



A Collection of Sweet and Sensual
Fiction: Volume 5

Compiled by: Sandman

The fiction gathered here is labeled according to the following scale:

Fluffy: (nothing serious, mostly cute)

Fuzzy: (a real d'aww scene for the heart)

Snuggly: (hugs, peck on the cheek, etc.)

Tender: (kisses, lying down together)

Romantic: (kisses w/ tongue, massages)

Cheeky: (moaning, overly massaging wings, hoofs, etc.)

Saucy: (very, VERY suggestive)

Whoa! (This goes as far as describing actual sex.)

Stylin' and Profilin'

By: Pony of the Year



"I'm sorry. We have to let you go."

You just stand there, stunned. You had been working the warehouse for years. It was a simple job, of course. Moving products from one place to another was very easy on paper. In truth, it took strength to haul stuff around all day.

You were always extremely loyal and responsible to your job. Oftentimes, you would find yourself daydreaming about other things. Usually what you would do once you got off. You hardly figured that was a reason to get let go of your job though. Tons of employees did that.

As always, you don't question it. You always had a small habit of not speaking up when needed most. Which could have been the reason altogether. You didn't stick out enough. They were making cuts to fill up the roster for the summer, and you just happened to not stick out to them, no matter how long you had been working there.

You trot out of your former employer's office with a truly sullen look, your head hung as low as can be. You're sure you garnered the attention of your other former co-workers. By the look on their faces and probably yours too, they're rather knowing of what just went on in that office. Their lack of words seem to comfort you much more than if they had told you that they're sorry, or that you'll find another job as quickly as possible.

After that long trek to the front doors of the warehouse, you turn around and raise your head up a ways at last. For whatever reason, you want to take one last look at this place before going out into the world of the unemployed. Which is the same world as the employed, just less happy.

Finally, you take a front hoof and push open the double set of doors, trotting out into the world of Ponyville. It's the same now as it always was. Full of laughing, smiling and busy ponies doing their day to day activities. Before there was a charm to this town. Now it just makes you even more depressed for whatever reason. As if you could feel as happy as them, but simply aren't and cannot be. You feel as if you are in a completely lower class.

At work, you often dreamed of being higher class sometimes. Going home to an extravagant home. Being able to afford many of the things you desired. At the very least, you desired to be able to be something a bit better than a modern day peasant. You were not treated like anything of the sort. However, most days, you certainly felt like one.

Sighing, you start down the street, only to be ran into by the one pony who wouldn't make you feel much better about your social status.

“LOOK OUT!”

The pony crashes in to you and you both stumble to the ground in a mess. The white colored mare quickly gets up, a bit flustered at what had happened as she begins to pick up her many materials that she had spilled all over the ground. As you shakily get up and shake off the pain in your skull, you see what she had dropped were various fabrics, tools and supplies. It finally hits you that you had crashed into the owner of Carousel Boutique, Rarity.

She is a bit famous around Ponyville for her exquisite taste in fashion and all things style when it comes to how a pony was supposed to look. If there is something a pony could want when it comes to appearance or style, your first stop should always be Rarity. She knows how to dress and look.

She is no exception. Her mane is always a beautiful and shiny violet that falls just perfectly at her slender neck. Her white, gorgeous coat doesn't have a dot or grain of dirt in it. Finally, her eyes...

Rarity's eyes are a brilliant blue. You could stare into them all day if she would let you. Not that she would, you had never even met her for real. You just admired her from afar even though you had accepted you had absolutely no real chance with the beautiful mare.

The mare you had knocked to the ground.

"OH!" You finally say, snapping out of your silly daydream as you rush to the lady's side, helping her up. "I...I'm so sorry. I wasn't looking or paying attention and-"

"Oh you?" Rarity asks as she backs away from you and regains her lady-like composure. For a minute you swear she is angry with you. Just what you need to top off a "brilliant" day.

"I was merely running too quickly." Rarity informs simply, keeping a curious eye on you. "You see, I tend to get a bit overexcited whenever I get a new piece of fabric or material for my work. Sometimes I just lose track of events around me...."

Rarity stops and blushes a bit at this. Truly endearing to say the least.

"It's uh...no problem." You say to her, not being able to fight the stupid, goofy grin across your face at talking to this mare.

Rarity just smiles in relief that you aren't angry with her or upset. She then glances up at the slightly run down building behind you.

"So then? What is your affiliation with this place?" Rarity asks, looking to you, making you freeze up at that. You can't very well tell Rarity that you were some deadbeat, low-class colt working in a warehouse. Minimum wage at that.

Why were you so upset at losing this job again?

“Um...this place?” You ask. “Well I definitely don’t uh-...I mean I really don’t work here or anything. Nothing like that...”

“So then, what are you doing here?” She asks as a mildly amused smirk appears on her muzzle. You just bite your lower lip. Lying to this girl was proving harder than expected.

“You see...I did work here...” You say, knowing you just said you didn’t two seconds ago. “I just didn’t like the horrible working conditions. It really messes up my fur and it’s horrible for my skin.”

...

“You were fired weren’t you?” She asks immediately, that amused smirk growing into an entertained smile now.

“...yeah.” You finally admit in defeat. You’re sure whatever she had thought of you based on this first impression was now out the window. Surprisingly, it’s the contrary. The white pony lets out a slight giggle. After that, her expression grows to a more serious one as you freeze up a bit in tension.

“It’s a shame.” Rarity says in a sullen expression of her own. “A lot of fine workers let go because silly conditions aren’t met. Well I believe it’s nonsense.”

“Um...yes...” You say in response, a bit taken aback by this small rant. Just what is she getting at?

“You seem like a good enough colt.” She smiles. “One that won’t make customers jump back in revolt. Plus I’ve simply been exhausted lately with only Sweetie Belle to help me.”

“....are you offering me a job?” You ask in shock.

“Yes, darling. I am.” She smiles in amusement again at you figuring it out before she can ask. “It won’t be anything huge. Just helping me around the Boutique. Of course I’ll also need to spruce you up a bit to make you sure you’re Carousel Boutique quality. Just

because I said you won't disgust customers does not' mean you are at ALL presentable. Understand?"

You just nod. "I..do I need an interview?"

Rarity shakes her head. "Let's call you an apprentice. Or an aide."

The aide of Rarity. You have a job working for Rarity of all ponies just after getting fired. You have no idea how to respond.

"When....can I start?" You ask, a mix of joy and shock in your expression and tone.

"How about tomorrow?" She asks, turning around to leave. "I'll see you at 8 AM sharp. Is that acceptable?"

"Yes! Um...yes. That sounds great." You say, realizing some of that joy had escaped. Rarity just giggles once again.

"If you don't know already, my name is Rarity. You may call me Miss Rarity." She informs with a warm smile as she leaves, leaving you to your thoughts. Just as you were before that mare had run into you and changed your entire day.

As you look around, you see the smiling faces of ponies everywhere, going about their days. This time, you can't help but smile too.

Maybe things weren't so bad after all.

Knock Knock Knock!

You quickly straighten up your posture. Coat? Clean. Hooves? Polished. Mane and teeth? Brushed.

Ability to stay calm? Gone.

You try your best to breathe calmly. Doing so proves rather difficult though. After all, it is your first day of work. For Rarity, the sweet and lady-like pony you had met just yesterday. You had spent most of the morning cleaning yourself up for work, something you never had to do at your old job. There, you walked in, moved stuff around, got sweaty

and smelly, then you went home. Then again, you didn't have such a beautiful mare as a boss at your old job. At one point you had a mare as a boss, but you would hardly call her beautiful. Sometimes you wonder if you could even call her a mare.

Snickering a bit at your own thoughts, you hear the door open at last.

"Ah yes." The white unicorn beams. "I was hoping you would arrive. Just on time too! Do come in."

She opens the door fully, revealing the spectacle that is her humble home and workplace. Just like her, it is truly impressive.

Walking inside, you peer around at everything in the home in curiosity and awe. What you don't notice though, is that the unicorn's eyes are mostly fixated upon you.

"You look....interesting." She says simply. Her tone is a bit misleading. Was that was a compliment or an insult?

"Interesting?" You ask, looking to her.

"A bit less...sweaty and filthy than I remember." She chuckles, turning and starting to lead you into her workplace. "At least you know how to look presentable, I'll give you that much."

Things are looking good so far. You seem to have impressed her in several aspects. Simple things such as taking a bit longer in getting ready for work got you some points with the boss. Apparently the time you appeared was good too. You had spent a little longer than you would like to admit thinking about that. On one hand, being a little late showed you weren't overly desperate. On the other, it was a job and it was always good to be right on time or even earlier. In the end, you just ended up showing up on time and hoped it worked. Luckily, it seems that it did.

"Now. I can't expect you know how to sew and make clothing of your own...yet." She smiles as she shows you around the work room. "For now, you can merely do such jobs like fetching me fabric when needed and running to the store to get some when needed as

well. I'll also give you the role of dealing with customers quite often. It becomes just so hard to deal with them all and their requests and making them at the same time."

You just listen to every word the mare says intently. You make absolutely sure that you remember each and every bit of this. For one thing, she is your new employer and is giving you a paycheck. On top of that, you simply want to please her in any way possible.

"Do you understand all that, dear?" Rarity asks, looking to you with an intent expression of her own. For a few seconds, all you can do is stare back blankly into her eyes. After a few seconds of her looking at you with a confused expression at why you were just gazing at her, you come back to reality.

"Um. Yes, Rarity. Miss Rarity." You say, that nervousness still evident in your tone.

"Mmm. Yes, yes. Very good." She says with a small smirk, clearly pleased with your response to her. "Now. Here's what I will require from you."

The day goes on. You and Rarity get off to a great start as employer and employee. Perhaps it's because it's much more personal in a way that you can talk to her while on the job. In just a few hours you've already learned so much about her. By the questions she asked, you wonder if she's at all interested by you as well. She had asked what you did at your old job. Where you lived. What your dreams were. Among many other things.

After a while of nothing too eventful happening, she finally gives you an errand for something outside of the Carousel Boutique.

"Can you be a dear and run down to this address for me?" Rarity asks in that polite, lady-like tone that just can't be refused. "I simply cannot finish this dress unless I have the necessary fabrics."

Rarity takes a pen in her mouth and begins to write down the materials that you'll need to get for her and of course the name of the store you'll be getting them at.

Giving you the paper, your hooves touch lightly for only a second. All you can do is simply stare at your touching hooves. It seems that the best brief moments in time always freeze up into slow motion.

This is one of those moments where you are more than happy it did slow down.

A hoof isn't usually the most appealing part of a pony. They are made rough and hard for traveling on the ground. There is something different about this though. Rarity's is so well taken care of. It feels absolutely perfect as it gently brushes against your own hoof. How you don't want that feeling to leave.

Finally, you take the paper of written supplies and back up, your cheeks now having a clear red tint to them. It was only a second, but holding hooves with her felt like an eternity.

As you raise your face up to look at the mare, you see she too has a blush on her face.

"So then..." She says in a slightly quiet tone, then looking off a bit toward the wall and regains her normal tone. "Are you going or are you just going to stand around like some sort of slacker? You know I simply won't stand for slackers."

You don't need more of a wave off than that. You exit the Boutique, heading quickly down the street as your daydream-like thoughts return to you. Just what was that chill that went down your spine when you simply touched her hoof? It was the first time in a long while you felt truly good. One second was enough to make you feel magnificent. You don't understand.

Then the déjà vu hits.

"LOOK OUT!"

Again, you and the other creature are knocked to the ground. Once again, it seems as if you've knocked something from the pony's grasp. Well, if it was a pony at all.

Before you is a small purple dragon, probably only a little over a foot in size. It clearly isn't an adult yet, or won't be for a while.

"Hey!" He says, getting up and glaring at you as you get up as well. "Why don't you watch where you're going!?"

“Uh. I’m sorry.” You say, backing up a bit. “I was just uh...I wasn’t paying attention.”

That’s your excuse a lot. You don’t seem to pay any more attention no matter how many times something slams into you though.

The dragon calms down a bit, seeing you aren’t anything too bad. “Eh...don’t worry about it. I was kinda daydreaming too.”

You can’t help but get an amused smile at this as he extends his claw.

“My name’s Spike. Yours?” He asks, looking up to you.

You shake his claw, telling him your name as Spike nods. “See I was just on the way to the Boutique. To see Rarity. I was going to give her uh....uhh....”

Spike stops and looks around in a panic. “Uh oh! Where are they!?”

Wondering what this young dragon meant, you look down toward the ground for what he could be freaking out about. You’re sure he is referring to the thing you had knocked from his grip upon impact. Finally, toward the left in the grass, you spot a bouquet of roses.

You trot over and pick them up, dusting the small amount of dirt off of them. Spike responds by rushing over and grabbing them quickly.

“Oh you found them!” Spike says in glee, clutching the roses close to him. “Thanks....doesn’t look like they got too damaged either.”

“So you’re giving those to Rarity?” You ask, raising an eyebrow. “Any reason?”

“Any reason!?” Spike asks in a slight mock tone. “Because Rarity is the most wonderful pony in all of Ponyville! No. In all of Equestria!”

You can’t exactly disagree with that.

“So you know her?” Spike asks, crossing his short arms at his chest.

“Yeah....I uh. I sort of work for her. I just started actually.” You reply a bit awkwardly. This sets off a strange set of emotions that flashes across Spike’s face quickly.

“Wait. You’re THAT guy!?” Spike asks in shock.

“What guy?” You ask, now completely lost as you tilt your head.

“When I was talking to her yesterday she kept talking about some guy she had just hired. Kept going on and on. I had never seen her talk about anypony like that.” Spike says in a low tone.

Rarity was talking...about you?

“Wait...she was talking about me?” You ask, looking to him. Spike just clutches the roses even closer to his chest, glaring at you now.

“Look.” Spike says, his eyes narrowing at you. “I have to give these to Rarity. You just remember you’re only her employee. Nothing more.”

Spike rushes off, leaving you to only be confused. Rarity was bragging about you? Why? You never thought of yourself as something all that great. It seemed to upset this little dragon you just met as well. What is his relationship to Rarity anyway? Questions that would remain unanswered for now. You had a mission for the lady in your thoughts.

Turning around again, you rush off to fetch her the materials she needs, your thoughts full of confusion, slight joy and of course, Rarity herself.

Days would pass. Then weeks. Then even months. You fall into the regular duties of helping Rarity incredibly quickly. Things such as fetching her fabric and going to the store to pick up new ones altogether become the usual.

You become more than that. You become more than just her employee and tool to make her day easier. After weeks of talking and working together, you become her friend. You both share secrets with each other that you would not have told anypony else. It only dawns on you that this pony actually trusts and likes you. Maybe not in the way you hope yet, but it’s clear she does.

Then there's the matter of your other problem.

"GET IN HERE!" Rarity yells from another room. You stop your sweeping that you are doing in the main room where customers usually walk in. What could you have possibly done wrong now?

You sigh to yourself, trotting into the work room where many of Rarity's dresses and other clothing are up on display. In the middle of a room is a horribly clashing purple and green dress. The design itself is great. The colors?...Not so much.

"Would you mind telling me what this is?" She asks, tapping a hoof impatiently and in annoyance. All you do is reel back a little with a slight whimper. Displeasing a boss is never a good idea.

"It's....a dress." You say.

Her expression doesn't look any more satisfied by that answer. Not that you expect it to be. It was pretty uninspired.

"I...really don't know how this happened though." You say, biting your lower lip. How could that have happened? You were only just learning to sew so it was expected for a few screw ups. You don't understand how the coloring could end up so horrible though.

Rarity just sighs, looking to you as her expression goes soft. "You do take this job seriously don't you?"

"Yes. Of course I do, Rarity." You reply, looking to her face. She just gazes back in a gentle way.

"Then you need to be more careful about your color choices, alright? Please consult me first before you make choices about colors. I'll tell you if it works." She says. "I'm not angry. Just rather disappointed that you keep wasting fabric on mistakes like this."

It isn't the first time it happened. Over the past few months various things had happened to this degree. It could have been as simple as not being able to get certain jewels from a drawer that clearly weren't there, then when she would look they would magically

return. Another instance was when she gave you permission to groom her fur as practice. A once in a lifetime opportunity. The shampoo was replaced with orange dye. You don't like to remember that day.

Each occurrence didn't seem to make sense to you. There isn't any real reason that a bottle of shampoo would suddenly have dye in its place. No reason why a drawer would suddenly be empty when every other time, it wasn't.

It didn't make sense until now, when you happen to look out the window to see someone walking away.

A small dragon. One whose colors match that horribly clashing dress.

Why would Spike do it? Why would he sabotage all of your good relations with Rarity? However, you aren't exactly surprised that he's doing this. Ever since he found out you work for her he hasn't exactly liked you. Then again, not a lot of colts have liked you ever since they found out you work for Rarity.

You had to confront him.

...

A bit later after that fiasco, you approach Rarity and request your lunch break. She is a little hesitant to agree to give you one after the events that have been happening lately. She agrees however, and promptly tells you to make it quick. You, of course, agree to that. You don't have any plans to keep her waiting for long. You still love working for her.

Exiting the Carousel Boutique, you trot off down the road at a rather quick pace. Your first stop would be his usual residence, the Ponyville Library. You stop by there every so often anyway to pick up some books and get along rather well with the owner, Twilight Sparkle. You figure it won't be all that awkward to stop in and ask where Spike may be.

Finally making your stop, you walk up and nudge the door open with your nose, seeing its open a crack. As usual, Twilight is at her desk, deeply engrossed in a book of her own.

“Hey, Twilight.” You say as you approach the purple unicorn’s desk

...

“Twilight.”

...

“TWILIGHT!” You tell her as she finally snaps out of her trance and sets down the book, looking up to you. It isn’t the first time you had to do that. The mare gets so caught up in her books all the time. You usually have to pretend to be caught on fire or something to grab her attention.

“Oh!” She says, blinking a few times to focus on you. “Yes? What is it?”

“Hey.” You say. “I was just wondering if Spike has been around lately. I just want to talk to him.”

“Spike?” She asks, bringing a hoof to her chin in thought. “He was here a while ago, but he ran off again pretty quick. He wouldn’t really tell me why he was away so much either. If I didn’t know any better, I’d say he was avoiding something.”

Smart dragon.

You just sigh and look to her. “Thanks anyway, Twilight.”

Making your way back outside, absolutely nothing new to go on, you plop down at the side of the road. Finding Spike will have to wait for another time it seems. It is then however, that you glance up at the sky to see where the sun is. Your break had ended quite a while ago.

