performed. I have a promotional poster for the play here.

**[Added to Court Record: “*Hinny of the Hills”* poster; A poster that advertises the play “*Hinny of the Hills”.* The show was sold out 7 hours prior to its start.]**

JUDGE  
Ooh, this looks interesting. I’ll have to get a ticket to the next show as soon as the trial is over.

BLUEBLOOD  
Unfortunately, Your Honor, that will be impossible. Due to the, obviously, unforeseen circumstances, all future showings at Bridleway Theatre are on hold. And besides, the show in question was completely sold out 7 hours before the play even started. The last ticket was bought by the defendant around noon of that day. You’ll be hard pressed to find an opportunity to buy a ticket, let alone actually manage to see the play.

JUDGE  
Hmm...well, that’s a shame. I don’t suppose there are any other sights in the city I could catch while I’m here?

BLUEBLOOD  
I have heard that there’ll be some sort of race here soon. I suppose, if you’re still here, you could watch that.

JUDGE  
Hmm, I’m not really into watching races like all of the young people are these days. My brother is, though. He’s been--

BLUEBLOOD  
If you don’t mind, Your Honor, I’d like to get us back to the case at hoof?

JUDGE  
[Apologetic] Oh, yes, of course. My apologies. Please continue, Prince Blueblood.

BLUEBLOOD  
Thank you, Your Honor. The victim in this case is Overall Concept, who worked as the head costume designer for the theatre. Allow me to present his autopsy report for your perusal.

**[Overall Concept’s Autopsy Report: Estimated time of death was between 8:30 pm and 9:00 pm. The cause of death was a severed spinal cord. Large bruise discovered on the back of the victim’s head indicates he was unconscious at the time of death. Traces of glitter found on the victim’s forehooves. No other substances or injuries were found on, or in, the body.]**

JUDGE  
Hmm, it seems as though the victim was unconscious at the time of his death. It’s...at least comforting to know that he didn’t suffer.

BLUEBLOOD  
Indeed, Your Honor.

PHOENIX  
(*The victim was unconscious when he died? I’d better remember that detail.)*

BLUEBLOOD  
As for the defendant in this case, that would be the victim’s assistant, Miss Coco Pommel, who joined the theatre several months ago. On that fateful night, Ms. Pommel and Mr. Concept were in the dressing room working on various costumes as the play was being performed. This is likely how glitter found its way to the victim’s forehooves, as stated in the autopsy report. Around 8:50 PM, Ms. Pommel attacked Mr. Concept in the dressing room. Attempting to save himself, Mr. Concept fled, but Ms. Pommel gave chase. The victim ran up to the catwalk that runs above the stage, with the unsuspecting actors still performing below. It was on this catwalk where the defendant caught up to the victim and mercilessly attacked him once more, knocking him unconscious with a blow to the back of the head. Wasting no time, she wrapped a noose around the unconscious victim’s neck. With the other end of the rope tied to the catwalk’s railing, she pushed his body off of the edge, and hanged him in front of a full house of 5000 ponies!

***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***

JUDGE  
[Shocked] My word! What a cruel and horrible way to die!

BLUEBLOOD  
[Confident Agreement] I wholeheartedly agree, Your Honor.

PHOENIX  
Hold on a second! This is just pure speculation! What makes you think my client is the killer? She and the victim were good friends!

BLUEBLOOD  
And you think the fact that they were friends is enough to let her off the hook? Nonsense! I expected better from you, human!

PHOENIX

If your case has as much evidence as your opening statement, it may as well be enough. I expected more than just pure speculation from you, Mr. Blueblood!

BLUEBLOOD  
[Snidely] “Prince” Blueblood. And for your information, none of this is, as you say, “pure speculation.” . Not only do I have physical evidence to back up my claims, but there is a decisive witness who saw the whole thing take place.

TWILIGHT  
That witness he’s talking about must be Playwright.

PHOENIX  
Right, and allegedly, he saw Coco chasing Overall up to the catwalk.  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
Let’s hope he doesn’t say anything...too conclusive before we even get a chance to fight back.

JUDGE  
Please call this witness to the stand, Prince Blueblood.

BLUEBLOOD  
Of course, Your Honor.

*Playwright takes the stand.*

BLUEBLOOD  
Witness, state your name and occupation for the record.

PLAYWRIGHT  
The name’s Playwright. I’m the director of Bridleway Theatre. My job is to make sure that all of my plays are nothing short of masterpieces!

BLUEBLOOD  
Your passion for the craft is duly noted, witness. Now, is it true that you saw the defendant chasing the victim two nights ago?

PLAYWRIGHT  
Yes, it is. I couldn’t stand their loud hoofsteps! I was worried that they were going to interrupt my play, you see. This performance was the best one yet!

BLUEBLOOD  
[Appeasing] It truly is a shame that your play was interrupted by such a horrific tragedy. Mr. Playwright, I would like for you to please testify as to what you saw on the night of the murder.

PLAYWRIGHT  
It would be my pleasure.

TWILIGHT  
This is it, Phoenix.

PHOENIX  
Let’s hear what he has to say.

**WITNESS TESTIMONY**

**What I Saw**

*I was in the left wing of the stage, watching my play being performed.*

*Suddenly, I saw Mr. Concept being chased by Miss Pommel up the catwalk.*

*I tried to ignore the disturbance they were causing, but then I saw Mr. Concept hanging right above center stage!*

*I ran up to the catwalk immediately, and saw Miss Pommel looking down from where Mr. Concept fell.*

*As much as I hate to believe it, Miss Pommel must have been the one who killed him. I didn’t see anything else that would suggest otherwise.*

JUDGE  
Hm, so the defendant really *was* chasing the victim.

PLAYWRIGHT  
[Confident] Yes. I have no doubt in my mind.

PHOENIX  
*(You might not, but I do. Besides, you can’t pronounce Coco Pommel’s name properly!)*

TWILIGHT  
He seems pretty confident.

PHOENIX  
Don’t they all? Anyway, all we need to get the ball rolling is a contradiction in his testimony.

JUDGE  
Now then, Mr. Wright. You may begin your cross-examination.

**CROSS EXAMINATION**

**What I Saw**

*I was in the left wing of the stage watching my play being performed.*

PHOENIX  
***HOLD IT!*** What was this play about?

PLAYWRIGHT  
It’s about a mare named Hinny. She’s an orphan who’s determined to find her parents, who she was separated from at birth.

PHOENIX  
[Intrigued] Oh? How’d they get separated?

PLAYWRIGHT  
Well, it’s an incredible tale-

BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** Do you mind?! Some of us are still planning to see this play when the showings resume! How dare you try to spoil it for me! Not to mention, the plot is absolutely irrelevant to the case!

PLAYWRIGHT  
Oh, of course! My apologies! I just love talking about this story!

JUDGE  
Aww. But I wanted to know how it all ends!

PHOENIX  
So, you said you were watching from the left side of the stage? Didn’t the chase happen on the right side, though?

PLAYWRIGHT  
Oh, are you referring to it as the house-left wing? In that case, no, I was on the other side.

PHOENIX  
But...you just said you were on the left side!

PLAYWRIGHT  
*[Exasperated sigh]* Do you know anything about the performing arts?

PHOENIX  
Umm...kinda? I mean, I was in the Art Department in college. I…heh, actually wanted to be a stage actor myself!

PLAYWRIGHT  
[Mocking] You?! Pfft. Trust me, you wouldn’t last a day in the business! I can tell.

PHOENIX  
*(Yeah, thanks for the advice on a career choice I gave up on nearly 15 years ago.)*

PLAYWRIGHT  
Anyway, since you’re obviously on the ignorant side when it comes to stage terminology, let me give you a little lesson. They were running through the stage-left wing, but it’s also called the house-right wing. [Deliver line quickly to help in playing up confusion] You call it stage-left if you’re looking at the audience from the stage, and you call it house-right if you’re looking at the stage from the audience. I just tend to go with the stage terms, because I’m usually behind the curtains.

PHOENIX  
[Thoroughly Confused] Uh, so… is it left or right?

PLAYWRIGHT  
[Frustrated] Gugh! If it makes it easier for you, I’ll go with your version, and call it the right side. Does that make you feel better?!

PHOENIX  
Yes, actually. [Awkward clearing-of-the-throat] Anyway, why watch from the side? Wouldn’t directors normally watch from the audience?

PLAYWRIGHT  
You’re right, many directors *do* tend to watch from the audience, but *I* like to be up close and personal during a performance. I want to make sure that my performers are at the top of their game!

PHOENIX  
Are you saying that you aren’t confident in your actors to give it their all?

PLAYWRIGHT  
[Insulted] Of course not! My performers are among the best in the business! Or they are *now*, at least. I just take a few extra precautions to make sure that my plays are absolute perfection!

PHOENIX  
I see… So no mistakes at all, then?

PLAYWRIGHT  
Not one. Everything went flawlessly up to the second act. We were on track for a perfect performance, if it wasn’t for what was happening backstage.

*Suddenly, I saw Mr. Concept being chased by Miss Pommel up the catwalk.*

PHOENIX  
***HOLD IT!*** [Pressing for information] You saw Miss Pommel chasing the victim? Weren’t you watching the stage for any potential screw-ups from your actors?

PLAYWRIGHT  
[Defensive] Well, I had no choice but to look! Their obnoxiously loud hoofsteps were distracting me from watching my play! It made me want to find whoever it was and scream at them, but it was during the show, so I had to keep quiet. I did complain to my stage manager, though. He was standing right next to me during both acts of the play.

PHOENIX  
*(His stage manager was with him? I suppose that gives him a solid alibi, then.)* Were there any breaks during the play?  
  
PLAYWRIGHT  
Yes, one - a 15 minute intermission between acts 1 and 2.

PHOENIX  
And what were you doing during that time?

PLAYWRIGHT  
Overseeing the stagehooves’ work. They had a lot to do to get ready for the second act, you see.

PHOENIX  
What did this work entail?

PLAYWRIGHT  
Well, they had to completely clear the stage of all the props, as well as any debris that could cause problems for the actors on stage, mainly tripping hazards.  
  
  
 PHOENIX  
What time was all of this happening?

PLAYWRIGHT  
The intermission started at around 8:00, and it ended at 8:15. The second act would’ve run from then until 9:00, if Overall hadn’t been murdered.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Did you see Overall at all during the intermission?

PLAYWRIGHT  
Actually, I did. He came onstage briefly to discuss something with me, and then he left right before the intermission ended. He said he and his assistant had to start working on coating a sheet of fabric in paint.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
What did you two talk about?

PLAYWRIGHT  
[Taciturn] That’s...a private matter. It has nothing to do with this case, I assure you.

PHOENIX  
You’re not the one who gets to make that judgement, Mr. Playwright. Tell us what he wanted to talk to you about. Remember, you’re under oath.

JUDGE  
Witness, please tell us what you discussed with the victim.

PLAYWRIGHT  
I…it was just something related to the fabric, that’s all.

PHOENIX  
The fabric?

PLAYWRIGHT  
Yes, I asked him to make a special fabric for the next show we were planning. He wanted to confirm the details with me.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
*(That must be the special fabric he told Rarity about in his letters to her.)* Did you see him again after that?  
  
  
PLAYWRIGHT  
Not until the chase, no.  
  
PHOENIX  
*(Hmm, even though the two of them met, it would’ve been before the time of death. I seriously doubt anything could’ve been done to throw that off, given the state of the crime scene. I guess this means Playwright can’t be the killer.)* And when did the chase occur, again?  
  
  
PLAYWRIGHT  
It was near the conclusion of the play; I’d say it was probably around 8:50pm.

BLUEBLOOD  
The time of death is estimated to be between 8:30pm and 9:00pm. This all lines up perfectly with the prosecution’s case.

PHOENIX  
Which way did you look when you noticed the victim and my client?

PLAYWRIGHT  
To the right, of course.

PHOENIX  
…Uh, so…is the stage-house direction thing still applied here?

PLAYWRIGHT  
… *[Exasperated sigh]* Forget it. I’ll just show you on the diagram. [Indicating various points on the diagram] I was watching the stage from this side, and I looked in this direction to see what was causing all the ruckus.

PHOENIX  
So, you were facing the dressing room, then?

PLAYWRIGHT  
Yes.

PHOENIX  
How exactly did you know it was them? Isn’t the backstage dark during the play?

PLAYWRIGHT  
Yes, but not pitch black. I was able to make out their silhouettes. Not to mention, they were the only two ponies who were on that side of the stage.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
“On that side”? Does that mean there was someone else on the other side of the stage?  
  
  
PLAYWRIGHT  
Yes - the stagehooves I mentioned before. They were all positioned at the right, or rather, left, if we’re going by house terms, wing of the stage.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
How long had they been there?  
  
  
PLAYWRIGHT  
They were there throughout the entire first act. During the intermission, they came onstage to clean and prepare it for act two. Then, they returned to the left wing for the second act.

PHOENIX  
In that case, what brought you to the conclusion that Coco was chasing Overall? Couldn’t it have been one of the stagehooves that left their post?

BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** They claimed that not a single one of them left the right wing Sorry, human, but that’s impossible; the stagehooves were all interrogated after the incident. during the second act. I assume your next proposal is going to be that all of the stagehooves were in league with one another, and plotted to murder Overall together?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
*(That…seems unlikely. We better look for other possibilities.)* [Exasperated] No, it isn’t.

BLUEBLOOD  
Hmph. Pity. I was looking forward to putting you down even more.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
But I *would* like Mr. Playwright to clarify exactly how he knew the figures he saw were Coco and Overall.

PLAYWRIGHT  
It was pretty dark, but I could make out a little of their faces. Miss Pommel looked a little scared, yet determined. She was chasing a stallion who was running for help, after all. As for Mr. Concept, he looked very angry.

PHOENIX  
Angry?

PLAYWRIGHT  
[Defensive] Hey, I don’t blame him! He’d just been attacked! By his partner, no less!

TWILIGHT  
Hmm, I’d be more scared than angry if somepony was attacking me.

PHOENIX  
Good point. Let’s see what other little tidbits we can get out of Playwright. Maybe he’ll let something slip that we can use later on.

*I tried to ignore the disturbance they were causing, but then I saw Mr. Concept hanging right above center stage!*

PHOENIX  
***HOLD IT!*** There was a disturbance?

PLAYWRIGHT  
The hard hoofsteps from them on the wooden floor were already bad enough. Mix that with the rattling catwalk, and that loud clang! That’s enough to ruin a play as it is! Not to mention that horrific hanging that happened not even a minute after they ran by.

PHOENIX  
How did you react to his death?

PLAYWRIGHT  
[Insulted?] How do you think?! Just like everypony else who saw it! Scared! Horrified! Distraught! My play was ruined, and one of my employees was killed! I wanted to find the ruffian who would dare commit such a heinous act! So, I went up to that catwalk, and...I was shocked at what I found!

*I ran up to the catwalk immediately, and saw Miss Pommel looking down from where Mr. Concept fell.*

PHOENIX  
***HOLD IT!*** And how did Miss Pommel appear when you saw her there?

PLAYWRIGHT  
She looked unfocused. As if she couldn’t believe what she was seeing. As soon as I saw her, I could tell. Miss Pommel pushed Mr. Concept off the catwalk with the noose that had been prepared!

PHOENIX  
Wait a minute. You’re claiming that the noose had been prepared before the chase?

BLUEBLOOD  
[Disbelief] Hmph. Honestly. Just look at the poster. You can see it right there, as plain as day!

PHOENIX  
Hmm? Ack!

BLUEBLOOD  
[Haughty] I can see right through you, human. You were planning on asking “Why would the defendant have prepared a noose on the catwalk if she was never planning to go up there?” Ha! An argument befitting a monkey such as yourself.

PHOENIX  
*(Well, this monkey is quick on his feet!)* So, this noose was already lying on the catwalk at the time of the crime?

PLAYWRIGHT  
That’s right. It was supposed to be used during the climax of the play, but I certainly didn’t plan for THAT kind of climax!

PHOENIX  
*(If it makes you feel better, it’s a twist ending no one will ever forget.)* When exactly was this noose prepared?

PLAYWRIGHT  
It was during the intermission. That was another task the stagehooves had to complete before the second act, on top of clearing the catwalk of any debris. I can assure you, it was done flawlessly. I went up there just as they were finishing to check it myself; the noose was ready, and the catwalk was spotless. From that point on, the stagehooves were positioned on the left side of the stage, and I was on the right with my stage manager.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Did the stagehooves report anyone going up to the catwalk during the second act?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
They did not. Along with none of them leaving their positions, not a single one has made mention of seeing anypony go up or down the stairs leading to the catwalk after the second act had begun, even after the murder had occurred.

PHOENIX  
*(So, it’s a classic locked-room murder, then.)* Are you sure that you saw no one else while you were up there?

PLAYWRIGHT  
[Confident] I’m certain. No one else was on that catwalk, besides Miss Pommel and myself. She was standing right above where Mr. Concept was...y’know. Pushed down from.   
  
  
PHOENIX  
Did you see anything else on the catwalk at all?  
  
  
PLAYWRIGHT  
Well, there was a small pile of glitter and a glitter-stained fabric roll next to Miss Pommel. But I didn’t pay them much attention, really.

PHOENIX  
Glitter-stained fabric roll? Huh. [Confused] When we went to investigate the theatre yesterday, we only saw the pile of glitter.

BLUEBLOOD  
That would be because the police had already removed it for examination. I have it right here. It was found exactly where the witness said it was in his testimony.

**[Glitter-stained fabric roll: A wooden fabric roll with traces of glitter stuck to it. Found at the crime scene, near the defendant. The roll has several exposed splinters.]**

JUDGE  
I say, Prosecut-err..Prince? Do my eyes deceive me, or does that fabric roll have several splinters sticking out from it?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
It does indeed, Your Honor. It would appear as though this roll has seen its fair share of use over the years.

PHOENIX  
*(Hmm, something about that fabric roll doesn’t sit right with me…)* And what did you do after you found Miss Pommel?

PLAYWRIGHT  
Well, I had to make sure she didn’t try to get away, so I stayed on the catwalk, and called out to my stage manager standing below to cancel the play and call for the police. They arrived relatively quickly, and arrested Miss Pommel right where I found her.

PHOENIX  
But how did she respond to you? You must’ve said something to her when you walked up there, right?

PLAYWRIGHT  
Umm...we didn’t actually say a word to each other.

PHOENIX  
Huh?

PLAYWRIGHT  
Miss Pommel just started…crying. A lot. I felt bad for her, but I was certain she was the one who murdered Overall Concept. So, instead of asking her anything, I just kept watch and let her be until the police arrived.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Incredulous] Hmph, a classic case of cragadile tears to garner sympathy. It’s what any criminal would do to make themselves appear innocent. Your directing skills must’ve helped you make that flawless judgement. Good on you, witness.

PLAYWRIGHT  
Thanks, although I have to give her credit, she sure made them look real.

PHOENIX  
[Frustrated] *(That’s because they* ***were*** *real. She had just lost a friend, and the first thing you assume is that she’s the one who murdered him?! I’d be upset too if I were in her horseshoes.)*

BLUEBLOOD  
[Haughty] As you can see, this witness has given a remarkably solid testimony. I do hope you’ll spare us all any further embarrassment, human.

PHOENIX  
*(A solid testimony? Well, wait until you see the crack in it, as I’m about to split it wide open.)*

BLUEBLOOD  
Any closing remarks, witness?

*As much as I hate to believe it, Miss Pommel must have been the one who killed him. I didn’t see anything else that would suggest otherwise.*

PHOENIX  
***OBJECTION!*** Are you absolutely sure about that last part, witness?

PLAYWRIGHT  
[Confident] Yes. Nothing else was out of place.

PHOENIX  
Well, if you ask me, that’s *far* from true.

PLAYWRIGHT  
[Insulted] What? Are you calling me a liar?!

PHOENIX  
[Clarifying] Not necessarily. It could be that you simply failed to take something into account.

PLAYWRIGHT  
[Confused] I’m sorry?

BLUEBLOOD  
 He “failed to take something into account”, you say? Humor me, then. What is it that you claim the witness did not give proper consideration?

PHOENIX  
That would, of course, be this fabric roll.

BLUEBLOOD  
The fabric roll?

PHOENIX  
Mr. Playwright, when you saw Coco and Overall run by, were either of them holding anything?  
  
  
PLAYWRIGHT  
If they had been, I would have mentioned that in my testimony. I’m not in the habit of making such a simple mistake as that.

PHOENIX  
In that case, how does the prosecution intend to account for this?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Stop talking in riddles, defense! What is it that you are trying to say?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Playwright has stated that he did not see Miss Pommel or the victim holding the fabric roll during this chase. We’ve also established that no one else went up or down the catwalk from the time the second act started to when Playwright ascended to the catwalk after the murder. The testimonies of both Playwright and the stagehooves confirm this. If this is all true, then where in the world did this fabric roll come from?!

JUDGE  
OH! That’s right!

PLAYWRIGHT  
Wh-What!?

***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble...***

TWILIGHT  
Nice one, Phoenix!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Our first contradiction of the day. Now, let’s start turning this case--

BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** Hmph! Is that all you’ve got, feeble lawyer?

PHOENIX  
What do you mean? This is a serious contradiction!  
  
  
JUDGE  
I have to agree with the defense here. How could the fabric roll end up on top of the catwalk if neither of the parties that went up there were carrying anything?

BLUEBLOOD  
I believe I have an explanation, Your Honor.

JUDGE  
Then please go right ahead, Prince Blueblood.

BLUEBLOOD  
Witness, when you saw the victim being chased by Miss Pommel, how far ahead was he?

PLAYWRIGHT  
Well, he’d already started climbing up to the catwalk, so, pretty far. If I had looked a second later, I probably would have missed him entirely.

BLUEBLOOD  
And there you have it.

PHOENIX  
[Confused] Um, I’m afraid I don’t understand.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Haughty] Then allow me to explain in a manner that even a commoner such as yourself can follow. The fabric roll was brought up to the catwalk by Overall Concept. Since he was ahead of Miss Pommel, and was already partly up the stairs to the catwalk by the time the witness took a glance at them, it would make perfect sense as to why he would miss this detail.

JUDGE  
Hmm. That *does* seem to explain it. I imagine it would be rather difficult to see something like that, given what was going on. Especially in the dark!

BLUEBLOOD  
I couldn’t agree more, Your Honor.

PHOENIX  
Argh! *(Well, there goes that contradiction. Now what?)*

TWILIGHT  
Don’t give up yet, Phoenix!

PHOENIX  
Twilight?

TWILIGHT  
I think we still have some room to maneuver. There’s something that Blueblood hasn’t established yet that demands an explanation.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
! You’re right. Good thinking, Twilight. Prosecutor Blueblood--

BLUEBLOOD  
[Irritated] *Prince*, please.

PHOENIX  
[Annoyed] ...Prince Blueblood, there’s still something vital to this case that you’ve yet to establish.

BLUEBLOOD  
And that would be?

PHOENIX  
A clear motive. It’s been mentioned before that the victim and defendant were very close friends. What makes you think that my client, of all ponies, would want to kill him?  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Oh, you really want to know? I’m afraid you’ll regret asking that question, human lawyer. Your Honor!  
  
  
JUDGE  
Y-Yes, Prince Blueblood?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
The prosecution would like to call the defendant herself to the stand.

PHOENIX  
***OBJECTION!*** What are you planning to have her testify about?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Don’t worry; it’s nothing that she’ll need to plead the fifth for. All she needs to do is tell us about her living situation.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
What? How is that relevant to this case?  
  
  
JUDGE  
Prince Blueblood. I, too, fail to see how the defendant’s living situation could possibly be of any use to us.

BLUEBLOOD  
If you’ll allow me to present this testimony, Your Honor, I guarantee I will be able to establish its relevance to the case at hoof. [Haughty] Unless, of course, the defense has so little faith in his own client that he’s frightened he’ll lose if she testifies?

PHOENIX  
Wh-What!? How dare--  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
If that’s the case, I can request that this trial be brought to a swift resolution, if you’d like? The prosecution has already made it abundantly clear that the defendant is the only one who had the opportunity to murder the victim. These extra bits of testimony and evidence will only serve to chip away at your fragile ego.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
!? *(He has even more evidence? If we could see that, then perhaps we could use it to turn this trial around. But first, we’re going to have to get through this testimony.)*  
JUDGE  
Well, Mr. Wright? Do you wish to have your client testify? It could be very harmful to your case, if Prince Blueblood can establish the relevance he is claiming.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Do note that, should you choose not to have her testify, I *will* call for a ruling. This trial will end here and now.

TWILIGHT  
Phoenix! What do we do? If we don’t let Coco testify, we’re going to lose this trial!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Well then, we’ll just have to allow it. It’s not like we have much of a choice.

TWILIGHT  
But what if...what if she says something that makes things even worse for us? We can’t afford to take any more damage to our case.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
I know it’s risky, but Blueblood said that he still had some more evidence against Coco. If we can force it out of him, we should still be able to save her.  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
…  
  
  
PHOENIX  
The defense agrees to the prosecution’s request, Your Honor. Let’s hear the defendant’s testimony!  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Hmph. You’ve dug your own grave, human attorney.

JUDGE  
Very well. Let the defendant take the stand.  
  
  
*Coco takes the stand.*  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Please state your name and occupation for the record.  
  
  
COCO  
…  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Pressing] Defendant! Quit your useless pouting, and state your name and occupation!

RARITY  
[Furious, from the audience] DON’T YOU DARE YELL AT MY FRIEND, YOU POMPOUS JERK!  
JUDGE  
[Bangs gavel] Order! Order! Will the pony in the audience please refrain from screaming at the prosecution?

PHOENIX  
[Embarrassed] *(Rarity, now is not the time…)*

COCO  
[Nervous and stuttering] !? U-Umm, my name is...is Coco Pommel, a-and I’m, or I guess, WAS the assistant costume designer at Bridleway Theatre.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Now then, please testify about your current living arrangements, in as much detail as you can manage.  
  
  
COCO  
O-Okay.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
*(Poor Coco. I hope this isn’t going to be too much for her...)*

**WITNESS TESTIMONY**

**Friendship With Overall**

*Ever since I started living on my own, I’ve been staying at various hotels all across Manehattan.  
  