“Uh oh!” You say in a deep panic, jumping into the air in a deep worry. You catch the attention of many bystander ponies. This does not seem to bother you though as you quickly gallop off toward the Carousel Boutique. You can only wonder what sort of tongue lashing Rarity will have for you this time. More than that, you can only wonder how many more strikes you have before it’s all over. Just like your last job.

Finally, you arrive and bust open the door in a heavy breathing panic, quickly shutting it behind you. You only pray that she isn't too upset with you for being so late back from your break.

"Rarity!?" You ask as you rush into the work room, seeing her slumped over her work desk. 'I am so sorry for being late! I was just um...I was just and-'"

"...Rarity?" You ask.

You finally realize she is crying. It isn't a straight up sob fest, but clearly enough tears flowing to show she is definitely upset about something. You have never had to deal with any crying mares before. Let alone your boss. This is going to be difficult.

"Rarity...are you ok?" You ask. She says nothing in response.

Rocky start.

"Rarity..." You say, sitting down beside her.

"Leave me..." She says simply, looking off with a scoff. "Just...go back to work."

You can't exactly disobey your boss. So you do as told, standing up with a sad, sullen expression as you start away. As you start away however, you get a quick glance at a picture laying on the desk. It is rather soaked in Rarity's tears.

A white stallion. He is truly remarkable in appearance. He's even looking right at the camera, as if telling the pony looking at the picture that he knows very well how great he is. You only tilt your head to the side a bit, trying to understand as it finally dawns on you. This is Prince Blueblood.

You always heard about his appearances at the Grand Galloping Gala every year. Was Rarity and this Prince an item at some point?

"And just what are YOU looking at?" Rarity asks, her face now a scowl. "When did I allow you permission to look at my--a..at my..."

Rarity just looks down again, quietly sobbing. You slowly take the seat beside her once more. This time, she doesn't beckon you away.

"You liked him didn't you?" You ask, not really knowing his affiliation with her. You at least know they were somewhat close for her to be crying all over this picture of him.

"Of course I did..." She sniffles quietly.

"Um...can I ask what happened, Rarity? Miss Rarity?" You ask.

"Rarity...is fine." She says. You can't help but get a surprised look. Only her closest friends can call her just Rarity for so long.

"It was supposed to be perfect." She tells you, looking to your face with a hurt and sad expression. "I was going to go to that Gala last year....meet my prince....we were supposed to fall in love and get married. Then he...he was horrible...he wasn't anything like I dreamed."

"Then maybe he wasn't all that charming." You say as she just glares at you a bit.

"Of course he wasn't." She says. "Otherwise we would be together right this moment. Cradling me in his arms...and-"

"But that's just it, Rarity." You continue as she looks at you. "These expectations you have. It's okay to want a guy to be like that with. To have a colt to cradle you in his arms. It just means that wasn't the colt to do it."

"But..." She says with a quivering lip. "He's...the only true prince in all Equestria. I can't just-"

"What if your true prince isn't a prince at all?" You ask, looking into her eyes as you slowly move your hoof to grace hers. She looks as if she's going to pull away, but decides to keep it there as she only looks to the ground, as if finally understanding.

"You think....there really is a colt somewhere who can make me happy?" She asks, gazing back into your eyes. They are just as beautiful as the day you first met her.

“I know for a fact there’s one who wants to more than anything...” You whisper as your faces unknowingly get closer and closer. After only a few seconds, you feel her warm, gentle breath slowly going into your mouth. It tastes like heaven.

She looks at you, slowly moving her hooves around your neck to hold you. She looks at you in the most lustful and needy way. You are ready to fulfill those needs.

The clock suddenly rings, letting out a chime as you both jump nearly 10 feet from each other, breathing heavily with your hearts thumping hard. How long had you both been there?

“Oh dear me...” She says with a deep blush at what had happened. “It seems work is done for today isn’t it? How time flies...I suppose I’ll see you tomorrow yes?”

You just lower your head a bit in disappointment as you walk toward the door.

“I’ll....see you...tomorrow yes?” She says as you just nod. “After all, the gala is in a few days again. We’ll be very busy designing for ponies everywhere.”

Your head springs up at that as you remember. The gala is returning in just a few days. Rarity, as far as you know, isn’t going with anyone.

“Ta-ta.” She waves, a bit of a soft smile in her expression now as you leave. You just trot down that road, deep in thought as always.

You have to be Rarity’s date for that Gala. Not Spike, Prince Blueblood, or anypony else could stop you.

You step out of your house for a bright new day. Your day off. The sun is shining. Ponies are chatting. Nervousness is tearing through you like a slab of hot butter. For today you are not taking the day off, you are going straight to your workplace for another matter.

It’s time.

You trot toward the Carousel Boutique, having every necessity you need now to ask Rarity to the Gala. You had purchased your tickets for the show just yesterday. It took nearly all of your paycheck, but it was definitely worth it. You have a tuxedo ready to be worn as well

It is finally time. It would be, if you don't notice the sullen creature sitting at the side of the road.

Spike.

He looks devastated. It's clear he notices you by the way he shifts his head toward you, but he does not make any sort of gesture. The dragon simply sighs deeper and buries his chin within his palms, looking out.

You wouldn't normally bother him, but he looks so down on himself, you can't turn a blind eye to someone this depressed. You know the feeling all too well yourself after all.

"...hey." You say, looking down to the dragon. He doesn't reply.

"Are you ok?" You try asking. Again, nothing.

You sigh yourself now. You don't exactly expect him to talk to you about his problems. He could at least respond though to show he's alive.

"Spike. I know it's rough." You say, your head hanging low as you try to talk to him as nicely as possible. "We both like her. We both could just as easily be with her and-"

"You don't have to pretend." He finally says in a monotone voice. "I already know."

All you do is stare blankly at him. At last, the small dragon turns to face you.

"I don't....I can't be with her." Spike tells you. "I'm giving up."

"Spike I don't think we ever were in competition." You say, then cringing as you realize that came out wrong.

Spike just stands up and scowls at you with tears in his eyes. "I know that! You don't have to rub it in! I don't even have a ticket to the Gala. Not even one for Rarity..."

“Spike...I didn’t mean it like that...” You say, plopping down beside him.

“Well it’s obvious anyway...” He mutters, not really mad at you in particular. “Who was I kidding anyway? I never stood a chance with her. We’re not even the same species...and I’m just a kid...”

“But you’re a good kid, Spike.” You tell him as he looks up at you. “You got a good heart. You’re funny. You’re thoughtful. I bet you Rarity would love to take someone like you to the Gala.”

“...you think so?” Spike asks, a small glimmer of hope beginning to show once more in the dragon kid’s eyes. It quickly fades away once more at another thought... “I don’t have tickets though....how can I ask her?”

You have no idea what possesses you to do what you do next.

You slowly hold out the tickets for Spike. All he does is stare at your hooves in disbelief, as if you were holding a dead body out to him.

“The...tickets for you and Rarity?” He finally manages to choke out. You only nod in response.

“But...why?” He asks. “This means that you can’t go with her and....you’re...OK with that?”

“Well. No.” You say. “It’s times like recently though that I have to do what’s right. Help others when they need it.”

“....even after...all I did to you?” He asks. “The dye. The pranks. Everything?”

“Take them, Spike.” You smile warmly, as he slowly reaches out for a moment. He manages to get the tickets into his claw for a half second before putting them back in your hoof, making you look in shock this time.

“I think we both like Rarity equally.” He smiles now. “The Gala is an event where Rarity should be with her prince. As much as I want to go....I don’t think I’m old enough yet for that.”

You just blink, holding the tickets to yourself now.

“I think for now, you can make her happy.” Spike says as he looks up at you. “So you need to make Rarity happy for both of us.”

“...will do, Spike.” You say, looking down at him. “I promise.”

“Alright.” He smirks to you as he finally begins to trot down that road, but he then stops and looks over his shoulder at you. “And by the way. Once I get older, things won’t be this easy. Rarity will have to fall for older Spike’s devilish charms and good looks.”

You can only imagine older spike will be a large dragon. You can’t imagine it will get much easier to be with Rarity. For now though, you humor the impressionable young dragon.

“I’ll be ready, Spike.” You smirk back. Spike’s smirk slowly grows into a warm smile as he turns around and walks away again. Not just a playful rival, but a pal and friend.

You hear the soft feminine sound of your name being called. It takes only a minute or two to register before you recognize that voice. Spinning around to it, you see it as your boss.

Rarity looks at you with a truly affection smile, her eyes gleaming with admiration and maybe even more than that. She had seen a lot of what just occurred by the look on her face. For the first time in a while, you’re proud someone had secretly seen you doing something.

Gently once more, like a dove, Rarity says your name again.

“I would love to accompany you to the Gala.”

It takes such a long time to register. She had said yes. You are now going to the Grand Galloping Gala with the mare you never thought you would ever have a chance with.

All because you showed some generosity.

With the moonlight glistening off of your fur, you turn around and make your way toward your home. For tomorrow, you have a date with a princess.

You have to be the prince.

At the gala, she is supposed to meet her prince.

The white unicorn has clung to that thought ever since she began to go to that gathering. You know the story that occurred just last year in this very building.

As you gaze up at the enormous Canterlot castle that looms brilliantly in the night, you can make your own thoughts. Your own dreams. In your own dreams, you fantasize about what you and Rarity could be once the night has ended.

Beside you is the girl herself. Stunning is an understatement for what best describes the regal pony. A violet dress that flows beautifully over her divine back. perfectly highlighting her bright and gorgeous mane that still fell just as magnificently at her neck. She also has several forms of jewelry at her neck and shoes, all bringing out the shine of her 'oh so' soft looking fur....

"Are you just going to stare or are we going to go inside?" She asks, a very playful and enticing smile on her lips. Either sounds good to you. However, as usual, a blush just appears on your cheeks as you stumble to get an answer out to her.

"I was just uh..." You stutter. "It's just that...and..."

Rarity only lets out that same giggle she gave you the day you first met her. She smiles as she says your name warmly. "It's just all too easy to get you in a fluster like this. It's a bit adorable if I do say so myself."

Adorable? You?

You see her approaching the door, but you make a quick rush to run up ahead and grab a hold of the door with your hoof. With that, you pull it open. It's surprisingly heavy, which you aren't sure why you didn't expect that. It's a huge castle door.

Regardless of that, you manage to pull it open all the way and get in front of it to keep it still in that position. Rarity's eyes slowly stop to rest upon your face. They have a mix of surprise and deep admiration. The girl just seems downright unsure as to why you did that.

She wants to be treated like a lady right?

Rarity's face slowly stops and settles on the look of admiration, slowly trotting up to you and planting the softest and most gentle kiss on your cheek, giving you an affectionate look before going inside the castle and into the gala.

The night you never thought would happen is all too real and alive. Like your first day of work, you have prepared. Coat? Clean. Hooves? Polished. Mane and teeth? Brushed.

Ability to stay calm? Tonight, it couldn't go anywhere.

You walk in behind the beautiful mare, letting her slowly gently close behind you as you peer around at the setting. It shares a resemblance to Ponyville in a way. Ponies chatting, dancing and playing games seem to be occurring everywhere.

This isn't a time to daydream however, you have to show Miss Rarity the night of her life.

"So." You say, turning to your date. "Do you want to go into the other room to uh...linger with the royals?"

"The royals?" Rarity asks in a puzzled way.

"Uh...yeah. The royals. The ones you always talk about." You say. She could not have forgotten about them right? "You want them to recognize you as regal? Just as lady like?"

"Oh yes!" She says as her eyes spring open all the way. "O...of course I want to impress them. After all, they aren't truly royal and regal without somepony of my class among them!"

“O..Off we go.” She demands. Her voice cracks. Something is definitely wrong. As you have learned from many experiences with her though, it isn’t always best to force her to speak what’s on her mind. She is a lot more reserved than many make her out to be. It is something you learned and picked up on rather quickly.

You watch as she eyes a set of stairs to the left. You both trot forward toward the double doors, but her eyes don’t leave that staircase. You desperately want to ask her what’s wrong, but you continue to bite your tongue and push forward. You have to make sure she does what she wants tonight.

“Um...yes.” Rarity starts as she stops before either of you can reach the doors. You stop as well, ready to listen. “Could you be a dear and fetch me a glass of punch?”

“Oh. Yes. Sure thing, Rarity.” You comply, rushing over to the punch table immediately as she just bites her lower lip, her expression immediately dropping to almost sadness. She only watches you as you get her the punch requested, as if she was about to do something.

Then she runs, her purple elegant dress trailing behind her.

Rarity simply runs up the stairs she had been looking at before, not saying a word. Her eyes however, are clenched tightly shut as tears stream down her cheeks. You don’t notice any of this however, until you turn around.

You drop the punch glass immediately and take off after her. You blew it. You have failed Rarity and are no better than Prince Blueblood. You can’t believe you ever expected any different. You’re a warehouse worker. Did you really ever think you ever had a chance with such a beautiful and wonderful girl like her?

Now it’s too late. She hates you and it’s all your fault.

You arrive at the top of the stairs. The room appears to be some sort of small gathering room, yet it is completely empty. More than that, there is no sign of Rarity. The only other door here is one that leads outside to a balcony. You decide to take it and see what comes your way.

As you step out into the brisk nighttime air, you see a rather plush and soft looking couch. The floor made of complete glass. The railing looks like it could be made of several types of gemstones.

In short, this balcony is probably worth more than you are.

At the railings though, is something that is worth more than any diamonds, rubies or anything in the world to you.

Rarity.

You are afraid to step closer. She hates you. She has to. Why else would she run away? You must have failed her as a date and did not do well enough in treating her like a lady. There is no other explanation.

"...I don't understand." She finally whispers in a somber manner. You can't reply yet. You have no idea what to say.

"You....keep....why are you doing this to me?" She asks, looking to you. Finally, your voice returns to you.

"Rarity I'm so sorry!" You say, trying to fight back tears in your own eyes. "I really wanted to treat you like the lady you deserve to be treated as! I really did try but I was so selfish for thinking I could when there's definitely another colt who could and-"

"No." She stops, approaching you and putting a hoof to your mouth. "You're not doing anything wrong....you're....everything he was supposed to be..."

"What...?" You ask as you get quiet finally, looking into her eyes in confusion, a few tears finally making their way down your cheeks in trails.

"I...didn't want to see the royals..." She says at last, looking away a bit but still keeping very close to you. You can feel her nervous heartbeat along with her breath warmly spreading across your neck. "I knew he was in there....I just couldn't show my face to him again."

“I....should have known.” You say as your head hangs low. “Rarity, I should have thought before I suggested that.”

“I shouldn’t have asked you out.” You continue, looking away. “I mean you could have come here with another colt and he would have treated you like-”

“Stop it!” Rarity yells as the tears openly flow now, making her face soaked in her own waterworks. “Why are you behaving like this!?”

“L..Like what?” You ask in deep fear, confusion and hurt, backing up. “Rarity, please tell me what I need to do to please you! I’m so sorry for whatever I did to hurt you.”

“This!” She continues, not letting you get away as she follows you as you back up. “Being so nice and caring and thoughtful and selfless....and...a..and...like a gentlecolt....”

That last word makes her tone go soft. All she does is look at you dead in the eyes, bringing a soft and gentle hoof to graze your cheek softly. She slowly wipes your tear away.

“I don’t understand....” She continues once more, keeping her hoof on your face. “Why I feel so....perfect when I’m near you. It was supposed to feel like this with him. You’re not a prince. You’re just a filthy worker and I simply CANNOT be seen romantically with somepony like y...y..”

...

Rarity finally grabs your face and plants her lips firmly on yours, her eyes fluttering shut. You make absolutely no effort to pull away. Shock rushes over you, of course. However, after understanding what exactly is happening, you slowly move your own hooves around the female pony’s slender and feminine body, holding her as close to you as you can.

“Oh...oh...” The girl mutters into your mouth in quiet whispers of bliss as your breath continues to mix with hers. It is everything you ever have dreamed and fantasized about and more.

Rarity trails her tongue carefully over your lips as if she were tracing them, moistening them with her saliva, pressing her body closely and deeply into yours. At last however, she breaks the kiss, needing to breathe.

Your eyes never leave the mare. You love her. You want her.

You move in once more and hold her closely as she lets a satisfied noise escape her luscious lips. This time, you lean down and begin to shower her supple neck with a barrage of loving kisses.

Rarity slowly coos out your name. "I...that feels divine..."

You make your way down, giving the same attention to each of her stressed and equally lush shoulders. At this point, you feel her hooves making their way down your sides in exploration. They adventurously rub each side of your thighs as you let out a soft groan yourself in pleasure.

Rarity smoothly brings you both farther and farther away from the railing, both of you continuing to rub and caress each other's bodies. You feel the back of your leg touch something soft. It gives out from under you, both of you tumbling down onto the couch with her laying on top of you.

You have a feeling that was her goal.

You don't take that as a signal to stop, only to continue giving the girl the love she craved as you start once more, licking her chest affectionately. The quiet whispers and coos grow to straight up moans of pleasure.

"Go on...please...."

You nuzzle and press your snout into her sides, causing her to let out a giggle as you smile sheepishly up at her beaming face. You let your eyes roll back down to what was next.

Her round and perfect flank.

You waste no time, bringing your lips to it and giving it the same love as every other part of her body. Your lips move forward and back repeatedly as she breathes more and more heavily, feeling the pleasure as her slender hips are caressed by mouth.

“Oh more...more, my prince...” She begs in between each deep, exasperated breath.

Then however, you finally stop. Looking to her cutie mark right in front of your face. It is beautiful. Just like her.

You lick the cutie mark, gazing at it as if it were her face. You love what this girl does for a living. You love her face. You love her laugh.

You love her.

A hoof reaches out to you, pulling your face back to face another. The most breathtaking face you have ever seen.

“....I love you.”

The words ring throughout your entire body. All that happens though is you let the instinct of your body to climb up beside her, laying with her. You carefully drape your foreleg over her and pull her close so that you are nose to nose.

You hold her. You cradle her in your arms as she had always dreamed. Then, at last, you speak out as well.

“I love you too, Rarity.”

She sighs dreamily at that, closing her eyes for a much deserved rest. You can only gaze up at the night sky too for a moment, letting it all sink in. You have done it. Rarity finally feels what it was like. To feel like a princess.

You are her prince.



A Story in All of Us

By: Timebomb0

*Knock*Knock*Knock*

"Fluttershy? Are you there?"

It's a bright and sunny day in the late afternoon as you find yourself standing before the home of Fluttershy. This was the first time you had ever been to her house before; you had just gotten over staring wide-eyed at her hut that seemed to blend in seamlessly with the surrounding nature for a couple minutes to remember why you were now knocking on her front door.