I’ve never been that wealthy, so that was all I could manage until I met Overall.  
  
He took me under his wing as an apprentice, and even offered to let me live with him in his apartment.  
  
I brought as much joy to him as he did to me, it seems. I don’t know what I’m going to do now that he’s gone…*

JUDGE  
[Saddened] *[Sigh]* Oh, what a tragic story…I think I might be tearing up.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Don’t be fooled, Your Honor. This is merely her psychological manipulation at work. [Goading] She may appear to be grieving on the outside, but on the inside, she’s deviously dancing in delight.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
***OBJECTION!*** [Defensive] Your Honor, this is slander!  
  
  
JUDGE  
Objection sustained. [Displeased] Prince Blueblood, I won’t allow comments like that in my court.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Hmph! You commoners and your bleeding hearts...  
  
  
JUDGE  
Now, Mr. Wright, you may cross-examine the witness.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
*(Coco didn’t mention any of this to me yesterday. I wonder why not? No use thinking about it now, I just have to focus on how to get Coco out of this!)*

**CROSS EXAMINATION**

**Friendship With Overall**  
*Ever since I started living on my own, I’ve been staying at various hotels all across Manehattan.*PHOENIX  
***HOLD IT!*** You’ve never had a place to call your own?  
  
  
COCO  
No, everything I’ve ever had I owed to those who were there to support me. Rarity, Overall, my parents, and even my old mentor.  
  
PHOENIX  
Your old mentor? Is this the pony you were talking about yesterday? The one who always said “It’s everypony for themselves in the big city?”  
  
  
COCO  
[Upset, recalling the memory] Yes, her. I quit being her assistant several months ago, and took up a job at the theatre, thanks to Rarity.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
[Observant] You don’t sound too happy about that.  
  
  
COCO  
Oh no, of course I’m grateful to Rarity for giving me such a huge opportunity, but…  
  
  
PHOENIX  
But what?  
  
  
COCO  
It doesn’t change the fact that I needed her to do it for me. Just once in my life, I’d like to achieve something without it being delivered to me on a silver platter. Something that I at least played *some* sort of major role in.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
[Comforting] I...see. Then perhaps you-  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** I grow weary of your stalling tactics, human. You are her attorney, not her therapist! You’re here to cross-examine the defendant, so I suggest you get on with it!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
*(I wonder how much effort it takes him to be* ***that*** *unpleasant?)*

JUDGE  
Objection sustained. Please continue with the cross examination, Mr. Wright.  
  
  
*I’ve never been that wealthy, so that was all I could manage until I met Overall.*PHOENIX  
***HOLD IT!*** Did you really have so little money that you could barely afford a place to live?  
  
  
COCO  
Yes, especially after I quit being an assistant to my mentor. She always made enough for both of us with my...with the designs she sold.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
? *(What was that she was about to say?)* And what about when you became the assistant costume designer at Bridleway? Did you make more money then?

COCO  
No, I was only an assistant, and an apprentice at that. The director, Playwright, didn’t trust my skills enough to give me any work worth paying much for. If it wasn’t for Overall, I’m sure I would’ve had to quit that job for a better-paying one elsewhere.  
  
  
PLAYWRIGHT  
!? … **[Playwright looks embarrassed, and sheepishly looks away from Coco.]**PHOENIX  
So, Overall was able to support both you and himself?  
  
  
COCO  
Yes, he was paid handsomely as the head costume designer of the biggest theatre in Equestria. Not only that, but his designs fetch pretty high prices outside of the theatre as well.  
PHOENIX  
[Surprised] Was he really THAT well known?  
  
  
COCO  
Of course he was.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
How did he get to be that famous?  
  
  
COCO  
[Pensive] Well, I can only tell you what I heard from him, but apparently, after his parents passed away a couple of years ago, he fell into a rather deep depression. They were his only family...*and* his only source of encouragement, you see. He thought about giving up on his dream to become a designer. However, he soon realized that he’d be betraying his parents’ hopes for him if he did, and so, he poured himself into his work. [Uplifting] He slaved day and night to create design after design, and finally, he decided to enter a contest - one that would essentially guarantee a successful career in design, should he win. And he did. Afterwards, his designs became well-known all across Equestria, and he has since worked at Bridleway Theatre as its head costume designer.

JUDGE  
\*sniffle sniffle\* [Touched] What a touching story…  
  
  
PHOENIX  
[Amazed] Wow. Overall must have been one strong stallion to not only overcome his parents’ deaths, but also achieve his lifelong dream.  
  
  
COCO  
He was. If only he hadn’t...passed away himself, then maybe he could’ve...helped me.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Cruelly] Well, maybe if you didn’t kill him, he could have done so. You’ve no one to blame but yourself, defendant.

COCO  
No! I didn’t--!  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Let’s continue with the testimony, shall we?  
  
  
COCO  
\*quiet sniffling\*  
  
  
PHOENIX  
\*growls in frustration\**( Don’t worry, Coco. I’m going to get you out of this.)*   
  
*He took me under his wing as an apprentice, and even offered to let me live with him in his apartment.*PHOENIX  
***HOLD IT!*** Coco, how come you didn’t tell me about any of this yesterday?

COCO  
What do you mean?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Yesterday, in the detention center, when I asked you about your relationship with Overall Concept, this is what you said to me:

***\*Flashback\****

COCO  
*Oh, uh, it’s nothing too serious, if that’s what you’re thinking. We’re just good friends who like working together. He’s even teaching me how to design better so I could one day make a design of my own for another play.*  
PHOENIX  
At the time, I took that to mean you were nothing more than co-workers; was I wrong when I made that assumption?  
  
COCO  
…

PHOENIX  
Coco?

COCO  
…

PHOENIX  
COCO!

COCO  
Wh-What!?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Did you purposely mislead me into believing you two were connected by nothing more than your work?  
  
  
COCO  
Umm, maybe…  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Why?

COCO  
Because...I was afraid...that you wouldn’t take my case otherwise…  
  
  
PHOENIX  
[Confused] What? But why would you think that?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Heh, heh, heh…

PHOENIX  
[Worried] *(Uh oh, I don’t like the sound of that. What in the world is Coco hiding from me?)*  
  
*I brought as much joy to him as he did to me, it seems. I don’t know what I’m going to do now that he’s gone…*PHOENIX  
***HOLD IT!*** That’s what everyone keeps saying. That you two seemed to get along so well. First Playwright, and then even Rarity said that you told her how happy Overall made you in your letters to her.  
  
  
COCO  
Yeah, we were really great friends. Everyone in the theatre knew that.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
And that’s exactly why I’m so puzzled.  
  
  
COCO  
What do you mean?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
You just said that you were afraid I wouldn’t take your case if I knew the truth about your living arrangements prior to today. Coco, you must have known that I have heard nothing but positive comments about your relationship with the victim from those who knew you both. So why did you think I would hesitate if I knew you two were living together?

COCO  
…  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Oh, come now attorney. The answer is so obvious, I’m surprised it’s taken you this long to realize it.

PHOENIX  
[Frustrated] If you know the reason, why not just say so already? Weren’t you trying to establish some sort of motive with this testimony? Let’s hear it, then.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Very well. I would like the court to take a look at this.  
  
  
JUDGE  
What is this, Prince Blueblood?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
It’s a document that recognizes both Coco Pommel and Overall Concept as domestic partners. The two entered into this partnership not long after they began living together.

PHOENIX  
And how is that relevant?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Mocking] My, my, attorney, are you not aware of one of the primary aspects of a domestic partnership?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Uh, sorry. It’s...erm...not my area of expertise. *(Sadly.)*  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
And you call yourself a lawyer? What a joke. Very well, I shall explain. If a partner passes away intestate (that’s “without leaving behind a will”, for you uninformed commoners) when they are in a domestic partnership, as Mr. Concept did, then their partner will receive all of their assets!  
  
PHOENIX  
...Oh. [Realizing the implication] OH NOOO!

BLUEBLOOD  
Yes! Now you finally get it! That is why this poor, underpaid, assistant costume designer murdered one of the most wealthy and well-known designers in Equestria! To claim his assets for herself!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
AARRRGGHH!!!!  
  
  
***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***JUDGE  
Order! ORDER IN THE COURT! I must admit, that certainly sounds like an incredibly plausible motive for murder.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Of course it is, Your Honor, because it is the truth.

PHOENIX  
*(Coco, why did you hide this from me!? This… How am I supposed to recover from THIS!?)*TWILIGHT  
[Panicking] Phoenix! What are we supposed to do now? This motive, it’s almost too perfect!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
[Stressed] I…I don’t know. And it definitely didn’t help that Coco kept this hidden from us all this time. I had no way to prepare for this!  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
[Distressed] Well, you have to say something! Fight back! Otherwise Coco will be found guilty!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
***OBJECTION!*** The defendant was being supported very well by the victim. She didn’t need to steal his money!  
BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** Did I ever say she was after his money *specifically?*  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Wh-What do you mean?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Recall what I said, attorney. She would inherit all of Overall Concept’s *assets*. Assets, attorney! Like, for example, all of his fabrics and designs!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Guh!  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Of course, the money she would inherit *would* be a nice bonus, and no doubt added fuel to the fire, but what Coco Pommel was really after were the victim’s designs.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Wh-Why!? Why would she need those?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
During our investigation, we discovered that Miss Pommel had entered a fashion competition. The very same competition the victim himself entered a couple years ago.

PHOENIX  
!!! Uhh...no...

BLUEBLOOD  
Just to clarify exactly what this contest is - it’s a fashion competition where the winner receives the honor of being recognized by the most well-known designers in the industry. While not particularly large, it is very prestigious, needing several background checks to even enter. Winning this contest is a big boost to one’s career, as you can imagine.

TWILIGHT  
!? Hmm…

PHOENIX  
What is it, Twilight?  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
[Unsure] I don’t know…something about that strikes me as important. I just can’t put my hoof on it.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
It goes without saying that a contest such as this would draw in several other keen fashion designers looking to rise to the top. With this much competition stacked against her, Miss Pommel was not confident enough in her abilities to win the contest.

PHOENIX  
And what brought you to that conclusion?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
The defendant herself admitted as much. When we interrogated her about the contest, she told us that she did not feel confident about her chances of winning.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Then surely Overall would’ve helped Miss Pommel in making designs, or at least guided her.   
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Possibly. However, it’s against the rules to seek direct help from somepony who has already won the contest. It’s a preventative measure against copying previous victors’ works with minor alterations.

PHOENIX  
But she WAS learning from him! I’m sure Miss Pommel had the ability to do just fine in the contest!

BLUEBLOOD  
Her actual level of competence is irrelevant. What matters is how *she felt* about her prospects of winning. Besides, I’m not finished, attorney.

JUDGE  
What do you mean?

BLUEBLOOD  
There’s a special fabric that the victim was making, as mentioned earlier by the previous witness. He was creating this fabric in secrecy, for an upcoming play.

PHOENIX  
So why is this special fabric important in this case?

BLUEBLOOD  
You should’ve connected the dots by now. Considering that Miss Pommel and Mr. Concept had lived together for a number of months, she naturally would know about this special fabric. And just like you said, Miss Pommel WAS learning from him, so this was to her advantage.

PHOENIX  
You’re really accusing Miss Pommel of cheating in this contest?!

BLUEBLOOD  
Cheating in the contest AND betraying Overall Concept’s trust.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
And...And that’s why…  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Confident] Looks like you finally realized it. That is exactly why the defendant murdered Overall Concept. It was her chance at stealing his designs, and passing them off as her own!

TWILIGHT  
!!!

PHOENIX  
[Stressing] *(Twilight, if you have something to say, then by all means, say it!)*

BLUEBLOOD  
On the night of the murder, the victim was working on that very fabric. This too, we heard, from Mr. Playwright. That was probably what set the defendant off. Upon seeing the fabric, she made up her mind, once and for all, to murder the victim. She attacked him in the dressing room, but failed to land a strike. The victim fled out of the room with a fabric roll in his mouth, likely taken for the purposes of self-defense, with Miss Pommel hot on his trail. The two were spotted by Mr. Playwright as they made their way up the stairs to the catwalk. Finally, as Overall Concept reached the top, he tripped, dropping the fabric roll. The defendant caught up to him, grabbed the roll, and proceeded to knock him unconscious. Afterwards, she wrapped the rope that was laying on the catwalk around the victim’s neck, and threw him over the edge of the railing, finally killing him!  
  
  
*Everyone is stunned into silence.*  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
If it weren’t for Mr. Playwright immediately coming up the catwalk after the murder, she may have gotten away with it. But she can’t hide from her crime now, can she, Mr. Wright?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Umm...uhh…  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Dramatic and over-the-top] And to think, this incredibly selfless stallion was planning on proposing to Coco, and she stole his life away because of her own selfish desires.  
  
COCO  
!? Wh-What!?

PHOENIX  
P-propose?!  
  
  
JUDGE  
Prince Blueblood! What do you mean?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
During our inquiries regarding Overall Concept and Miss Pommel’s relationship, many ponies employed at Bridleway Theatre commented on how much he cared about her. Apparently, he often said that being together with her made him even happier than when his parents were still alive. They mentioned that he was going to propose next week, after another play. He even ordered this custom ring to give to her. I have it right here, Your Honor. The police found it while they were investigating his apartment.  
  
**[Engagement Ring: Overall bought this custom-made ring to give to Coco for his proposal to her.]**

COCO  
[Tearing up] He…..he was…going to propose...to me…?

BLUEBLOOD  
This shows just how cruel you really are. [Shaming] You took advantage of an innocent stallion’s kindness for your own selfish gains, and killed him in the process! Mares like you are corrupting our good-natured society of Equestria! It’s despicable! Don’t you agree, ponies of the gallery!?

***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***  
  
GALLERY  
Pony 1: [Outraged] How could she do something like that!?  
Pony 2: [Saddened] After everything that kind stallion did for her…  
Pony 3: [Disbelief] I never would have thought ponies could be so evil.

JUDGE  
ORDER! ORDER IN THE COURT! My word! Could someone who looks so adorable really be so cruel?

BLUEBLOOD  
Looks are very deceiving, and what better example of that than this heartless, soulless excuse of a mare!  
  
  
RARITY  
***HOLD IT!*** *[in the audience]* [Enraged]HOW DARE YOU SPEW SUCH POISONOUS LIES! ! COCO WOULD NEVER DO THAT TO A STALLION WHO CARED ABOUT HER!! WHY I OUGHTA COME OVER THERE AND TEAR YOUR COLD LITTLE HEART OUT FOR THAT!!

JUDGE  
*[hits gavel]* Whoever that is out there, please refrain from shouting, or else you will be removed from the court!

PHOENIX  
*(Rarity, I get that you don’t like this guy, but I need you to keep quiet if I’m gonna properly help Coco!)*

BLUEBLOOD  
[Haughty] Well, defense? Anything you want to say to counter my claims, or have you decided that you’ve suffered enough humiliation?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
I… I… *(Come on! There’s got to be something I can say to this. But he’s absolutely tarnished Coco’s image to the rest of the court. Where am I even supposed to begin this uphill battle?)*JUDGE  
It seems as if the defense has no further objections. In that case, I think it’s about time for me to pass my verdict. Prince Blueblood, any closing remarks?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
I warned you, human attorney. You should’ve saved yourself from putting on this pathetic display when you had the chance. Your Honor, please proceed.

PHOENIX  
*(No! I can’t let it end like this!)*  
  
  
JUDGE  
Very well. This court finds the defendant, Coco Pommel...  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
***OBJECTION!***

JUDGE  
Wh-Who was that!?

TWILIGHTIt was me, Your Honor.   
  
  
PHOENIX  
*(Twilight!?)*  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
Prosecutor Blueblood, I want you to clarify something for me.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
*Prince*, ple--  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
*Blueblood*, you said that Coco saw the special fabric on the night of the murder, and that’s what prompted her to go through with her plan to kill Overall?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Excuse me!? You are to address me as--  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
[Pressing] Is that what you’re claiming or not?!

BLUEBLOOD  
[Frustrated] Argh! Yes! That is what I am claiming! What of it?  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
Can you please show us the fabric you are talking about?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Surely you must have seen it for yourselves? It was left sitting in the dressing room. But if you insist on seeing it again, I had it brought into court today. Here it is. Are you happy?  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
[Confident] Heh, just as I thought.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Worried] Wh-What is that supposed to mean?

TWILIGHT  
I believe Mr. Wright can answer that for me.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
! *(Of course! Thanks, Twilight!)* What she means, Prince Blueblood, is that the fabric you presented to the court is *not* the special fabric that Overall made.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Panicking] What!? No, it has to be! Playwright confirmed it when we asked him! This fabric is what Overall was commissioned to make for the theatre.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
[Emboldened] Then let me rephrase my response. True, that *is* indeed the special fabric Overall was working on for the theatre that night. However, the fabric that you presented…[Slams desk and points finger] is currently INCOMPLETE!!!  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Wh-WHAT!?  
  
***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***  
  
  
JUDGE  
ORDER! ORDER!!! Prince Blueblood, what is the meaning of this!?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Stammering] I...I…  
  
  
JUDGE  
I find it hard to believe that the defendant would’ve murdered the victim for a roll of incomplete fabric!  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Panicking] Th-Then that’s it! She must not have known it was incomplete!  
  
  
PHOENIX ***OBJECTION!*** How is that possible? She and the victim not only worked together, but they LIVED together! There’s no way she wouldn’t have known what the fabric was supposed to look like!  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Desperate] Rrgh! Well...maybe she thought she could finish the fabric on her own!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Okay. Let’s test that theory, then, shall we? Mr. Playwright!  
  
  
PLAYWRIGHT  
Y-Yes?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
I recall you said something in your testimony earlier regarding the fabric Overall was working on that night.

***\*Flashback\****

PLAYWRIGHT  
*He came onstage briefly to discuss something with me, and then he left right before the intermission ended. He said he and his assistant had to start working on coating a sheet of fabric in paint.*PHOENIX  
If you don’t mind me asking, what exactly was this “paint?”  
  
  
PLAYWRIGHT  
Fluorescent paint. The fabric was supposed to be covered in both that paint, and a touch of glitter.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
And what does that prove!? Miss Pommel would’ve known that - you said so yourself!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
It’s not about whether or not she would’ve known about it, but whether or not she could gain access to it.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
What do you mean? She was going to inherit all of Overall’s assets. The fluorescent paint and glitter would’ve been included in that as well!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
True, she would’ve inherited whatever Overall had left, but what about after she ran out?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
What!?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
This fabric was meant to be used in the next play at Bridleway Theatre. Naturally, that means Coco would’ve had to make more if she intended on using it in the contest. And making more fabric...means buying more paint.  
BLUEBLOOD  
And how is that an issue? She would’ve inherited all of Overall’s money. Buying a few cans of paint would’ve been nothing!

PHOENIX  
Not *this* paint, I’m afraid.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Explain yourself!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Yesterday, when we were investigating the theatre, Rarity, one of the most fashion-forward ponies in Equestria, had a few things to say about this fluorescent paint.

***\*Flashback\****

RARITY  
*Fluorescent paint? Such a thing exists? Where can I get this paint? It might help me in my business.*

RARITY  
*I still wonder where he got this paint. It must have been awfully expensive, especially since he used so much of it.*

PHOENIX  
If Rarity hadn’t even *heard* of the paint, let alone considered it to be cheap, then I doubt this paint is anywhere near as accessible, or affordable, as regular paint. Even if Coco were able to find and buy some, do you really think she’d be able to do so before the contest deadline, *or* spend that much of her newly earned money on a chance that the fabric would be good enough to win a contest? If she lost, she’d have a very hard time making that money back.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** If you look at the fabric by itself, it’s already relatively nice to look at, even without all the bells and whistles the victim added to it. She could’ve just entered the base fabric itself into the contest.

PHOENIX  
Maybe so, but you can’t deny that this evidence blows a hole in your theory that Coco killed Overall for this fabric.  
  
  
JUDGE  
Mr. Wright has a point, Prince Blueblood. The motive you proposed isn’t very persuasive given this new information. Do you have anything else against the defendant that proves she committed this crime?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Hmph! Of course, Your Honor. I have yet to produce the most damaging piece of evidence to this court.  
  
  
JUDGE  
I-is that so!?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
*(So we’re finally going to see what he was talking about earlier.)*  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Indeed, Your Honor. And I’ll have Playwright explain what I mean.

PLAYWRIGHT  
Huh? Me?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Witness, when you found Miss Pommel on the catwalk that night, did you notice anything odd about her?  
  
  
PLAYWRIGHT  
[Thinking] Well, as I said earlier, she seemed rather dazed…

BLUEBLOOD  
And what about her hooves? Did you notice anything in particular about them?  
  
PLAYWRIGHT  
[Remembering] ...Oh! That’s right!  
  
  
JUDGE  
What is it, Witness?

PLAYWRIGHT  
Miss Pommel’s forehooves...when I discovered her on top of the catwalk...they were covered in glitter!

PHOENIX  
WHAT!?  
  
***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***

JUDGE  
[Confused] The defendant’s forehooves were covered in glitter? What does this mean?

BLUEBLOOD  
Allow me to explain, Your Honor. Recall that Miss Pommel and Mr. Concept were working in the dressing room prior to the crime. During the course of their work, the defendant must have gotten her hooves covered in glitter.  
  
  
JUDGE  
Oh! So the glitter marks on the fabric roll…!  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Precisely, Your Honor. They were left behind by Miss Pommel when she used it to hit the victim.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
No...this can’t be…

BLUEBLOOD  
And now, the prosecution would like to submit our final piece of evidence - the noose.

JUDGE  
The noose itself?

BLUEBLOOD  
The court is no doubt aware of the fact that this is the noose used to hang the victim to death. Though I have yet to reveal a crucial detail concerning this noose. We have discovered that, just like the fabric roll, there are traces of glitter on it.

TWILIGHT  
T-traces of glitter...

BLUEBLOOD  
Considering that there was only one conscious pony on the catwalk that could’ve committed the crime, the only logical inference is that Ms. Pommel is the culprit. But knowing that she had glitter left on her hooves and that there was glitter on both the fabric roll and the noose, it has become crystal clear… that Ms. Pommel was the one who knocked the victim out, wrapped the noose around his neck, and killed him!

PHOENIX  
NGH!

***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***

JUDGE  
That seems to be very decisive evidence! The one who touched the rope was Miss Pommel herself.

BLUEBLOOD  
Of course. There’s no other way it could be anypony else. I presume a guilty verdict is in order, Your Honor?

JUDGE  
It would seem that way.  
PHOENIX  
***HOLD IT!*** But what about the motive!? It’s unlikely that Coco would’ve killed for a fabric that she had no reliable way of reproducing!  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
You’re still obsessing over that? Perhaps she merely killed him for his other designs, or maybe just his money? The defendant has a laundry list of potential motives, attorney. That fact doesn’t disappear by virtue of you pointing out that the completed version of the fabric was not at the theatre that night, you know.

PHOENIX  
!!!

BLUEBLOOD  
[Haughty] Besides, who can say for certain what was going through that demented pony’s head that night? For all we know, the defendant may have a motive beyond our wildest imaginations. What matters, though, is that all of the evidence points to her as the one responsible for this crime. The glitter on her hooves, the fabric roll, the noose itself, and being found at the scene with no chance that anypony else had slipped away unnoticed.  
  
  
PLAYWRIGHT  
…  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
All of it points to one simple conclusion: Coco Pommel murdered Overall Concept in cold blood!  
  
  
***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***  
  
  
JUDGE  
Order! Order in the court! [Pause] Mr. Wright.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Yes, Your Honor?  
  
JUDGE  
Prince Blueblood has presented a very convincing case, even if the motive is somewhat unclear at the moment. I’m afraid, if you have nothing further to add, then I will have no choice but to end the trial. This is your last chance, Mr. Wright. Do you have anything else to present to this court to counter the prosecution’s claims?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Hmph. Of course he doesn’t. If he did, he would’ve presented it a long time ago.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
(*This is it! If I mess up here, the trial’s over. I need to present something that casts significant doubt over Blueblood’s claims. And I believe he may have unintentionally given me just the hint I needed.)* Your Honor, I do indeed have something to present to the court at this time.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Shocked] What!? How could you possibly--!?  
  
  
JUDGE  
Now, now, Prince Blueblood. Save your surprise for AFTER you’ve seen what it is Mr. Wright has to present.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Grrr…  
  
  
JUDGE  
Mr. Wright, please present this piece of evidence to the court.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Yes, Your Honor. ***TAKE THAT!***  
JUDGE  
Is that...a torn piece of fabric?

BLUEBLOOD  
Really? That’s it? That’s your “big” piece of evidence?PHOENIX  
[Confident] Perhaps not in terms of its physical size, but certainly in the hole it’ll create in your argument.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Angry] Rgh! Cease your smug little remarks and explain, human!

PHOENIX  
(*You’re the last pony I want to hear* ***that*** *from, Blueblood!*) Very well. We found this ripped piece of fabric during our investigation of the stage. It was right below the center of the catwalk.

BLUEBLOOD  
I fail to understand how this relates to anything discussed thus far.

PHOENIX  
Well, how about we let the one who requested the fabric explain it to us, then.  
  
  
PLAYWRIGHT  
Huh? M-Me?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Playwright, you were the one who asked Overall Concept to make this fabric, correct?  
  
  
PLAYWRIGHT  
Yes. We needed it for our next play.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
For your *next* play. Meaning none of the costumes for the play on the night of the murder used this fabric?  
  
  
PLAYWRIGHT  
That is correct.  
  
  
JUDGE  
Where are you going with this, Mr. Wright?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
It’s simple, Your Honor. If this fabric wasn’t being used on the night of the crime...then why did we find a piece of it on the stage afterwards!?

***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** That piece of fabric could’ve found its way there at any point. It’s impossible for you to prove when exactly it wound up there!

PHOENIX  
***OBJECTION!*** I may not be able to prove the exact time it ended up on the stage, but I can definitely prove it was after the play’s intermission.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
H-How!?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Recall Playwright’s testimony for a moment. He had this to say about what was happening onstage during the 15-minute intermission.