There were two reasons for your unexpected visit. First, you were delivering some mail of hers that had ended up in your mail box by mistake. You weren't entirely sure how such a mix-up could happen, but then again, your town's post office has a cross-eyed pegasus for a mail carrier, so anything is possible. In any case, deep down you knew that the first reason was merely a lucky excuse so you could actually go to her house for the second reason, a reason you wouldn't dare tell another soul:

You love her company.

Ever since you first saw her at the special welcoming party Pinkie Pie sprung on you in your own house the day you moved in, you have always felt something stir inside you when she was near you. One look at the peaceful expression on her face coupled with her

sweet delicate voice would always be enough to make you feel at ease with the world, no matter how stressed you were mere moments ago. You expect her closest friends were used to her peculiarities by now, but you never tired of them and always found your time near her to be criminally short. It was also tough to get her to acknowledge you at first: While her other friends were quicker to open up to you and treat you like a true friend, she rarely spoke directly to you when it was just the two of you, and even then it was little more than small questions and one-word replies uttered at a barely-audible level. Her friends had to explain to you that it's just how she acts around ponies she isn't comfortable with, and you could see small signs of her getting slightly more comfortable being around you, but it only strengthened your resolve to become friends with her. There simply must be a beautiful heart underneath her quiet demeanor, and you wanted it to feel as serene and content as she made you feel without even knowing it.

Returning from your daydream, you knock on her door again. It had been a couple minutes since you last knocked, and with each passing second you could feel your chance to see her today slipping away. Your head was racing with thoughts on why she wasn't answering the door: Is she taking a nap? Is she not home? Is it you? Could she possibly....not want anything to do with you? Could you really have come off so intimidating to her? What if you tried too hard to be friendly towards her? What if you weren't friendly enough?

Finally realizing how paranoid your thoughts are starting to get, you decide to settle on the innocent explanation that she's not home. With a sigh of disappointment and your head pointed to the ground, you turn around and begin your long walk home. Maybe you'll try again tomorrow; you still have her mail, after all, and you didn't just want to leave it at her doorstep where some animal could take it and run off with it. Not that you would know what kind of animal would just up and take someone's mail, but better safe than sorry. Reaching the end of her front yard, you look up so you can at least see where you're going-

Eep!

You're not exactly sure which one of you made that noise (possibly both of you), but you had more important matters in front of you. Standing only a couple feet away and looking right at you was none other than Fluttershy, showing just how quiet and inconspicuous she can be without even realizing it. You jump back a couple steps out of reflex, which causes her to do the same and unconsciously bring her body down lower to the ground. It's at this point you notice something strange about her: She's dirty. Mud and other stains are splotted randomly across her otherwise lovely coat, her mane is disheveled (yet still able to conceal one of her eyes from your vision), and you could possibly make out a stray leaf or two in her tail. You aren't sure what your next move should be; you feel like you should say something, but you don't know what to say, and even if you did, your surprise meeting has put a large lump in your throat. All you can do is stare at her dirt-covered face until...

"Oh! I'm so sorry!" says Fluttershy, finally breaking the silence between the two of you. "I, um, wasn't expecting any c-company for today..." she continues, her voice steadily getting weaker and her face turning away from yours and toward the ground. She lightly kicks at the dirt beneath her with her forehoof.

Through sheer willpower, you swallow the lump in your throat and begin to speak in as friendly a voice as you can muster. "N-no, Fluttershy, please! It's my fault...I shouldn't have come by unannounced. Please forgive me, it was rude of me to do such a thing." You bow your head to the ground, despite knowing she isn't looking at you anymore. Returning from your unseen gesture of humility, you remember the one question that popped into your head upon bumping into her: "But, Fluttershy...if I may ask, what happened to you? Why are you covered in mud?"

"Oh! Um, it's n-nothing..." she replies, looking up from the ground but still not making eye contact with you. "Uh, my friend Applejack came by this morning and asked me to help find some of her pigs that got out last night. We found them in a muddy bank near the edge of the Everfree Forest, but they were just a teensy bit rowdy, and we had to chase them through the mud to catch them. I finally got them to calm down by talking to them, but then one of the baby pigs got just a teensier bit friendly and jumped on top of me, pushing me into the mud and licking my face a whole bunch. Applejack helped me out of the mud and

told me that she could lead them back to her farm by herself, so I decided to come home and wash this mud off, not that I like to leave my friends like that or anything...eep!"

Realizing that this was the most she had ever said to you at one time, she turned her head to the side, her mane obscuring both of her eyes to you. You could possibly make out a light blush coming across her face and her muttering the words "I'm such a chatterbox..." under her breath. Again, you felt like saying something, anything, to make her feel better, but it seemed that all your knowledge of language had just abandoned you, never to be found again. Before you can even begin to think of saying something that wasn't just foal babbling, she sort-of turns her head back to yours and speaks again. "...but, um, why are you here...um, you know, if it's okay for me to ask?"

For a second, it seemed as if not only your ability to speak coherently had been forgotten but your reason for being there as well. "Um, er, yes, I'm here because, uh...oh, right!" With your brain finally getting somewhat back into gear, you immediately open the saddlebag you'd been wearing the entire time and pull out her mail: A single issue of *Equestrian Geographic*, with Fluttershy's mailing address labeled on the cover. Holding it up for her, she slowly takes the magazine with her mouth and places it on her back. "I, er, somehow got your mail delivered to me by accident. I was just stopping by to hand it to you," you explain. It wasn't the whole truth, but you knew that now would not be the best time to express your desires to her. "I see you have some things to take care of, so I should probably just get going now..."

At those words, Fluttershy's head perked up and turned to fully face yours again. "No, wait! Um, you can't go just yet. I mean, you came all this way out here just to deliver a magazine. You should at least come inside and let me make you some tea." Mere seconds after making her assertive outburst, she resumes her normally timid stance. "Um, that is, if you want to...if you're available..."

It was an offer you couldn't refuse. Giving her a warm smile in yet another attempt to make her feel more comfortable, you accepted her offer, and found yourself walking into her house together.

.... *Why am I here?*

About half an hour has passed since you came inside Fluttershy's home, and you've been asking that question to yourself ever since. You had told her that it wouldn't be right for her to serve you while she was covered in mud, pig saliva, and Celestia knows what else, so she went upstairs to take a bath. You tried to come up with some way of getting your feelings across to her in the meantime, but nothing you thought of didn't come off as overbearing or incredibly cheesy, and thus your thoughts would eventually come full circle to the question of what you were doing at her house. Maybe it wasn't so bad being just a distant friend after all, you figure. At least you couldn't hurt her this way...

Before you could wallow in more of whatever it is ponies are supposed to wallow in, a bright light makes its way into your eyes, forcing you to shut them and turn your head for a second. Placing a hoof over the bright spot, you eventually make your way to the source of the glare. It turns out to not be your first guess - a magical love fairy sent to turn you into a Casanova - but rather a pretty glass ball sitting on a table that caught the sunlight coming through a window and bounced it into your eyes. Inside the ball is a delicately crafted butterfly resembling the ones on Fluttershy's cutie mark. In a way, it was exactly like Fluttershy: Beautiful, yet seemingly fragile at the same time, and almost just as captivating as the real thing.

You found yourself drawn to this pretty table ornament. Using both of your forehooves, you carefully pick up the ball to admire it better, noting how smooth it felt to the touch. You bring it a little closer to your face, but in doing so, the ball bounces the sunlight off itself and back into your eyes again. In your hock-jerk reaction, you feel your balance slip out underneath your hindlegs. Before you knew it, you had fallen to the ground with a nice "THUD!" sending the glass ball flying into the steps leading down to Fluttershy's basement. Returning to your senses, you immediately rush down the stairs into the basement, chiding yourself the entire time. That ball looked so valuable! What were you thinking just grabbing it like that? If it was broken, she definitely wouldn't accept you now!

The basement is dark, its only sources of light coming from the door and the glow of some fireflies inside a glass jar. You reckon Fluttershy must keep them as pets or something, but you quickly return your focus to finding the ball if it's still in one piece. You poke and prod through the knick-knacks, furniture, and other miscellaneous items inside the basement

until you find yourself on the other side of the room. You turn to start combing the room from the other side when you catch a faint gleam of light in your eyes again. Slowly making your way to the source, you reach out and carefully grab the object, hold it up in front of the fireflies, and breathe a sigh of relief; it was the ball, with a couple extra scuff marks, but still in one piece. You could probably hide them from view if you put it back in its stand just right. Lingerin in the basement any further would likely end in trouble, you figure, so relying on your hindlegs to guide you once again, you turn your head towards the door-

...ngs in the Wa...

Wait, was that...no, it couldn't be! As you turned your head, you could have sworn you had briefly caught some words you had seen before. Setting the glass ball to the side and performing a double-take somewhat confirms your suspicions; poking out of a large white sheet obscuring a large "something" was the words you had thought you saw. Your next move was crucial: Fluttershy could be out of her bath at any moment now, but if this really was what you thought it was....

Your curiosity got the better of you. Grabbing the edge of the sheet with your mouth, you flick your neck and throw the sheet off the "something", revealing much more than what you initially suspected. The sheet was hiding a desk, and on this desk was a small stack of books. You recognized many of the titles of these books: *Spreading Wings in the Water* by Ravenley, *The Day the Guard Came Home* by Sugarcane, *The Wish for Relief* by Winkley. The majority of the books, however, were all penned by the same author, a reclusive and eccentric writer known only by the name of Lionheart. You knew these books were not just regular books; they were romantic novels, some of the highest-praised romantic novels in Equestria, to be precise.

You knew this because you were a huge fan of them.

It was a hobby you didn't openly discuss with anyone, but ever since being dared by one of your stallion friends to read a popular romance book, you couldn't get enough of

them. In the hands of the right author, the novels touched your heart in a way you had never felt or thought you needed to feel before. Lionheart's works were especially moving; by the time you had finished reading *A Filly's Fantasy*, tears of several emotions all resonating at once were trailing down your cheeks, something you would never admit to doing lest you risk giving up your status as a colt. Seeing these novels in Fluttershy's house of all places has made you elated. This was a side of her you would have never thought existed in your wildest dreams, and maybe, just maybe, this could be what you need to break the ice.

You couldn't get too far with this line of thinking, however, as your attention soon turned to the other object upon the desk: A stack of paper, with one sheet set aside by itself with a quill laying on top. You thought about stopping your sudden snooping spree, but you just had to continue, as if some force was drawing you to this desk. You could make out writing on the lone paper, but even with your eyes somewhat adjusted to the dark conditions, it was still difficult to read, especially considering it was written in some of the cutest cursive you had ever seen. You can only make out a few words - "lips", "massage", "control", "blush", "passion", among others - but the gist of it was causing you to develop a blush of your own. She couldn't really be writing *this* kind of scene, could she? Just what was she trying to write? You reach over to the stack of papers and pull out the sheet on the very bottom. The print on this page is large and clear, and nearly causes your jaw to hit the floor.

A Story in All of Us

By

Lionheart

This...has to be a dream. Or a joke. Maybe your mind is playing tricks on you now. Maybe you're going insane. Maybe Celestia is teaching you a lesson from afar on not snooping around on your friends and/or possible love interests. Whatever the explanation is, it can't be real. There is absolutely no way that Fluttershy, this delicate and gentle creature, could even know what a romantic novel is, let alone be a famous author-

Gasp!

You're definitely sure which one of you made that noise. but you had much more pressing issues behind you. Slowly turning your head to the inevitable, you can make out the pink mane and wide green eyes of Fluttershy, once again showing just how quiet this pegasus can be. She looks at you with an expression of pure mortification. You had been caught red-handed; there wasn't a thing you could do or say to get out of this, and so you can only look back with an equally frightened face. The mere seconds the both of you stand in this position feel like years to you. Finally, she breaks the standoff, but not in a way you had hoped. Her breaths turn into light whimpers and tears start forming in her eyes. Before you can even begin to work up the courage needed to free yourself from this emotional paralysis, she turns to the stairs and runs out of the basement, her head held low to the ground. You spent the next few seconds staring into blank space in sheer disbelief until your instincts finally took over, forcing you to run up the stairs in some kind of blind chase after her.

Your thoughts were filled with a new level of despair and self-pity. You had blown it, plain and simple. The person you wanted to open up to you and your favorite novelist were one in the same, and you were now being rejected by both. Whatever punishment you receive from hurting this beautiful creature, you surely deserve tenfold. You race out of the basement and up the stairs into the second floor out of a combination of guilt and a futile attempt to repent for your actions. Frantically looking around for the pegasus whose heart you undoubtedly broke, you notice a shut door leading into what you assume is the bathroom. Inching closer to the door, you can begin to hear the sounds of someone crying on the other side, your heart breaking even further as the sobbing gets louder. Purely operating on emotion now, you lose all control over your next few actions.

"Fluttershy?" You ask loudly enough for the pegasus to hear. Her sobs do not stop. "Fluttershy, please I..I'm sorry! I know what I did was wrong!" The crying continues undeterred. "I...deserve to feel horrible for this! If I could t...take it all back, I would!" With each word uttered, your voice becomes more choked up, and you can feel tears forming in your eyes, but your words still have no effect. What possessed you to say this next line, you will never truly know:

"Fluttershy...I...I...love your work!"

All goes quiet on the other side of the door. Your mind and heart were racing faster than the Wonderbolts in a one-hundred-yard dash. What have you just done? Did she believe you? Did she have any reason to trust you anymore? This silence was weighing down on you more than any stress you have ever felt before. You thought you were going to go mad from the suspense. You had even begun to imagine seeing the door knob turning...no wait, that was actually happening!

The bathroom doors opens with a slight crack. You cannot see Fluttershy through the crack, but you know that she is on the other side of the door. "D...do you really mean it?" Her voice is shaken and unsteady, as if she could break down and start crying at a moment's notice.

"Y-yes, I really mean it." You respond, once again making your voice as gentle and comforting as you possibly can. "I've always loved your work. I...own all of your books. They've all...touched me dearly...I never knew I could feel so emotional for text before..." As you finish this line, a question you can't help but ask enters your head. "But...Fluttershy, I must know...how do you write so well? Where do you get your inspiration?"

"Um, I, uh...." She goes silent for a few seconds, just barely long enough for you to start regretting asking her in the first place until she speaks up again. "Uh, well, I, um, I just...think of things that make me happy while I write." You note that a little bit of stability has returned to her voice, but hints of fragility still linger.

Her response gives you a follow-up question that you couldn't pass up: "...and what is it that makes you happy?"

Again, she waits a little bit before responding. "Um, well, just..little things....uh, cute animals...warm sunny days...being together with all my friends...." At those words, a small smile forms across your face and you have to fight back the urge to say "d'aww" out loud.

".....you."

At this word, your mouth and eyes open wide and your cheeks start to turn pink. *You*, of all ponies, not just her friends, made Fluttershy happy? Not just make her happy, but serve as an inspiration for some of your most favorite books ever? You tap your face with your forehoof and, feeling the sensation of touch, confirm that this wild series of events is not a dream but the real deal.

"I...really make you happy?" You cautiously ask, still doubting this stroke of good fortune is real.

"...yes." She replies, once again putting a blush on your face. "You've always been so nice to me, even if, um, I haven't always thanked you for it. It's just that...I thought if I told you how much you meant to me, you would think I was really weird, but I must have acted so cold to you. I wanted you to feel happy too, but I...I...." Her voice was breaking up again, and she began letting out more sobs.

You had heard enough. With a sudden burst in confidence, you push the bathroom door open the rest of the way and step inside. Taken aback at your sudden move, Fluttershy steps back a couple feet but keeps her eyes focused on you. In this light, you are able to make out all of her beautiful features. She had washed her coat and mane clean, almost making her give off a warming glow. Her face was less illuminating; there were streaks of tears running down her face, a deep blush of pink across her cheeks, and her eyes glistened with more tears ready to run if you hadn't moved in. You had never felt a bigger need to comfort someone else than you did now.

"Fluttershy," you begin in your most soothing and reassuring voice. "You do make me happy, and ever since meeting you, I've wanted nothing more than to make you as happy as you have made me." As you finish, her blush gets even deeper, and she turns her head to the ground. You reach out your forehoof and gently bring her head back up to yours. "Please, Fluttershy...let me make you happy...."

As if you were raised your whole life for this moment, you slowly move your head closer to hers and begin to close your eyes. Now only mere centimeters from her face, you shut your eyes all the way, close the remaining distance to her, and lightly touch your lips to the tip of her snout. You withdraw your head after only a second, but you felt like whole years had passed in that time. Opening your eyes, you see Fluttershy's eyes and mouth are

wide open, maybe out of not knowing how to feel or react, you guess. Before another wave of self-doubt can hit you, she brings her head closer to yours, and then, closing her eyes, returns the favor, lightly brushing your snout with her lips. Breaking contact from you, she retreats her head, allowing you to see the soft smile forming across her lips. It was a smile that melted your heart; at that moment, you decided that your sole mission in life was to make sure that smile never left her face for the rest of your days and hers.

You reached your head out once again, not moving to her face but her neck. You gently rub your face against the left side of her neck, causing Fluttershy to gasp at first but then turn the gasp into a sigh of contentment. As you rub, you take note of how lovely her neck feels to all of your senses. Her freshly-washed coat is not only as soft as a newborn foal's, but it also contains hints of the shampoo she used not too long ago, giving off a smell of berries you can't quite identify but you also can't get enough of. You move back for a second and then begin your nuzzling anew, this time on the right side of her neck, and with a little more aggression. Fluttershy takes notice of this, letting out a stronger sigh of satisfaction. You felt like you could have done this for all eternity, but there was so much more to Fluttershy, and you wanted to make every last piece of her feel happier than it has ever been.

Breaking away from her neck, you reach forward and slowly lift her left forehoof into the air. Again, she gasps, but that gasp turns into a soft coo when you show her what you plan to do next. Using both of your forehooves, you slowly massage the lower portion of her foreleg, starting at the tip of her hoof and working up to the hock, rubbing out any tense spots you find. As you expected, her legs were firmer than the rest of her, but there was also a hint of softness that felt lovely in your hoofs. Pleased with your work, you bring her hoof up to your face and lightly kiss the tip, noticing that Fluttershy is blushing even deeper out of the corner of your eye. You lower her hoof back to the ground, but pick up her other foreleg and repeat the process, once again massaging away any tense spots, your new-found sworn enemy, and ending the rubbing with another light peck on the hoof.

Lowering her right leg back to the ground, you move to find another part of Fluttershy to please, but she raises a hoof and pushes on your shoulder, preventing you from moving any further. "Wait," she begins while keeping her warm smile, "I would like to have a chance to make you happy, too." Just being with her was enough to make you happy, but you couldn't say no to that request. You give her a warm smile of your own and nod your head, allowing her to make the next move. She moves her hoof from your shoulder up your neck and onto your face, brushing your cheek with her base. You knew your body couldn't possibly feel as great as hers did, but her continued brushing seemed to suggest otherwise.

Eventually she removes her hoof from your face, but as you start to miss the feeling, she cautiously brings her head closer to yours until they are only a hair's breadth apart. Shutting her eyes, she closes out the remaining distance and joins your lips to hers. Her mouth feels as soft as a pillow, and you can slightly make out the taste of that berry from before. Instead of the light peck you had expected, however, Fluttershy presses against you with a surprising amount of passion. You can even feel her tongue brushing at your lips, extracting your special taste from them and looking for a way inside your mouth. You oblige to her request, opening your lips and allowing her tongue to further explore you. She gleefully takes advantage of the opportunity, lapping at every curve of your inner mouth and throwing your tongue around as if she were in a playful wrestling match with friends as a foal. Not wanting to let her have all the fun, you decide to push back, and before you know it, a full-on war for dominance between your mouths has begun. Slowly but surely, you overpower her tongue, pushing it back into her mouth and allowing you to be the explorer for a change. The pleasure you feel as you lap at every last corner and taste as much of her as you can is almost unreal. If there was a heaven, you can't imagine it feeling any better than this.

Out of nowhere, Fluttershy breaks the kiss, gasping for breath while her lips were still curled upward. Taking advantage of the break, you decide to get some fresh air in your lungs as well. After some much-needed deep breathing, Fluttershy speaks up again. " Um...I know of a few more ways that I could make you happy...if that's alright with you. "

"Really?" You respond, your breathing slowing down into something more manageable, "I'm listening." Grinning at those words, Fluttershy leans into your ear and

begins whispering her suggestions to you. By the time she's finished, your jaw is almost touching the floor. If you hadn't already learned about her secret hobby a while ago, you would have seriously believed this was a dream. You wonder if you should try tapping yourself again to be extra sure it isn't, but you decide it's best to not look this gift horse in the mouth. "Fluttershy, I can think of no better thing in the world to do than these things with you," you reply to her, quietly chuckling to yourself for that cheesy rhyme. Elated, Fluttershy gives you one more kiss, this time on your cheek, before she walks out of the bathroom and beckons for you to follow. You turn and exit the bathroom, following her as she walks across the second floor and climbs onto her bed, turning towards you and giving you the most adorable "Please?" expression you had ever seen.

As you climbed into the bed, you thought back to the title of Fluttershy's book in progress. She was right: Everyone truly has a story inside them. Your story was about to begin, and you were going to love every moment of it.



Cloak and Dagger

By: Sim

It's taken months to put this all together, there's no way you're about to blow it now. After all the strings you had to pull to get here? The weeks spent sneaking and spying, knowing if you were caught you'd likely "disappear" never to be heard from again? Absolutely not. You're not about to let so much planning and preparation go to waste.

You've always been suspicious of Mayor Mare, though you never fully understood why. Your gut just told you there was something off about her, and even though you're still fairly young you've learned to trust your gut over your short lifetime. You had to call in a few favors, but you finally managed to land yourself the position of "intern" in the mayor's office. Perhaps not a glamorous title, but suitable to your purposes just the same. You spent weeks learning the mayor's routine, and the layout of the office. You've learned quite a bit about the scandals she's involved with, simply by careful eavesdropping. However, you lack any concrete evidence and know it wouldn't be prudent to come forth without any.

Having overheard a recent conversation she'd had with some cur she was no doubt in league with, you were intrigued to learn about the existence of some rather sensitive documents that would give weight to your claims. As Mayor Mare had left her office for the evening, your mind was already putting a plan into action.

You are going to steal those documents and blow the lid off this conspiracy.

“I’m heading home for the night, I’m terribly exhausted. I have an audience with the princesses tomorrow, I trust you have my agenda in order for the rest of the week?” the mayor said as she made her way toward the door, passing by your modest desk.

“Yes ma’am. Though there are a few minor details I still have to work out. I’m gonna stick around here and uh... tie up some loose ends,” you said, trying to make up a reasonable excuse to stay behind.

“I wish my full-time staff worked half as hard as you do,” she said with a wink and an appreciative smile. “I guess I’ll see you in the morning, then. Good night.”

“Night, ma’am,” you replied as the door shut behind her.

After an hour or so when you felt it was safe, you rose from your seat and made your way toward the mayor’s private office. Holding a flashlight in your mouth, you opened the door - which you were somewhat surprised to find unlocked - and proceeded inside, not daring to turn on the overhead lights for fear of drawing the attention of anyone who might be passing by outside.

You rummage around for several minutes, your apprehension steadily rising the entire time as your fear of getting caught slowly overwhelms you, your inexperience in such matters easily getting the best of you. Just as you find what you’re looking for and turn to make a bee line for the door, the lights flip on. Your stomach drops through the floor and you shrink in terror.

“Well well well, what do we have here?” Mayor Mare says as she closes the door, cutting off your only route of escape.

“I know about everything,” you say, quickly throwing up a bold front to hide your mind-numbing fear. You stare her down with a cold glare hoping to appear intimidating. Even through your feigned confidence your voice trembles, the burst of adrenaline coursing through your veins kicked up by your instinctive fight-or-flight response causing your body to betray your bluff.

“The misappropriated funds, the ponies who all suddenly vanished after they started asking questions, all of it. I’ll expose you. I wonder what your constituents will think when they find out that-”

Mayor Mare heartily laughs at you, quickly dismissing the notion that you’re any threat to her, causing your brave facade to crumble instantaneously.

“And what exactly are you going to offer as proof, my dear? A few pieces of paper?” She asks, slyly grinning at you. “Little colt, you are playing a game you cannot possibly hope to win. You can’t begin to imagine just how dangerous it is - the territory you’re wandering into. Are you aware of just how long I’ve been the mayor of Ponyville?”

You shake your head nervously.

“A very... *very* long time,” she continues. “I have something here that you don’t. Something that I’ve built up over the years that has yet to fall to the scrutiny of far more troublesome meddlers than you,” she states matter-of-factly while glancing up at a portrait of herself on the wall. “I have credibility. Credibility, and the loyalty of the populous. If you offer your ‘proof’ to any of the good citizens of Ponyville, you’ll quickly be labelled an insolent, ambitious foal looking to make a name for himself by sully mine. Best case scenario, you’ll be run out of town, worst case scenario - well, let’s just say it won’t go over well for you, my dear.”

You feel your heart jump into your throat and swallow hard as the weight of her words sinks in.

“Now what ever shall we do about you breaking into my office?” Mayor Mare tisks and shakes her head lightly.

You wince and squeal a bit. What have you gotten yourself into? *Oh Celestia please don’t let her kill me*, you think to yourself as a dozen horrible scenarios play in your mind. She slowly approaches you, and oddly, the malice in her demeanor seems to be gradually fading away, replaced by something else entirely.

“I could make life very comfortable for you here you know,” she says sultrily.

You back up with every step she takes, having absolutely no clue how to handle her advancing on you like this. To say you're confused would be the understatement of the century. Mayor Mare reaches down and loosens her collar, letting it slide off her neck and fall onto the floor.

"Tell me, my nosey little hard-worker. Have you ever been with a mare? And I don't mean those silly young fillies that haven't got a clue how to use the gifts Celestia blessed them with. I mean a *real* mare."

Sweat is visibly beading on your face now. You can't even hear your own thoughts over the deafening roar of your own heartbeat. You timidly shake your head.

Mayor Mare pouts her lip in sympathy. "Oh you poor dear. You have so much you've yet to experience. I'm sure I could teach you a thing or two," she says, still advancing toward you even as your rump bumps into the wall, a devilish grin on her muzzle as the distance between you shrinks exponentially. There is no escape for you. You open your mouth to speak but she places a hoof over it, silencing you.

"I've seen the way you look at me when you think I'm not paying attention," she whispers.

You'd be a liar if you tried to deny that you'd thought about it once or twice. She's quite an attractive mare for her age, you admit to yourself. But you can't help but to feel a little uneasy about the stigma of such a huge age gap. Your doubts and fears all melt away as you feel something warm and moist meet your lips.

You cry out in surprise, but it's immediately stifled as the experienced mare parts your lips with her tongue, running a hoof down your chest as she pins your back against the wall. Your whole body trembles in fear and exhilaration at this unexpected turn of events. She pulls away and places her mouth on your neck, gently kissing and suckling. Your head rocks back, resting against the wall as you let out a gentle moan of pleasure.

"That's a good boy..." she whispers as her soft breath tickles your neck.

You aren't sure if you want this, though any objection your brain might have to what's unfolding is quickly overridden by your body's uncontrollable reactions to Mayor Mare's skilled touch. You close your eyes and lose yourself in the indescribable sensations. The hoof she had placed on your chest gently traces its way lower, over your belly, and lower still until finally...

You gasp as it makes contact with a part of your body nopony had ever touched before. She kisses her way down your neck... your chest... and it quickly becomes apparent that her mouth has set course to rendezvous with the same part of your body that her hoof is on. Your eyes spring wide.

"But... I've never..." you attempt to protest over your deep, heavy breaths.

"Shh... it's okay," she coos in response, "I'll take care of you."

You whinny loudly in reflex, biting your lip as you're overcome by the most exquisite sensation your body has ever felt. You buck your hips to envelop more of yourself in this little taste of heaven. Your lower legs give out on you and you slide down the wall, your rump making a soft thud as it hits the floor, your lover never missing a beat the whole way down. You feel her wrap her hooves around your backside, slipping one underneath your tail, and...

Oh Celestia!

Your head slams against the wall as your entire body tenses up in response to all these new, wonderful sensations. You don't feel the tiny trickle of blood seeping from a tiny cut you just inflicted on yourself in your carnal rapture. In this moment, you're invincible to pain; impervious to anything, save for the heat of passion stoked hotter by the mare beneath you burning with desire.

Her rhythm and cadence pick up suddenly, in time with your wild bucking. You place a hoof around the back of her head, desperately urging her forward. She's driving you utterly mad, any moment now and you'll...

Your entire body seizes up, your hooves instinctively wrapping around the back of your lover's head, pushing her down and holding her there, your tail clamping down hard as you yell out, your release washes over you like a tidal wave, blinding you to your surroundings as it feels like every nerve ending in your body is set ablaze simultaneously. You let go of her as you come back to your senses slowly. You look down at her, her eyes meeting yours as she releases you.

Perhaps you could learn to keep a secret.



Special Treatment

By: Blinky

You breathe a sigh of relief after you return home from work. The weekend is finally here. The last week was very busy and you're feeling tired. You sit down at the couch to relax. Yesterday's mail is on the desk next to you. You left them there yesterday as you didn't have time to check them. You pick up the topmost one and read it.

The Twin Spa

Feeling exhausted? Come relax at our spa! We have everything you need to refresh your body. Our skilled attendants are ready to help you relieve all the stress from your body. A warm bubble bath is waiting for you. You'll feel like whole new pony after our luxurious treatment!

Opening Hours

Monday - Friday
10-19
Saturday - Sunday
10-18

Regular treatment

20% Off

With this coupon

The Twin Spa
Cutie Street 6
Ponyville



This sounds just like what you need right now. You decide to take advantage of the offer and head there.

You arrive at the street the spa is located in. The building is easy to find, as its pink pointy roof stands out from the scenery. You push the door, but it appears to be locked. Odd, it should be open at this hour. You knock at the door. After a moment, a pretty mare with a light blue body and a pink mane opens the door.

“Hello, how can I help you?” She asks in her foreign accent.

“I came to have a bath, are you still open?” You ask.

“It's Celestia day, we're closed during holidays. Sorry, we forgot to mention that in the leaflet. Since you came all the way here, would you like to be a tester for our new bath salt?” She asks.

“Sounds good. Here, I brought a coupon.” You say.

“Oh, no need to worry about payment. Just give us your honest opinion on the bath, okay?” She asks. You nod in response and head inside with her. The inside is very clean and smells like a pool.

“Sis, the sauna is ready. You coming?” A pony with the same accent says while walking from the corner in front of you. She looks much like her sister, only her body is pink and her mane is blue. She looks surprised as she notices you.

“We've got company. I'm Lotus, and this is Aloe. Our friend here will be joining us.” Lotus says.

“Nice to meet you.” You say.

“Likewise. Let's go to the sauna first. A bath is always nicer after you've sweated a bit.” Aloe says. You follow her to the door that leads into the sauna room. You feel hot air coming from the inside as she opens the door. She sits next to the sauna heater near the entrance. You sit at the back next to Lotus. Aloe throws some water into the heater. It lets out a hiss as it hits the rocks at the top and the heat gradually rises.

“Do you use this place on your days off too?” You ask to start a conversation.

“Absolutely. We've loved spas since we were fillies. It was our dream to run one ourselves. Our hometown Senol had plenty of them, so we decided to move elsewhere. We heard Ponyville didn't have one. We took the opportunity to introduce them to the wonderful world of spas.” Lotus explains.

“Yes, we were lucky to find a nice village to build one in. Can you believe they'd never had one before? They're an important part of daily life at home, so it was strange to hear there wasn't one here.” Aloe says and throws more water into the heater. The room is steamy and it's getting hotter.

“I'm not used to this kind of heat. Could we head to the bath already?” You ask while sweating.

“We like our sauna very hot. The heat is harsh at first, but it's nice after you get used to it. Anyway, let's go wash off that sweat in the bath.” Lotus says. The three of you get up and head towards the bath. The air feels refreshing as you leave. Aloe opens the large door to the bathing area. There's an open area with a round bathtub in the middle. It's large enough to hold around ten ponies at once. You climb in along with Lotus. The water that reaches your neck is pleasantly cool. It's so relaxing. Aloe grabs a small jar next to the bath with her mouth. She pours the dark green bath salt inside it into the bath. She joins you in the bath after emptying the jar. The water washes off the shiny look on her skin caused by the sweating. The salt made the water softer. Your body feels lighter inside, almost as if it's floating.

“Do you like the bath?” Lotus asks, looking relaxed.

“It's very nice. It has to be the most comfortable bath I've had.” You tell her how you honestly feel.

“Great, just what we were hoping to hear. We got this recipe recently from a zebra. We changed it up a bit to add our personal touch to it. I have to agree, it turned out well. “Right, sis?” Lotus says happily.

“Yeah, we're definitely going to use this regularly. You were lucky to be the first pony to experience it.” Aloe says, pleased with the results. The three of you relax in the bath.

“We should wash up soon. Sis, could you help me soap up our guest?” Aloe asks after a while.

“Sure thing. We'll get you nice and clean.” Lotus says. You three leave the bath and stand outside of it. The sisters grab sponges in their mouths and cover them in soap. They rub you with the sponges, starting from your sides. They feel nice and soft as they touch your skin. They move from left to right on your back for a few times, while taking care to get soap everywhere. They move onto your hooves, rubbing them up and down almost in sync. You raise your hooves one by one so they can reach under them. They rub the bottom of them especially hard, to get the dirt off of them. They move onto your stomach after finishing the hooves. Finally, they soap your neck and face, stopping at your cheeks to avoid getting soap in your eyes.

The sisters drop the sponges in the corner, and then wash the soap out of their mouths with the water in the bath. They grab bottles of shampoo from a basket into their mouths. Aloe squeezes shampoo onto your tail while Lotus does the same on your mane. They put down the bottles and spread the shampoo evenly on the hair on your body. Their hooves slide up and down gently. Lotus uses the bottom of her hoof to even out the shampoo on your mane. It feels calming, like she's petting your mane while she's at it. Aloe takes your tail in-between her front hooves. She pulls it slowly to even out the shampoo on it. Your tail is very sensitive and you can clearly feel her hoof as she slides downwards on it. She goes back to the base and moves down a few times. Being touched by two beautiful girls feels so nice. You feel a bit disappointed that it's over so soon, but you hide this from them.

“All done! Would you mind returning the favor? We could get Lotus soaped up quicker if we did it together.” Aloe asks.

“Sure, I'll help you.” You answer. You try not to show how excited you are to do this. You grab an unused sponge in your mouth along with Aloe. You hold the soft foam in place with your teeth. You rub it along the bar of soap on the ground. It's ready for use, so

you get in position at the left side of Lotus. You bow a bit to reach her side and rub the sponge on her. In times like these, it would be convenient to be a unicorn. Being able to levitate the sponge would make this easier. However, the earth pony way does have its advantages. You can feel your nose on Lotus's back as you rub her. Her back is soft and smells like flowers. You brush her all over her left side, while Aloe takes care of the other side. You take care to get every part of her body slippery with soap. The last part you do is her neck and face. She blushes a bit as your nose touches her cheek. You drop the sponge and wash your mouth. It's nice to get rid of that soapy taste out of your mouth.

“Would you like to do her mane or her tail?” Aloe asks.

“Both!” You say without thinking. Oh shoot, you didn't mean to say that out loud. Aloe giggles as she hears your answer.

“Hey, why not? She's all yours. Be gentle with her.” Aloe says teasingly. As embarrassing as it was, saying that was for the best. You grab the shampoo bottle and squeeze some on Lotus's mane. You rub it back and forth with your hoof. The hair is soft and delicate. She must brush it regularly, as it isn't tangled at all. You make sure to get her mane done well, then move onto her tail. You squeeze shampoo on it and take her tail in-between your front hooves. You hold it gently and pull on it. The shampoo on your hooves spreads among the hair on her tail. You repeat this a few times to make sure it's entirely covered on it. She's now ready to be washed.

“Thank you! I can take care of Aloe by myself. You should get that soap off before it drips off.” Lotus says. You jump back into the bath. The shampoo turns into foam as the water washes it off your body. You put your head under the water to get it off your mane. You're now completely soap-less and feel very clean. You lean at the edge of the pool, waiting for the girls to finish washing. The sisters soon join you in the bath and wash themselves. They swim next to you, with Lotus on your left and Aloe on your right. They lean onto your shoulder, looking content. They must've picked up on your feelings, as you did a rather poor job at hiding them. Either way, you're glad that you decided to come here. The stress from work is long gone and you feel more relaxed than ever. You enjoy the peaceful afternoon with the spa twins.



La Nuit Belle

By: Scarlet Filly

Moving silently through the jungle, your team waits for your command. Pointing in the direction of a small fishing hut, they quickly surround and infiltrate the compound.

“Empty sir. But no worries, as my old ‘mam used to say: at least that's one less to do!”

“Your old ‘mam can go to hell for all I care Simons. Who’s giving us this Intel?”

“Celestia won’t say sir, but she assured me it was from a trusted source”

While Simons was a nice lad, you swear he had gone partly insane in the jungle. In fact, 6 weeks without food or water was starting to take its toll on the whole group. The conditions were almost unbearable, with humidity levels souring to... wait a second.