***\*Flashback\****  
  
PHOENIX  
*Were there any breaks during the play?*

PLAYWRIGHT  
*Yes, one - a 15 minute intermission between acts 1 and 2.*

PHOENIX  
*And what were you doing during that time?*

PLAYWRIGHT  
*Overseeing the stagehooves’ work - they had a lot to do to get ready for the second act, you see.*

PHOENIX  
*What did this work entail?*

PLAYWRIGHT  
*Well, they had to completely clear the stage of all the props, and any debris that could cause problems for the actors, on stage, mainly tripping hazards.*  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
The stagehooves had to… [Realizing] clear the stage! NO!

PHOENIX  
If this piece of fabric had been onstage before the intermission, it would’ve been cleared off by the time the second act had begun. After all, there’s no way Playwright would’ve allowed for anything less! Am I right, witness?  
  
  
PLAYWRIGHT  
Absolutely. It’s out of the question that I would have let the play continue if something like this was still onstage. I mean, it could’ve distracted the audience, or ruined the concentration of one of the performers!

PHOENIX  
So you see, Prince Blueblood, there’s no way this piece of fabric was on the stage before the intermission.

BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** The victim came onstage during the intermission to talk to Playwright about the fabric. It’s possible he could’ve accidentally dropped that piece on the stage then, and it simply went unnoticed because the stage had already been cleaned!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
***OBJECTION!*** Sorry, but that’s also impossible.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Concerned] Wh-Why is that?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Let’s go back to Playwright’s testimony one more time.

***\*Flashback\****

PHOENIX  
*Did you see Overall at all during the intermission?*

PLAYWRIGHT *Actually, I did. He came onstage briefly to discuss something with me, and then he left right before the intermission ended. He said he and his assistant had to start working on coating a sheet of fabric in paint.*

PHOENIX  
If you examine this fabric closely, you’ll notice that it’s covered in glitter. Not only that, but if we were to turn the lights off in this courtroom, I’m sure you’ll realize that it’s also covered in fluorescent paint. However, according to Playwright, Overall didn’t start covering his fabric in paint until AFTER he had come onstage.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
RGH!  
  
  
JUDGE  
Then...what does this mean, Mr. Wright?

PHOENIX  
This piece of fabric proves two things: the first is that someone brought it up the catwalk during the second act of the play.  
  
  
JUDGE  
The...catwalk?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Incredulous] And what ridiculous train of logic are we meant to board to arrive at *that* conclusion?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Well, there’s simply no other way for it to have landed on the stage, right? No one could’ve brought it to the stage directly without being seen, so the only conceivable option must be that it came from above.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Gritted teeth] Tch! ...Fine! And what’s the second thing that piece of fabric supposedly proves?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Isn’t it obvious? It proves that, at the theatre that night, there existed at least one sheet of Overall’s special fabric that had been completed!  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Disbelief] That’s...ABSURD!  
  
  
JUDGE  
But-But how is that possible? I thought that the police only found *one* sheet of the fabric, and it was the incomplete version!

PHOENIX  
Which can only mean that the other sheet was stolen from the theatre that night! A third party must have escaped with it!  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** You are either desperate beyond belief or have gone completely insane, human attorney! There’s no way a third party could exist!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
[Challenging] Well then, why don’t you explain what this means, then? This piece of fabric clearly proves that the completed fabric was there at the theater that night, so why didn’t the police find it!?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Hmph. Simple. The defendant had hidden it prior to the crime. She must have been planning to steal the one sheet of fabric all along. When Overall Concept saw that it was missing, THAT’S when Coco attacked him. I suspect she hid it in a spot where none of us could find it, which is why it is still missing, even now.

PHOENIX  
[Unconvinced] That’s impossible. The discovery of a piece of fabric on-stage proves that it was out in the open somewhere. The stage was cleared in preparation for act two. The fabric must’ve been taken either on or above the stage during the second act of the play. Otherwise, we wouldn’t have this piece with us today. In fact, Playwright, I need you to clarify something for me.

PLAYRIGHT  
And what would that be?

PHOENIX  
After the crime occurred, was there someone watching the stage at all times?

PLAYWRIGHT  
Yes, there would always be somepony either on or watching the stage. The fabric would’ve been noticed if it was brought on stage at any given moment.

PHOENIX  
That settles it, then. This indicates that the fabric HAD to have gone up the catwalk once the second act started, which means Coco *couldn’t* have hidden it beforehand. It must have gotten torn somehow, and a piece fell to the stage below!

BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** You’ve forgotten that if somepony went up that catwalk with that fabric during the second act, they would’ve been spotted holding it by Playwright or the stagehooves on the right wing of the stage! If that fabric glows in the dark, then it should’ve been almost impossible to miss. But none of the theatre staff have said *anything* about seeing somepony carrying a glowing sheet of fabric up the catwalk.

PHOENIX  
*(He’s right. Even if you take the stagehooves out of the picture, Playwright definitely would’ve noticed if the victim had been carrying that fabric.)* Then I’ll propose another theory.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Doubtful] Another theory?

PHOENIX  
Playwright said in his testimony he only got a small glimpse of Overall running up the stairs.

BLUEBLOOD  
Correct. And what of it?

PHOENIX  
Well, what if there was somepony ahead of Overall? Then Playwright wouldn’t have been able to see them, meaning a third party could have been involved from the start!  
  
  
PLAYWRIGHT  
!?

BLUEBLOOD  
[Doubtful] Oh, please! Like that’s even possible!

PHOENIX  
What do you mean?

BLUEBLOOD  
If this third pony exists, then how did Miss Pommel not see them? If she was following Mr. Concept the entire time, there’s no way that the defendant would’ve missed this third pony escaping. At the very least, she should have seen them on the catwalk. Yet has she mentioned such a thing? No. So, how do you explain that, attorney?

PHOENIX  
Actually, it’s quite simple.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Dubious] Simple? Hmph, this should be good.

PHOENIX  
When I spoke to Miss Pommel, she told me that she has been suffering from memory loss and headaches. I believe it’s possible that during the crime, she was knocked unconscious by this third party, and the headaches and memory loss was a side effect from her being knocked unconscious.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Unconvinced] Do you really expect me to believe the nonsense you’re spouting?! You do realize that you’re speaking for the defendant, right? She’s obviously lying to save her own flank! Even if she *were* hit on the head hard enough to leave a bruise, what makes you think that this incident happened that night, and not the day before?! And what kind of weapon would this mystery third party have used to knock her out?! I demand you show evidence that she was struck on the head on the night of the murder!

PHOENIX  
Gladly! Here it is! ***TAKE THAT!***

JUDGE  
The fabric roll?

BLUEBLOOD  
[Dubious] And how does this prove anything?

PHOENIX  
Before the trial started, we noticed that there was some glitter stuck in her mane. I believe that this is the result of being struck by the fabric roll!  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
How in Equestria would that result in glitter getting stuck in her mane? Splinters and wood chips, maybe, but certainly not glitter!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Well, as you pointed out, there are traces of glitter on the roll. What if some of it ended up in Coco’s mane as a result of getting hit with it?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Preposterous! The glitter on that roll came from when the defendant held it in her hooves to attack the victim!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Can you prove that that’s the exact scenario that caused the glitter to end up on the roll?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Stammering] W-Well, no, but how else could it have gotten on there?

PHOENIX  
Let’s stop and think about where this roll came from - the dressing room. I think it’s very likely the roll could’ve gotten covered in glitter there.  
  
  
JUDGE  
What do you mean, Mr. Wright?

PHOENIX  
Here’s what I think: Coco and Overall were working in the dressing room prior to the crime. During the course of their work, they must have scattered glitter around the table, where this roll may have been sitting. In fact, yesterday, when I investigated the dressing room, I found a can of glitter that clearly showed signs of spillage, sitting right next to the other roll of fabric*.* After this third party stole the sheet of fabric, they were spotted, and ran off. Overall must have grabbed the nearby fabric roll as he gave chase, likely hoping to use it to stop the thief. However, once he reached the top of the catwalk, he tripped, and dropped the roll. The thief took advantage of this, and used the roll to knock out both Overall and Coco, who had followed her teacher up the catwalk in pursuit of the thief.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Dubious] That sounds absolutely ludicrous.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
But can you deny the possibility?

BLUEBLOOD  
[Cocky] With ease. First off, even if this third party managed to make it all the way up to the catwalk without being spotted by Playwright, how would they have managed to get down without being seen by the stagehooves in the left wing? Not to mention, if the fabric roll left glitter in Coco’s mane, then why didn’t it also leave glitter in Overall’s mane when *he* was knocked unconscious?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
[Unsure] Well, you see, that’s...uh…BLUEBLOOD  
[Haughty] You see, human? Your theory makes absolutely no sense. It’s inconceivable that a third party could exist, because there’s no way they could’ve escaped without being spotted by Playwright or the stagehooves!

PHOENIX  
*(Gr! He’s right! How am I supposed to prove that the third party was able to get away when the left side of the stage was being watched? And I don’t even know where to begin with Overall’s mane!)*

PLAYWRIGHT  
Excuse me? If I may interject.

PHOENIX  
Hmm?

JUDGE  
Is there something on your mind, witness?

PLAYWRIGHT  
[Sheepish] Yes. I’d... like to make a confession, Your Honor.

JUDGE  
A confession?

PLAYWRIGHT  
[Sheepish] I’d like to amend my statement regarding when I went up to the catwalk. I actually…didn’t go up immediately.

JUDGE  
[Shocked] W-what!?

PHOENIX  
[Shocked] Huh!?

BLUEBLOOD  
[Angry] Witness! What are you doing?!

JUDGE  
Please, explain what you mean!

PLAYWRIGHT  
It’s as I say, Your Honor. I did not go up to the catwalk immediately after seeing the hanging. Before I went up to investigate, I called over my stagehooves from the right wing and my actors from the stage. I ordered them to attend to the panicking audience and try to calm them down, and I asked my stage manager to inform the police of what happened. After a good five minutes of giving my staff instructions, that was when I decided to go up the catwalk.

PHOENIX  
[Outraged] Witness! Why didn’t you share this time discrepancy earlier? This is crucial information!

PLAYWRIGHT  
[Defensive] It’s not as if I intentionally wanted to withhold this information! Prince Blueblood told me not to share it, because he said it was “irrelevant information”!

BLUEBLOOD  
[Furious] What?! Why you!

JUDGE  
Prince Blueblood! You knew about this information?!

BLUEBLOOD  
[Defensive] Yes I did, Your Honor. But I did not believe it to be important enough to address!  
  
PHOENIX  
*(Yeah, right… You withheld this information because you* ***knew*** *it’s detrimental to your case.)*

PLAYWRIGHT  
To think I actually blamed Miss Pommel for this heinous crime. But...now it’s possible that she’s innocent, isn’t it? I’ll make sure to tell everything that I know from this point on! I promise!

JUDGE  
[Disappointed] As much as I would have appreciated it if you did that from the beginning, [Relieved] I am glad that you are willing to tell us everything this time.

PLAYWRIGHT  
Many thanks, Your Honor.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Angry] Grrr. Witness! You ruined my perfect case!

PLAYWRIGHT  
After hearing what could be the truth, this is nowhere near perfection! And I should know! I’ve been striving for it all my life, only to come up short every time. But at least I can acknowledge that I can get as close to it as possible.

PHOENIX  
*(This information could be just what I need to move forward!)* [Determined] Your Honor, we now know that there was no one near the left side of the catwalk after the murder, AND that there was a five minute gap between the hanging and Playwright going up the catwalk! The possibility of a third party being involved is UNDENIABLE!

JUDGE  
Yes, I do believe this to be the case as well, Mr. Wright.

BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** No, there’s still a flaw in that claim!

PHOENIX  
What flaw?!

BLUEBLOOD  
I’ll have you know the police interrogated every member of the theatre and all 5000 attendees in the audience! If this pony really escaped with the fabric, then why was their absence not discovered during the course of the investigation!?

PHOENIX  
Well, the thief in question must have been someone who was not a part of the audience or the theatre staff.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Doubtful] Oh really? And how did they get in?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Through here. ***TAKE THAT!***

*Phoenix points out the back door*

JUDGE  
The back door?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Precisely, Your Honor. They must have come through the back door of the theatre without purchasing a ticket. I’m willing to bet that that’s also how they left the theatre after they stole the fabric.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Angry] Stop. Suggesting. That this third party. Exists! I demand proof, filthy human! PROOF! Give me something that truly convinces me that somepony else was there that night!

PHOENIX  
[Confident] You should be careful what you wish for, Prince Blueblood.

JUDGE  
[Excited] Please just show the evidence already, Mr. Wright! My beard is quivering in anticipation!

PHOENIX  
Here’s the proof, Your Honor! ***TAKE THAT!***

*Phoenix presents a picture of the glowing hoofprints*

JUDGE  
A picture? Of what?

PHOENIX  
Take a closer look, and you’ll find out.

JUDGE  
Hmm...what's this?! [Shocked] Are these glowing hoofprints?!

BLUEBLOOD  
[Shocked] EXCUSE ME!?!

***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***

JUDGE  
*[hits gavel]* Order, order! What a turn of events! Glowing hoofprints left behind at the crime scene?!

PHOENIX  
It’s not just the fact that they exist, it’s their path that tells a bigger story!

JUDGE  
Please explain, Mr. Wright.

PHOENIX  
The hoofprints start from the dressing room, right where we are proposing that this chase started. The hoofprints then lead up to the catwalk, just like how Playwright described in his eyewitness account of the chase. And finally, they lead down from the right side of the catwalk, and out the back door of the theatre. This path was not taken by anyone else involved in this crime. The existence of these hoofmarks, without a doubt, proves that a third pony was there that night!

BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** What kind of preposterous game are you trying to play, Human?! The police did not find any hoofprints of the sort during their investigation! This HAS to be false evidence! The court CANNOT accept this!  
***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***  
  
  
JUDGE  
[Bangs gavel] Order! Order in the court, I say! Prince Blueblood! That is an extraordinary accusation! I’ve known Mr. Wright for years, and I had the misfortune of mistaking him for a crook once before, and, thankfully, I was proven wrong. You’re going to need some serious evidence to back up your claim if you continue with this assertion, otherwise I will hold you in contempt of court!  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Scared] EEK! But…but, Your Honor…

PHOENIX  
[Surprised] *(Whoa, that was out of nowhere. The Judge really just stood up for me against the prosecution. I’m actually quite flattered.)*

BLUEBLOOD  
[Nervous] You see, it’s just that… The police didn’t see these hoofprints during their investigation.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
I believe the explanation for that is quite simple. Did the police ever turn the lights off during their investigation?  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Of course not! Why would they? ...ACK!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
And there you have it. The reason why the police couldn’t see the hoofprints is because the only way to see them is by turning off the lights!   
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[sputtering] I...i-in that case...shouldn’t the witness have been able to see them when he went up to the catwalk?

PHOENIX  
Well, why don’t we ask him? Playwright, were these hoofprints on the catwalk prior to the second act?  
  
  
PLAYWRIGHT  
No, there were no hoofprints to be found before the second act. The catwalk was dark during preparation, so they would’ve been impossible to miss.

PHOENIX  
And what about when you went up there after the murder? Did you see them then?  
  
  
PLAYWRIGHT  
No, I did not.

BLUEBLOOD  
Then the answer is obvious! The hoofprints were made AFTER the incident. Meaning that these glowing hoofprints have no relevance to this case!

PLAYWRIGHT  
Actually, I think they do...

BLUEBLOOD  
What?!

JUDGE  
Care to explain, witness?

PLAYWRIGHT  
Yes, it’s true that I didn’t see the fluorescent hoofprints after the murder, but there was a good reason why.

BLUEBLOOD  
And what would that be?

PLAYWRIGHT  
The safety lights were on.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Nervously] S-Safety lights?

TWILIGHT  
The lights hanging above the catwalk. They seemed to be on the fritz yesterday. That’s how we found those hoofprints in the first place.

**\**Flashback to the catwalk investigation\****  
  
  
*PHOENIX  
Wait a minute, did you see that?  
  
TWILIGHT  
See what?*

*PHOENIX  
There’s something glowing on the floor. Twilight, could you turn off the lights for a second?  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
Yeah, okay.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
There!  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
Hmm...Huh!? Th-There are hoofprints! And they’re glowing!*  
\****Flashback ends\****  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Disbelief] I-Impossible...

PLAYWRIGHT  
[Rambling] Oh, right! Yes, we’ve been meaning to fix that issue, but I’m always getting so caught up in the plays we’re performing that… I-I guess I tend to forget about those sort of things. The pulley system isn't in the greatest condition either, which is why we had to tie the rope to the catwalk instead.

PHOENIX  
*(Not exactly the pinnacle of safety, those lights. Especially not with a director like* ***this*** *around.)*

PLAYWRIGHT  
They’re usually off during performances, as well as during the second act. But when I went up after what had befallen, they were switched on, which means the hoofprints wouldn’t have shown up.

BLUEBLOOD  
But what about the rest of the backstage area? Even if you somehow explained why you weren’t able to see the glowing hoofprints on the catwalk, why weren’t the rest of the hoofprints discovered? If it was dark there, they should have been seen!

PLAYWRIGHT  
That’d be because I turned the backstage lights on as well.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
So you see, Prince Blueblood, these hoofprints could very well be connected to this case.

BLUEBLOOD  
Hmph! Then it is clear that these hoofprints belong to Miss Pommel.

PHOENIX  
What makes you think they belong to her?

BLUEBLOOD  
She must’ve gotten her hooves wet with paint from working in the dressing room, and chased the victim while her hooves were still wet. He likely turned on the safety lights when he fled, so he could see where he was going.

PHOENIX  
But the prints go down from the right side of the catwalk, and Playwright found Coco standing right above where Overall was hanged. [Dubious] Are you suggesting that she descended from the catwalk, and then climbed back up?

BLUEBLOOD  
She certainly had time to do so. After all, Playwright didn’t immediately go up to the catwalk, now did he?

PHOENIX  
*(Dammit! Now he’s using my own argument against me!)* Do you have proof that these prints even belong to Coco?

BLUEBLOOD  
[Confident] Process of elimination, attorney. It couldn’t have been anypony else. It certainly wasn’t the victim, otherwise the trail would’ve stopped at the catwalk, not to mention the fact that his hooves don’t have any paint on them. And this “third party” you claim was there would have no way to get their hooves dirty with the paint! So it could only be Miss Pommel!

PHOENIX  
And what if there existed a way to prove that those prints *couldn’t* be hers?

BLUEBLOOD  
I beg your pardon?!

JUDGE  
I certainly would like to see that, Mr. Wright. Tell me, how do you plan on proving that Miss Pommel couldn’t have made those prints?

PHOENIX  
With this, Your Honor. ***TAKE THAT!***

*Phoenix presents the forensic flashlight*

JUDGE  
[Confused] Is that a flashlight?

PHOENIX  
Yes, Your Honor. But not just any flashlight. A forensic flashlight. This has the ability to show traces of fluorescent paint without needing to turn off the lights. If there are no traces of paint on her hooves, then that means Coco couldn’t have been the one to make those hoofprints!

JUDGE  
Hmm...[Bangs gavel] Very well. I permit the use of the flashlight.

PHOENIX  
Miss Pommel!

COCO  
Oh? Yes?

PHOENIX  
If I may, I’d like to run this forensic flashlight on your hooves.

COCO  
Yes, of course.

*Phoenix inspects Coco’s hooves with the flashlight. No traces of paint were found.*

PHOENIX  
[Confident] Just as I thought, no traces of fluorescent paint at all. This means Coco couldn’t have been the one to leave those prints behind!

BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** You do realize she could’ve just washed her hooves to remove the paint?!

PHOENIX  
***OBJECTION!*** Even if she wanted to, she wouldn’t have been able to! The defendant had no opportunity to wash them after she was caught by Playwright and arrested!

BLUEBLOOD  
[Laughing in eerily smug triumph] Are you certain?  
  
  
JUDGE  
Prince Blueblood?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Your Honor, allow me to let you in on a little something about the night of the crime: it was raining.

PHOENIX  
[Confused] Raining?

BLUEBLOOD  
Think for a second. If Miss Pommel went out the back door with her hooves covered in this paint, then it could’ve all been easily washed off in the rain.

PHOENIX  
But there was still glitter on her mane and hooves! The rain would’ve washed those out as well!

BLUEBLOOD  
It seems as if you’ve forgotten this little bit of testimony from Playwright:

***\*Flashback\****  
  
PHOENIX  
*Did you see anything else on the catwalk at all?*

PLAYWRIGHT  
*Well, there was a small pile of glitter and a glitter-stained fabric roll next to Miss Pommel. But I didn’t pay them much attention, really.*

PHOENIX  
Ack!

BLUEBLOOD  
The glitter in Miss Pommel’s mane and on her hooves could’ve been added after returning to the catwalk. She could’ve seen the pile of glitter left lying there, put some of it on her mane and hooves, and then simply touched the fabric roll to leave glitter marks on it.

PHOENIX  
[Disbelief] D-Do you know what you’re saying right now? You’re talking as if she replanted the glitter on herself on purpose! Why would she want to frame herself for the crime?!

BLUEBLOOD  
To give the illusion that a third party exists, of course.

PHOENIX  
W-what?!

BLUEBLOOD  
[Elated] Yes, it’s all coming together now! After cleaning herself in the rain, Miss Pommel realized that she would’ve been caught red-hoofed because of all of the remaining evidence pointing to her! So, making the best of a bad situation, she improvised, fabricating her own evidence to make it appear as if she had been framed!

***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***

JUDGE  
[slamming gavel] Order in the court! Prince Blueblood! Are you accusing the defendant of tampering with the crime scene?!

BLUEBLOOD  
Of course I am, Your Honor!

PHOENIX  
***OBJECTION!*** That’s ridiculous! Why would my client decide to fabricate evidence?! If she washed herself off from the rain, then that would already make her look innocent! What would compel her to put herself at risk and go as far as to mess with the crime scene?!

BLUEBLOOD  
I’ve already said it multiple times. It’s to create the illusion of a third party. The defendant was smart enough to foresee that she would be the initial suspect in this murder, so she did everything she could to fabricate evidence in order to tell a story of a third party escaping the scene after knocking her out, and causing her to “lose her memory”.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
[Astounded] That’s...That’s insane!

JUDGE  
[Doubtful] Prince Blueblood, I am honestly having some difficulty believing all of this to be possible. Though, admittedly, I’m rather curious as to what led you to this conclusion.

BLUEBLOOD  
Your Honor, I am confident another theory can demonstrate to the court why I am right!

JUDGE  
Another theory? Please explain.

BLUEBLOOD  
Very well. Allow me to run through my theory of the events after the murder had been committed: first, the defendant went down from the catwalk and outside, to wash her hooves. Next, she retrieved the fabric from where she had initially hidden it. Heading back outside, she found a secure hiding spot where it wouldn’t be found by the police. As she was hiding the fabric, she tore off a piece of it as part of her ploy to create misleading evidence. Lastly, she ran back up to the catwalk and covered her hooves in glitter, while also leaving some traces of it in her mane. She then dropped the piece of fabric off the catwalk, and left glitter marks on the fabric roll. All of this was done to fool us into thinking that a third party had stolen the fabric, ran up the catwalk, killed the victim, and hit her on the head before escaping. Don’t you see, human? You’ve fallen right into her trap!

PHOENIX  
G-GAAAAAAAHHHHHH!

***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***

JUDGE  
[Incredulous] This...This is preposterous! You’re truly saying that the defendant forged evidence to make herself look innocent?!

BLUEBLOOD  
Indeed I am, Your Honor. I can see right through her little tricks! And this filthy human fell for it!

PHOENIX  
[Desperate] (*No! There has to be something I’m missing! Something that proves that Coco didn’t do anything that Blueblood is suggesting!*)

TWILIGHT  
[Eyes closed]Hmmm…  
  
PHOENIX  
[Hopeful] Do you have something, Twilight?  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
Huh?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
You’ve been quiet for a while now. Have you thought of something?  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
[Nervously] S-Sort of.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Well, do you think it’ll get us out of *this* situation?  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
[Unsure] Um, well...I think so.

PHOENIX  
Really? What is it?

TWILIGHT  
Think about where the paint came from.

PHOENIX  
You mean...the dressing room?  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
Yes. You said that a third party could have also been in that dressing room to steal the fabric.

PHOENIX  
That’s what I suggested.

TWILIGHT  
Let’s assume that what you’ve said is true. If they were just trying to get the fabric, then how would their hooves get wet with the paint? And we can’t say that it was from the paint can, since there were no spills anywhere when we went in the dressing room.

PHOENIX  
So, what do you think could’ve happened?

TWILIGHT  
Do you remember what Playwright said?  
  
  
**\**Flashback to Playwright’s testimony\****

PLAYWRIGHT  
*The intermission started at around 8:00, and it ended at 8:15. The second act would’ve run from then until 9:00, if Overall hadn’t been murdered.*PHOENIX  
*Did you see Overall at all during the intermission?*

PLAYWRIGHT  
*Actually, I did. He came onstage briefly to discuss something with me, and then he left right before the intermission ended. He said he and his assistant had to start working on coating a sheet of fabric.*

***\*End of flashback\****TWILIGHT  
If we consider that, and recall what Athena said during the investigation…  
  
  
\****Flashback to Athena talking about fluorescent paint\****

PHOENIX  
*Athena, how long does it take for fluorescent paint to dry?*

ATHENA  
*According to Junie, it takes about an hour.  
  
\*****End of flashback\****TWILIGHT  
If Overall and Coco started coating the fabric in paint during the intermission, which lasted from 8:00 to 8:15, and the murder occured at 8:50…

PHOENIX  
[Realizing] Then that means that the sheet of fabric Coco and Overall were working on...was still drying when the crime occured! That’s how the third party could’ve left those hoofprints!

TWILIGHT  
It’s not just the hoofprints. There’s something else.

PHOENIX  
[Confused] Something else?

TWILIGHT  
You claimed Coco was knocked out from being hit with the fabric roll, right?

PHOENIX  
Yeah. She still has the glitter stuck on there from that night. That doesn’t explain why there are no traces in *Overall’s* mane, though.

TWILIGHT  
Exactly. The only traces of glitter he had were on his forehooves.

PHOENIX  
So, what are you suggesting? That this third party hit Coco on the head with the fabric roll, and then they hit HIM with something else?

TWILIGHT  
If somepony else was indeed present at the crime scene, I think it’s safe to assume that they must have brought their own weapon ahead of time. They could’ve used that to hit Overall without leaving anything behind on his head. It’s the only scenario that fits.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Okay, but what about Coco? She clearly had glitter left in her mane. Did the third party take the fabric roll from Overall after knocking him out?  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
I don’t think so. In fact, I’m not entirely convinced that Overall was the one who brought the fabric roll up to the catwalk in the first place. Playwright didn’t actually see Overall carrying the fabric roll, after all. We just assumed that he must have because we thought he and Coco were the only ones to go up there.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
But now that it’s possible that a third party was running ahead of the two, *they* might have been the one to bring the fabric roll up to the catwalk instead!  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
Right! And if they had their own weapon with them, then why would they have brought the fabric roll?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Well, the only reason I can think of is because…it had the fabric they wanted on it…Aha! Of course! Thanks, Twilight!

JUDGE  
[slams gavel] Mr. Wright, do you have anything to refute Prince Bluebood’s theory?

PHOENIX  
[confidently] Yes, I do Your Honor.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Doubtful] Really? I sincerely doubt that. Enlighten me, human. What will you pull out of that spiky head of yours this time?

PHOENIX  
[Confident] A pointy quill that will poke a hole in your theory. You suggested that this whole thing was fabricated by Miss Pommel to make it look like she had been framed. Not only can I prove that to be false, but I can also demonstrate that a third party was behind the whole crime!

JUDGE  
Then please explain to the court, Mr. Wright!

PHOENIX  
We’re under the assumption that the hoofprints were made from the paint from the dressing room. While that may be correct, the source of the paint is what I believe changes everything.

JUDGE  
And what would this source be?

PHOENIX  
That would be...the fabric roll.

JUDGE  
Really?

BLUEBLOOD  
[Snarky] Where are you going with this?

PHOENIX  
I’m getting there, Blueblood, just bear with me a moment. Now, when this third party stole the special fabric from the dressing room, it still must have been wet from the paint.

BLUEBLOOD  
And how do you know that?

PHOENIX  
Fluorescent paint takes at least one hour to dry completely. Overall and Coco started painting the fabric during the play’s intermission. This means that if we don’t take into account the time taken to actually coat the fabric, the earliest that the fabric could’ve been completely dry is sometime between 9:00 and 9:15. Since the crime occurred at 8:50, and there were no other completed versions of the fabric found at the theatre, the only remaining possibility is that whoever stole the fabric must have taken the one that had just recently been painted, meaning it was still wet when they stole it.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Hmph. So what? How does this prove anything?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
You’ll see in a second, no need to rush me. Now, the thief was likely unaware that the fabric was still wet when they stole it. Because of this, they got their hooves covered in paint, causing them to leave the trail of hoofprints.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
How long do you plan on continuing with this assertion of there being a third party? I’ve already shown how unlikely it is that they even exist! Why do you insist on prattling on about such an insane theory?

PHOENIX  
If you’d let me finish, Prince Blueblood, I’ll show you just how *sane* it is. Now, when this third party stole the fabric, I initially assumed it was a sheet that they collected and placed in a bag that they had on them. However, I’d like to amend that theory.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Confused] Amend?

JUDGE  
So what’s your new theory then, Mr. Wright?

PHOENIX  
The fabric this third party stole wasn’t a completed, dry sheet laying on a table. Instead, I’m positive that the fabric was simply laying out to dry, and the third party rolled it up in a nearby fabric roll to collect the whole thing. They were stealthy for the most part, but eventually, either due to the noise they made, or just bad luck, the thief was caught right as they were about to leave. They took the rolled up fabric in their mouth, and ran away up to the catwalk, with Coco and Overall in pursuit.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Incredulous] And I suppose you’re going to say that both of them were knocked out by this third party as soon as they reached the top of the catwalk? Nice try, but if that were the case, our victim would have some glitter in his mane as well, wouldn’t you agree?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
I do, actually. But that’s not my main point here - the thief could’ve easily used a different weapon on Overall when they attacked him. It’s the weapon that knocked out Coco that will destroy your theory of her fabricating evidence!

BLUEBLOOD  
[confused] The...weapon?

PHOENIX  
As has been well established and demonstrated, Miss Pommel currently has glitter in her mane. This suggests that she was struck on the head with the fabric roll. And now that I’ve shown the possibility that the roll actually had Overall’s special fabric on it at the time, we have a much more likely scenario for how it got in Coco’s mane - it came from the fabric that was *on* the roll!

BLUEBLOOD  
In what way does this disprove my theory, defense? Besides, you have not done enough to prove that that fabric roll *ever* had any of the special fabric on it.

PHOENIX  
That’s next on the agenda, actually. Now, if the fabric was still wet at the time, that would explain how the third party got their hooves covered in paint, and left behind a trail of hoofprints. And, if that *is* the case, something *else* would’ve also been left behind.  
  
  
JUDGE  
[Curious] Oh? And what is that, Mr. Wright?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[realizing, making a pained noise] NO! It can’t be!

PHOENIX  
If Coco was struck on the head with the fabric roll when the fluorescent paint was still wet, then not only would glitter be left over, but there would also be traces of fluorescent paint on her as well!

JUDGE  
WHAT?! But what does that mean?

PHOENIX  
It means that, not only was the special fabric *really* on that roll at the time of the crime, but it also means that Coco couldn’t have gone outside to hide the fabric OR wash her hooves! Because if she did...then the glitter AND the paint would’ve both been removed!  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** She could’ve just reapplied it like she did with the glitter!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
***OBJECTION!*** Playwright and his employees were all standing in the right wing after the murder. Coco couldn’t have made it to the dressing room to get more of the paint to put on herself without being spotted!

BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** That’s ASSUMING that Miss Pommel was struck in the first place! How about you SHOW ME that she was actually struck by the roll?!

PHOENIX  
[Determined] I’ll do just that! By using the forensic flashlight again on Coco, on the area where the glitter is still on her! Miss Pommel!

COCO  
[Compliant] I’ve heard everything, Mr. Wright. Please go ahead and do what you need to do

*Phoenix runs the flashlight on Coco’s head, and discovers that there’s fluorescent paint dried on her mane, in the same area where the glitter is.*

JUDGE  
There it is! Just like Mr. Wright said!

BLUEBLOOD  
[Unbelieving and shrill] No! NO! No, no, no! This cannot be!

PHOENIX  
As the court can see, this evidence proves that not only could Miss Pommel *not* have been the one to steal the fabric OR kill Mr. Concept, but also that without a doubt...this third party is THE TRUE CULPRIT!

BLUEBLOOD  
GAH!!

***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***

JUDGE  
ORDER! ORDER IN THE COURT! But Mr. Wright! If this is true, then who is responsible for this murder?!

BLUEBLOOD  
NO! No, no, no! This was NOT supposed to happen! HUMAN!

PHOENIX  
[surprised] What is it?

BLUEBLOOD  
Even if this third party somehow exists, you have no idea who it could be! And where in Celestia’s name would we even begin to look?! It could be ANYPONY!

TWILIGHT  
Then maybe I can make a suggestion.

JUDGE  
Oh? What would that be, Miss Sparkle?

TWILIGHT  
Prince Blueblood argued that Coco wanted the fabric to herself to get a better chance to win a fashion competition she’s participating in. Correct?

BLUEBLOOD  
And what of it?

TWILIGHT  
Well, you just asked to narrow down our search of the mystery third party. If we’re looking for somepony who would want a fabric enough to kill for it, why not start with the other contestants of the fashion contest? While we're at it, we should try to find out if any of them have a connection to anypony directly involved in this case.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Insulted] W-who do you think you are, ordering me around like that?!

PHOENIX  
I remember you mentioning something earlier, Prince Blueblood. That the contest is “not particularly large” and has “several background checks”? Those checks would involve taking their prints, right?

BLUEBLOOD  
You both seem to have forgotten that Coco Pommel is the only pony who could’ve known that this special fabric even exists!

TWILIGHT  
That may be the case right now, but I still would like the records of all the hoofprints and horseshoes of everypony in that fashion contest. If they match with the fluorescent hoofprints left behind, then I say that’s all the proof we need to show that there was indeed a third pony at the scene of the crime!

JUDGE  
I agree with Miss Sparkle. I presume this can be done relatively quickly?

BLUEBLOOD  
[Seething] Grrr…...it...shouldn’t take long, Your Honor.

JUDGE  
Very well. I shall grant a thirty-minute recess to have the police run an analysis to determine if any of the hoofprints of the contestants match with the trail left behind at the theatre.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Seething] I don’t believe this. How could I have let this filthy, spiky-headed human get away with this?!?

JUDGE  
[Bangs gavel] Court is adjourned.

**Scene 3**

***Manehattan District Court - Defendant Lobby No. 2***

***February 12, 11:00 AM***

PHOENIX  
[Relieved] Whew, that was a little intense! But we pulled through.

RARITY  
[Dramatic] A LITTLE intense?! My heart couldn’t take that entire trial! [Overjoyed] But I’m so happy that you’ve been able to help Coco!

PHOENIX  
We’re not done yet, though. I may have proven that someone other than Coco could’ve done it, but she hasn’t received the acquittal yet. We’ve still got a long way to go.

*Coco appears and is looking down.*

COCO  
[Deflated] Hello, everypony.

PHOENIX  
[Pleasantly Surprised] Oh, Miss Pommel.

RARITY  
[Encouraging] Coco! You don’t need to worry about a thing anymore! Phoenix is on his way to kick that prince’s sorry flank, and you’ll be out scot-free!

COCO  
[Downcast] Yes, I’m… I’m very grateful, Mr. Wright.

RARITY  
[Confused] So why the long face, darling?

COCO  
What the prince said about Overall, that he planned to propose to me. [On the verge of tears] Is… Was that true?

RARITY  
Oh, well, you always said in your letters that he cared a lot about you. So it wouldn’t surprise me if he took it to the next level. And, well… I was supposed to keep it a secret, but… [clears throat] It wasn’t too long ago that he requested me to look for a special gem for you. He said he wanted the gem to match your eyes, so from it… he fashioned a ring.

*Coco begins to tear up.*

COCO  
He said that about me? He actually wanted to propose to me? *[starts to cry]* It’s a beautiful ring. I would’ve happily said yes…

*Coco cries. Rarity comforts her.*

RARITY  
[Comforting] There there, darling. I know this is hard for you. But you must be strong right now. Overall would NOT want to see you like this! Keep shining bright like that gem!

*Coco sniffles a little, and then calms down.*

COCO  
You’re right, Rarity. Overall wouldn’t want to see me like this. [Determined] I have to be strong. For him and for me.

RARITY  
That’s the spirit, Coco!

PHOENIX  
[Relieved] I’m glad you’re feeling better, Miss Pommel.

COCO  
[Grateful] Thanks, Mr. Wright. I wouldn’t be here without you.

PHOENIX  
Actually, while you’re here, I’d like to ask you a couple of questions.

COCO  
Oh! Of course, go ahead.

PHOENIX  
Since we started discussing the events that you were involved with on the night of the murder, have you been able to remember anything else?

COCO  
Hm… well yes, actually. It was a bit slow, but I’ve been regaining my memories as the trial was going on.

PHOENIX  
Anything at all will help greatly.

COCO  
I remember...that Overall and I had been working on the special fabric in the dressing room during the second act of the play. We had just finished coating one of the two rolls of fabric with the fluorescent paint once the second act was nearing its conclusion.  
  
PHOENIX  
So we were right. The fabric that was stolen *was* the one you two had been painting.  
  
COCO  
Yeah, we set it out on the table to dry. After that, I stepped out for a minute to wash my hooves of the glitter and paint.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
You left the room?  
  
COCO  
Yes, but only for a few minutes.  
  
PHOENIX  
[Pensive] *(Hmm, if the thief was waiting nearby, they may have seen Coco leave the room, and taken advantage of that opportunity.)* So, what happened after that?  
  
COCO  
Well, while I was returning to the dressing room, I saw Overall sprinting out the door. I called out to him, but he didn’t answer, so I followed him. I saw him running up the catwalk, and I was afraid that he would hurt himself up there because it was so dark, so I quickly turned on the safety lights and continued to follow. On the way up the stairs, I heard a loud clanging noise, and I ran as quickly as I could to see what happened. And…. that’s all I remember.

PHOENIX  
Playwright mentioned a clang too, if I recall. That must’ve been when Overall was struck on the head with that unidentified weapon. *(But what could it have been? Something metal?)* What about after you regained consciousness? Do you remember anything after that?

COCO  
I do. After I woke up, I saw that there was an empty fabric roll in my hooves, which were, for some reason, completely covered in glitter once again.

PHOENIX  
The fabric roll was left in your hooves? And the glitter reappeared? Are you certain you washed all of the glitter off of yourself in the first place?

COCO  
I’m sure of it, Mr Wright. I don’t know how the glitter got on my hooves again. And I’m not sure how this empty fabric roll ended up where it did, either.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
I see. *(Better make a note of that)*.

**[Court Record Updated:** **Glitter-stained fabric roll: A wooden fabric roll with traces of glitter stuck to it. Found at the crime scene. The roll has several exposed splinters. The roll was in Coco’s hooves when she regained consciousness.]**

PHOENIX  
Is there anything else you can tell me?  
  
COCO  
Not that I know of. Everything else happened exactly as Playwright testified. He stayed with me until I was taken away by the police. As soon as I got to my cell, I shook the glitter off my hooves as best as I could.

PHOENIX  
I see. Well, hopefully what you do remember will be useful in some way.  
  
COCO  
I hope so, Mr. Wright.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Now, Twilight, I have a question for you.

TWILIGHT  
What is it, Phoenix?

PHOENIX  
I’m curious as to why you’re so sure that the third pony from the incident was a contestant of this fashion contest. I don’t quite understand how anyone else in that contest would know about the fabric, and just because they could possibly have a reason to steal the fabric for themselves, it’s still not exactly a concrete conclusion, even if it did help us out.

TWILIGHT  
I understand your uncertainty, Phoenix. I’m pretty sure all of the contestants would be confident in their own ability to win. However, there is one particular mare that we know that would do whatever it took to win.

PHOENIX  
Oh? Who would that be?

TWILIGHT  
Suri Polomare.

*Rarity and Coco react with upset expressions. They make a few unpleasant sounds, their discontent obvious.*

PHOENIX  
*(Whoa, the mood turned rather quickly there.)* Suri Polomare, huh. Who is she?

TWILIGHT  
You recall when Rarity bumped into that one mare during yesterday’s investigation?

PHOENIX  
Oh, that pony? I remember now. So, her name is Suri Polomare. What does she have anything to do with the case?

TWILIGHT  
Do you remember what she said back then?

***\*Flashback to the moment.\**** *SURI  
I’ve no time to waste on you, Rarity. I’m on a tight schedule, so you better stay out of my way. I don’t want* ***another*** *victory taken away by* ***your*** *hooves, m’kay?*  
**\**End of Flashback.\****

PHOENIX  
Yeah, she even mentioned Rarity “taking away another victory”. What did she mean?

RARITY  
I believe I can explain.

PHOENIX  
Please do, Rarity.

RARITY  
Several months ago, I was involved in a similar fashion contest to the one Coco entered, and Suri was a contestant as well. I had my own special fabric, and she was enamoured by it, so I let her use the fabric for small touches on her own designs. She ended up using my entire fabric and claimed it as her own! Despite that, I managed to beat her, but I didn’t know that I won until Coco told me.

PHOENIX  
What do you mean?

COCO  
Well, remember when I said that I was an assistant of somepony?

PHOENIX  
[Realizing] Wait...are you saying it was Suri?

COCO  
Yes, it was her. In fact, when Suri got ahold of Rarity’s fabric, instead of making the dresses herself, she made me do it. It was excruciating. And that part about Rarity not knowing that she won that contest until I told her: Suri was the one who lied to Rarity and her friends, and made me keep quiet about it, too.

PHOENIX  
Oh, so, earlier in the trial…

***\*Flashback\****

PHOENIX  
*Did you really have so little money that you could barely afford a place to live?*

COCO  
*Yes, especially after I quit being an assistant to my mentor. She always made enough for the both of us with my...with the designs she sold.*

***\*End of flashback\****

COCO  
Suri is a great designer, but when it came to whose work she would sell, she almost always chose to sell the designs *I* had made over her own. She didn’t even have the courtesy to mention that they weren’t hers.

PHOENIX  
Wow, this pony sounds so…selfish.

RARITY  
[agitated] I know, right?! Not giving somepony proper credit, and stealing, to boot? She has absolutely NO DIGNITY!

PHOENIX  
But do you think she would actually go as far as murder, though?

RARITY  
[losing her steam, becoming more pensive and subdued by the prospect] I…. hm. I don’t know. I don’t think she’s THAT heartless, but if those hoofprints actually belong to her, then it couldn’t have been anypony else.

PHOENIX  
[Hopeful] Hopefully the hoofprint analysis will give us the answers we need.

BAILIFF  
The trial is about to resume. Will the defendant and her attorney please return to the courtroom?

TWILIGHT  
It looks like they already finished their investigation. Let’s hope we don’t get any bad news from this.

PHOENIX  
Hold up, Twilight, there’s still one more thing I want to talk to Coco about.

COCO  
Huh? Wh-what is it?

PHOENIX  
Coco, you hid your true relationship with Overall from me on purpose, didn’t you? I want to know why.

COCO  
[hesitates, then lets out a long, drawn-out sigh] ...After working with Suri for so long, I began to believe in her philosophy.

PHOENIX  
The idea that it’s “everypony for themselves in the big city”?

COCO  
Uh-huh. I encountered so many ponies like that while working with Suri, that eventually I just started to believe it was true. It wasn’t until Rarity came along that I realized there *were* ponies out there who would put the well-being of others before themselves.

PHOENIX  
But...what does this have to do with why you hid your relationship with Overall?

COCO  
Even though I know now that there are selfless ponies out there, it doesn’t change the fact that there are many who *do* think and act selfishly, *and* assume the same from others. That’s why… I thought it would be better if you didn’t know the truth about us. I was worried that if you did, and realized what it meant, you’d have noticed how strong of a motive I had to...kill him, and wouldn’t have taken my case as a result.

PHOENIX  
I see. You said something similar yesterday, I believe.

***\*Flashback\****

PHOENIX  
*Well, you were in the area when he fell. Still, just because you were at the scene of the crime, it doesn’t mean you did it.*

COCO  
*I know, but everypony who saw me thought I did it.*

PHOENIX  
*Rarity doesn’t think you did it. She certainly believes you wouldn’t have the heart to kill.*

COCO  
*\*Sigh\* Although I appreciate her believing I didn’t do it, it’s not enough to convince everypony else.*

***\*End of Flashback\****

PHOENIX  
[Understanding] You were frightened by the looks everyone was giving you while you were being arrested. That’s why you thought you had to hide the truth from me.

COCO  
Y-Yeah.

PHOENIX  
But because of that, Coco, we were put in a very tough spot. I was completely unprepared to argue against Blueblood’s assertions. It was only because of Twilight’s quick thinking that we managed to escape a guilty verdict there.

COCO  
[Apologetic] I-I’m sorry.

PHOENIX  
If you want me to help you as best I can, I’m going to need you to trust me.

COCO  
T-Trust…

PHOENIX  
Yes. We defense attorneys fight for the innocence of our clients through our ability to trust completely in that innocence. However, in order to fight as hard as we can, we need our clients to believe in *us*, and tell us everything they can, so we can make the truth known.

COCO  
…

RARITY  
You would’ve trusted Overall with the whole truth, right Coco?

COCO  
O-of course!

RARITY  
Then you must do the same for Mr. Wright. He and Twilight are both trying their hardest to help you!

PHOENIX  
Trust in me, Coco, and I promise I will believe in, and fight for you, until the bitter end.

COCO  
...Okay, Mr. Wright. I trust you. From now on, I’ll tell you everything I know about the murder.

PHOENIX  
Thank you, Coco.

TWILIGHT  
We’ve got to get going now, Phoenix. We don’t want to damage our case by being late.

PHOENIX  
Right! Let’s go then. Hopefully, we can put an end to this, here and now.

**Scene 4**

***February 12, 11:30 AM***

***Manehattan District Court - Courtroom #2***

***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***

JUDGE  
Court will now reconvene. Prince Blueblood, has the police brought the results of the hoofprint analysis?

BLUEBLOOD  
[Seething] Y-yes, they have, Your Honor.

JUDGE  
Then please share your findings with the court.

*Blueblood takes a moment to look at the results, and quickly gets angry.*

BLUEBLOOD  
[Angry] Grr…..

JUDGE  
Well, don’t just stand there looking irritated. Say something!

BLUEBLOOD  
[In a begrudging tone] It…it’s just as the defense claims. The hoofprints don’t belong to either the defendant or the victim.

JUDGE  
So...do they really belong to one of the other contestants in that fashion contest?

BLUEBLOOD  
Yes, well...just as Princess Twilight requested, we compared the prints found backstage and on the catwalk to those of the contestants. Apparently, some...observant pony down at Forensics noticed that only one contestant has any connection to anypony involved in this case. He checked their prints first, and found...a perfect match.

PHOENIX  
[Amazed] (*Wow. Can I get that guy in all of my future cases, please?*)

JUDGE  
You actually found a match?! Then please tell us, whose hoofprints are they?!

BLUEBLOOD  
The hoofprint analysis has concluded that…the one who left those hoofprints at the time of the crime was a mare by the name of…...Suri Polomare.

JUDGE  
Suri Polomare?

PHOENIX  
*(So Twilight was right after all.)*

**[Court Record Updated: Glowing Hoofprints; Hoofprints left behind on catwalk. Made of fluorescent paint. Can only be seen in the dark. Begins in the dressing room, ends near the back door. Belong to Suri Polomare.]**

BLUEBLOOD  
We subpoenaed her during the recess: she has just arrived, and is waiting in the witness lobby, Your Honor.

JUDGE  
Then please bring her to the stand, at once.

*Suri takes the stand.*

BLUEBLOOD  
Name and occupation, please.

SURI  
[Annoyed] …...Hmph. This is ridiculous.

BLUEBLOOD  
Hm?!

SURI  
[Agitated] I was in the middle of something very important, and then the police barged into my apartment and demanded that I accompany them to the courthouse! Some nerve!

BLUEBLOOD  
[Annoyed] Witness, I would appreciate it if you would state your name and occupation for the record.

SURI  
[Angry] I need to finish my dresses before tomorrow! I’ll be ruined if I don’t finish soon! Can’t you all see that I am a very busy mare? You don’t just drop in on somepony like me and take me away from my duties, m’kay?!

BLUEBLOOD  
[Shouting angrily] Witness! Name! Occupation!

SURI  
[Disgruntled] Hmph, fine! Suri Polomare. I am a fashion designer.

JUDGE  
Miss Polomare, are you aware of why you are called to the stand today?

SURI  
No, I am not! The police who showed up at my apartment didn’t tell me a thing!

JUDGE  
You are called here because you are suspected of murdering a costume designer by the name of Overall Concept.

SURI  
[Shocked] What?! Murder?! I did no such thing! I’m too busy dealing with my own problems to commit something so heinous!

JUDGE  
Hmm, I see…  
  
  
PHOENIX  
[Disbelief] *(Really, Your Honor? That’s all you have to say to that?)*

JUDGE  
Well then. Does the defense have any objections?

PHOENIX  
[Sarcastic before moving to neutral] As shocking as it may sound, I do, Your Honor. Based on the analysis that the prosecution revealed, the hoofprints belonged to Miss Polomare. She must’ve been the one who made them at the scene of the crime, which means she must also be the one who stole Overall Concept’s special fabric, and murdered him!

SURI  
[Dubious] Hmph. A human is here to accuse me of something I didn’t do? Don’t make me laugh, m’kay?!

PHOENIX  
Then how do you explain these hoofprints left behind? The analysis clearly shows that they’re yours!

SURI  
Now you listen here! I didn’t commit any sort of theft or murder, but if it makes you feel any happier, I’ll tell you what I was doing that night.

PHOENIX  
[Disbelief] You… you’re actually going to cooperate?

SURI  
It’s not like any of you are giving me a choice. Besides, I’m in the middle of something very important, so the sooner I get out, the sooner I can get back to work.

JUDGE  
Well, we appreciate your cooperation, Miss Polomare. Now please testify as to your whereabouts at the time of the incident.

**WITNESS TESTIMONY**

**Where Was I?**

*I guess I can’t really hide this; I was indeed at the play that night.*

*It was during the intermission that I went to the dressing room to meet up with Coco.*

*As soon as the second act started, I took a casual walk backstage.*

*I went up to the catwalk, walked across, and went back down on the opposite side.*

*I then went out the back door and left the theatre before the incident happened.*

PHOENIX  
So you admit that you were actually at the theatre!

SURI  
Don’t act so surprised. I never denied that I was. [Annoyed] Now look, I am in a hurry right now. I’ve said what happened; can I go home now?. I have more important things to do, m’kay?

PHOENIX  
Then you’d better hope I don’t find anything that makes you stay longer.

JUDGE  
Mr. Wright, you may now cross-examine the witness.

**CROSS EXAMINATION**

**Where Was I?**

*I guess I can’t really hide this; I was indeed at the play that night.*

PHOENIX  
**HOLD IT**! You said you were busy earlier; were you also this busy on the night in question?

SURI  
Of course I was. I’m currently in a fashion contest, and the dresses need to be finished soon. I am not done yet, so I need all the time I can get to finish them...like the time you’re all wasting right now.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Is this contest really that important?  
  
  
SURI  
[Offended] Of course it is! This contest can make or break a designer’s career!

PHOENIX  
If this contest is such a big deal, why did you go to the theatre?