“...she wants us to die...”

“Sir?”

“Don’t you see! Celestia didn’t send us out here to find Makarov, she thought we’ll...”

A clapping sound starts emitting from the bush, followed by a pony wearing a safari kit with a big, twirly mustache stepping out.

“Bravo sir, you’re almost correct. But who said that it was the real Celestia? Any who, since you have to be *so* selfish and try to live, I’ve been sent to do finish the job myself. Boys.”

Twenty ponies leap out of the dense jungle bush; their faces completely camouflaged with branches and leaves, surrounding you on all sides. You need to think fast.

A rope hangs over a fire swayed in the distance. A stand of fishing poles complete with bate stood a few feet away. If you could get to the fire, you could cause a distraction big enough to allow...

“Hey, you’re cool! Want to hang out a bit?”

What the? Spinning around, you see a girl standing there looking strangely... nice. Wait, what where you doing! You’re on a mission man, pull yourself together. This is no time for girls! Especially not ...

“Psst. Wake up! Oh no... *boot*”.

Snapping awake, you see Sweetie Belle sitting next to you, drawing innocently on a piece of paper. Wait a second, the classroom? Miss Daisy’s going to...

“You weren’t asleep where you mister?”

Heep. Shaking your head as fast as you can, you can only hope that Miss. Daisy didn’t notice. This could get you some serious detention if she finds out, or even worse a letter home.

What’s was wrong with you lately? Daydreaming in class was one thing, but about a girl? Man, things where sure getting weird around here. For one thing, it seemed like every pony in your class had gotten their cutie marks now. Sure, your mom said that these things took their time and that it’ll happen eventually, but what about the funny things that happened *downstairs* when you woke up? And why are girls trying to take over your dreams! It made no sense....

“Just checking! Now class...”

Turing to Sweetie Belle, you mouth a thank you. Although she just carried on drawing, you could swear she was blushing slightly. Nervously laughing, you look away.

“...time to put what you learnt today into action. I want you to study the effects of the moons cycle and how Princess Luna manages it. It'll be partners again, but to try and spice things up a bit, I going to pick them for you! Not only will it encourage learning, it'll encourage friendship as well! Alright then, pick a number and find the person it matches. Simple! “

Pulling a number out, you turn around to see Sweetie Belle standing behind you, wide eyed staring at your card.

“Are you number 3?”

Oh no. Please no. Flipping the card over... 3. Dammit.

Her eyes widen up as you drop down on the desk. While Sweetie Belle was nice and all, she had always made you so nervous when you spoke to her and so you tended to...

“When are we going to do it then? We could go round mine now but my mom doesn't really like me having people round while my sisters watching me. Something about being to annoying...”

Her face turning to the side, a puzzled look appears on her face.

“Are you ok? You look a bit...”

“Umm yeah, I'm fine... if you're not busy you can come over to mine after school... if you want to that is...”

“Sure!”

With that, the school bell rings, followed by cheers.

“Alright class, remember the projects in for Monday. MONDAY! Don't show up without it ok? Have a nice weekend!”

The walk home was a weird one. While the Sweetie belle you had always known was quiet and reserved, once you asked about her quest for a cutie mark the awkwardness vanished. For the next 20 minutes stories of rope slides, talent shows and some sort of stare where told.

“Wow, you must tell that to a lot of ponies...”

“Not really, only to you. I mean, it’s just you seem... different to the other boys...”

Different? What was that supposed to mean....

Without warning, a crack of lighting whips along the sky, bringing with it a sudden downpour of rain. Within seconds, everyone and thing around you was soaked to the bone. Running home you’re both stopped in your tracks by your mother.

“Dry your hoofs first, I don’t want... Oh my, aren't you adorable! You poor things, you’re soaked! Wait right there while I get you two a towel...”

Standing there, dripping in rainwater, you both can’t help but giggle. Sweetie bells mane had fizzled up to look like cotton candy, while you were sure you looked like a piece of art as well.

“I guess the projects off then. I’ll just get going...” Gently kicking the ground, a look of disappointment creeps onto her face.

“Well, if you want to stay for a bit until the rain goes away you’re more than welcome... I think I have Kerplunk around here somewhere...”

10 minutes into a hardcore game of Kerplunk, thunder crackles in the distance. Jumping up in shock, Sweetie belle wraps her hoof around you and squeezes tightly. Normally you would be horrified at such an act, but she’s shaking so much you can’t help but feel sorry for her.

“Wait... are we friends? Because I think we are but my sister says I’m a bit slow sometimes. Something about being a needle short of a sowing kit...”

Butterflies floating around your stomach again, you suddenly feel nervous again.

“Well, of course we are...”

“You don’t sound too sure...”

“Oh, I don’t really know”

“I’m sorry, I didn’t...”

“I mean... I like you, but I just get so nervous talking to you. I don’t really know what that means...”

“Really? I feel like I can talk with you about anything. The only other people I can do that with are, well, Apple Bloom, Scootaloo and Rarity...”

“And sometimes ... I get a funny feeling when you’re around.”

“Like something’s floating in your tummy? My sister said that means that you *like* someone. ”

Blushing heavily, she puts her hoof in front of her face to protect her from more embarrassment.

“Not like I asked her about it or anything...”

“Yeah! It’s just like...”

As more lightning strikes, she clutches you even harder. Suddenly an idea so good you can’t believe you didn’t think of it earlier pops into you head. Grabbing a blanket and pole, you create a make-shift tent, complete with pillows inside.

“Well then, no lightning scares my friend! Get in, it’ll protect us...”

Her cheeks still bright red, a shy smile appears on Sweeties Belles face as she looks at you before climbing in. Her smile is infectious, causing you to shyly smile back. Staring out the window at the storm filled night, she shuffles closer to you.

“Wait...So are you my boyfriend now? I’m confused...”

“I don’t know...maybe if you want to be?”

“Yay! Oh hey, those things floating in my belly again...”

Brushing her mane into yours, she snuggles up next to you. Feeling her heart beating against your chest, your eyes slowly... start to... *yawn...

As the sunlight breaks through the cloudless sky, you begin to wake up. Sweetie was still asleep, using your arm as a pillow, snoring gently with each breath. Slowly opening her eyes, she seems pleased to see you. After stretching her arms and yawning, you both walk down the stairs to the... oh please no.

In a photo frame by the fridge was a picture of you and Sweetie Belle asleep in the tent together.

“MOM!”

“Oh I’m sorry, but you two but you looked so cute! And don’t worry Sweetie Belle, I rang your mom up, she’s knows your here. Oh, and can you tell her I’ll give her the photo when we meet up next. Now what do you two want for breakfast?”

“What! Mom, how many did you take?”

“Oh only one dear. But I don’t know how many copies I’ll make though, so someone better be a good boy or else granny’s going to get a nice surprise! Who wants eggs?”

Even though you hate to admit it, she was clever. Really clever.

15 years later

“...and that’s how I met your mother.”

Lying on the floor, the young white filly simply stares at you. Tilting her head to the side, a puzzled look appears on her face.

“Wait a second what’s Kerplunk?”

“Ahhh, Me and your father used to play Kerplunk all the time when we were little. He never could beat me though...”

Sitting on the stairs, Sweetie Belle was clearly eavesdropping on your story. Popping up from behind her, a little blue foal jumps up and starts to pounce at the trail left by her dress as she slowly descends. Her mane dangling down the side of her red dress, she playfully picks up the young foal and sits down next to you.

“So what’s your cutie mark to do with Kerplunk then?... Oh oh! Mom, how did *you* get cutie mark again?”

“Oh, I remember that day as if it were yesterday. It was the day of the

Even though you had heard this story a million times, somehow it manages to get told every other week. Glancing back at the photo of you two in the tent, you can’t help but smile. After all these years Sweetie Belle hadn’t changed a bit; still the caring, loving and slightly slow filly you fell in love with on that rainy day 15 years ago.

“... and when I was done, they all gave mommy a standing ovation! And when I looked at my flank, well it just appeared! Or at least, I think that’s how it happened... Oh look at the time; I think it’s time for bed now. Your mom’s got a big show tonight and ...”

“Arrr, but we’re not even tired yet!”

Taking advice off your mom, you point to a photo of the two siblings asleep together by the fireplace. Gulping, she quickly grabs her oblivious little brother and runs straight upstairs.

“You do know that one day she’s going to realise that everyponies’ already got a copy of it

... don’t you?”

“Well, we can only hope that day will never come... come to think of it; I think my mom has two copies of it somewhere...”

Rubbing her mane against yours, her gentle touch silences you.

“You look... stunning. Are you *sure* you don’t want us to come tonight? ‘Cause I’m sure we can get some tickets if we... ”

Blushing slightly, she covers her mouth with her hoof and starts to giggle like a school girl.

“Oh you. Don’t worry, I’ll be fine. Sis and the gang are going tonight, and Apple Bloom and Scootaloo seem to have everything perfected on their end so it’s just down to me I think. Besides, it’s only in front of 20,000 ponies...”

Maximum Relaxation

By: Coffeebean



You look out of the large glass front of your workplace into the dark, rain-lashed city of Canterlot. It's been raining for days now following a mysterious drought that not even the weather teams had been able to solve. When they had eventually been able to tow in clouds from nearby, they had definitely overdone it. You can see water pooling in the marketplace, a single unicorn member of the city guard trying to stand out of the rain in a doorway, trying to keep his horn lit to keep him warm under the leather cape wrapped over his armour.

You begin to think about offering the handsome steed somewhere to rest for a while, when the bell attached to the door of your workplace jingles, signalling your only customer for the entire day entering. Pulling your eyes away from the guard, you address the soaked and thoroughly bedraggled pegasus, sprigs of trees lodged in her orange and yellow mane, her complexion almost pallid despite her currently dull yellow coat. Her feathers are mostly out of place; almost as if the mare had been crazy enough to even consider flying in this weather, goggles on top of her head filled with condensation, and her mane? You couldn't get it out of your head how awful it looked.

"Velcome to zhe Royal Equestrian Spa of Canterlot, Mine name ist Kurhauz, do you have an appointment?" You ask, raising an eyebrow towards the mare.

"Yeah, should be for five o'clock under the name of Spitfire?" She replies, approaching the counter and attempting to check your appointment book. You know full well that she's the only appointment due today, but levitate the book away from prying eyes anyway, animating a quill as well.

“Ah, Yes, I see you were supposed to be seeing Fonteverde today, I’m afraid she has been unable to make it into work, the rain has caused flooding in lower parts of the city.”

“Kurhauz, please, just drop the accent.” she replies, looking thoroughly fed up. Taken slightly aback, you comply.

“Of course, I’m sorry. I’m afraid that I’m the only member of staff who has been able to make it in today, we’ve only opened for you. Would you like to re-schedule your visit for another time?” You ask, watching her face as she makes a decision.

“Nah, today will do fine.” she starts, looking herself over, “To be honest, I could do with it.”

Flipping the book to the full notes for Spitfire’s appointment, after having had a quick read through the profile of her that your colleague has recorded, you see that she has booked what is lovingly referred to by the rest of the staff as “The Works”; almost as if she had been expecting to come into the spa in this state. You sigh as you lock the main door and lead your client through the reception to the first stage of the process, a grooming to remove any nastiness that could possibly end up left elsewhere in the building; potentially requiring you to do more cleaning before going home for a night of ice-cream and soppy romance novels. You begin by removing the twigs and things from her mane, the look of disgust apparent on your face, slight embarrassment on hers.

“So, how have you been? I understand you’re one of the Wonderbolts?” you ask, trying to keep your mind out of neatening her mane, her goggles dropped on a table at the side of the room as she had sprawled out on the comfy padded table before you.

“Haha, yeah. Work has been a pain, we’ve even had to go with the weather teams looking for rain clouds, but other than that? Not bad, not bad at all. We had a great time at the Gala the other week, despite what happened.” she replies.

“Ooh, yes! I heard about that! Somepony destroyed half the castle, the gardens and that beautiful statue, was it really just one pony?” You ask, following gossip from your colleagues that had built up over the last couple of weeks. Spitfire grins, shortly before grimacing as you forcefully pull the final twig from her mane and levitate a brush over to you.

“Ouch, no, no, there was a group of them. I think it was Princess Celestia’s idea to spruce things up a bit, get the old crowd to lighten up. From what I’ve heard, it didn’t work at all; Princess Luna was completely wasted before the guests even arrived, she had to be put to bed by some of the members of hers and Celestia’s bodyguard and Prince Blueblood is livid about how some mare from

Ponyville treated him. It wasn't all bad though, my buddy got the number of this cute apple farmer who showed up, so at least he's happy."

"Oh, didn't you meet anyone there sweetheart?"

"Nah, it's not normally my sort of scene, picking up ponies at parties. There was one that I was interested in but, well..." she trails off as you start to run the brush through her mane, looking thoughtful with a slight glaze in her eyes, "I don't know. How about you? Seeing anyone?"

"No, not at the moment. I was seeing a nice colt, but he turned out to be a complete disaster as far as his life was concerned, no direction what so ever. It's enough to send a boy insane, I swear."

"Ah, you're a colt-cuddler huh?"

"It's more about personality than gender for me."

"Oh, sorry." Spitfire responds, blushing again, thinking that she may have offended you.

"Don't worry about it!" you respond, still running the brush through her mane, "A lot of fillies assume that, and if I'm fair, a lot of colts too." you add with a slight mischievous grin, causing her to laugh a little, "Which team do you play for?"

"I... Uh." she stutters, looking away before you move her head back to continue brushing, "I guess I'm the same, it's too hard to stick to one type, especially if the personality is so great. Looks are a bonus too of course." she eventually responds, her amber coloured eyes flicking over your chest, you pretending not to notice but smiling slightly inside. Delicately, you start to use your magic to re-arrange the feathers on her wings, taking care not to arouse the mare mistakenly as you work, a small pile of the damaged feathers being tossed into the bin when you finish.

Using your magic, the mane brush is swapped for a shorter bristled one for use on the mare's coat, dipped in lavender scented salt water to help relax and exfoliate before the next stage of the process. Scrubbing lightly at her coat, Spitfire is strangely silent, re-arranging her wings awkwardly as you push them aside to scrub underneath, her fur starting to turn back to its original golden hue as the now dark water drips from her underside and down to the floor, where it begins to flow over the tiles into the drain in the middle.

“Alright, I think we’re done.” You say, before realising that Spitfire had fallen asleep on the table. This had happened a few times to you now, with different clients, leading you to wonder if you weren’t over doing the lavender oil in the scrubbing mixture.

“Miss Spitfire, wake up, it’s time for your sauna.” gently shaking her shoulder with your hoof. Her eyes open again and she blushes, embarrassed. You notice that she’s beginning to look a lot like her pictures from the celebrity magazines kept in the foyer now, the pallid tone from her first arrival having almost disappeared once the muck from flying had been scrubbed out. Her mane is also vastly different, flopping limply around her face rather than having the eerie ability to defy gravity so common with fliers of her ability.

She walks through one of the doors leading to other parts of the spa complex with you, occasionally brushing her wet mane out of her face, unused to it behaving in such a manner. The two of you arrive in the huge main area of the complex, an enormous swimming pool being the centerpiece over several levels, lush green plants around the edges along one side. Spitfire, being no stranger to this exclusive relaxation destination, calmly trots around the edge of the pool before grabbing a robe from the wall and wandering into the sauna opposite a freezing plunge pool that she will be using afterwards.

An hour passes, with you listening to the rain lashing at the glass ceiling above you, when you see the golden mare coming out of the sauna, panting and sweaty from the room. You see her hang her robe up again and look at the plunge pool before gingerly dipping her hoof in it and rapidly pulling it out again, causing you to smile as she steels herself and takes the plunge. Freezing water goes everywhere and you hear her yelp as she surfaces, the cold knocking her breath away as she stands from being submerged. As she struggles to get out again, you notice how her usual confidence has taken a light beating from being so cold, small hooves sliding on the tiles before she pulls herself out with a little help from a single flap of her wings. You trot over with a smile and pass her a pair of towels, one to wrap over her body, the next for her mane.

“How was that, Madam?” You ask, smiling slightly.

“Awesome. Exhilarating. What’s next?” She replies, bouncing back into the confident mare who had entered the spa once again.

“You have a choice, I can give you a massage, or you can go for the hot tub followed by the massage. Up to you, but I suggest the massage purely because of how tense you seemed when I was cleaning you earlier.”

“Alright Kurhauz, let’s go for the massage.” she says, looking at you like she had done briefly during her scrub down.

You lead her into a room that is similar to the scrub down area, but slightly more clinical, the walls and tiled floor a bright white. In the centre there is table for her to lay on with a hole for her to put her head and muzzle through, a rack holding several vials of exotic oils attached to the wall, towels on another heated rail on the opposite side. Selecting a lavender and jasmine based oil, you place them in a small basket attached to the side of the massage table. A pair of fluffy white towels are also levitated and placed flat on the table, and you motion for Spitfire to lay on it. At first, she lays on her side, having received the instruction from your female colleagues before, and you start to feel up and down her body, working out where knots are hidden in the muscle covered by her golden fur. Slowly, you tease her wing upwards, feeling underneath for the tough spots. You lay it back down and ask her to flip over so that you can repeat the process, unsurprised that her legs and hooves aren’t particularly tense, a relatively normal phenomenon in seasoned pegasi. Nearing the base of her back, near her tail, you feel one particularly large knot start to unwind the moment you run the tip of your hoof over it, causing a brief “ooh” of pleasure to leave Spitfire’s lips.

Deciding on the best course of action, you roll her onto her chest and begin to work at the collection of tense spots starting from her rump, each rub being met with a gentle and somewhat repressed moan. She closes her eyes, enjoying the sensation as you start to push more and more into it, trying to rub out one huge tense area just below the base of her wings along her spine. Pushing and rubbing as hard as you can, it suddenly gives, causing her to yelp in pleasure, two golden wings springing erect and almost knocking you over with a soft “foomf”.

“Oh my... I’m so sorry, it just felt so good and...” she starts, trying to hide herself on the table, hooves reaching around and trying to force her wings back down, blushing heavily.

“Don’t worry about it sweetheart! I know what you pegasi are like with you wings, you can’t help it. It’s alright.” you interrupt, making a rather camp gesture with your hoof, “Although, if you’re *that* frustrated, I do have something I could offer you?”

“Wh...”

Deciding to bring back a little of your showmanship, you slip back into your accent and interrupt her once more.

“Vell, meess Spitfire. Vhat I can do, is offer vhat ve here call “Maximum Relaxation”. Some of the less savoury spas in the likes of Manehattan do somethink similar, called a happy endink?”