SURI  
I needed a break. I felt going to the theatre would help me unwind. I knew Coco Pommel was working there, so I thought I might as well give her a visit.

PHOENIX  
You met with Miss Pommel?

JUDGE  
What exactly were you doing with the defendant, witness?

*It was during the intermission that I went to the dressing room to meet up with Coco.*

PHOENIX  
***HOLD IT****!* You went during the intermission?

SURI  
I was late getting to the theatre, so I couldn’t make it backstage before the play started. When the play went on break, I figured it was the best opportunity to get backstage.

PHOENIX  
But aren’t the staff in the theatre guarding the stage? I find it hard to believe that they would let someone in the audience go backstage.

SURI  
I’ve been to the theatre many times, so the staff are quite familiar with me. They just let me through.

PHOENIX  
But the staff didn’t mention anything about you going backstage.

SURI  
That’s probably because they had no reason to. I wasn’t there when the crime occurred, after all.

PHOENIX  
In that case, why didn’t Miss Pommel mention anything about you?  
  
SURI  
!? [Nervously] Uhh…

BLUEBLOOD  
Miss Pommel could’ve easily lied about anypony else being involved.

PHOENIX  
I find that very hard to believe! If she actually didn’t want to get caught as the murderer, she would’ve mentioned that a third party was involved right from the beginning. In fact, NOT mentioning just that makes your previous theory rather unlikely! Why would my client try so hard to create false evidence, and then not even bother to mention that a third party was there, especially if there actually *was* one there?!

BLUEBLOOD  
Gah!

***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***

BLUEBLOOD  
[sputtering] Hmph! Who knows what the defendant was thinking. Unless you have a solid objection to this testimony, defense, I suggest you move on.

PHOENIX  
Very well. That leads me to my next question. Why did you meet with Miss Pommel?

SURI  
*That* is none of your concern.

PHOENIX  
I beg to differ. Your business with Miss Pommel has everything to do with this case.

SURI  
Well, if it’s that important, I was just there to visit her.

PHOENIX  
Visit her? For what?

SURI  
[Curt] Nothing in particular. Just to see her.

PHOENIX  
From what I hear, the two of you aren’t exactly on good terms. Miss Pommel said she used to be your assistant, and she quit.

SURI  
Our professional history is irrelevant. I was there to just see her again for old times’ sake, and put everything behind us.

PHOENIX  
So what did you talk about?

SURI  
Nothing much. I was wondering how she was doing. She and her friend were just working on this fabric as we talked.

PHOENIX  
The special fabric? Did you know about the fabric prior to your visit?

SURI  
No, this was the first time I had heard about the fabric. They let me have a look, and I even touched it a bit. Very soft fabric, I should say.

PHOENIX  
(*So she felt the fabric? That would explain how she got paint on her hooves to make the hoofprints. As for the path itself, though...)*

*As soon as the second act started, I took a casual walk backstage.*

PHOENIX  
***HOLD IT****!* Took a casual walk around?

SURI  
Well, I was finished with our conversation, so I just figured that looking around backstage was a good way to unwind. The area was way bigger than I thought, so I couldn’t help but wander around looking at everything. It reminded me of the last fashion competition I was in, and of seeing the models wearing my designs on stage. [Bitter muttering] If only I had won the contest, I would-

*Suri stops for a moment.*

SURI  
Hmph, but that was months ago. I am far too busy to talk about any of my past accomplishments.

PHOENIX  
*(Or lack thereof, according to Rarity and Coco.)* Couldn’t you have just watched the show instead?

SURI  
If I decided to watch the show, then I would’ve gotten too distracted to get back to work on my dresses. But I still was a little curious about the play, so I took a little peek. From a different perspective, you could say.

*I went up to the catwalk, walked across, and went back down on the opposite side.*

PHOENIX  
***HOLD IT****!* You went up to the catwalk?

SURI  
I wanted to see the play for a short bit before I left. I must admit, the height was very intimidating, but it sure was a great view.  
  
PHOENIX  
But, neither Playwright nor the stagehooves mentioned anything about you going up to the catwalk. Why would they not mention you being backstage, especially since you’re not a part of the audience or the staff?!

BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION****!* [Smug] If you recall Playwright’s testimony, you would know that he was paying attention to the play. He only looked at the catwalk because he heard ponies running. This witness had no reason to make any sort of ruckus, so it’s possible that she went up to the catwalk quietly without anypony noticing, especially since backstage was dark at that moment.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
*(Unfortunately, I can’t deny that. It would explain the hoofprints, but I don’t believe that it's the right explanation. It HAS to be something else. And I’m going to show her why all of this is false.)*

JUDGE  
Any final statements, witness?

*I then went out the back door and left the theatre before the incident happened.*

PHOENIX  
***HOLD IT!*** Just so we’re all clear...you came in through the main entrance, and left through the back door? That’s what you’re saying?

SURI  
That’s correct.

PHOENIX  
Would you mind adding this to your testimony, for clarity’s sake?

SURI  
If it means I can leave soon, then fine.

JUDGE  
[Bangs gavel] The witness will add this clarification to her testimony.

*I entered the theatre via the main entrance, and left through the back door before anything even happened. Happy now?*

PHOENIX  
***OBJECTION***! Miss Polomare, there’s a significant contradiction in your testimony.

SURI  
[Confused] What?

BLUEBLOOD  
I see no such contradiction, human. Stop trying to force your reasoning when the trial’s not going in your favor!  
  
PHOENIX  
*(Oh, like you’re one to talk!)*  
  
  
JUDGE  
Mr. Wright, would you care to explain this contradiction to the court?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Certainly, Your Honor. Suri claims that she left the theatre before the murder took place, and therefore, she has no connection to the case. Well, I have it on good faith that this claim is a bold-faced lie.  
  
  
SURI  
...  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
And what evidence do you have to support that statement?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Well, first, let’s clear up a separate issue regarding Suri’s movements that night. She mentioned that she entered the theatre through the front, which was where the audience sat. I find that very odd.

BLUEBLOOD  
Odd?! But she was an attendee! That’s where everypony goes when they enter the theatre.

PHOENIX  
You’re right, that’s where the audience goes. That is, if you’re actually a part of the audience.

BLUEBLOOD  
Explain!

PHOENIX  
The witness said that she was late to the theatre, and arrived after the play had started. According to your own words, Prince Blueblood, the show in question was sold out around noon that day. It was actually Coco who purchased the last ticket, and gave it to one of her friends as a gift. This means that if Miss Polomare just went to the theatre on a whim, she would’ve had no way to get through the front door to get inside the theatre!  
  
SURI  
Ack!  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Grgh!  
  
***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***  
  
JUDGE  
Order! Order! Witness, have you been lying to this court!?

SURI  
[Nervous sputtering] N-No, of course not! I must have gotten confused, what with the stress of this competition. I bought my ticket a few days in advance, so I was still able to get into the theatre without any problems.

PHOENIX  
Even *if* that were true, that doesn’t solve the biggest issue with your claim.  
  
  
SURI  
There’s another!?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Oh, yes. And this will be the one that will reveal just how closely connected you are to this case.  
  
  
JUDGE  
Please explain, Mr. Wright.

PHOENIX  
Of course, Your Honor. The police made sure to interrogate all 5000 attendees in the theatre. If you really had bought your ticket, then the police would’ve discovered your absence immediately! They would’ve only interrogated 4999 members of the audience. That means the only possible explanation for this inconsistency is that you were never part of the audience!  
  
  
SURI  
Ngk!?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Shock] No! This… this can’t be!  
  
  
***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***  
  
  
JUDGE  
Miss Polomare! It seems more and more likely that you’ve perjured yourself. What do you have to say to explain this?  
  
  
SURI  
[Annoyed] Rrrrh! Isn’t it obvious!? I went back to my seat after I saw that it was raining outside. Jeez, why are you picking apart every insignificant detail?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
You went back to your seat? How did you do that?  
  
  
SURI  
What do you mean, “How did I do that!?” I walked back through the stage wing, and returned to the audience.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
***OBJECTION!*** Unfortunately for you, that is impossible.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Wh-Why?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
If you recall, the stage wings were being watched during the second act of the play - there were stagehooves in the right wing, while Playwright and his stage manager were in the left.  
Even if they could’ve somehow failed to notice the witness going to and from the catwalk, there’s no way they would’ve missed her walking right past them!  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** [Desperate] But the right wing was empty following the incident! She could’ve made her way back to the audience at that point!  
  
  
  
SURI  
[Desperate] Y-Yes! That’s exactly what happened! I went back to my seat when the wing was empty!

PHOENIX  
[Self-assured] Then the police obviously took your name down when they interrogated you, correct?  
  
  
SURI  
!? [Nervous] Uh...  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Angered] Grah! To Tartarus with you, you filthy human!  
  
  
JUDGE  
[Probing] Well, Prince Blueblood? Was this witness among those interrogated?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Grudgingly] Rrrr… No, she was not.  
  
  
SURI  
Wh-What!? How dare you--!

PHOENIX  
So, as we can see, this witness was not among those interrogated, the total number of which add up to a full house of 5000. This, in addition to the glowing hoofprints, conclusively proves that Suri did not enter that theatre as a member of the audience. She came in through the back door with the express purpose of stealing a roll of Overall’s special fabric!  
  
  
***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***  
  
  
JUDGE  
Witness! Explain yourself at once.  
  
  
SURI  
………….  
  
  
JUDGE  
Umm, witness?  
  
  
SURI  
...Hmph! [Disappointed] So, this is how far the Equestrian royalty have fallen, huh?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
!? [Outraged] What!?  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
!?  
  
  
SURI  
How pitiful. You can’t even protect a damsel in distress from being falsely accused.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Defensive] Now, see here! I am trying my hardest to help--

SURI  
***SHUT UP!*** I do not believe I gave you permission to speak.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Insulted] Excuse me!? I am a prince, I’ll have you know - the nephew of Princess Celestia! You should treat me with the respect I deserve!  
  
  
SURI  
[Dismissive] Respect? Don’t make me laugh. A prince who uses the power he’s *borrowing* from his aunt for no other purpose than to grant himself prestige among the elites of Canterlot isn’t somepony worth respecting.

BLUEBLOOD  
How dare you!?  
  
  
SURI  
[Condescending] Simmer down; the adults are talking now, m’kay?  
  
  
JUDGE  
Miss Polomare! Restrain yourself, or you will be held in contempt of court!  
  
  
SURI  
Hmph.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
[sweating] *(Jeez, and here I thought a pony couldn’t get any more intimidating.)*  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
…  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Twilight?

TWILIGHT  
[Pensive, somewhat disheartened] What did she mean, “This is how far the Equestrian royalty have fallen?”  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Huh?  
  
  
JUDGE  
Now, witness, please explain to the court how you came to be at the theatre on the night of the murder.  
  
  
SURI  
[Reluctant] Fine; I admit it. I was not there as a member of the audience.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
So, you *were* lying to us!

SURI  
[Curt] ...Yes, I was.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Enraged] Witness! What are you doing?! You realize that lying to the court would make me look-

SURI  
***SHUT UP!*** [Crabby]Why should I care how it makes *you* look? I don’t recall you actually helping *me* out!

BLUEBLOOD  
[Offended] I beg your pardon?! You dare talk back at me, witness?! In case you haven’t noticed, I’m trying to save your sorry flank!

SURI  
[Enraged] Then how about you stop sitting on yours, and make yourself useful for once!?

BLUEBLOOD  
[Short-Tempered] Are you really challenging my patience?!  
  
  
SURI  
[Furious] YOUR patience?! I’ve been trying to be patient ever since I got here! And I have NO TIME to be patient! I have dresses to work on!  
  
  
JUDGE  
[Bangs gavel] ORDER IN THE COURT! Witness! What you’ve just done is commit perjury! I will allow you an opportunity to clear the air. I suggest you take it, rather than argue with the prosecution! Now, why would you lie to this court?  
  
  
SURI  
[Irritated] Maybe if you would all just be quiet for one moment, I can explain.

PHOENIX  
[Confused] Explain?  
  
  
SURI  
[Very direct and to the point] Let’s cut to the chase, shall we? You’re trying to say that I stole the fabric and killed that costume designer, correct?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
[Hesitant] That’s right… [Concerned] (*Uh oh. Why do I have a bad feeling about what she’s going to say?*)  
  
  
SURI  
If that’s the case, then why wouldn’t I have just left the theatre after stealing it? I had no reason to stick around and murder Overall, correct?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
But, what if he caught you trying to escape? You’d naturally want to stop him from catching you.  
  
SURI  
Stop him, perhaps, but there are several ways to do that without killing him, m’kay?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Ngh! [Unnerved] W-Well, perhaps you had some sort of hidden connection to the victim that we don’t know about yet!  
  
  
SURI  
In that case, Your Honor, I would like to testify regarding my “connection” to this pony: Overall Concept.  
  
  
JUDGE  
O-Okay.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Angry] W-what are you doing, witness? *I’m* supposed to be the one to call for things like that!

SURI  
[Enraged] Then how about you actually do your job instead of waiting for me to do it for you!? Maybe if you were actually competent at your job, I wouldn’t be standing here, having my name dragged through the mud and my patience tested because of this human attorney’s endless questioning! If you want something done right, you do it yourself. [Frustrated] I can never rely on others to do work for me anymore. Like I always say, it’s everypony for themselves in the big city.

PHOENIX  
...

JUDGE  
Well then, witness. Please testify to the court about your connection to the victim.

**WITNESS TESTIMONY**

**My Connection to the Victim**

*I admit, I wasn’t part of the audience.*

*I noticed that the tickets were sold out, so I figured I’d come in the back door.*

*The reason I came to the theatre was to visit Coco Pommel, and nothing else.*

*It was then that I first met Overall Concept.*

*After my visit, I left the theatre - I had no reason to kill the victim.*

JUDGE  
So is that all you have to say, witness?

SURI  
What else can I say? That’s all that happened.

TWILIGHT  
It’s quite a short testimony for us to dissect.

PHOENIX  
Then all I need to do is press for more information. She’s bound to reveal something.

JUDGE  
Very well, Mr. Wright. Please begin your cross-examination.

**CROSS EXAMINATION**

**My Connection to the Victim**

*I admit, I wasn’t part of the audience that night.*

PHOENIX  
***HOLD IT****!* You acknowledge that you willingly trespassed the theatre?

SURI  
Yes, but it wasn’t as if I was going to harm somepony. Besides, it’s not like any of you haven’t ever trespassed before.

PHOENIX  
*(There’s a big difference between a cattle ranch and a big-city theatre, y’know.)* Were you planning on buying a ticket?

SURI  
I planned to, but…

*I noticed that the tickets were sold out, so I figured I’d come in the back door.*

PHOENIX  
***HOLD IT****!* Were there no other entrances in the theatre?

SURI  
The only one I knew was the back door.

PHOENIX  
And there were no ponies guarding the back door?

SURI  
I’m pretty sure I wouldn’t be in this mess if there were guards in the back to stop me, wouldn’t you say?

PHOENIX  
Point taken. So what did you do once you went inside?

*I only visited the theatre to visit Coco Pommel, and nothing else.*

PHOENIX  
***HOLD IT****!* Why did you want to visit Miss Pommel?

SURI  
She invited me to come over.

PHOENIX  
So you were a guest?

SURI  
Yes. I actually went there because Coco gave me a letter that day, to come to the theatre, near the end of the play.

PHOENIX  
*(A letter? Coco didn’t mention anything about a letter to Suri. This has got to be another lie.)* Do you still have this letter, by any chance?

SURI  
!? [Stuttering] N-Not with me, but...

PHOENIX  
*(Hm. She hesitated. So she probably* ***was*** *lying.)* [Probing] Then how do we know that everything you just said was the truth?

SURI  
I suppose you can’t know for certain, but you absolutely can NOT see that letter!

PHOENIX  
*(She’s really aggressive about this supposed letter, but I don’t have any proof that this letter was there or not. Guess I’ll come back to this when the time comes.)* So, what did you do after you arrived at the theatre?  
  
  
SURI  
I talked with Coco for a bit, and...  
  
  
*It was then that I first met Overall Concept.*PHOENIX  
***HOLD IT!*** You had never met the victim before that point?  
  
  
SURI  
No, but I’ve heard of him. I mean, who hasn’t? He earned his fame a few years ago in the same fashion contest I’m participating in. [Sarcastic] Something I’d like to get back to working on.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
*(That checks out with what Blueblood said earlier.)* Did you talk to him at all?

SURI  
No, he was too consumed by his work - he was busy with a sheet of gorgeous fabric at the time.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
I see, and what did you do after your visit with Coco?

*After my visit, I left the theatre - I had no reason to kill the victim.*

PHOENIX  
***HOLD IT!*** You DID have a reason! You went to steal the fabric!

SURI  
Even if I did, which I didn’t by the way, I wouldn’t have needed to kill Mr. Concept in order to get away with it.

PHOENIX  
But he was chasing you. You had to get him off your tail somehow.

SURI  
I would think that *hanging somepony* would be considered a bit extreme if all I wanted to do was get him to stop chasing me, am I right?

PHOENIX  
Err…  
  
  
JUDGE  
Mr. Wright, do you have any evidence to disprove Miss Polomare’s claims about having no motive to kill the victim?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
*(Ugh! What should I do? I don’t have anything that shows a connection between Suri and Overall, and I can’t deny the fact that murdering him to get away with theft is too extreme, especially since we know that the victim was knocked unconscious before he died.)* Hey, Twilight. Any ideas?  
  
TWILIGHT  
…  
  
  
PHOENIX  
[Nervously] Twilight?  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
[Distracted] Huh? Oh, sorry. What were you asking me?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Suri’s motive for killing Overall. As much as I hate to say it, I can’t help but think that she wouldn’t kill him if she could’ve made a clean getaway.  
TWILIGHT  
[Pensive] Hmm, maybe she didn’t have a motive to kill Overall after all, then. Perhaps her motive for murder is actually related to someone else instead.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Oh! Good thinking, Twilight.  
  
  
JUDGE  
Well, Mr. Wright? Do you have an answer?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Your Honor, the defense is willing to concede that the witness did not have a direct motive to kill the victim.  
  
  
SURI  
[Conceited] You see? So you finally acknowledge that I’m innocent.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Not quite. You didn’t have a motive to kill the victim, but you *did* have a motive to hurt someone else!

JUDGE  
M-Mr. Wright! Are you suggesting that there were *two* victims that night!?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Indeed, I am, Your Honor.  
  
  
SURI  
***SHUT UP!*** What nonsense is this? There was only one victim at the theatre that night: Overall Concept!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Your Honor, I would like the witness to add that last statement to her testimony.  
  
  
SURI  
[Astonished] Wh-what!?  
  
  
JUDGE  
Hmm...I’m not sure how this will help, but I will follow along. Witness, please add that last statement to testimony.

SURI  
[Frustrated] Rrrgh!  
  
  
*There was only one victim at the theatre that night: Overall Concept!*

PHOENIX  
***OBJECTION!*** Only one victim, huh? It seems you’ve forgotten about someone else who ended up as a victim in this case.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
What are you blathering on about, attorney? Overall Concept was the only pony who was killed at the theatre that night!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
But that doesn’t mean he was the *only* victim!

SURI  
Quit wasting my time, and just say what you want to say, m’kay!?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Very well. It’s true Overall Concept was the one murdered. But being murdered isn’t a requirement in order to be a victim.

JUDGE  
[Confused] I’m just as confused as everyone else. Could you please explain, Mr Wright?

PHOENIX  
For example, someone being the victim of assault. And while the victim *was* assaulted before his death, someone *else* was also attacked at the crime scene...Coco Pommel!

JUDGE  
Miss Pommel? You mean with that stain on her mane?

PHOENIX  
Yes, that’s exactly what I’m saying.

BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** So what does that prove? It doesn’t prove that the witness was the one who caused that mark on her mane!

PHOENIX  
***OBJECTION!*** While it’s not exactly proof that she was the one who attacked Miss Pommel, it *would* establish her motive for murdering Overall.

BLUEBLOOD  
Her motive?

PHOENIX  
Think about it. After Miss Polomare was able to knock Overall down, all she needed to do was run away. As she said herself, she never knew the victim. Leaving her with no reason to commit murder.

SURI  
[Relieved] Finally, you understand! I told you I wouldn’t want to do something like kill him!

PHOENIX  
But then somepony else gave you a reason.

JUDGE  
What’s this, now?

SURI  
[Irritated] What do you mean?

PHOENIX  
You know who Coco Pommel is, correct?

SURI  
[Disbelief] Is this a joke? I’ve already mentioned I do!

PHOENIX  
And what was your past relationship with her, again?

SURI  
[Nervously] Well… I…   
  
  
PHOENIX  
Before you say anything, I should warn you that both Rarity and Coco are listening, and I’m sure they’d be willing to testify to the truth, if the need arises.  
  
  
SURI  
Grrr...

BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** What does Miss Polomare’s and Miss Pommel’s past relationship have to do with any of this?

PHOENIX  
I’ll gladly explain. When I spoke to Miss Pommel and Rarity, they had some *very* negative things to say about Miss Polomare.

SURI  
[Nervous] Errr…!

PHOENIX  
In another fashion contest that both Rarity and Suri Polomare had entered, Miss Polomare stole some of Rarity’s own special fabric to make dresses with, and took all of the credit. Yet, it wasn’t even the witness who made the dresses. Coco made them!

JUDGE  
[Shocked] What?!

SURI  
…..

PHOENIX  
But that’s not all. At the end of the contest, she lied to Rarity by saying that she had lost, and made Coco lie to her as well. In response to her dishonesty, Coco quit as Miss Polomare’s pupil.

JUDGE  
You’re saying that this witness has a history of lying and cheating?!

SURI  
So what? Even if I did any of that, how does this have anything to do with this case?

PHOENIX  
It’s actually got everything to do with it.

JUDGE  
Really?

PHOENIX  
Now that we know of their history together, let’s bring it back to the current incident. Miss Polomare could’ve just knocked out Overall Concept and left with the special fabric. But a certain former pupil was right behind him.

JUDGE  
Yes, that would be Miss Pommel… Oh!

PHOENIX  
With Coco Pommel in the picture, it changes everything. I think anyone would have some feeling of animosity towards someone who called you out as a liar and a cheat in such a big contest, am I right?

SURI  
Hrrmm….!

PHOENIX  
Maybe the feeling was so deep-seated that you would do ANYTHING to get back at them. Maybe even… frame them for murder?

JUDGE  
Wh--  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Wh--  
  
  
JUDGE & BLUEBLOOD  
WHAAAAAAAAAT!?!?  
  
  
***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***  
  
  
JUDGE  
Order! ORDER! Mr. Wright, explain what you mean at once!  
  
  
SURI  
…

PHOENIX  
Your Honor, the witness’s motive in this case is not actually tied to the victim at all. Her motive...was revenge against her former pupil...Coco Pommel!  
  
  
JUDGE  
Y-You’re saying that the witness killed someone...simply to frame another for their death?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Exactly. Here’s how I think things played out: Miss Polomare was originally planning on just stealing the fabric and escaping. After she knocked Overall out, she was about to make her exit, but then Coco showed up right behind the victim. After knocking her out too, Miss Polomare realized that she was in the perfect position to get revenge on the pony who had caused her such grave humiliation. That’s right! She hanged Overall just to get her revenge on Coco Pommel!  
  
  
JUDGE  
…

BLUEBLOOD  
…

TWILIGHT  
…  
  
  
PHOENIX  
…  
  
  
SURI  
Heheheh...  
  
JUDGE  
Hmm? Who was that?  
  
  
SURI  
Hahaha...hehehehe….HAHAHAHAHHA!  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
W-Witness!?  
  
  
SURI  
***SHUT UP!*** I’VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS FARCE OF A TRIAL!  
  
  
JUDGE  
!?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
!?  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
!?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
…  
  
  
SURI  
[Vehemently] Listen to you all! *This* is what Equestria is depending on as its means of serving justice!? This court is an absolute farce!  
  
  
JUDGE  
[Placate] N-Now, calm down witness--  
  
  
SURI  
[Livid] Silence, you senile old fool!

JUDGE  
[Insulted] Excuse me!? Senile!?  
  
  
SURI  
Yes, a senile, old fool! You’re the one who’s supposed to be mediating this trial, correct!? Then why haven’t you put an end to that human lawyer’s baseless slandering against me!?

JUDGE  
[Stuttering] Well, he has made some very good--  
  
  
SURI  
***SHUT UP!*** See, that’s exactly what I’m talking about! Even though he has no evidence to support his claims, you just let him prattle on anyway! And you…!  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Scared] M-Me?  
  
  
SURI  
You’re supposed to be protecting me, are you not!?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Scared] But...you said you wanted to…  
  
  
SURI  
***SHUT UP!*** It’s not your job to stand there and complain! It’s to prosecute that little traitor over there, m‘kay?! So why don’t you get started by debunking this lawyer’s theory!?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Stuttering] Well...uh…  
  
  
SURI  
[Livid] Ugh! Do I have to do EVERYTHING myself!? Absolutely worthless! Ugh, it seems as if it’s not only everypony for themselves in the big city - it’s everypony for themselves no matter WHERE you are!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
[Carefully] Witness…  
  
  
SURI  
WHAT!?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
You’re saying that my theory is completely false? You didn’t kill the victim, *or* frame Miss Pommel for his death?  
  
  
SURI  
Of course not!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
In that case, I’d like you to testify to the full truth of what you did at the theatre that night!  
  
  
SURI  
RGH! FINE! Since neither the judge nor the prosecution will help me, I suppose I have to do this myself.  
  
  
JUDGE  
Very well, witness. Please tes--

SURI  
***SHUT UP!*** I know what I need to do. Now sit back and listen so the truth doesn’t escape those worn-out ears of yours.  
  
  
JUDGE  
[Timid] Y-Yes, ma’am.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
[Determined] *(Seems as if we’re finally approaching the end of our little play here. Time to make-it or break-it!)*

**WITNESS TESTIMONY**

**Meeting with Coco**

*I met with Coco Pommel after receiving a letter from her.*

*After our meeting, I left the room, only to have Overall start chasing me.*

*I ran up to the catwalk hoping to outrun him.*

*Suddenly I heard a thud, and I noticed that Overall was on the ground, and the fabric fell out of his mouth.*

*I saw Coco come from behind, grab the roll of fabric, and hit him over the head.*

*She then took his body, wrapped a noose around his neck, and dropped him from the ledge.*

*Coco told me to unwrap the fabric from the roll, and leave the building. And I begrudgingly obeyed.*

JUDGE  
You- you saw Miss Coco murder Mr. Concept?!

SURI  
Yes, I am a witness to the actual crime.

BLUEBLOOD  
Why did you not mention this to me before?! This is crucial information!

SURI  
Coco told me to keep this a secret. It was *her* idea after all.

JUDGE  
But if this testimony is the truth, then that means…you were an accomplice!

SURI  
It’s not as if I wanted to do this! Coco told me to keep quiet about it!

PHOENIX  
I find that very hard to believe! [Incredulous] You honestly think this sudden revelation that Coco somehow forced you to cooperate with her will convince anyone?

SURI  
Look, I saw what I saw! And I *had* to obey because I was afraid that I would be her next victim, m’kay?!

TWILIGHT  
She is trying so hard to frame Coco for all this.

PHOENIX  
All we gotta do is prove that she didn’t do it. And I think there are plenty of things that she didn’t take into account. We just need to show them.

**CROSS EXAMINATION**

**Meeting with Coco**

*I met with Coco Pommel after receiving a letter from her.*

PHOENIX  
***HOLD IT!*** What time did you receive this letter?

SURI  
[Prompt] Well, I found it under my door when I got back to my apartment - it was probably around 4:00 in the afternoon.

PHOENIX  
Hm!? *(That’s odd. I thought she was lying about this letter earlier, but she answered rather quickly there.)* And what time did you go to the theater?

SURI  
Well, I knew the play started at 7:00, and lasted about 2 hours, so I made sure to arrive at the theater around 8:45.

PHOENIX  
*(According to the autopsy report, the time of death was between 8:30 and 9:00. This lines up perfectly!)* What did you do once you were there?

SURI  
I met up with Coco in the dressing room. She said she just wanted to catch up after not talking for a while. She and her friend, Overall Concept, were just finishing up coating a sheet of fabric with fluorescent paint. I even accidentally touched some of the wet paint when I went to feel the fabric - Overall scolded me for doing so.

PHOENIX  
*(That mostly lines up with what Coco remembers. Is that a lucky guess, or did she actually visit her?)* Did you do anything else during your visit?

SURI  
Nothing much really. As soon as they were done with coating the fabric in paint, Coco left the room for a moment to wash her hooves. There was really nothing left for me to talk about, so I just made my leave, as I did have to wash my hooves as well. However, I suddenly heard some kind of… commotion.

*After our meeting, I left the room, only to have Overall start chasing me.*

PHOENIX  
***HOLD IT!*** Overall just started chasing you?

SURI  
It was so out of nowhere! He was holding a fabric roll in his mouth, and he had a very angry look on his face! I think you’d freak out too if a stallion like that just started running towards you!

PHOENIX  
[Frustrated] *(Can you stop trying to turn it around on me?)* [Neutral] About this fabric roll, was it bare?

SURI  
No, it had the fabric Coco and he had just finished working on wrapped around it. My best guess is that he was rolling up the fabric, and then something disturbed him, so he ran out of the dressing room with it.  
PHOENIX  
[Doubtful] *(The victim rolled up the sheet of fabric while it was still wet? I don’t buy it...)* [Neutral] So how did you react to the situation?

*I ran up to the catwalk hoping to outrun him.*

PHOENIX  
HOLD IT! Couldn’t you have just gone straight for the back door?

SURI  
I could’ve, but I saw Coco Pommel on the other side of the backstage area, and I didn’t want to crash into her. So I went up to the catwalk instead.

PHOENIX  
You saw Miss Pommel?

SURI  
For a brief moment, yes. She looked very surprised, as well.

PHOENIX  
But wouldn’t Playwright have been able to see you going up to the catwalk too?

BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** You should know the answer to that by now, human. Playwright’s testimony stated that he didn’t see Miss Polomare go up to the catwalk when he saw the chase. In fact, it was YOU who suggested that she was far ahead enough that Playwright might’ve missed her.

PHOENIX  
*(He’s right, it* ***was*** *me who pointed that out. If anything, this at least confirms my suggestion. I just hope the rest of her testimony can line up with my theory.)* So what did you do once you reached the top?

SURI  
I was correct in thinking that going up to the catwalk would slow him down.

JUDGE  
What do you mean by that, witness?

*Suddenly I heard a thud, and I noticed that Overall was on the ground, and the fabric fell out of his mouth.*

PHOENIX  
HOLD IT! He tripped?

SURI  
Yes. And based on the sound of the “clang” he made, he must’ve tripped hard.

PHOENIX  
*(Coco and Playwright both mentioned something about hearing a clang as well. But would the victim tripping really make such a loud noise?)* Where did the fabric roll, er, well, *roll* to after he dropped it?

SURI  
Nowhere, really. It just landed right in front of him.

PHOENIX  
Did you keep running after he tripped?

SURI  
I was going to, originally, but then I saw something quite unsettling.

*I saw Coco come from behind, grab the roll of fabric, and hit him over the head.*

PHOENIX  
***OBJECTION!*** Miss Polomare, that statement contains a glaring issue.

SURI  
Glaring?

JUDGE  
Care to explain, Mr. Wright?

PHOENIX  
Certainly. The witness claims that she saw Coco take the fabric roll and hit Overall on the head with it.

BLUEBLOOD  
I fail to see the problem with that statement.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Well, if you recall, Coco’s hooves didn’t have a trace of paint on them. If the fabric was wet enough to cover Miss Polomare’s hooves in paint, then it should’ve also covered Coco’s when she grabbed it.

BLUEBLOOD  
Hmph! It’s a fairly simple explanation, human! Remember that this paint could’ve been washed in the rain. Since this witness stated that Miss Pommel gave the fabric to her and left the theatre with it, she didn’t need to hide the fabric herself, which means she wouldn’t have needed to step outside completely - just far enough out that she could get her hooves wet. You see? This was all part of the defendant's plan to frame Miss Polomare for the crime!

PHOENIX  
In that case, how do you plan to explain away these other two inconsistencies?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Nervously] I-inconsistencies?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Indeed. They arise from a detail in the autopsy report. Namely, the areas where the fabric roll touched the victim.

BLUEBLOOD  
What’s wrong with that? The autopsy stated that there was a bruise on the back of the head, and if Miss Pommel came from behind, it would naturally be the area where she would strike him.

PHOENIX  
It’s not what’s been left behind on Overall’s body that’s the problem, it’s what *wasn’t* left behind.

BLUEBLOOD  
Hm? What do you mean?

PHOENIX  
Have you forgotten already? That fabric had just been coated with fluorescent paint, and it was still wet at the time of the crime. If Overall was really holding it with his mouth, there would’ve been traces of the paint left over *in* his mouth!

BLUEBLOOD  
Perhaps the paint was washed away by his saliva, then.

PHOENIX  
Even if that were somehow the case, it wouldn’t matter, because there was another spot where the paint COULDN’T have been washed away.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Confused] Couldn’t? … [Realizing] ACK! NO!

PHOENIX  
If Overall was hit in the back of the head with the wet fabric on the fabric roll...then some of the paint would’ve been discovered there!!!  
  
  
***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble...***

JUDGE  
[Confused] What? What’s happening? Someone enlighten me so that I can be shocked too!

PHOENIX  
Your Honor! The autopsy report states that no other substances or residues were found on the victim’s body aside from the glitter on his forehooves. We also now know, thanks to the previous testimony, that the special fabric was *indeed* wrapped around the fabric roll at the time of the murder, and it was most definitely *still* wet.

JUDGE  
Oh...OH!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Based on all of the evidence and testimony presented up to this point, it is *impossible* for the victim to have been hit in the head with that fabric roll!  
  
  
SURI  
WH-WHAAAT!?

***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***

BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** Then the only other explanation is the roll must’ve been empty this whole time! It would explain why there were no stains on him!

PHOENIX  
***OBJECTION!*** Unfortunately, Prince Blueblood, that *cannot* be the case. A torn piece of the fabric was found on the stage, indicating that the fabric *must* have gone up the catwalk at some point. And even if we were to ignore that, the witness herself *just* claimed that the fabric was on the roll when it was brought up!

BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** Then that must mean that the defendant unwrapped the fabric from the roll as soon as she got up there, and *then* hit Overall with it.

PHOENIX  
***OBJECTION!*** Unless you were a unicorn, unwrapping the roll would’ve taken far too much time, and Overall would’ve managed to escape without being attacked. No matter what way you try to interpret it, it’s impossible for Coco, or anyone else, to have used the fabric roll to hit the victim!

BLUEBLOOD  
[Livid] Grgh! GRAAAAAAH!

JUDGE  
So, what WAS the fabric roll used for then, Mr. Wright?

PHOENIX  
It’s become apparent that Suri Polomare was the only one who could’ve brought the fabric up to the catwalk.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
And why is that?

PHOENIX  
Overall couldn’t have done so without getting paint on himself, and Coco couldn’t have done it without being seen by Playwright, so there’s only one pony left. Process of elimination. Right, Prince Blueblood?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Rrrrgh!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
So, Miss Polomare, do you deny that you were the one who carried the fabric roll up the catwalk?  
  
  
SURI  
…  
  
  
PHOENIX  
There’s no one else who could have done it, so you might as well--

SURI  
[Blunt] … So what if I did?

PHOENIX  
Huh?

SURI  
[Harsh] Listen here, human. Maybe I *did* steal the fabric, maybe I *did* attack Coco Pommel. But here’s the thing… this proves NOTHING!

PHOENIX  
[Unsure] W-what do you mean, “proves nothing?”  
  
  
SURI  
You’re saying that I knocked both the victim *and* Coco Pommel out with that fabric roll, right? Well, how exactly did I manage to not leave any traces of paint on the victim myself then? Hmm? You’re claiming that Coco couldn’t have hit the victim with the roll because she would’ve left paint on him. That same reasoning applies to me, does it not?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
That is indeed true, but if you really did go to the theatre to steal the fabric, it’s possible that you might have prepared a weapon of your own to fend off anyone that would try to stop you.  
  
  
SURI  
It’s possible!? HA! [Provoking] Well, then why don’t you go ahead and prove that “possibility.” I can say for certain that I did not bring a single thing to the theatre, other than what I have on right now. So go ahead - prove the existence of this “other weapon” if you can!  
  
  
JUDGE  
Well, Mr. Wright? Can you prove the existence of a different weapon the witness could’ve used to knock out the victim?

PHOENIX  
Uh… *(Are you kidding me? How am I supposed to do that!? I’ve got no leads to go off of! It could be anything!)*  
  
  
SURI  
Hmph. Admit it, you have nothing, filthy human. Your Honor?  
  
  
JUDGE  
Yes, Miss Polomare?  
  
  
SURI  
I request an escort to take me back to my apartment, and hopefully we can all put this travesty behind us.

JUDGE  
I’m afraid you will have to be brought in for questioning, before that. You were an accomplice to the defendant, after all. But I’m sure the police can arrange some form of transportation after that.  
  
  
SURI  
Hmph. Whatever. It’s still better than being charged for murder.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
*(NO! If I don’t think of something now, she’s going to get away!)*  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
[Urgent] Phoenix!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
[Panicking] Twilight, there’s nothing! I don’t know what she could’ve used to knock the victim out!  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
Calm down. There’s got to be something we’ve overlooked.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
[Panicking] How can I calm down now!? The real killer is about to get away!  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
Phoenix! Follow my lead.  
  
  
[Twilight performs her breathing exercise, as taught to her by Cadence].  
  
  
PHOENIX  
[Confused] Wh-What was that?

TWILIGHT  
It’s a breathing exercise my sister-in-law taught me. She’s a princess too, and she taught me this to prepare me for the stressful situations I would have to face as a princess myself.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
I see....wait, your sister-in-law? You have a sibling!? And there’s another princess?!  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
That’s not important right now, Phoenix!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Uh, right, sorry…  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
Anyway, we need to think quickly here. Suri must have brought something to the theatre that night to use as a weapon.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
But the only thing she’ll admit to having brought with her are the clothes she has on now.  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
...Then let’s see if we can use those!  
PHOENIX  
Are you nuts!? How could she have knocked someone out with an article of clothing!?  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
We’ll think about that later; this is the only lead we have left right now!  
  
  
JUDGE  
Well then, if there are no further objections, I believe it is time we conclude the cross-examination of this witness.  
  
  
SURI  
Hmph. About time, too.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
***OBJECTION!***  
  
  
SURI  
!?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
!?  
  
  
JUDGE  
!?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Your Honor, the defense would like to present evidence at this time.  
  
  
JUDGE  
Evidence?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Yes, evidence that shows exactly what this witness used to attack Overall Concept on the night of the murder.  
  
SURI  
***SHUT UP!*** Impossible! You can’t possibly have anything!  
  
  
JUDGE  
Mr. Wright, please explain what you mean.  
  
  
[Phoenix performs the same breathing exercise Twilight showed him].

PHOENIX  
*(I’ve got to think fast here. No, not just fast - crazy. Miss Polomare must have somehow knocked Overall out with just a piece of clothing. She’s not wearing anything that would be heavy enough to cause such a large bruise on the back of his head, though. So, time to think outside the box. Instead of figuring out what she used on the victim, I should figure out what she did to him to cause that bruise!)*

*\*****Flashback\****

*PLAYWRIGHT  
The hard hoofsteps from them on the wooden floor were already bad enough. Mix that with the rattling catwalk, and that loud clang! That’s enough to ruin a play as it is!*

*COCO  
On the way up the stairs, I heard a loud clang noise, and I trotted as quickly as I could to see what happened.  
  
[Catwalk background.]*  
  
  
PHOENIX  
*(Wait a minute… Could it be?)*

***\*Flashback ends\****

JUDGE  
[Bangs gavel] Time’s up, Mr. Wright. The witness has made some valid points in her defense. Do you have anything to refute them?

PHOENIX  
I do, Your Honor.

SURI  
[Exasperated] I told you before! I didn’t bring a weapon to the theatre!

PHOENIX  
Oh, I believe you. You didn’t “bring” anything of the sort.

JUDGE  
[Confused] But Mr. Wright, wasn’t your whole theory based on her having another weapon?

PHOENIX  
It was, and it still is.

BLUEBLOOD  
Explain, human.

PHOENIX  
What if this other weapon…wasn’t a conventional one?

BLUEBLOOD  
[Frustrated] Meaning?!

PHOENIX  
The defense is of the opinion that we’ve been going about this the wrong way. Recall that Playwright mentioned there was a loud clang during the chase.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Exasperated] At least *try* and keep up, attorney. That was when the victim tripped. We just established this in Miss Polomare’s testimony!

PHOENIX  
I beg to differ.

BLUEBLOOD  
Hm?

PHOENIX  
I think that this noise was really the moment when Overall was knocked unconscious.

BLUEBLOOD  
And how would that be?! You’ve admitted that she had no weapon with her! What else could have possibly made that clang? It would’ve had to have been something metal!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
I completely agree.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Your Honor, the defense proposes that the witness, Suri Polomare, knocked the victim out...using the catwalk itself!  
  
  
JUDGE  
Wh- WHAAAAT!?  
  
  
***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***  
  
  
SURI  
***SHUT UP!*** Do you hear yourself, human!? How in the world would I have been able to use a catwalk as a weapon!?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Simple, all you had to do was throw the victim against it. If he hit the back of his head against the railing hard enough, I’m sure that would’ve been able to knock him out cold.  
  
  
SURI  
[Stuttering] Th-that’s absolutely ridiculous!  
BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** And impossible, might I add! The witness is a mare of rather petite stature! Are you suggesting that she managed to overpower a fully grown stallion with nothing but her hooves?! Then, after doing so, throw him hard enough against the railing to knock him unconscious!?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Not quite.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Huh!?

PHOENIX  
You’re right that she used the catwalk railing to knock the victim out, but she didn’t do so with her bare hooves.  
  
  
JUDGE  
Err...would this be related to that unconventional weapon you mentioned earlier, by any chance?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Exactly, Your Honor. In fact, she’s kindly brought it into court for all to see!  
  
  
SURI  
I’ve what!?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Your Honor, this is the weapon Miss Polomare used to overpower the victim! ***TAKE THAT***!  
  
  
JUDGE  
[Disbelief] You-You’re saying she used…her scarf!?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Recall what this witness said just moments ago:  
  
  
*I can say for certain that I did not bring a single thing to the theatre, other than what I have on right now.*JUDGE  
Nothing other than what she has on… AH!  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
NO!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
If that is the truth, then the weapon she used should be clear as day! After making it to the catwalk, she took her scarf off her neck, and waited for the victim to ascend, as well. Once he did, she quickly wrapped her scarf around the unsuspecting Overall’s neck. The two no doubt struggled as he tried to free himself, but as his strength waned, Miss Polomare managed to knock out Overall by throwing him against the catwalk’s railing!  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** Are you listening to yourself, human!? If she had done that, she would’ve left marks around the victim’s neck!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Marks that I’m sure weren’t just seen as having been caused by the rope, am I right?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Wh-!? You—  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Then, just as Miss Polomare had finished incapacitating Overall, who should show up but Coco? After coming across a scene like that, she would’ve been too on guard for the witness to use her scarf again, so instead, she used the fabric roll she had with her...to knock Coco out as well!

SURI  
***SHUT UP!*** [Disbelief and Outrage] You…what are you even talking about!? I did no such thing! Your Honor, please, throw this lawyer out of this courtroom now!  
  
  
JUDGE  
...I’m sorry, Miss Polomare, but I cannot.  
  
  
SURI  
Wh-Why is that!?  
  
  
JUDGE  
Mr. Wright’s theory may seem far-fetched, but I cannot deny that what he has proposed is indeed a possibility. Prince Blueblood, any thoughts?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Stuttering] I...uh...well…  
  
  
JUDGE  
Hmm...oh, dear. We’ve reached an impasse, it seems. I suppose I have no choice but to suspend proceedings of this trial for another--  
  
  
SURI  
***HOLD IT***! [Desperate] Your Honor, I-I have evidence to prove my innocence!  
  
  
JUDGE  
You do? Well, let’s hear it then!

PHOENIX  
…  
  
  
SURI  
Very well. Mr. Wright, you’re saying that I used my scarf to strangle the victim on the night of the murder, correct?  
  
PHOENIX  
Well, not exactly to death, or anything. But something like that, yes.  
  
  
SURI  
In that case, there should be paint marks on my scarf, right? I clearly wasn’t aware of the paint that had stained my hooves, since I left behind a pretty noticeable trail at the scene. So obviously, that means I wouldn’t have washed it to get rid of those marks, correct?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
I suppose so.  
  
  
SURI  
[Challenging] Then go ahead. I give you permission to test my scarf for traces of paint. I promise you, you won’t find anything on it.  
  
  
JUDGE  
Well, Mr. Wright? Do you wish to request that we test Miss Polomare’s scarf?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
… *(This feels like a trap. There’s no doubt that she was unaware of the paint that night. If she* ***had*** *known, she wouldn’t have left such a clear trail behind. In that case, the fact that she so eagerly gave up her scarf for testing can only mean that she’s certain that whatever paint she left on it has been washed off. So then, the answer should be clear…)* No, Your Honor.  
  
  
SURI  
What?

JUDGE  
Why not, Mr. Wright? This could be your only chance to prove your case.

PHOENIX  
That would be because there’s no way that scarf has any paint left on it.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
And how are you so sure of that?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Because last night, at the time of the murder...it was raining outside!  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Ghk!  
  
  
SURI  
Rgh! NO!  
  
  
***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble....***  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Even though you were completely unaware of the fluorescent paint that night, that doesn’t matter in the slightest! Any traces of paint that remained on your hooves or scarf would’ve undoubtedly been washed away in the rain as you made your way back home!  
  
  
SURI  
[Furious] YOU...INSOLENT...HUMAAAAANN!!!  
  
  
JUDGE  
ORDER! ORDER! Witness, restrain yourse--

SURI  
***SHUT UP!*** You stay out of this! This is between me, and that lawyer over there!

JUDGE  
[Scared] O-of course, ma’am!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
[Sarcastic] *(Thanks for nothing, Your Honor.)*  
  
  
SURI  
So, human, since you refuse to let me try and prove my own innocence, how about *you* show some evidence that proves *my* guilt?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Your...guilt?  
  
  
SURI  
Everything you’ve said so far is all based on circumstantial evidence! The scarf, the fabric, the clang... you’ve woven a fascinating yarn, but can you prove it to be true!?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
(*She’s right. At the moment, this is all just circumstantial… just conjecture. But that’s about to change very soon...*)  
  
  
SURI  
If you can't prove I killed Overall, and framed Coco for it, then cease your baseless accusations, M’KAY!?  
  
  
JUDGE  
Well, Mr. Wright? *Do* you have anything that conclusively proves that this witness was the one who killed Overall Concept, and then framed the defendant, as an act of revenge?

PHOENIX  
*(This is it. The final piece to the puzzle. If I can’t prove Suri’s guilt now, the trial will have to resume tomorrow. Who knows what that could mean for us...)*

TWILIGHT  
[Nervous] Do you know what we can use now, Phoenix? I don’t think any of the evidence is conclusive enough to show that Suri had anything to do with the murder or the framing.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Perhaps not right now, but we may just see it in a moment.  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
[Confused] What do you mean?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Suri made one big mistake that night - she got her hooves covered in fluorescent paint. Then, whatever she touched *also* got contaminated in that paint, and unfortunately for her, she just had to go the extra mile when framing Coco for the crime.  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
!? Oh, I see now!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
[Confident] All that’s left is to see if we can make it stick!  
  
  
JUDGE  
I won’t ask again, Mr. Wright. Present your evidence now, if you have any, to prove that this witness is the real guilty party behind this crime.  
  
  
SURI  
[Confident] He’s got nothing. He *can’t* have anything.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
I’m afraid that’s where you’re wrong, Miss Polomare. I do have the evidence that proves you’re the guilty party, and it’s right here! ***TAKE THAT!***JUDGE  
Isn’t that...the fabric roll?  
  
SURI  
[Smug] HA! What in Equestria does that prove? There’s nothing on there to suggest that I even touched it!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
When looking at it normally, you’re right. However, we’ve yet to examine this fabric roll completely.  
  
  
SURI  
[Nervously] C-Completely?  
  
   
PHOENIX  
Your Honor, with your permission, I would like to perform one last test with the forensic flashlight. Once I shine it over this fabric roll, we’ll see once and for all...who really killed Overall Concept.  
  
  
SURI  
[Panicking] W-what!? No… NOOOO!  
  
  
***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***  
  
  
JUDGE  
Mr. Wright, I’m afraid I don’t understand! How would any traces found on that fabric roll prove who killed the victim?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
It’s simple, Your Honor. When we adjourned for recess earlier, Coco told me she had regained some of her memories.  
  
  
JUDGE  
Oh? And what did she remember?

PHOENIX  
Unfortunately, she couldn’t remember exactly what had happened on the catwalk, but she *did* remember everything after she awoke from being knocked out. This very fabric roll was resting in her hooves…hooves which had suddenly become covered in glitter, despite the fact that she had just washed them.  
  
  
JUDGE  
The fabric roll...was in her hooves!?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
ACK!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
If she is to be believed, then this means someone must have placed it there, and there’s only one pony who could’ve done that.  
  
  
SURI  
[Nervously] Errrr….  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Miss Polomare, I’m going to run this flashlight over this fabric roll. If we find your hoofprints on there, left clearly by the paint your hooves were covered in, then I’d say this whole case is SOLVED!  
  
  
SURI  
AH! NOOOO!  
  
  
[Phoenix checks the fabric roll, and finds a set of glowing hoofprints on it.]  
  
  
JUDGE  
There they are! Quick, someone analyze them!  
  
  
*30 Minutes Later*  
  
JUDGE  
Prince Blueblood, are the results back yet?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Nervously] Y-Yes, Your Honor.  
  
  
JUDGE  
And what do they show?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Reluctantly] Th-The hoofprints found on the fabric roll...match those of Suri Polomare.  
  
  
SURI  
!!!

PHOENIX  
It’s over, Suri. Now that we know you were responsible for framing Coco, that would naturally mean you were also the one who killed Overall Concept!

SURI  
Grrr… grrrrrrr!

PHOENIX  
So Suri Polomare, WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY FOR YOURSELF!?  
  
  
SURI  
Grr….grrrhh….GRRAAAAAAAAHHHHHHH!!!

***Rubble, rubble, rubble rubble…***

JUDGE  
I do believe we’ve come to the conclusion of this trial.

PHOENIX  
I agree, Your Honor.

JUDGE  
If I am to understand correctly, Miss Polomare was the only other pony at the scene of the murder, and all of the evidence points to her. Her motive was to steal a roll of the victim’s fabric for the contest she was participating in. She was caught in the process of stealing it, and retaliated against her pursuers. After they were both knocked unconscious, she hung Overall Concept in an effort to get revenge on her former pupil.

PHOENIX  
Yes, Your Honor. Everything lines up, and all the facts are in place.  
  
  
JUDGE  
Indeed. I see no room for doubt.

TWILIGHT  
[Celebrating] You did it Phoenix! You won!

PHOENIX  
[Relieved] All’s well that ends well.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Despairing] No…. no! I can’t lose! Not to this… hairless buffoon!

PHOENIX  
The truth has led us to this conclusion, Blueblood. There’s nowhere else to go from here.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Furious] Grrraaahh!  
  
  
SURI  
No! NO! No, no, no, no no! [Scared and desperate] I didn’t do it! You have to believe me! Please! [Hopeless and despairing] Somepony...help me...

JUDGE  
Now then, I believe it is time that I hand down my verdict. The court finds the defendant, Coco Pommel...  
  