Her face screws up slightly as she translates, her wings still fully erect whilst she lays behind you, the red on her cheeks deepening as she catches on, “Nahzink close to actual mating, of course, but it is... very good and reserved only for the most special of clientele. A most sensual massage, vorking on your most intimate of intimate places.”

“How much?” She eventually asks, a cocky smile appearing as she catches on to your rather forward suggestion, choosing to go with the flow.

“For you, dahlink, on the house.”

“Can I ask one thing?”

“Certainly, I will accept any request that you make.”

“The accent. Get rid of it.”

Nodding, you climb up onto Spitfire’s back and ask her to raise her wings as high as she can get them, running parallel to each other at a right angle to her spine. You wrap your forelegs around and breathe down the gap to the little patch of fur between where the feathered appendages join her body. You feel her shiver slightly, her wings trying to push down, but held in place by your hooves. She tries to flap them again, you can feel the muscles moving and she lets out a tiny whimper of pleasure. Sitting up on her, you slowly drag your hoof-tips from the base of her wings upwards, still doing your best to hold them together, able to feel her pulse quickening as you rub. This appears to be having the desired effect, as her moans begin to get louder, and you can feel your rear legs being forced a little further apart as her stomach begins to rise and fall in line with the huge deep breaths she is beginning to take.

Releasing the left wing, you sandwich her right one between your hooves, making small circles in the short fuzzy fur that her feathers are attached to, pressing firmly. You work from base to tip, before leaning down and gently biting the area between where her wings join her body, eliciting a much louder drawn out whimper, and feeling her shift underneath you, crossing her back legs with her tail twitching excitedly.

“Wha... What was that?” She groans, “I’ve had them rubbed before, but that... My God...”

You nibble the same spot again, feeling her rear legs try to push against your weight and the hair of her tail gently flicks against your back as she scrunches her eyes closed in concentration. Picking up her other wing, you once again sandwich it between your hooves and rub in circles from base to tip, her moans significantly softer than when you had bitten her. Catching on, you instead wrap your forelegs underneath her wings and hold them down as you draw a deep breath and exhale on the spot that had gotten her so riled up, millimetres away from her coat. She shivers, eyes shooting open as her moans intensify again and you lean in once again to tease at the tiny patch of flesh with your lips and tongue, occasionally giving it a nip to her delight.

“Could you do it like the first time? Roughly?” She asks, deep breaths adding additional punctuation between her words. You comply, sinking your teeth in, taking care not to draw blood. Her tail flails at your back again, and you catch a brief taste of citrus from her coat. She moans once more, her voice going high pitched as her breath slips away from her, leaving her panting hungrily at your every touch.

“I... I think I’m almost there Kurhauz.” she gasps, closing her eyes again. She attempts to flap her wings as you keep nibbling and biting her, your hooves easily holding them down, despite her legs now beginning to thrash to push the pair of you upwards, unable to lift you.

“Please... Please just keep going, I’m so close I don’t know if...”

She starts to tremble, just slightly at first, her rump quivering underneath you. You see her forelegs trying to gather at the towel underneath her, as if she’s desperately trying to hold on, starting to lose control of her now quaking body. You continue to rub each wing with a hoof, hoping desperately that she won’t be able to take off with you on her back, still nibbling, nuzzling, and occasionally biting her as she shudders, lost in the throes of pleasure taking over. She’s practically screaming now, gasping your name in between yelps, moans, whimpers and groans; trying to bring her rump upwards with every ounce of strength in her tiny golden body.

Somehow, Spitfire manages to flip you, her forelegs now wrapped around your neck as she hungrily tries to devour your lips, those amber eyes still forced shut as you manage to start rubbing her again, her wings flapping involuntarily, causing the table to move. Pinching that magic spot between your hooves, you feel her hips start to move, rubbing against your thigh as she roughly and brashly invades your mouth with her tongue. As her moment of pure, intense, white hot pleasure ends, she collapses on you, panting, her orange and yellow mane splayed on your chest. One hoof

then raises to the top of your head, curling around your horn, sliding up and down once as she breaks the kiss.

“Your turn.”

“I’m fine with that.” you respond, slightly surprised at how eager to return the favour the filly was.

She traces from your lips upwards, still laying on top of you, leaving a trail of her slightly salivary kisses on your fur... inching closer to your horn. You’d never had this done to you by a mare before, previous girlfriends having been somewhat more sheltered in their knowledge of unicorn anatomy than colts you had been with, but Spitfire soon wraps her lips around it, her tongue dancing over the shaft, avoiding the sharpened tip.

Your brain steadily begins to turn to mush, feeling her working your horn with her mouth, rewarding you for your service to her earlier. Soon, you begin to feel your magic involuntarily activate, expecting her to take the horn out of her mouth but surprised when she begins to stimulate you further, the tingly feeling of light escaping the corners of her mouth before she swallows the somehow corporeal magic.

“Did you enjoy that as much as I did?” she breathes into your ear

“I sure did, you’re definitely talented.” You reply, gasping slightly.

“Would you be interested in going further?” She asks, a cheeky smile visible as you lean up to look at her, “I’d love some company in the hot tub.” she says with a wink.

You nod, allowing her to climb off of the table, wings still majestically erect. Following her, you notice how nicely her hips sway, with the occasional flick of her orange and yellow tail revealing a little more of herself than you had already seen...

Towards the hot tub.

Best. Shift. Ever.

Fin.



Love Triangles and Other Funny Shapes

By: The Gentleman Creeper

The waves churn the boat ever so slightly as you gaze out upon the open water. Your crew scurries across the deck of the ship as they prepare. Something is coming. A lone pony in the crow's nest yells out to you.

“Cap’n! There’s a ship on the horizon!”

Your crew stops dead in their tracks and look to you, waiting for the next order. You nod once and a series of yells and commands goes through the ranks. They drop down, hiding. The lookout pony at the top of the mast yells out again.

“Cap’n! Looks like a schooner!”

You smirk as the ship comes within viewing distance, flying a flag native to Equestria, a sign of peace and good will. You continue to wave until the ship is so close, you can make out the face of the other captain, who is waving as well and wearing a big grin. The broadside hatches open, revealing at least a dozen ten-pounder cannons. You continue to smile back at the captain as you say the word.

“Fire.”

Thunderous explosions ring across the open ocean as the cannons fire harpoons, each carrying a sizable length of rope. The captain of the other ship looks at you, his jaw hanging slack.

“GET ‘EM ON A LEASH AND REEL ‘EM IN! RAISE THE BLACK FLAG AND PREPARE TO BOARD!” you scream.

All at once, your crew stands up, brandishing swords and axes. The pony in the crow’s nest tears down the flag you hung in false pretenses and replaces it with a torn, black flag with a skull and crossed bones under it. Grabbing a hanging length of rope with your teeth, you take a few steps back and run forward, letting go of the rope as you’re at the height of your swing, landing on the deck of the schooner, your boarding party not too far behind. The confused crew of the schooner looks at you in disbelief before going for their own weapons. Reaching to your side with your teeth, you grab a hold of your own cutlass and enter a fighting stance. All at once, the three charge you as they let out a rally cry. Their swings are sluggish and untrained, allowing you to block and parry each blow with skill and ease. While you have the skill, they have the numbers and begin pushing you back. Looking to your crew, you smile as you see your crew tie up the last of the rag tag fighting force who took up arms against you. All that’s left are the three in front of you. In a show of bravado, you jump into the air and grab a hold of a low hanging boom, planning on circling around and attacking them from the back. However, you begin to question the wisdom of this idea as another boom comes into view, just inches from your face. The second boom connects with your skull, knocking you to the ground as you begin to see stars.

“Wake up.”

You wonder who that just was. It sounded like a mare. But mares can’t be pirates; it couldn’t possibly be one of your crew.

“Wake up!”

Whoever it was, they were shaking you now. You try to force your eyes open, but they feel like they’re glued shut.

“Come on! You’re going to be late for school!”

Your eyes finally snap open and you look around. This wasn’t the ocean or a captured schooner. This was a room. Your room. Rubbing your eyes, you look around and

realize that this is reality and you weren't a feared pirate captain. You were just a regular colt.

"Have a good dream?" Looking up, you see your mother smiling as she runs a hoof through your mane.

"Yeah, I did. Why did you have to ruin it?" You ask, annoyed.

"Because, it's your first day of school and you're going to be late."

The words click inside your head.

School

FIRST DAY

LATE

"OH GOSH OH GOSH OH GOSH!" you yell as you spring from bed. You hear your mother laugh as you barrel down the stairs.

"Breakfast is on the table and your pack is by the door. Have a wonderful first day!" She yells.

You grab the blueberry muffin and stuff it in your mouth as you awkwardly get your saddle-pack on. Moving before you think, you actually run into the closed door before opening it, only to sit there for a moment in a daze while your mom laughs again. You get to your hooves and make sure to open the door this time and sprint towards the schoolhouse as fast as you can.

"Oh man, I hope this Ms. Cheerilee isn't too mad that I'm late!" You say to yourself as you dodge other ponies walking through the streets of Ponyville. You and your mom moved here from Clydesdale, a small valley town nestled near the ocean. You were reluctant to leave your friends and family behind, but you knew you had to leave. Your father had been a captain of a fishing boat and made sure you and your mom always had food on the table. But then one day, he disappeared. Your mom explained that there was a freak storm out on the ocean and that your father wasn't coming home. You had been up

late last night, like every night, looking at your father's sea charts and playing with the compass he gave you before his last voyage. Your mother had made it into a necklace so that you can 'Always keep a piece of your father close to your heart, as she put it. You smile as you feel the cold piece of metal bump your chest as you run. The schoolhouse came into view and you start to slow down when you realize that class hadn't even started yet. This allowed you to catch your breath and regain your composure. After all, first impressions are everything and you didn't want to come off that you were always panting and out of breath. You made it to the threshold of the schoolhouse and let out a sigh of relief. Looking around, you find a place where everyone else had set their own saddle-packs and put it in the corner, off to the side. It wasn't hard to find Ms. Cheerilee. Or, it wasn't hard for Ms. Cheerilee to find you.

"Ah! You must be the new student I heard was coming today! Before you sit down, why don't you tell the class your name?" Ms. Cheerilee said with a smile.

Looking around, you noticed that everyone else was sitting in their seats and was now staring directly at you. At that moment, it felt like you had a butterfly colony in your stomach.

"Uh...I... Umm..." You sputter out.

This was going to be a LONG day.

A few seconds passed before you finally got the nerve up and said your name to the whole class. There were hushed whispers amongst the others, which died down when Ms. Cheerilee cleared her throat.

"Well, what do you like to do for fun?" Ms. Cheerilee asked.

You really didn't like all this attention. All the eyes on you felt like bugs you just wanted to swat off. Instead of making a scene, you try to answer the question.

"I like... I like the ocean. And reading maps. And using the tools."

Ms. Cheerilee gave you a look, as did the other ponies.

“The tools? What kind of tools?” A pink earth pony asked in the front.

You smiled. All the navigation gear you find on a boat was what your dad had called ‘The tools’. He had taught you the name and how to use every single one at one point or another and could name them in your sleep.

“Oh, all sorts. Rulers, compasses, astrolabes, telescopes, sextant-“

You were cut off when a yellow Pegasus colt got up and yelled

“He said sex!”

Immediately, the other ponies joined in started laughing. Your cheeks turned bright red and felt like they were going to burst into flames any moment. All you could do was hang your head and hope that the laughter died down soon. Which, thanks to Ms. Cheerilee, ended very quickly.

“CLASS!” She yelled out. The laughter stopped dead. The class was so quiet, you could hear a pin drop. Everyone dropped their head a bit as Ms. Cheerilee began to chew them out.

“This is NOT how we treat a new class mate! And Half-Back! What do you have to say for yourself?!?”

The yellow Pegasus looked at Ms. Cheerilee for a second and then back to you.

“I’m sorry.” He said, half-heartedly.

You knew for a fact he wasn’t. Ms. Cheerilee turned to you and sighed.

“I’m sorry for that. Why don’t you take a seat over there” She suggested, pointing to an empty chair in the front row. Taking a seat, you find yourself in-between two fillies. To your right, there was a yellow earth pony with a bright red mane that held a large red bow. To your left, there was a white unicorn with a purple and pink mane.

“Applebloom and Sweetie Belle will help you and get you settled in if you need it.” Ms. Cheerilee said with a nod to the two fillies sitting next to you. “Now class, yesterday we were discussing the founders of Ponyville who...”

You tuned out Ms. Cheerilee, still trying to recover from that little fiasco.

“Sextant? Nice choice of words, dumbbo.” You thought to yourself. You slipped back in your desk as far as you dared, hoping that if you made yourself look as small as possible, the class will forget about you and move on. But no such luck.

“Hey... Hey you...” You hear to your right. Looking, you see Applebloom, looking at you with a smile.

“Hey... You don’t have your Cutie Mark?” She asked.

You rolled your eyes and wonder which Princess you angered to deserve this. First you get embarrassed by one of the tools and now they were going to pick on you for being a Blank-Flank.

“Yeah, what about it?” you asked, a little ticked off.

She looks past you and motions her eyes towards you. Glancing behind you, you see an orange Pegasus looking down at your side, which makes you a little uncomfortable. She then looks over to your right and motions with her head to you. The unicorn looks at your left side first and then tries to crane her neck to get a better look, but only manages to fall out of her seat and onto the floor. The class snickers at the display, but Sweetie Belle swiftly gets back into her seat before Ms. Cheerilee turns around, only to give you and the three around a puzzled look. Sighing heavily, you realize all at once that waking up was a bad idea and try to remember your dream.

* * * * *

“Well Cap’n, wadda we do wit ‘em?” One of your pirate crew asks. You circle the captured crew of the schooner.

“Hm. Hmm... HMMMMM....” You muse. A smile creeps across your face.

“We COULD feed ‘em to the sharks!” You say, slamming your jaws shut inches away from a scared sailor’s face. “No...” You say aloud. “I have a better idea!”

Slamming a hoof down, you give the order. “Let ‘em live, but empty the larder, toss the magazine overboard, and take whatever’s valuable! Let ‘em tell the tale of THE PIRATE KING AND HIS DREAD CREW!” you yell. Your crew yells back in joy.

“We’re gonna feast tonight!” One of your crew yells as he carries a barrel stocked full of dried fruits and vegetables. You smile at the haul, but the smile turns into a look of confusion when you hear a mare yell out.

“Get your hooves off of me, you beast!”

Looking in the direction of the voice, you see two of your crew carrying a mare with yellow fur in a regal dress. Her hair is done up in a large, red bow. As she’s brought before you, you put a hoof under her chin and look up at her, her orange eyes gazing into yours. You stare into them for what seems to be for an eternity. And then she says your name. And again. And again. And again, you’re being shaken.

* * * * *

Your eyes snap open and you look around.

“Dumb old reality again...” You say before remembering the last part of your dream. Your cheeks turn red as you look around. Applebloom is smiling at you.

“If you’re gonna fall asleep, best to do it in the back of the room.”

You smile sheepishly. “Thanks for waking me.”

She smiles back and nods. You turn away quickly, hoping that she didn’t notice your blush. “*What was that about?*” You ask yourself. You’ve dreamt of being a pirate before, but

it never involved a damsel, especially not one in the real world. You don't have much time to think this over as Ms. Cheerilee chimes in.

"Well class, that does it for now. You have a wonderful day!"

She didn't even get the second sentence out before everyone started moving around and leaving. Sighing heavily, you go to the back of the room and grab your things, trying to ignore the snickers from the other ponies. Before you can make it out the door, Applebloom, Sweetie Belle, and the orange Pegasus who sat behind you call out to you. Turning around, you look at them with a raised eyebrow.

"Uhh... Can I help you?" you ask hesitantly.

The three fillies look at each other and giggle. "You don't have your cutie mark." The orange Pegasus says with a smirk. This was the straw that broke the pony's back.

"I've been embarrassed beyond belief, fell asleep in class, and now you're making fun of me for being a blank flank!" You yell as you stomp your hoof down.

"Way to make a pony feel welcome." With that, you storm out of the schoolhouse, but before you can even get a foot down the road, they start chasing after you. You break into a full gallop, having reached your breaking point. You blink back tears as you wonder why this was happening. Why your dad had to disappear, why you had to move, why they made fun of you, and most importantly, why this Pegasus was now sitting on your back.

"Hey you! Get offa me!" you yell as you buck around violently.

The Pegasus stays on and tackles you to the ground. "My name isn't 'Hey you!'" she says. "It's Scootaloo and we're not making fun of you! See?" She says as she points to her friend's sides.

You blink a few times, trying to wrap your head around it. They both had blank flanks and you wagered a guess that Scootaloo didn't have one either, which was proved right when she got off of you and joined the three.

“Then why are you chasing me?” You ask.

“Well duh!” Applebloom says, helping you up. “You were running.”

“Not only that,” Sweetie Belle chimes in “but we want you to join us!”

You blink a few times, still lost completely. “I don’t follow.” You say, shaking your head.

The three fillies grin from ear to ear, take a deep breath and yell

“THE CUTIE MARK CRUSADERS!”

You blink a few times before responding, wondering if this was some sort of joke. “The what?”

“The Cutie Mark Crusaders!” Apple Bloom says with just as much enthusiasm as before.

“We’re going to discover our hidden talents!” Sweetie Belle chimes in.

“And earn our Cutie Marks!” Scootaloo finishes.

You can’t help but feel that they rehearsed this before, probably in front of a mirror, since they were now posing. “I really don’t know...” you say tentatively.

“Oh come on! There’s nothing to lose and everything to gain!” Scootaloo says.

You make a face, still not knowing what to do. The thought of getting your Cutie Mark had crossed your mind before, but it never had really bothered you to the point that you turned it into a quest like these three fillies had. Sure, it got annoying when your friends back in Clydesdale would bust on you about being a blank flank, but... You couldn’t finish the thought. Apple Bloom was now looking at you with those big, soulful eyes. She wasn’t even saying anything. She was just looking at you. But the look said it all and you finally caved.

“Alright, alright. I’ll join.” You say, blushing. “Just stop with the look.”

All three girls jump up and down and squeal with delight. “Apple Bloom, you have got to teach me that look! It’s up there with *The Stare*.” Sweetie Belle says as she tries to give an intimidating look before cracking up.

“Well... I’d better get home first,” you finally say “My mom is probably wondering where I am.”

The three fillies perk up. “Alright then! Meet us at Sugar Cube in an hour!” Scootaloo says. “We’ve got a plan!”