  
COCO  
***HOLD IT!***

*The court reacts to the sudden HOLD IT! They quickly realized that it came from Coco, who is currently on the witness stand.*

COCO  
[Desperate] Please, hold on for a second!

PHOENIX  
[Shocked] Coco?!

BLUEBLOOD  
[Shocked] Huh?!

***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble...***

JUDGE  
[Surprised] Miss Pommel?! What are you doing?! I was about to hand down your verdict!

COCO  
[Urgent] Wait! There’s something I need to tell you! It’s important!

PHOENIX  
Something important?

JUDGE  
What is it, Miss Pommel?

COCO  
I…have an objection to the defense’s last statement!  
  
JUDGE  
Wh-  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Wh-

TWILIGHT  
Wh-  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Wh-

JUDGE, BLUEBLOOD, TWILIGHT & PHOENIX  
WHHHAAAAAATTT!?

***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***  
  
  
JUDGE  
[Bangs gavel] ORDER! ORDER IN THE COURT! Defendant, what is this all about!?  
  
  
  
COCO  
I...I remember now. I remember everything!

BLUEBLOOD  
Remember?

PHOENIX  
[Surprised] Wait, Coco! You’ve regained all of your memory?!

COCO  
Yes, all of it!

JUDGE  
What do you mean by “all of it”?!

COCO  
I can tell you in full detail about the chase! Even what happened on the catwalk!

PHOENIX  
What?!

JUDGE  
Well don’t just stand there looking adorable! Please tell the court what you mean!

COCO  
I….Admittedly I didn’t see the moment he fell. But I know for a fact that Suri…she couldn’t have been the one who pushed him down!

PHOENIX  
HUH!?

TWILIGHT  
WHAT?!

BLUEBLOOD  
THAT’S…!

JUDGE  
IMPOSSIBLE!

***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***

JUDGE  
[Bangs gavel again] Order! Order! Order in the court! Miss Pommel! Do you realize what you have just said?! By doing this, you’re incriminating yourself!

BLUEBLOOD  
[Incensed] Are you trying to make a mockery of this court?!

SURI  
[Seething] Pommel…stay out of this. This doesn’t involve *you* anymore!

COCO  
[Desperate] But you’re going to be arrested for murder if I don’t do something!

SURI  
[Frustrated] Why do you care?! You hate my guts! If anything, you should be *thrilled* about this!

COCO  
But I’m not! I can’t just sit by and watch this happen! If I don’t say anything, you’re gonna get sent to the moon!

SURI  
[Bitter and Brooding] ...Maybe it’s what I deserve for getting myself into trouble all the time...

COCO  
No, you don’t!

SURI  
!

COCO  
You keep saying that it’s everypony for themselves, but that’s just not true! I’ve learned from a great friend that you should always show generosity to others, even if they may not deserve it. So I’m going to help you...whether you want me to or not!

SURI  
…

BLUEBLOOD  
I couldn’t care less about why you’re doing this! What matters is what this means! Is this you confessing to your crime, defendant?!

COCO  
Not at all. If it’s alright, I’d like to explain what I saw on the night of the murder!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Coco, what else is there left that needs to be said? It’s been proven that Miss Polomare was behind this. [Empathetic] I understand how you must feel, but-  
  
  
COCO  
Please, Mr. Wright! I have to do this. I have to save her! I…I trust her. She would never kill anypony!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
!  
  
  
COCO  
And...you trust me, right? You told me so. So please, let me testify. Let me tell you what really happened that night!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
… All right, Coco.  
  
  
COCO  
!? Really?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
If you’re that certain of your own testimony, then I trust you. Your Honor!

JUDGE  
Y-Yes?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Please allow my client to testify. From it, we should be able to find the *real* truth of this case.

JUDGE  
Hmm...very well. Miss Pommel, please testify about what you witnessed at the night of the murder.

COCO  
Thank you, Your Honor. And you too, Mr. Wright.

SURI  
[Disbelief] Coco...  
  
  
PHOENIX  
*(We’re in uncharted waters, now. The only thing I really know...is that whatever it is Coco has to say will lead us to the truth!)*

**WITNESS TESTIMONY**

**What I Remember**

*I was returning from the restroom after washing my hooves of the paint and glitter.*

*I suddenly saw Overall running up to the catwalk, and then I quickly followed him.*

*While running up the stairs I heard a loud “clang” from above.*

*When I reached the top of the catwalk, I saw Suri looking over the edge with the special fabric in her mouth!*

*I ran to her to ask where Overall was, but then she swung the roll at my head, and I was knocked out!*

*When I came to, I looked down from the catwalk, and saw Overall hanging with a rope tied around his neck!*

*Before I could even scream, Playwright found me, and I just stood where I was until the police came.*

JUDGE  
That seems to be quite consistent with what the defense has already uncovered.

COCO  
Yes, but if you’ll let me explain further...

BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** [Frustrated] Why are we continuing with this charade!? Is this your handiwork, dirty human? Did you set this up just to rub my defeat in my face!?

PHOENIX  
Of course not. It’s our duty as keepers of the law to find the truth - the whole truth. If all you care about are your own personal victories, then I suggest you find a different occupation!

BLUEBLOOD  
Grrr! You! [Enraged] You little blue cretin! You dare disrespect me?! ME?! PRINCE BLUEBLOOD?! Nephew to Princess Celestia herself?!

PHOENIX  
[Exhausted and angry] I don’t care WHO you are! I’m here to find the truth! And if you aren’t here to do the same, then the only “experience” you’re going to get with these trials...is how to severely damage your judicial system!

BLUEBLOOD  
[Furious] YOU—

JUDGE  
[Bangs gavel] Enough! Mr Wright, please begin your cross-examination.

**CROSS EXAMINATION**

**What I Remember**

*I was returning from the restroom after washing my hooves of the paint and glitter.*

PHOENIX  
***HOLD IT***! Are you certain that you were able to wash everything off?

COCO  
Yes, I did. I knew that I was dealing with fluorescent paint, so I had to be thorough with my washing. I actually had to turn off the lights while washing my hooves to see if I got everything off.

PHOENIX  
Is it that difficult to wash off?

COCO  
As long as it’s still wet, it’s manageable. It’s not as easy when it is dry, though. That’s why I had to wash my hooves immediately.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
So...why didn’t Overall have any paint on his hooves? He was working with you, right?  
  
  
COCO  
Yeah, but he was mostly just showing me how to properly paint the fabric, so he barely touched the stuff.

PHOENIX  
I see. You also said that you were returning to the dressing room. Anything in particular that seemed off while heading back?

COCO  
Well, something like that.

*I suddenly saw Overall running up to the catwalk, and then I quickly followed him.*

PHOENIX  
***HOLD IT!*** Did you see anyone else before you saw Overall?

COCO  
No. I only saw him. Or at least, that’s all I could see when I looked.

PHOENIX  
What do you mean by that?

COCO  
[Reminiscing] While on my way back, I was listening to the play. I was really happy with how great the actors were doing, and it sounded like their best performance yet! [Serious] I only noticed that something was wrong when I heard loud hoofsteps, and that was when I looked ahead towards the dressing room. I only saw Overall sprinting out the dressing room for a brief moment.

PHOENIX  
Did you see which direction he was running to?

COCO  
He looked like he was headed towards the stage. I even called his name, hoping he would respond, but he didn’t say anything. I was really worried.

PHOENIX  
And that was when you started running after him?

COCO  
Yes, I had to find out what the problem was. When I next caught sight of him, I saw that he was near the top of the stairs to the catwalk. I was afraid he would trip because it was so dark, so I turned on the safety lights to make sure he was safe.

PHOENIX  
*(Right, she said this earlier, and that’s why the safety lights were turned on during the crime.)* So when you ran up the stairs to the catwalk, was there anything that you saw that struck you as strange?

COCO  
It’s not exactly what I saw that caught my attention, it’s what I heard.

JUDGE  
What did you hear, defendant?  
SURI  
...

*While running up the stairs I heard a loud “clang” from above.*

PHOENIX  
***HOLD IT***! How loud exactly would you say it was?

COCO  
Pretty loud, actually. I’m sure that the others who were near the stage would have heard it, too.

PHOENIX  
*(That’s right...Playwright said he heard the same thing in his testimony. I thought Miss Polomare knocked out the victim with the railing. Could it have been something else? She also mentioned it in her testimony, after all.)* How did you react to the noise?

COCO  
It startled me! It made me even more worried for Overall! I HAD to see what was going on up there!

PHOENIX  
What did you see when you got to the top?

*When I reached the top of the catwalk, I saw Suri looking over the edge with the special fabric in her mouth!*

PHOENIX  
***HOLD IT***! [Shocked] You saw Miss Polomare?!

COCO  
I recognized her the instant I saw her. I never thought I would *ever* see her again after quitting as her assistant.

PHOENIX  
Do you recall her reaction to seeing you?

COCO  
She looked very shocked. In fact, she looked just as shocked to see me as she did when she was staring over the edge of the catwalk.

PHOENIX  
Did you see her holding anything other than the fabric?

COCO  
No, all she had was the rolled-up fabric. I didn’t see anything else.

PHOENIX  
What about her scarf? Did you see it?  
  
  
COCO  
I did, and it was securely wrapped around her neck. There’s no way she could’ve taken it off and put it back on so quickly, I’m sure of it!

PHOENIX  
And just to confirm, the special fabric was rolled up, and used to knock you unconscious?

COCO  
Yes, it was rolled up.

BLUEBLOOD  
This has already been established. [Arrogant] You’re just poking holes into your own theory now.  
  
  
PHOENIX  
[Ignoring Blueblood] ...What about Overall? Where was *he*?

COCO  
Well…he wasn’t anywhere.

PHOENIX  
What do you mean?

COCO  
When I got to the top of the catwalk, all I saw was Suri. Overall was nowhere to be seen.

PHOENIX  
What?!

BLUEBLOOD  
Hm?!

JUDGE  
Huh?!

***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***

JUDGE  
Miss Pommel! Are you suggesting that Overall just… disappeared?!

COCO  
I don’t know! I was confused too! But that’s what I saw! He wasn’t on the catwalk at all!

PHOENIX  
*(Well, this throws a wrench into my theory. If Overall wasn’t on the catwalk by the time Coco made it up there, that could only mean…)* [Nervously] You don’t think that the victim had already been hanged by the time you got there, do you?

COCO  
[Thinking] Um…now that you mention it, I did hear the crowd panicking when I got to the top. And I’m sure whatever Suri saw gave her that expression when she looked down. It’s possible… [Saddened] she was looking at the body.  
  
  
JUDGE  
Wh-What!? But how is that possible!?

BLUEBLOOD  
Heheh, hahahahaha.

*The court reacts to Blueblood’s laugh.*

JUDGE  
Prince Blueblood, what’s so funny?

BLUEBLOOD  
Isn’t it obvious, Your Honor? The defense has managed to disprove his own theory with his client’s testimony!  
  
JUDGE  
He...He has?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Smug and Goading] Go on, filthy human. Say it. Admit that, according to Miss Pommel’s testimony, Miss Polomare cannot possibly be the killer, and as a result, the only other one it could be is the defendant!  
  
  
JUDGE  
Well, Mr. Wright, is this true? Do you have nothing left to support your own theory?

BLUEBLOOD  
[Smug] Hmph. Watch, Your Honor. The attorney there will clearly opt to strike all of the defendant’s testimony from the record.

COCO  
[Desperate] No! Please, Mr. Wright! You have to believe me! I know it ruins the case you built, but it’s all true, I swear!

PHOENIX  
 *(Blueblood‘s right, I could easily have this testimony discarded, and go straight for a Not Guilty verdict. But Coco risked everything to bring this information to light. She must really believe that Miss Polomare is innocent. And given the testimony she’s provided so far, it certainly seems to be the case. She’s trusting me to save someone she cares about...and I am NOT about to betray that trust!)* [Neutral] Your Honor, the defense will *not* have the defendant’s testimony stricken from the record.

COCO  
…!

JUDGE  
[Surprised] Y-You won’t? But that means…

PHOENIX  
[Neutral] Yes, we are accepting the defendant’s testimony as the truth.

COCO  
[Relieved and Grateful] Oh, thank you! Thank you, Mr. Wright!

JUDGE  
Then, does that mean you have evidence to prove how Miss Polomare could’ve committed the crime under these new circumstances?

PHOENIX  
[Neutral] No, Your Honor, we do not.

JUDGE  
[Confused and Angry] What!? But wasn’t she your prime suspect for the theft, and the framing, *and* the murder!?

PHOENIX

I do still believe that she stole the fabric and framed Coco. However, I’m certain, based on Coco’s testimony, that she was not the one who killed Overall.

SURI  
…!

BLUEBLOOD  
[Smug and Goading] I see, and what, pray tell, do you think can prove your point? After all, there’s nothing to suggest that the defendant is even telling the truth here, is there?

PHOENIX  
…*(Talk about showing your hand. Blueblood’s clearly baiting me into presenting this evidence. He knows what it will prove if I do, but there’s no way to go but forward. My only hope now…lies with her! [Referring to Suri])* Your Honor, the defense would like to present a piece of evidence at this time. Evidence that will reveal the truth behind this incident once and for all.

JUDGE  
[Concerned] Are...you sure about this, Mr. Wright?

PHOENIX  
Absolutely, Your Honor. ***TAKE THAT***!

JUDGE  
I-Isn’t that...the noose used in the crime?

BLUEBLOOD  
[Arrogant] Heh…

PHOENIX  
Earlier, we determined that Miss Polomare had touched the fabric roll by finding traces of fluorescent paint on it. Now, what do you suppose we’ll find if we examined THIS with the forensic flashlight?

JUDGE  
Well, if she’s the culprit, I’d imagine there’d be traces of paint on the rope.

PHOENIX  
And if there isn’t, then that means that she’s innocent of this murder, correct?

JUDGE  
[Concerned] Yes, I suppose so, but you do know what you’re doing, Mr. Wright?

PHOENIX  
[Confident] I couldn’t be more certain, Your Honor.

JUDGE  
Very well, then please, test the rope for fluorescent paint!

[The rope is tested, and no paint is found.]

COCO  
…!

SURI  
…!

TWILIGHT  
…!

JUDGE  
There’s...there’s no paint! There’s no paint on the rope!

***Rubble, rubble, rubbble, rubble…***

BLUEBLOOD  
[Haughty] Hehehehe...HAHAHAHAHA! Foolish attorney! You’ve fallen right into my trap!

PHOENIX  
…

JUDGE  
Prince Blueblood! What do you mean?

BLUEBLOOD  
[Haughty] Your Honor, as we’ve all seen, this rope has no fluorescent paint on it, which means that Miss Polomare can *not* be the killer. In which case, the only other clue left as to the identity of the killer are the traces that *were* found on the rope.

JUDGE  
The...other traces?

BLUEBLOOD  
If you recall, Your Honor, this rope had traces of glitter found around the noose.

JUDGE  
Oh! That’s right!

PHOENIX  
…

BLUEBLOOD  
This must mean that someone who had glitter-covered hooves must have been the one to wrap the noose around the victim’s neck.

PHOENIX  
…

BLUEBLOOD  
There were only two ponies who had the opportunity to do that after the victim was knocked out, and both of them would’ve had glitter on their hooves: Miss Pommel and Miss Polomare. [Haughty] However, now that we know that there was no paint on the rope, that rules out the witness, leaving the defendant as the only possible suspect!

JUDGE  
OH! That’s right!

COCO  
[Scared] What!? No! It… It wasn’t me!

BLUEBLOOD  
Silence, you criminal! It’s impossible for you to escape your punishment, now! Isn’t that right, defense?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
…  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
***OBJECTION!*** [Desperate] But...but Coco *couldn’t* have used the fabric roll to knock the victim out! There’s no way she could be the killer!  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** Just because she couldn’t have knocked the victim out doesn’t mean she can’t be the killer.  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
[Nervous] Wh-why not?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Arrogant] Have you already forgotten what your spikey-headed friend has already demonstrated? That Miss Polomare here was the one who knocked the victim unconscious by throwing him against the catwalk railing using her scarf?  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
!? [Despairing] N-No…  
  
  
SURI  
…

BLUEBLOOD  
After incapacitating the victim, likely because she was trying to stop him from catching her after stealing the fabric, Miss Pommel showed up on the scene, and proceeded to hang the victim!  
  
  
TWILIGHT ***OBJECTION!*** [Desperate] But-But Coco had cleaned off all the glitter on her hooves before going up the catwalk! Suri even testified that Coco had gone to do so.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** However, she has not confirmed that the defendant *did*, in fact, have clean hooves when she arrived on the scene.   
  
  
SURI  
…  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
[Despairing] But...But…  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
It’s the end of the line for you, defense. Am I wrong, Mr. Wright?

PHOENIX  
… *(Alright, everything is going according to plan. Even though it’s now clear who killed the victim, I think it’s time we remove the last trace of doubt from this court’s mind!)*

JUDGE  
Well, Mr. Wright? Do you have anything that can refute the prosecution’s claim?

PHOENIX  
*I* don’t, Your Honor, but someone here does.

BLUEBLOOD  
!?

COCO  
!?

JUDGE  
A-and who would that be, Mr. Wright!?

PHOENIX  
Isn’t it obvious? The one pony who can testify for certain... exactly *when* Coco’s hooves were covered in glitter...Suri Polomare!

SURI  
[Surprised] Wh-What!?

BLUEBLOOD  
[Haughty] Ha! You honestly think she’s going to testify for you *now*!? What a joke! You just accused her of a murder she never even committed! Why in Equestria do you think she would want to help *you*!?

SURI  
…

PHOENIX  
Suri, you’ve always believed that “it’s everypony for themselves in the big city,” right?

SURI  
!?

PHOENIX  
And yet, as we’ve just seen, Coco put her own life on the line to protect you. She saved you from being charged with a murder you didn’t commit. Now, it’s *your* turn to save *her*.

SURI  
[Unsure] My...turn?

PHOENIX  
Yes. If you confess to everything you did that night, *and* everything you saw, it will prove Coco’s innocence beyond all doubt.

SURI  
[Unsure] C-Confess…

PHOENIX  
I’ve done everything I can to help Coco. And your testimony, your *confession,* is the last piece I need to completely prove her innocence. However, you *must* tell the truth this time. We aren’t going to get another shot at this.

SURI  
…

COCO  
[Accepting] Please, Suri. I...trust you. You’ll do the right thing - I know it.

SURI  
[Unsure and surprised] You...trust me?

COCO  
I do.

SURI  
…

BLUEBLOOD  
[Haughty] Enough of this melodrama - the game is up, attorney. She is not going to testify for—

SURI  
[Hesitant] Fine then, I...I confess.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Shocked] What!?

JUDGE  
What are you confessing to, witness?

SURI  
[Hesitant] I confess...to stealing the fabric and attacking Coco!

JUDGE  
You- you’re admitting that it was you?!

BLUEBLOOD  
[Seething] Witness, silence yourself! You are going to ruin my—

SURI  
***SHUT UP!*** I don’t care about your case, m’kay? I’m going to tell the whole truth of that night, whether you want me to or not.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Enraged] Grah! Will none of you treat me with the respect I deserve!? [Ranting] I am Prince Blueblood, nephew of—

JUDGE  
[Bangs gavel] Witness, I hope you realize that these are not minor offenses you are confessing to.

SURI  
I am well aware, Your Honor, but I refuse to just stand by and let Coco take the blame for this murder.

COCO  
[Touched] S-Suri!

SURI  
[Like a Tsundere] Hmph! Don’t misunderstand me. I’ve not been moved by your sentimental pleas for help. I just…I don’t want to have to owe you, or that attorney, any favors in the future.

PHOENIX  
[Wryly] *(Of course…)*

JUDGE  
Well then, witness, please proceed with your confession.

SURI  
…That night, I went to the theatre of my own volition. I was there to steal the fabric, as Mr. Wright predicted, and yes, I attacked Coco in the process.

PHOENIX  
But the fabric’s existence was only known to Coco, Overall, and Playwright, and those whom they told. How did *you* come by this knowledge?

SURI  
[Hesitant] I…can’t say.

PHOENIX  
Why not?

SURI  
Look I just can’t, okay! Don’t ask about it anymore, or I will be withdrawing my confession.

PHOENIX  
[Pulling back from the question] ...Very well. *(Although, I can’t help but be curious.)* So, what exactly happened after you entered the theatre?

SURI  
I went to the theatre through the back door, just like you said, and made my way to the dressing room. There were two ponies in there - Coco and Overall. I kept my eyes on the room and the surrounding area, waiting for an opportunity to take the fabric. After Coco left the room, I hid behind a curtain so that I would not be seen. Overall was still in there, but I figured this would be the best chance I had to steal the fabric. I waited until his back was turned, and then entered the room. I quietly picked up a wooden roll that was sitting on the table, and began rolling up the fabric that had been left out.

PHOENIX  
I see. *(But, to actually manage to sneak in and roll up the fabric... Something else must have captured Overall’s attention: something to keep him occupied long enough to allow for Suri to do what she did. I doubt she would’ve been successful otherwise. But… What could that have been?)* So, what happened next?

SURI  
I managed to roll the fabric up unnoticed, but Overall noticed me as I was leaving, and he started chasing me. I bolted for the back door, but I noticed Coco Pommel coming back to the dressing room. Before she had a chance to see me, I went straight for the catwalk, hoping that Overall would be slow climbing up so that I could escape. The lights came on as I turned the corner, but I paid them no mind and kept running. As soon as I reached the end of the catwalk, I heard a loud “clang” behind me. And when I looked back, Overall was just…gone.

PHOENIX  
That lines up with what Coco said.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Confused] But… he was just chasing you. How could he have just disappeared like that?

SURI  
I was just as lost as you are. I was happy that he wasn’t chasing me anymore, but that noise worried me. So, I went back to see what had happened. I started hearing screams of terror from the audience. With my worries growing, I looked down. And what I saw ...was Overall’s body hanging from the catwalk!

BLUEBLOOD  
[Shocked] WHAT IN THE—

JUDGE  
[Shocked] WHAT!?!

***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***

PHOENIX  
*(I knew it.)*

JUDGE  
[Bangs gavel] ORDER! ORDER I SAY! Witness! Are you saying that the victim was hanged *during* your chase?!

SURI  
[Desperate] It sounds crazy, I know, but that’s what I saw! I was about to run for the back door, before the police had a chance to arrive. But as I was looking down at the body, Coco had come up the catwalk as well. I was freaking out! She was wondering where Overall was, and she started moving towards me! I-I didn’t know what to do, and I was too afraid of being caught stealing his fabric, and possibly being seen as a killer… so I took the fabric roll, and swung it at Coco’s head as hard as I could to knock her out.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Shocked] This…this cannot be…

SURI  
[Regretful?] It was at that point that…a certain thought occurred to me.

**\*Flashback\***

SURI  
\*panting\* [Vengeful] I can...I can use this. I can frame her...get back at her for everything…

**\*Flashback ends\***

BLUEBLOOD  
What?!

JUDGE  
So, you really were trying to plant the whole thing on the defendant?!  
SURI  
[Livid] Coco and that prissy unicorn, Rarity! They both ruined me! I was seen as a cheater in the fashion world! I was humiliated! I wanted payback! So, I removed the fabric from the roll, as I was still intending on keeping it. However, in my haste to remove the fabric, I accidentally tore a piece of it off in the process.

BLUEBLOOD  
H-How...did you do that?

PHOENIX  
I think the answer to that question would be because of the exposed splinters on the fabric roll, correct?

SURI  
You got it, a bit of the fabric got caught on a splinter, and tore off as I unwrapped it. I tried to catch it before it fell, but I was too late. Luckily, it went unnoticed thanks to the panic as a result of the hanged body. Once I had the fabric off the roll, I shook off some of the glitter onto Coco’s hooves, and placed the fabric roll itself between them.

PHOENIX  
That would explain why the glitter left on the catwalk was in a pile. You quickly dropped it all in one place, instead of wasting precious time by spreading it about.

SURI  
That’s right. After I had covered both Coco’s hooves and the fabric roll in glitter, I placed the roll in Coco’s hooves to complete the picture that Coco had attacked and hung the victim. Finally, I fled down the left side of the catwalk, and left the building.

PHOENIX  
Leaving a trail of hoofprints in fluorescent paint behind you, for us to find.

SURI  
I didn’t even know that paint was on the fabric in the first place. I only found out when it was brought up during this trial. I didn’t really pay attention to what Coco and Overall were working on in the dressing room, and the lights were on when I stopped running on the catwalk. I was completely unaware I had left any prints. Even after I got home, I wasn’t aware of the paint - the rain must’ve washed it off my hooves, and the fabric.

JUDGE  
And this is the full truth this time, right, witness?

SURI  
Yes, every last thing I saw and did that night.

*The court takes a moment of silence to take in the confession.*

SURI  
So there, Mr. Wright, you have my confession - I stole the fabric, attacked Coco, and framed her for murder. Now, the ball’s in *your* court to save her.

PHOENIX  
Very well. [Thankful] Thank you for your cooperation, Miss Polomare.

SURI  
[Dismissively] Hmph. Don’t lose any sleep over it.

BLUEBLOOD  
Tch! [Sarcastic] As much as I hate to be the bearer of bad news to you all, this proves nothing! The defendant is still the only one who could’ve committed the crime!

PHOENIX  
***OBJECTION!*** Then you must not have been listening to that confession at all, Prince Blueblood! If you had been, it should be clear that there’s no way Coco is responsible for this!

BLUEBLOOD  
Feh! Explain, then, if you can!

PHOENIX

According to the confession that was just given, not only was Coco not even *on* the catwalk when the victim was hanged, but Miss Polomare herself admitted that it was *she* who covered the defendant’s hooves in glitter!  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Ack! No!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
And since that’s the case, then it’s impossible for Coco to have been the one to leave these traces of glitter on the noose. That, in conjunction with her exact wherabouts at the exact time of the murder, should prove beyond any doubt...that Coco Pommel is innocent!  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
No… NOOOOO!  
  
***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***  
  
  
JUDGE  
Order! Order in the court! Mr. Wright, you--  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** This is impossible! Human! If neither pony could’ve murdered Overall, then who are you proposing is the true culprit!? There was no one else on that catwalk who could’ve done it!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
...Are you certain about that?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
H-Huh?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Aren’t you forgetting someone? One other pony that was on that catwalk at the time of the crime?  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Realizing] !? No...you can’t be serious…!  
  
  
JUDGE  
Mr. Wright, are you suggesting…!?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
…*(It seems as though we’ve finally arrived at the truth. As much as I don’t want to believe it, or even fully understand why… this is the only possibility left.)* I am, Your Honor.

TWILIGHT  
Phoenix! You aren’t going to…!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
The one responsible for taking the victim’s life was the only other pony who was at the crime scene when he was hanged, and that, of course, would be... the victim himself! OVERALL CONCEPT!!!!

BLUEBLOOD  
WHAT!!

JUDGE  
THE!!

TWILIGHT!  
HELLO!?

***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***

JUDGE  
Order! Order! Order in the court! Mr. Wright, have you completely lost your mind?! Are you suggesting that the victim… committed suicide!?

PHOENIX  
That’s exactly what I am suggesting!

BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** [Flabbergasted] Are you crazy?! There is NOTHING in the evidence or testimony that suggests suicide!

TWILIGHT  
[Hesitant agreement] I have to agree here, Phoenix. Murder is already rare enough in Equestria, but SUICIDE?! That’s entirely unheard of!

PHOENIX  
I figured as much. But despite how improbable it may be, it’s the only logical conclusion I can think of that can solve this case!

BLUEBLOOD  
[Flabbergasted] LOGICAL?!? How can you even call this logical?! I hope you have a good explanation for this, Human!

PHOENIX  
Although I can’t claim to know *why* the victim would do this, I can hazard a guess as to what happened that night. Overall Concept, after chasing Miss Polomare up to the catwalk, grabbed the rope that was prepared by the stagehooves during the intermission. Wrapping it around his neck, he jumped over the railing to his death. We’ve heard testimonies from both the defendant and the witness, and together, they prove rather conclusively that Overall was the only other one on the catwalk at the time of the crime! If neither of them could’ve done it, then it could only be the victim himself!

BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** [Incensed] Your delusions have utterly ruined your sense of reason, human! Time to bring you back to reality! The victim was unconscious due to a blow to the head at the time of his death. Are we meant to believe that he committed suicide while he was *unconscious*?!

PHOENIX  
Of course not, but we may have made an incorrect assumption regarding this blow to the head.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Demanding] What do you mean!?

PHOENIX  
We all came to the conclusion that the victim was unconscious because he was knocked out by someone, but that’s where we were wrong. It wasn’t because he was attacked, he was knocked unconscious after hitting his head against something as he was falling!  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
WHAT!?  
  
  
JUDGE  
What could the victim have even hit his head *on*!?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
Might I suggest that he hit the back of his head on the catwalk railing? He must not have jumped out far enough, and received a pretty nasty bruise as a result, which knocked him unconscious.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Incensed] How outrageous! And I suppose you have something to support that claim?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
The “clang” that Suri, Coco, and Playwright heard! It was the sound of the victim’s head colliding with the railing!  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Ghk!  
  
  
***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble...***

BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** [Livid] You can’t be serious, Human! This theory of suicide— it’s completely baseless! I demand to see real, physical evidence that points to this ridiculous assertion being the truth!

PHOENIX  
I have it right here! ***TAKE THAT!***

BLUEBLOOD  
[Livid] The autopsy report? How does that prove anything?!

PHOENIX  
Right here, where it says, “The victim had traces of glitter on his forehooves.”  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
[Livid] So what!? That doesn’t [voice beginning to falter, realizing] prove...any...thing...   
  
  
JUDGE  
[Confused] Hmm? Prince Blueblood? What’s the matter?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
He’s finally realized the truth, Your Honor. As we’ve established, there are traces of glitter around the noose. The two ponies who were the most likely to have left glitter on it could not have done so. The lack of fluorescent paint clears Miss Polomare, and the noose had already been thrown off the catwalk by the time the defendant arrived! Not to mention Miss Polomare admitted that SHE was the one who coated Coco’s hooves with glitter…AFTER the victim died. Therefore, there was only one other pony who could’ve left the glitter on the noose. The only other pony who had traces of glitter on his hooves AND went up to the catwalk at the time of the crime, OVERALL CONCEPT!

***Rubble, rubble, rubble, rubble…***

BLUEBLOOD  
***OBJECTION!*** [Desperate] ...You haven’t won yet! You still haven’t explained *why* the victim would take his own life! He was living happily, and was even planning to propose to the defendant! And on top of all that, if he *was* planning on comitting suicide, why do it in the middle of a play, in front of thousands of ponies in the audience?!?

PHOENIX  
…  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
Y-You don’t have an answer, do you? [Haughty] Ha...hahaha! I knew it!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
You’re right, I don’t have an answer as to why the victim decided to commit suicide. But that’s not something that needs to be determined here and now.  
  
  
BLUEBLOOD  
What!?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
The purpose of this trial was to ascertain whether or not the defendant, Coco Pommel, was guilty of the murder of Overall Concept. Through the testimony and evidence that’s been presented, I’d say the answer to that question has been made abundantly clear by now. As for why the victim chose to end his own life, I say it’s up to the police to investigate and discover the truth behind *that* mystery.

BLUEBLOOD  
GRRR!!!

JUDGE  
As much as I share everyone else’s confusion, I have to agree with the defense.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Livid] WHAT?!? You’re actually going along with this??!

JUDGE  
There is simply no other explanation, I’m afraid. I would like to request that the police continue their investigation in order to uncover further information regarding this supposed suicide. As for Suri Polomare, you will be placed under arrest for perjury, theft, and tampering with the crime scene.

SURI  
Hmph, whatever. It sure beats getting sent to the moon. Just make sure that sentence isn’t too long, I have dresses to work on, m’kay?

JUDGE  
Well, Mr. Wright, even in another world you haven’t lost your knack for taking a seemingly ordinary murder case and turning it on its its head. Not bad for your first time back in Equestria, I must say.

PHOENIX  
Oh! Uh, thanks, Your Honor. (*I can’t tell if he’s complimenting me or calling me out…*)

JUDGE  
Still, sometimes I wish you would stop for a moment. I’m an old man; I don’t know how much more of this my heart can take!

PHOENIX  
Y-yes, uh, sorry, Your Honor. (*Okay, maybe he* is *calling me out.*)

JUDGE  
As for now, I think it’s time I hand down my verdict in the case of Miss Pommel.

BLUEBLOOD  
[Breaking down] No! No! No! No, no, no, no, no! How could I lose?!? How could I lose to this hairless ape?!? MY PERFECT WIN STREAK!! Noooooooooo!

*Blueblood breaks down in tears.*

TWILIGHT  
[Relieved] We… we won!  
  
  
PHOENIX  
[Relieved] And what a bumpy ride this trial was.

JUDGE  
In the case of Miss Coco Pommel, I find the defendant…

**NOT GUILTY**

JUDGE  
Court is now adjourned.

**Scene 5**

***February 12, 12:30 PM***

***Manehattan District Court - Defendant Lobby No. 2***

APOLLO  
Whoa! Now that was an ending I certainly didn’t expect!

ATHENA  
[Congratulatory] But you still managed to pull through! Congrats, Boss! And you too, Twilight!

RARITY  
[Relieved] YES! Thank you so much, Phoenix! You saved Coco!

PHOENIX  
All in a day’s work, Rarity.

TRUCY  
[Celebrating] Woo! Daddy wins the case once again! But of course, was there ever any doubt?

PHOENIX  
Haha, Trucy! There’s no need to shower me with praise, honestly!

TRUCY  
But it’s true! I can never count you out in a trial! And you sure taught that prince not to underestimate you in there!

RARITY  
It was so satisfying seeing him fall apart, especially after going after my dear Coco! Oh, here she comes now!

*Coco appears. Still looking sad.*

COCO  
[A tinge of sadness in her voice] Hello everypony.

PHOENIX  
Hello there, Coco.

RARITY  
[Congratulatory] Coco! Congrats on getting your acquittal, dear!

COCO  
[Still somewhat saddened] Thank you, Rarity. I’m very glad.

RARITY  
[Confused] Oh? Then why the long face, darling?

COCO  
It’s just that…well, I’m happy that I’m off the hook. But I’m still sad about Overall passing away, especially now that I know how he REALLY died. [Self-questioning] How could he just do that to himself?! Was something hurting him?! [Having an epiphany] Was… was it me?

ATHENA  
Miss Pommel?

COCO  
Y-yes?

ATHENA  
I’ve studied analytical psychology, so I want to give you my opinion. You are absolutely not responsible for what happened to Overall.

COCO  
[Denying] But you can’t know that!

ATHENA  
[Neutral] ...Coco. You mentioned earlier in the trial that Overall had a bout of depression following the death of his parents, right?

COCO  
Well, yes. But that was years ago, and he never seemed upset once we started living together!

ATHENA  
It’s not uncommon for someone to have periods of depression separated by years where they feel and act perfectly normal. I...think Overall may have been suffering from it without anyone realising. Granted, we can’t know for sure. But that’s what I think, anyway.

COCO  
[Self-loathing] Even still...he probably wasn’t happy with me.

PHOENIX  
That couldn’t be farther from the truth, Coco. Remember this ring Overall was going to propose to you with? He clearly was at his happiest when he was with you. It’s true we may not know his true reasons for ending his own life, but I know that you were not the reason.

COCO  
[Rambling, increasing in volume and pace] But I could’ve done something about it. Maybe I should’ve talked to him more, or probably been more involved with his designs. If only I didn’t leave the dressing room, he would’ve stayed alive! If only I-

APOLLO  
[Cutting her off, then soothing] Hey, calm down.

COCO  
Huh?

APOLLO  
[Calm and soothing] Take a breather. You’ll hurt your vocal chords yelling like that.

COCO  
[Sheepish] Um… ok.

APOLLO  
[Consoling] Listen, you shouldn’t blame yourself for Overall’s death. There was nothing you could’ve done.

COCO  
[Continuing to bargain] But…if I were only with him the entire time, then he would’ve-

APOLLO  
[Very sudden and snap response] But it happened anyway!

COCO  
[Taken aback] Huh?

APOLLO  
[Empathizing] I understand what you’re going through. You thought you could’ve done something to prevent losing a loved one. But the entire situation was beyond your control. You shouldn’t put the burden on yourself. You’ll never be able to live in the present if you stay in the past.

*Coco looks down.*

APOLLO  
Besides, in some way, your friend still lives on.

COCO  
What do you mean?

APOLLO  
He may be gone, but his spirit isn’t. He was a teacher to you, right? If you learned from him, you’re allowing his techniques to live on as well. So in some way, he’s always with you.

RARITY  
Of course! Overall was teaching you his ways, and I know you’ve learned so much from him. Now it’s up to you to carry on his legacy! Even though he’s gone, I know you’ll make sure he is never forgotten!

COCO  
[Grateful] T-thank you, Mr. Wright, Rarity, and...uh, what are your names?

APOLLO  
I’m Apollo. Apollo Justice.

ATHENA  
And I’m Athena Cykes!

COCO  
Thank you. All of you, thank you so much. I think I feel a little better now. [Unsure] But…I don’t know how I could possibly live up to Overall’s expectations. He always made sure his designs were perfect. And now that he’s gone, all of his assets go to me, including his sketches for new designs. They will be his final pieces of work, and they look fantastic! But... once it’s my turn to design something, I don’t know how I could possibly make something of that caliber on my own. Compared to somepony who played such a big role in the theater industry... I don’t know if I’m good enough to do it.

*Playwright shows up.*

PLAYWRIGHT  
Actually, Coco… You’re more talented than you’d let yourself believe.

COCO  
[Surprised] P-Playwright? What are you doing here?

PLAYWRIGHT  
[Apologetic] I just wanted to apologize for thinking that you were the one who killed Overall.

COCO  
It’s quite alright, sir. I was the only one up there after all.

PLAYWRIGHT  
I know, but this human proved otherwise. [Encouraging] Coco, I know you think you may not reach Overall’s expectations, but I believe you’ll do fine. You were under his wing, after all.

COCO  
[Self-doubt] But sir, he was much more skilled than me, I don’t see-

PLAYWRIGHT  
[Firm] Miss Pommel, I need you to listen to me.

COCO  
Hm?

PLAYWRIGHT  
During this trial, I’ve seen that perfection isn’t always the best thing to aim for. While it’s nice that you can believe that you can achieve something great, the sacrifices you make to get there aren’t always worth it. [Regretful/Remorseful] In fact, it may have been partially my fault for Overall taking his own life.

COCO  
What?! But why?

PLAYWRIGHT  
I was so obsessed with making my plays perfect, that I never realized how I’ve often mistreated my staff members. Without a doubt, this applies to both you and Overall. I was a terrible leader. So from now on, instead of striving for perfection, I will do my best to achieve something greater that all of us can be proud of. Not just for me and you, but for the rest of the staff as well.

COCO  
[Touched] Playwright, I…

PLAYWRIGHT  
Overall told me time and time again that your skills had even surpassed his own. In fact, when he came onstage during intermission that night, he wanted to talk to me about letting you design the costumes for the show after the next. He said that it was time that your own work became known, and that this was a perfect opportunity. At the time, I said I’d think about it, but admittedly, I was going to reject his request. However, that’s all changed now. In honor of Overall’s last wish to me, I hereby promote you, Miss Pommel, to head costume designer for Bridleway Theatre.

*Coco finally smiles.*

COCO  
[Grateful] Oh sir, thank you! I will do my best to make sure that my designs will be the best that they can be!

PLAYWRIGHT  
I’m sure you will! That twinkle in your eye...you’re really just like Overall, you know? [Considerate and Caring] Come on, let’s get back to the theatre. I want to make sure the staff knows you are all right.

COCO  
Of course, sir! We still need to make some costumes for the next play anyway, and I certainly have my own ideas to implement!   
  
  
RARITY  
That’s the spirit, darling. And once you do design some of your own clothes, I’d be happy to sell them in my store for you! I could even use some of Overall’s special fabric as inspiration for my next clothing line, if you’ll allow me to have some.

COCO  
Of course, Rarity. Anything for a dear friend. Well, see you later, everypony!

*Coco and Playwright leave.*

PHOENIX  
And there they go.  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
… [Twilight casts a nervous look downward].  
  
  
PHOENIX  
What’s wrong, Twilight?  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
[Hesitant] Oh, it’s...it’s nothing. I’m, uh, just glad to see Coco so happy.

ATHENA  
I know, right? I can hear a lot of happiness coming from her. Playwright did a great job cheering her up! I can hear lots of happiness from him, as well.

RARITY  
I must confess, I’ve actually never seen Playwright this happy before.

ATHENA  
[Surprised] Really?

RARITY  
[Thinking back] You see, Playwright hasn’t always been in the best of moods, at least whenever I visited the theatre.

ATHENA  
Well, he did say that he’s always been striving for perfection. I can only imagine the emotional stress he puts on himself day in and day out.

RARITY  
It did. His never-ending desire to achieve perfection made him so stubborn and short-tempered, and it put the staff under a lot of stress. I was very upset with how unfairly he treated everypony.

PHOENIX  
[Empathetic] Being the Element of Generosity, I understand why that would upset you.

RARITY  
But…this is the first time he considered the well-being of others. He was only ever remotely happy when he thought he was close to perfection. I’ve never seen him show this much sympathy for somepony else.

ATHENA  
Showing sympathy to others is an easy way to let them know that we care about what happens to them. Bringing negative emotions to your peers will only spread more negativity, and that leads to an unhealthy environment. This tragedy must’ve given him that revelation.

RARITY  
He looked like a very different pony, and I’m happy that he has changed for the better.

PHOENIX  
And Coco seems to be a lot stronger too.

RARITY  
[Proud] And I’m so proud of her for that. Now she’s off to forge her own path! I can’t wait to see what else she has to offer the fashion world!

TWILIGHT  
[A tinge of sadness] Yep, it seems as if everyone is moving on to bigger and better things. [Pensive] Although, I can’t help but feel...a little unsatisfied with the way the trial ended.

PHOENIX  
Unsatisfied? What do you mean?

TWILIGHT  
Well, there were still some unanswered questions at the end of it all. The most notable one being: Why did Overall Concept take his own life?

RARITY  
That’s something I can’t begin to fathom. Overall was certainly a very happy individual. Even with depression possibly being a factor, his life seemed to only be getting better and better, with his fame, job, and even someone he cared enough about to want to propose to them. He never seemed the kind of pony to even consider suicide.

PHOENIX  
It makes me wonder too, but unfortunately there’s no clear answer. Let’s hope the police can investigate further, and find out the truth soon.

RARITY  
I suppose. But hey, you showed that prissy prince who’s boss! I definitely enjoyed myself, seeing his face as he smelled defeat!

PHOENIX  
Yeah, he was quite the character, wasn’t he? Oh, that reminds me! Twilight, I have a question for you.

TWILIGHT  
Hm? What is it, Phoenix?

PHOENIX  
You said that Prince Blueblood was prosecuting for experience when he can rule a kingdom, correct?

TWILIGHT  
Yes, that’s correct.

PHOENIX  
And as a princess, you’re able to stand in court as an attorney as well, correct?

TWILIGHT  
[Unsure and not liking where the conversation is going] Yes...

PHOENIX  
[Questioning] So, what I’m trying to understand is…why did you feel the need to summon *me* when it seems as if you could have handled this whole situation yourself?

TWILIGHT  
[Confused] Huh?

PHOENIX  
I know you’re capable of doing it - you saved me quite a few times in court today. You’ve clearly been studying law for a while now, even if this was your first real time practicing it.  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
[Unsure] Umm...

PHOENIX  
[Questioning] In fact, didn’t you say that ponies who are of royalty *need* experience in upholding the law? Considering you’re a princess, doesn’t that technically mean you have an obligation to represent Miss Pommel?

TWILIGHT  
[Nervously] O-oh! Well, I just…when Rarity told me the story, I didn’t exactly have a lot of time to think about who should represent Coco, so I just summoned you.

PHOENIX  
[Dubious] That...doesn’t really make sense, Twilight. Summoning me would have meant you would’ve had to have gone through the trouble of getting an Equestrian Attorney’s badge ready again. Also, the one accused of murder is a friend of your friend, and considering you are the Princess of FRIENDSHIP, that’s more of a reason to take on the case yourself. You *did* say that you’ve been studying law ever since you became a princess.  
  
  
TWILIGHT  
I...I...

PHOENIX  
[Probing] The more I think about it, the less I understand it; if you appear so capable of taking on a case, why did you feel the need to summon me?

TWILIGHT  
….…  
  
[Magatama activates, and five psyche-locks appear]  
  
  
PHOENIX  
[Shocked] *(Wh-What!? Psyche-locks!?)*TWILIGHT  
[Concerned] ? What’s wrong, Phoenix?  
  
  
PHOENIX  
[Stuttering] N-Nothing… Forget I asked...[Confused and Concerned] *(What does this mean? What is Twilight trying so hard to hide from me?)*  
  
*Pinkie pops out of nowhere.*

PINKIE  
[Bubbly] HIYA FEENIE!

*Phoenix, Twilight, and Rarity yelp.*

PHOENIX  
[Surprised and shocked] Where in the world did YOU come from, Pinkie?!

PINKIE  
[Completely unaffected] Ask my parents, Feenie!

TRUCY  
[Cheerful] Heya, Pinkie!

PINKIE  
[Cheerful] Heya, Trucy!

TWILIGHT  
[Questioning] Uh, Pinkie, where were you sitting in the gallery? I didn’t see you.

RARITY  
I was with Fluttershy and Applejack, so she certainly wasn’t with us.

ATHENA  
She wasn’t with me, Apollo, and Trucy either.

PINKIE  
Oh yeah! I was late!

RARITY  
[Disbelief] Late? But this is clearly an important trial to us. I know Rainbow had some Wonderbolt Reserve business to attend to, but how could *you* possibly be late?

PINKIE  
[Still bubbly and peppy] I slept in!

*A moment of silence.*

RARITY  
AGAIN?!

PINKIE  
[Sheepish] Hehe, I can’t help it! I had one of those really fun dreams, and I didn’t want them to stop, so I tried sleeping some more!

APOLLO  
[Astonishment] Doesn’t this pony have a day job?! How has she not been fired already?!

PINKIE  
[Insulted] Hey, I have a job! I work at Sugarcube Corner helping the Cakes make cakes! I am also a party extraordinaire, so I help throw parties that will shake your flank all night!

ATHENA  
With the amount of energy it takes to party that hard, it makes sense that you sleep for so long.

PHOENIX  
So why did you come to us, Pinkie?

PINKIE  
Don’t you remember, Feenie? The “Congratulations on Winning the Trial” Party!

TRUCY  
[Excited] Ooh! You already have that party ready?!

PINKIE  
Yup yup! Sure did! I already got the cakes, the drinks, the guests, and decorations ready! I even brought a DJ to the party too!

ATHENA  
[Amazed] Cakes? Drinks? Guests?!

TRUCY  
[Ecstatic] And decorations?! And even a DJ!?! This party is gonna be wild!

APOLLO  
[Amazed] This sounds like a very stacked party! When did you get everything prepared?

PINKIE  
I got it prepared as soon as I woke up!

ATHENA  
Wow, that must’ve taken forever to prepare.

PINKIE  
It wasn’t hard. I do this all the time!

APOLLO  
[Confused] Wait, hold on a second. I thought you slept in? How did you get the time to prepare a big party like that?

PINKIE  
[Matter-of-factly] By doing it quickly, silly!

APOLLO  
So then...when did you wake up?

PINKIE  
A couple of hours ago.

ATHENA  
[Confused] …Uhhhh wait, doesn’t it take a couple hours to get to Manehattan from Ponyville?

PINKIE  
Uh huh.

ATHENA  
[Confused] But I thought you said you woke up a couple of hours ago.

PINKIE  
I sure did!

ATHENA  
[Realizing] But… that means the second you woke up…

APOLLO  
[Realizing] …You fully prepared a big party…

ATHENA  
[Putting the pieces together] ...and caught the train here...

APOLLO  
[Clarifying and disbelief] ...in a matter of minutes!?

PINKIE  
Yep, sure sounds like it!

ATHENA  
But… but that’s...

APOLLO  
[Disbelief] ...How were you able to prepare a party THAT BIG in such a SMALL SPAN OF TIME?!

PINKIE  
[Matter-of-factly, with a tinge of sarcasm from repeating herself] I told you, Polly! By doing it quickly!

APOLLO  
[Dumbfounded] I...er...w-wha...

TWILIGHT  
You’d be amazed of what this pink mare is capable of, Apollo.

TRUCY  
She just has a great work ethic, Polly! You could learn a thing or two from her!

APOLLO  
[Deadpan] Give me a couple hundred clients, and maybe I’ll consider taking lessons.

ATHENA  
[Questioning] Boss, does this pink pony have time powers?! There’s no way she is capable of that!

PHOENIX  
Nah, that’s just Pinkie Pie being Pinkie Pie. You better just get used to it.

APOLLO  
[Frustrated and confused] But what does that even mean?!??

PHOENIX  
Just trust me on this, it’s for your own sanity.

APOLLO  
[Frustrated] As if this world isn’t testing it enough!

TRUCY  
Hey, Pinkie! If you want, I’d like to have a magic performance at your party!

PINKIE  
[Excited] A human doing a magic show?! Oooh, that sounds exciting! I’ve always wanted to see a human do magic!

TRUCY  
I’m the best magician in the city where I’m from! I can guarantee you all a good show!

RARITY  
Well that sounds like it’ll be a wonderful time!

PHOENIX  
I’m certainly looking forward to it. *(Hopefully I don’t get forced to dance until I throw my back out.)*

PINKIE  
Come on everypony! Let’s get to the party!

TRUCY  
Right behind ya, Pinkie!

*Phoenix gives an inner monologue.*

PHOENIX  
*(And as quickly as it started, the case came to a close. Pinkie threw a party for all of us to celebrate, and it was actually very enjoyable. Like a little vacation, it was a nice change of pace to what I usually do after a trial. Unfortunately, this little moment of sunshine and rainbows wouldn’t last forever. Unbeknownst to us, something darker was lurking in the shadows of this colorful world, something that teased at a broader mystery... And little did any of us realize that during our care-free celebration, that mystery would continue to unfold not too far from us. It’s a mystery I won’t soon forget, as it brought me to someone that I thought I would never see again. Someone who is the spitting image of a dear friend I knew a long time ago…)*

***One Year Ago***

***Canterlot Prison***

***Solitary Confinement #13***

*A guard pony slowly trots to a jail cell levitating a pair of keys. He looks through the little gap on the cell door, and sees a mare sitting silently with her eyes closed.*

ROYAL ORDER  
[Jovial] Knock knock, rise and shine inmate. Guess what day it is?

*The guard pony unlocks the cell door, and slowly opens it.*

ROYAL ORDER  
That’s right. As of today you’re a free mare.

*The mare looks up, then slowly stands. She begins to slowly walk out of the cell. The guard walks beside her, escorting her to the entrance of the prison.*

ROYAL ORDER  
It must feel nice to finally be out after eight months, huh?

*The mare just trots in silence.*

ROYAL ORDER  
[Awkwardly] Right. Well, uh, you’re lucky that human defense attorney proved that you didn’t murder anypony. You probably would’ve been banished to the moon if he hadn’t.

*The mare continues to trot in silence.*

ROYAL ORDER  
As for your possessions….just these. You left ‘em back in the courtroom.

*The guard pony shows the mare’s glasses. The mare makes a quiet gasp, then slowly exhales. The mare uses her horn to levitate the glasses next to her. The guard stops walking, and allows the mare to leave the prison. The entrance doors open.*

ROYAL ORDER  
Well, this is it. But before you leave, I want to ask you something. Now that you’re out, what are you going to do?

*The pony stood still in between the entrance doors. Silence looms for a moment. Until she finally looks back and speaks.*

SONATA  
I’m going to help those that need it……..just like he did for me.

*The mare puts on her glasses and opens her eyes.*

**END**