Your three new friends run off towards Ponyville leaving you confused. And flustered when Apple Bloom stops and turns back to you, giving you a wink. You don’t really know what to do, so you end up standing there with a goofy smile on your face. You think a lot about the day on the way home and when your mom asks you how it went, you decide to leave out some parts you’d rather forget. When you get to the part about Apple Bloom, Sweetie Belle, and Scootaloo your mom only sits there and smiles when you describe each one. After having some lunch, you decide to pour yourself into your dad’s maps again. You thought it would help clear your mind, but it doesn’t. You keep coming back and back again to her. Why did she make you feel so ...weird? Sighing, you look at the clock on the wall and realize that it’s time to start making your way to Sugar Cube Corner.

“Where are you going?” Your mom asks as you make your way to the door.

“I’m going to go and meet up with my friends.” You reply nonchalantly.

Your mom smiles. “Alright then... You have fun on your date, Casanova.” She says with a giggle.

You blush heavily and stomp your hoof “MOOOO~M!”

You leave before she could say anything else and hope that your blush is gone before you make it to Sugar Cube Corner. Fortunately, you were able to turn your mind back to the maps.

“I wonder if I can use the tub tonight and try to recreate the ocean currents. Then I can-“

Your thoughts were cut off when you felt a series of hooves grab you and drag you into an alleyway across from Sugar Cube Corner. In a panic, you start struggling and flailing around. Your hoof connects with something and you hear an audible. “OW!” The hooves let go of you and turning around, you see Scootaloo giving you a dirty look while Apple Bloom consoled Sweetie Belle, who was rubbing her nose and was on the verge of tears. “Oh my gosh!” you yell out. “Sweetie Belle, I’m so sorry! I didn’t know it was you guys and I sort of freaked! Are you okay?” You ask, hoping the unicorn wasn’t about to start crying.

“Yeah...” she says with a snuffle “I told you it wasn’t a smart idea to scare him like that!” she tried to say. It more or less sounded like she had a nasty head cold. You can’t help but still feel bad and offer another apology.

“Really, I’m sorry. I’d never do something like that on purpose.” You say with a smile. She smiles back. “Oh, I know that. You’re way too nice to be a bully.”

She not only surprised you with those words, but with a hug. You can’t help but feel your whole face turn red.

“Alright then!” Scootaloo says with new found confidence, causing both you and Sweetie Belle to jump back from each other.

“Mr. and Mrs. Cake are in Fillydelphia for a cooking contest an’ Pinkie Pie is heading over to Sweet Apple Acres in a bit.” Apple Bloom says. “Mah sister’s gonna teach her some Apple Family recipes. Once she’s gone, we’re gonna go in there an’ do it.” You blink a few times and raise a hoof.

“Uhh... What is it we’re going to do exactly?” You ask.

“We’re going to make candy!” Sweetie Belle says happily “Nice and safe! Not like last time...” She shivers slightly.

You raise an eyebrow and begin to regret agreeing to all of this. “What do you mean ‘Not like last time?’”

“How was I supposed to know that the cannon was going to explode like that?!?” Scootaloo yells as she throws her hooves up into the air “The pony I borrowed it from said it worked like a charm.”

Applebloom scowls “Scootaloo, that pony had three legs an’ was burnt worse than one of my Auntie Oops’ pies. ”

“Your point?” Scootaloo asks before realizing what Applebloom was getting at. “Oh. Okay, not my best moment. But hey at least we test fired it first.”

What in the world did you just get yourself into? Well, there was no going back now. You follow the three fillies as they move across the Ponyville Street, trying to remain hidden. Once you finally make it to the back door of Sugar Cube Corner, you and the three fillies sneak into the shop unnoticed.

“So, what are we making?” you ask.

“Well, last time I tried to make cupcakes, it didn’t go so well...” Apple Bloom said, a little disheartened at remembering her past failure.

“Why not candy?” Sweetie Bell suggests.

“Why not? It couldn’t be that hard, could it?” you say encouragingly. Maybe this wasn’t going to turn out so bad after all.

“OOH! OOH! Can we make bubblegum?!?” Scootaloo asks excitedly “I LOVE bubblegum!”

“Are there any recipes around here?” Sweetie Belle asks, looking through some drawers.

“Over here! Hmm... Candy, candy, cand- Ah!” Apple Bloom exclaims. Pulling out an index card from the box, she shows you a simple recipe.

“Yeah, we can do this!” you say happily “We’ll have bubblegum in less than 15 minutes with this!”

* * * * *

You never believed so much could go wrong in such little time. But there you were. Suspended from the ceiling by a giant wad of gum. Where did it go wrong? When Apple Bloom used too much gum base? When Scootaloo tried to fix this by adding more syrup? When Sweetie Belle thought that doubling the temperature would balance everything out? Or when you got distracted when Scootaloo licked some of the gum sweetener that you got on your neck and you let the mixture expand into the giant mass that now held you in its gummy grip. Yeah, that last part seemed about right.

“How should we get him down?” Sweetie Belle asked.

“We could use apple butter. When I got gum stuck in my mane last week, apple butter got it right out.” Apple Bloom suggested.

“We could eat it.” Scootaloo said as she flew up and took a bite out of mass you were stuck in.

“MMM! Thif if roly goob!” Scootaloo tried to say in-between chews.

As you stared at the floor, you began to wonder why your life has gotten so complicated. And how in the world you were going to explain to your mom that you got gum over 80% of your body.

“What if we froze it?” Sweetie Belle asks “Rarity got gum on her coat once and froze it. It just broke off.”

Apple Bloom raises an eyebrow. “I didn’t know Rarity chewed gum.”

“She doesn’t. That’s why she freaked out and screamed for ten minutes first.” Sweetie Belle says, sounding almost a little ashamed. Sighing, you tried to calm yourself down.

“Don’t get mad... Don’t get mad... Wait, then get even.” You think to yourself.

Sweetie Belle and Apple Bloom debate whether to cover you in ice or smear apple butter on you while Scootaloo happily chewed away at the gum. Before the debate could turn into an argument, the sound of the front door closing makes all of you stop dead.

“Quick! Get me down!” you hiss as you flail your hooves around.

“There’s no time!” Apple Bloom says as she throws the sticky pot into a nearby cupboard.

Sweetie Belle starts putting away the ingredients you used and looks up at you. “Just hang in there!” You stop flailing around and stare daggers at her. She laughs nervously. “Oh right. Sorry, wrong choice of words.”

“We have a plan!” Apple Bloom says, trying to dispose of the last of the evidence. Scootaloo had ripped the gum off of the walls and had stuffed it into her maw, which now looked like it held a piece of gum the size of your head. She simply nodded quickly and helped the others clean up quickly before leaving out the back door. Before you could call out to them, a pink earth pony with a mane that looked like cotton candy had entered the kitchen. You immediately froze, hoping that Pinkie Pie didn’t notice you. She looked around the kitchen, her eyes darting back and forth. Her face bore an almost predatory look, as if hunting for something.

“I know you’re here.” She finally says. You held your breath, waiting for her to look up and turn you over to the Ponyville Police for breaking and entering. Instead, she opens the fridge and pulls out a plate of cupcakes and grins from ear to ear.

“There you are!” Pinkie yells happily. You don’t know how, but she manages to shove the whole cupcake into her mouth and swallow it whole. She eats two more cupcakes like this before she stops and sniffs the air.

“Why do I smell gum?” she asks aloud. Getting up, she begins sniffing the kitchen all over, without looking up, thankfully. She finally stops and begins rubbing her nose furiously. “Oh don’t tell me I got gum stuck in my nose again!” She says, obviously annoyed at the idea. You watch as she leaves the kitchen and hear her thunder up the stairs, saying something about needing a crowbar and a pound of oatmeal. Sighing, you wonder

how you're going to get yourself out of this sticky situation. Playing back what you just thought, you actually want to punch yourself for such a horrible pun.

"Hey!" Whipping your head around, you see Apple Bloom standing in the door way with some rope in her mouth. "Catch!" She yells quietly.

The rope hits you in the face, but you manage to grab a hold of it with your teeth. "Now don't let go!" Giving a nod, you begin to feel yourself being pulled from the gum, slowly but surely. With a final yank, you fly out the back door of Sugar Cube Corner and land in a bush.

"See, I told ya we had a plan!" Apple Bloom says with confidence over you. You flail around and get yourself to your hooves. You're mad. No, you're beyond mad. Your father had a word for this feeling. A word your mom didn't like you to use.

The three fillies stare at you, all of them waiting for you to say something, but you don't. The only thing in your ears is Scootaloo smacking her gum.

You try to find the right words. Well, you have a few choice words you want to use, but the last time you used those words, your mom had tanned your hide raw.

"That was just crazy!" you finally say "I mean, I was just hanging from the ceiling by a wad of gum!"

Apple Bloom giggles. "Yeah, that was pretty funny."

You start to toss around the idea about running away right now and never looking back when something behind Apple Bloom and Sweetie Belle gets your attention: Scootaloo and her giant bubble. She apparently worked the gum enough to get a bubble going and blew it so large, it was almost as big as she was.

"Uhh..." is all you can say before the bubble pops with a loud explosion, showering Apple Bloom, Sweetie Belle, and Scootaloo with ABC gum. Apple Bloom and Sweetie Belle glared at Scootaloo as they try to scrape the gum off. She gives the two a gummy grin. "Sorry."

“Heh...” The three fillies look at you. It starts as a chuckle but quickly turns into a full on roar of laughter. It becomes contagious as the three fillies look at each other and join in. You and your friends laugh for what feels like ages. When you finally calm down, your sides hurt and your eyes are moist. Using a gummy hoof, you wipe away the tears and breathe a side of relief.

“Okay. THAT was funny.” You finally say. “Come on. Let’s find a way to get this gum off.”

Sweetie Belle frowns. “We can’t ask my sister. She’s spent the day locked up in her shop, trying to fill this huge order that came in from out of town.”

“Well what do we do now?” You ask.

“Oh! Oh! We could-“ You cut Apple Bloom off, knowing what she was going to suggest.

“And don’t say apple butter!”

She seems disappointed. What was with her and apple butter? Her eyes widen and she smiles.

“What about Twilight? She’s really good with magic!” Apple Bloom suggests.

Scootaloo nods her head quickly. “Yeah! It’ll come off easy with a little magic!” She says in between chews.

You shrug. “Why not? Lead on.”

You follow the three fillies to the Ponyville library. You remember seeing it on the way into Ponyville when you first arrived and had made a mental note to check it out as soon as you could. But with everything going on, from the introduction fiasco to the Cutie Mark Crusaders, you had completely forgotten. Reaching out with the only hoof that doesn’t have gum on it, you knock on the door.

“Hold on! Hold on! I’m coming! Keep your saddles on!” You hear a young voice from inside call out. When the door opens, you have to do a double take. Standing before

you was a purple and green dragon, just a bit taller than you. This was the first time you had ever seen a dragon, so you were at a loss for words.

Especially when the dragon starts cracking up.

“What happened to you guys?” He asks, still smirking.

Apple Bloom sighs. “It’s a long story Spike. Can you just get Twilight? We need some help.”

“Sure.” Spike says. “She’s in her lab. Just stick around!” he says with a laugh before slipping inside.

The four of you don’t have much to say, so all you can do is wait around and listen to Scootaloo smack her gum.

“Scootaloo, could you close your mouth when you chew? It’s getting *really* annoying.” Apple Bloom says, putting emphasis on “really”

Scootaloo scowls at Apple Bloom for a moment before smacking her gum at a much faster rate, really trying to annoy her.

“Why you... C’mere!” Apple Bloom yells before tackling Scootaloo. They roll around on the ground for a few minutes before the door to the library opens.

“Ponies, Ponies, a little order here?” A female voice asked behind you. A violet unicorn stands in the doorway, looking at you four with a raised eyebrow. “What...” She shakes her head and sighs. “Nevermind. I don’t want to know. What did you need?” She asks.

You wave a hoof at the gum covering most of your body. “If you could just...” you allude. She gives you a smile and shakes her head. “Alright, alright. I can take a hint. Let me try something...” Her horn glows with a violet light before you and the three fillies are hit by a cold, stiff breeze that permeates you to the core. Your teeth immediately begin to chatter, but you smile as you see the gum break apart and fall on the ground. Giving a shake, the rest comes lose. “T-T-Thanks.” You manage to sputter out.

“ah ongue!” You hear one of fillies call out. Scootaloo stands there with her tongue hanging out; the gum she had been chewing frozen to it. “eh ah ahh!” she yells as she shakes her head back and forth.

“Here lemme help.” Apple Bloom says as she grabs a hold of the chunk of frozen gum. “I’m gonna pull it off, okay? On the count of three.” Scootaloo nods and braces herself. “One... Two...” Apple Bloom give a devilish grin, as she rips it off before the next count. Scootaloo’s eyes go wide and she yells at the top of her lungs as she holds her tongue.

“Hey, hey, easy now, it’s over.” You say, trying to comfort her.

“No! ‘he wipped mah ‘ongue off!” Scootaloo says, her hooves over her mouth.

“Come on, let me see.” You say.

Scootaloo runs up to you and opens her mouth. Her breath still smells sweet like bubblegum. Other than a little red spot, it was intact.

“Come on, you’re fine. Don’t be such a baby.” Scootaloo looks at you and sticks out her sore tongue at you.

“Alright, well, I’m heading home. It’s getting late.” Sweetie Belle says.

“Yeah, and it’s almost time for dinner!” Apple Bloom says as she trots off.

Scootaloo decides that speaking isn’t such a good idea at the moment and just smiles at you. You smile back, waving them all off as they head home.

“Well, you sure are the popular one?” Twilight teased. “I don’t think I’ve ever seen you around here.”

“Yeah, I just moved in. I meant to stop by earlier, but things got a little crazy.”

Twilight cocks her head at you. “Stop by? For what?”

“Well this is a library, right?” You ask.

“Oh. Oh!” Twilight realizes what you’re after. “I usually don’t get a lot of ponies stopping by after books. What do you want to read? *The Pony Went Over the Mountain?* *The Three Ponies?* *The Little Pony That Could?*” She suggested, bringing a pile of children’s books, naming the titles. You shake your head, feeling a little insulted, but not surprised that she would suggest children’s books. You were still a kid, of course.

“I was actually hoping you had something on ocean currents around Equestria.” You ask. She’s a little taken aback at your request, but she gets the idea.

“Here we are!” She says, levitating a book in front of you. The title read “Ocean Circulation, Volume 1”

The book was pretty thick, but that didn’t stop you. “Thank you! I’ll get it back when I’m done!” You say as you hurry out the door, the book balanced on your back.

It didn’t take long for you to get home. Your mother was waiting for you, drinking a cup of tea. “Welcome home.” She says. “Have fun with your date?”

You blush, but don’t let it get to you. “I’m going to my room. Call me when dinner’s ready.”

The book was getting heavy and you wanted to get it off your back, not just for relief, but also to see inside. Setting it on the desk next to your maps, you crack open the book and begin flipping through the pages. You stopped when you finally found it. A map that matched one that belonged to your father. The one in the book had very detailed drawings of the currents swirling around in the open ocean. Immediately, you begin to make notes on the map. You only took a break when your mom brings up your dinner and you fall asleep sometime around midnight.

It was a perfect score. You and your crew couldn’t believe their eyes when you made your way into the heart of the ship. Gold, silver, and other riches beyond belief. You sit on the throne that feels like it was made just for you and look to your crew.

“We did it boys! We’re kings among kings! Weigh anchor and set sail! Set a course for port! Time for some shore leave!”

The crew gave a cheer and proceeded to their posts. All but one mare. "C'mere, Ms. Bloom. Pop a squat!" You say as you slap your thigh. The yellow mare walks towards you, wearing a seductive grin.

"You know captain, I didn't think this pirate life would be for me..." She said as she sat down on your lap. "But you make a convincing argument." All you could do was smile as she snuggled up to your chest and wrapped her forelegs around you. She felt so warm... so soft...so good. You put a hoof under her chin, just as you did when you first met her. But there wasn't resentment in her eyes this time. Those eyes were filled with a love that melted your heart. You both began to move closer to each other, your faces inches from each other. In one fluid motion, you lock lips, sending a surge of electricity through your whole body. You feel her tongue trying to push its way into your mouth and you gladly welcome it. She breaks the kiss and smiles as she licks her lips.

"Say it."

You know what she wants to hear and you roll your eyes. "How many times do I have to say it before you believe me, mare?" You ask as you wrap your hooves around her, bringing her closer. Giggling she traces a hoof around on your chest. "How many stars are in the sky?"

Shaking your head, you break down and say it. "I love you."

She smiles at the words and kisses you again. "Say it again."

Tackling her to the ground, you embrace her and roll around in your ill-gotten booty. "I love you." You say.

You say it again and then the whole boat starts to shake.

* * * * *

Or to be more precise, your entire bed. “Mom!” You yell as you throw off the covers. “What are you-“

Blinking a few times, your brain tries to process the sight before you. “Apple Bloom...” You say, just above a whisper.

“Good morning!” She says as she hops down from your bed. “Sleep well?”

Looking outside, you realize the time. “OH NO, I’M GOING TO BE LATE AGAIN!” You yell as you try to take off down the stairs, only to run into your closed bedroom door.

“This is getting old...” You think to yourself as you get up in a daze.

“What are you freaking out about this time?” Apple Bloom asks. “It’s Saturday!”

It takes a while for the word to click with you before you let out a sigh of relief. “Oh thank Celestia. I thought... Nevermind. Apple Bloom, do you mind telling me what you’re doing in my house?” you ask.

“Well, Sweetie Belle is acting as a model for her sister and Scootaloo took off, yelling something about hanging out with Rainbow Dash. So I thought I’d come here and hang out with you.” She explains.

“Oh, I see. What about my mom? What did she say?” You ask.

“She lemme in an hour ago. She said she had to go shopping and told me where your room was.” You look at Apple Bloom puzzled.

“What did you do for an hour? Watch me sleep?” you ask, jokingly. Apple Bloom blushes and looks away. It looks like you hit the nail on the head.

“Uhh, so. What’s all this stuff?” She asked, pointing to your desk, obviously trying to change the subject.

You had left the book on ocean currents out and one of the maps on your corkboard was littered with tacks. “Just some work I was doing last night. Nothing really that

interesting,” You say, looking over the points “I’m trying to figure out where something would go if you dropped it in the ocean. But it’s boring. Why don’t we head out and do something?” You ask, trying to find some excuse to get Apple Bloom out of your room.

“Well, what do you have in mind?” She asked as you walked down the stairs. You opened your mouth, only to be stopped by your own rumbling stomach.

Apple Bloom giggled “Hungry? Why don’t ya come to Sweet Apple Acres? Granny Smith had some apple pies in the oven ‘fore I left. They’re probably done by now!” Smiling, you follow Apple Bloom out the door.

“That would be great!” Your mom had brought home some apples from Sweet Apple Acres a few days ago and the thought of using apples that delicious in a pie made your mouth water.

“Great! Follow me!” Apple Bloom said before galloping off.

When you two finally make it to Sweet Apple Acres, you’re out of breath and even hungrier than before. If Apple Bloom is tired, she’s hiding it well. “Hi Big Macintosh!” Apple Bloom says as you pass a large red stallion. He gives you a nod and continues on his way.

“Hiya Applejack!” Apple Bloom says to an orange mare carrying a bushel of apples. She sets it down and looks both of you over. “Heya Apple Bloom. Who’s this wit ya?” She asks.

“This is ma new friend I was tellin’ you about. I offered to feed him some a Granny Smith’s pies. I hope ya don’t mind.” She explains. Applejack looks you over and smiles. “Why shucks, go on an’ help yerself!”

“Thanks a lot! I can’t wait!” You say excitedly. Making your way into the Sweet Apple Acres homestead, the smell of baked apples hits you, instantly making your mouth water. Apple Bloom leads you into the kitchen where you find an elderly mare in a rocking chair. She squints in your direction. “Eh, wass that? Who’s there?” She asks.

“It’s me, Granny Smith. I brought my friend with me.” Apple Bloom says cheerfully. “Get real close. She can’t see that well anymore,” she whispers “she’s blind as a bat.”

“This bat’s eyes may be going, but her ears are as sharp as ever!” Granny Smith exclaims.

You move up slowly to her and stop when you’re at least a half a foot away from her. She looks you over a second before her eyes go wide and her mouth goes agape.

“V..Vang? Is that you?” She asks.

“Uhh, no, I’m sorry. Who’s Vang?” You ask.

Granny Smith just stares at you. “Yer the spittin’ image of ‘em. Could he...Boy! Where you from?” She asks sharply as she looks you over.

“I’m...I’m from Clydesdale, why?”

Granny Smith remains quiet for a long time. Apple Bloom moves next to you. “Granny Smith, are you okay?” She asks.

A smile goes across Granny Smith’s face. “That ol’ seadog.” She says under her breath with a chuckle. “Come on. Sit down and grab some pie. That’s what you’re after, isn’t it?” She asks. You and Apple Bloom grab a plate from the counter and Granny Smith uses a spatula to cut you and her a large piece of pie. Taking a bite, you start to fill the hole in your gut, but something is still nagging you.

“Uh, Mrs. Smith? Who’s Vang?” you ask.

Granny Smith sighs and looks out the window, her stare going on for miles. She doesn’t say anything for what feels like the longest time.

“He was my first love,” she finally says “Clydesdale wanted to do business with the Apple Family way back when. I was to go and settle the trade agreement. I just turned old enough to start doing some serious business for the Apple Family.” She says before getting lost in her memories. You and Apple Bloom remain quiet, waiting to hear what she says next.

“The deal was struck pretty quickly and it benefited both parties, so everyone was happy. I didn’t have to go back for a week, so I started exploring Clydesdale. It was such a beautiful place.” She says with a sigh “I spent most of my time down by the docks, watching the boats come and go. That’s when I met him. A stallion, just a bit older than me, never took his eyes off of me as the boat came ashore. He was just the first mate of this little fishing boat back then and was on shore leave. Next to your grandfather, he was the most beautiful stallion I ever laid eyes on.” She says as she nods to Apple Bloom. “The one thing I’ll never forget about that stallion was his eyes: Sharp, that seemed to go right through you.” She said before drifting off. She snaps back when you clear your throat and continues the story. “He confessed to me out on the open water in his captain’s boat. He promised to tear the heavens down and give it to me if I just said I loved him,” she sighed heavily “But things were different back then for the Apple Family. I wanted to say I did, but I was already arranged to be married. I broke his heart...” Granny Smith said sullenly. “I left Clydesdale that day and didn’t come back for years. When I finally did, I found out Vang had met a mare that loved him and even had a colt.” She smiled fondly. Looking at you, she points at the compass around your neck. “I got him that on our first date. So tell me now, how are those two seadogs?” She asked.

It finally clicked in your head. You grabbed the compass and looked it over. There. You knew that words were familiar. The word ‘Vang’, carved right into it.

“My grandpa retired from the fishing business,” you explain. “He mostly spends his days watching the boats come and go. He said he would have kept doing what he loved if it wasn’t for his other love.”

“And what was that?” Apple Bloom asked.

“My grandma.”

Granny Smith nodded. “Sounds like Vang... But what about his colt? Your father?”

The smile slips off of your face and you look at the ground.

“My dad... My dad went out to sea and never came back...” You bring yourself to say. The words feel like broken glass in your mouth and leave a lump in your throat. Both Apple Bloom and Granny Smith gasp.

“Oh my gosh, I’m so sorry.” you hear Apple Bloom say, trying to console you. You do your best to hold back the tears.

“I’m sorry for opening old wounds,” Granny Smith says “Vang told me that he would raise his son right so he could have his own family. Looking at you, I’m say he did good.” That did it. The dams burst and you begin to cry openly. The only other time you have cried like this was when you first learned your father wasn’t coming home. As you began to think that the pain would never go away, you feel a pair of hooves wrap around you. Opening your eyes, you see Apple Bloom holding onto you, shedding her own tears.

“Please don’t cry. I’m here for you.” You put your own hoofs around her and just sit there, embracing each other. The tears stop. “T-Thanks...” You say sheepishly. “I guess the pain never goes away...” You say with a sniffle.

Apple Bloom looks up to you with her big, orange eyes. Without a word, she places a kiss on your cheek. You blush heavily and smile. “Thanks... I-I needed that.”

“Anytime...” Apple Bloom says.

Granny Smith chuckles. “Oh to be young and in love.” Apple Bloom blushes heavily and gets up.

“It’s nothin’ like that! It’s just-just that he needed it! If I lost anyone like that, I’d want a shoulder to cry on!” She says defensively, but her red face gives it all away.

Wiping the tears from your face you smile at Apple Bloom. “And I’m grateful.” You turn to Granny Smith. “Thank you again for everything, but I think it’s time I got home.”

Apple Bloom gets up and follows you. “Let me walk with you.”

The walk home was a little longer than you remember but you’re happy when you finally make it. All you want to do is lie down and get some rest. Looking at Apple Bloom,

you smile. Thanks to her, you learned more about your father and that you have a friend you can always count on.

“Well, thanks again Apple Bloom. For everything. I don’t even know how I could repay you for all you’ve done,” you say.

She looks at you sheepishly and then at the ground. “Close your eyes.” She finally says.

“Uhh, why?” You ask. “You want to know how to repay me? Then close your eyes.” She’s blushing very heavily. Closing your eyes, you wait there for a few seconds. You feel her breath on you first. Then you feel something warm and wet touch your lips for just a few seconds. Opening your eyes, you see Apple Bloom’s face was less than an inch away from yours.. “Did you-” Was all you could make out before she turned around and galloped home. You stood there for a few minutes in a daze.

“Did she just kiss me?”

It was Sunday night and you hadn’t seen hide, nor hair of Apple Bloom all day. You started to think she was purposely avoiding you. “Well, when she wants to talk, we’ll talk.” you muse aloud as you turn the page of Ocean Circulations. You really weren’t reading the book however. Your mind was going back to that kiss. It was short and sweet, but made your whole body tingle. Sighing, you realize that you can’t get any work done like this and decide to go to bed early this time. Unlike the past few nights, you didn’t have any dreams this time and this made you a bit sad. You were actually starting to enjoy them. Your mom had worked late last night and slept in, leaving you to make your own breakfast, consisting of daisies between two slices of toasted wheat bread.

With nothing much else to do before school started, you decided to wander around Ponyville to get a feel for it. A familiar voice gets your attention as you round a corner.

“YEAH! Nailed it!” Scootaloo says as her scooter touches down on the ground. Her purple mane was stuffed into her helmet, so you almost didn’t recognize her. She, however, smiles as you approach.

“Hey! Wanna see something cool?!?” She asks excitedly.

“Sure.”

She smiles at your answer. “Awesome! Check it!” She crouches down on her scooter before jumping into the air with it and spinning 360 degrees before landing in the same position she started in. You clap your hooves together in applause and Scootaloo takes a bow. “Thank you, thank you. So, you need a lift to school?” She asks.

You think about it for a second before shrugging. “Sure, why not?” You ask.

Scootaloo hops off of her scooter and motions for you to get on.

“So, how is this supposed to work, with the two of us?” You ask. Scootaloo gets on behind you and wraps her hooves around your waist. “Just steer. I’ll take care of the rest.” She says. You blush at the feeling of her this close to you. “Alright, I’m ready.” You say nervously.

“BLAST OFF!” Scootaloo began flapping her wings as fast as she can. You have trouble keeping yourself on a straight path, but you finally get the hang of it and like the feeling of the wind in your mane. You’re almost sad when you see the schoolhouse approach and feel Scootaloo slow the scooter down. “Well, we’re here!” She says with a grin as she lets you off.

“That was pretty fun!” You yell with a grin.

Scootaloo smiles back. “Yeah, that was! I thought we were gonna crash at that last turn! My heart was beating so fast! We should totally do that again!” You notice Scootaloo’s cheeks are flushed, but you write it off as the adrenaline rush.

Scootaloo looks behind you and smiles. “Hey Sweetie Belle! Hey Apple Bloom!”

Turing, you see the two fillies and smile. “Hey girls. How are you doing?” You ask.

Sweetie Belle smiles “I’m doing great! Rarity needed me to model for her and she said I was so helpful!” She began to go on about something, but you became distracted.

Apple Bloom kept looking away from you and was blushing heavily. “Apple Bloom, are you okay?” You ask.

She jumps and fumbles for the right words. “Uh, I-I-I’m fine! Really! Fine!” She says with a forced smile. “I’ll see you in class!” She yells before running away.

Scootaloo raises an eyebrow. “What is wrong with that pony?” She asks.

It was like that through the entire class. Apple Bloom was so nervous and jumpy around you. She had even dropped her pencil and screamed in fright when you tried to give it back to her. At the end of the class, you made your move and confronted her. “Apple Bloom, this is ridiculous. You nearly hit the ceiling during class. We really need to talk about this...Us.” You say, feeling awkward as Apple Bloom looked for the nearest escape route. Sighing, she looks at you with her cute orange eyes. “I know... It’s just, I don’t know what to do or say. I really need to get my thoughts in a row.”

You begin to frown as you begin thinking of the worst. “Apple Bloom... I’d never force you to do something that you didn’t want to do. I just don’t want you to stop being my friend. You mean a lot to me.”

Apple Bloom blushes heavily, but smiles shyly. “T-Thanks. It means a lot to me, too. I-“ Apple Bloom was cut off as Scootaloo budged in-between you two. “Come on! We’ve got some crusading to do!”

Apple Bloom jumps back and starts freaking out again. “I uh got some stuff to do actually! Apple Jack wants me to help her! Yeah! Out in the field!”

Scootaloo looks a little down. “Aww... That stinks. Well, have fun!” Scootaloo yells as she waves Apple Bloom off.

“What do we do now?” Sweetie Belle asks.

Scootaloo jumps into the air. “I’ve got it! Meet me at the lake in an hour! I got to get some stuff!”

Scootaloo jumps on her scooter and takes off before you can say anything.

“What was that all about?” you ask Sweetie Belle.

She shrugs. “I guess I’ll see you there.”

You really didn’t have anything else planned today, so you decided to go find this lake Scootaloo was talking about. Asking around for directions, you were directed to an unnamed lake a mile down the road. It was pretty big and you couldn’t help but throw caution to the wind and go for a swim. Getting out to the center of the lake, you take a deep breath and sink down. After a minute of sinking, your lungs start to ache and you decide to not risk going down any further. Surfacing, you take a much needed gulp of breath and get back to shore. “Deeper than it looks...” You gasp out.

After shaking yourself dry, you curl up by the shore and decide that now was a great time to take a nap.

Drifting off to sleep, you started to dream again.

“Cap’n! Cap’n! Wake up!” Your eyes snap open as your midshipman shakes you.

“You better have a good reason for waking us up or I’ll keel haul ya!” You yell.

“No he won’t.” A voice says to your side. “I will.” Apple Bloom threatens as she rubs her eyes. The midshipman swallowed the lump in his throat and finally spoke up.

“T-There’s a ship on the horizon!” Sighing, you get out of bed, still dressed in your pajamas. “And you seriously couldn’t handle this without me?” You grumble “Just wave the jolly roger and they’ll go running! Works every time.”

“But that’s the problem Cap’n! The ship is flying their own jolly roger!” Your eyes go wide, realizing why your midshipman was so freaked. Pirates didn’t get along with anybody. Not even other pirates. “Man your stations!” You yell. “We’ve got company! Get the cannons ready!” You say with a sinister grin. “I want to give ‘em a warm welcome.”

“Uh, Cap’n?” One of your crew squeaks.

“What is it now?” The sailor pointed at you and you finally realize that you’re still in your pajamas. You hear Apple Bloom laugh as she steps out of your cabin. “Maybe it’ll confuse ‘em.” She teases. You can’t help but laugh.

“Maybe.”

You didn’t give the ship any chance to turn and unload their own cannons. “Fire!”

The cannons unleashed the harpoons, latching onto the enemy ship. “REEL ‘EM IN BOYS!” Apple Bloom yells. You smile and give her a peck on the check. “That’s my girl!” You yell proudly.

The ship began to get dragged towards you, but it managed to shift to its side and open fire with its own cannons. “DUCK!” you yell.

You hit the deck and feel a cannon ball whiz over your head. Normally, this would scare you, but all you could do was laugh. “IT FEELS LIKE A KEEPER! LET’S LAND THIS BABY!” You yell.

You jump back as you feel something else fly overhead. “That’s no cannon ball.” You say as you look up.

An orange Pegasus with a purple mane done in dread locks stares down at you, laughing. “So this is the best the captain can muster? Some rope and a pirate in P.J’s?” She laughs again.

“I AM the captain!” You yell. You whistle to your crew and they throw you a cutlass, which you catch in your mouth. The Pegasus unsheathes her own cutlass and charges at you from the sky, ready to clash metal with me-

“Come on! Wake up! I need your help!”

You bolt upright and look around. Scootaloo and Sweetie Belle stood over you. Scootaloo set a large saddle-bag down in front of you. “Get up, lazy bones! We got a ramp to build!”

“Ramp? A ramp for what?” you ask. Scootaloo looks at the lake and points across it. “I’m gonna jump the lake!”

You blink a few times, waiting for the punchline, but it didn’t come. “Are you serious?” You ask. Sweetie Belle shakes her head. “I tried to talk her out of it the entire way here! She’s dead set on jumping it!”

“Scootaloo... Are you 100% serious about this? You do know you could get really hurt?” You ask.

Sweetie Belle sighs. “I tried to tell her that, too.” Shaking your head, you begin looking out on the lake.

“You’d still do it even if I say no, so I might as well.” You say, finally breaking down. Scootaloo jumps up and down. “Yay! Mr. Tinder let me have a bunch of planks we could use! I’m going to go get them!”

“I guess I’ll work on the design.” You say as you start to draw some sketches in the dirt.

Scootaloo took off on her scooter, leaving her wagon behind. Sweetie Belle looks at you, worried. “What’s wrong?” you ask.

She shakes her head. “I don’t know. I got a real bad feeling about this and I can’t shake it. She’s going to be okay, isn’t she?”

You smile and nod. “Sure. Scootaloo knows what she’s doing.” Sweetie Belle lets out a sigh of relief and began clearing a spot for the ramp. You didn’t want to tell her that you had the same exact feeling.

It took a few hours, but the ramp was built. You were actually impressed by you and the two fillies’ handiwork.

“Okay!” Scootaloo said as she laid out a piece of paper. The title read “Operation Swan Glide” and the entire thing was drawn in crayon. “I’m going to go WAY back so I’m going fast enough as I hit the ramp. Once I hit the ramp, I’ll spread my wings as far as I can

so I can get enough wind under them and glide to the other side of the lake. Simple!” She says clapping her hooves together. The stick figures she drew of herself were pretty comical and you couldn’t help but snicker, which sent the wrong message to Scootaloo.

“You don’t think I can do it, do you?” She asks angrily. You open your mouth to apologize, but you get a better idea.

“No, I don’t.” She looks at you, her face something mixed between anger and hurt. “So why don’t you get on that scooter and prove me wrong?” You say with a sly grin. It finally dawns to her; you were trying to encourage her. You could swear you see a fire ignite in her eyes. “You just watch me.” She says before getting on her Scooter. You and Sweetie Belle back up a fair distance back, making sure not to get into Scootaloo’s way. Scootaloo puts on her helmet and knee pads and makes everything is secure. She takes off at incredible speeds and hits the ramp in no time. She flies into the air and extends her wings. She looked so amazing as she flew through the air, but Sweetie Belle pointed out your worst fear. “She’s not going to make it!” She yells. It was true. She started coming down and coming down fast. She flapped her wings furiously, but they weren’t strong enough to carry her yet. She hit the lake with sickening smack that made your stomach drop to your hooves.

“SCOOTALOO!”

It took you a moment to realize that the pony screaming Scootaloo’s name was you and that you were now galloping as fast as you could. Before you knew it, you were already swimming across the lake to the spot where Scootaloo. Taking a deep breath, you started swimming down into the lake, looking frantically for Scootaloo. In the murky depths, you see a shape and reach for it, dragging it to the surface. It was indeed Scootaloo, but she was unconscious, knocked out from the drop. Using your free hooves, you began to paddle your way to shore with Scootaloo in tow. Sweetie Belle helped bring her to dry land, but she said the words you didn’t want to hear.

“SHE’S NOT BREATHING!”

“Oh Celestia, what do I do, what do I do?” You ask yourself frantically. Time seemed to slow down. There was nothing in the world except for you and Scootaloo. And in that instant, you remembered something. Something your father had shown you a long time ago.

“You see son, even sailors can drown, no matter how well of a swimmer you are. Honey, could you come over her for a moment? I want to show our son the kiss of life”

“Eww! Kiss?”

“Oh now, don’t be like that. You’ve seen your father and I kiss all the time.”

“Yeah, but I always have a hard time stomaching it.”

“That’s enough out of you, boy! This is really important! You can save somepony’s life with it. Baby, can you lie on your back for me? Thanks. Alright, first thing you want to do is make sure they’re on their back.”

You roll Scootaloo from her side to her back.

“Okay, next, take your hoof and firmly push down on their chest and count each time you push.”

“One...Two....Three...” You counted aloud as you pressed down on Scootaloo’s chest.

“Not too hard, you don’t want to break their ribs. Okay, once you reach ten, stop and tilt their head back.”

You grab Scootaloo’s head and gingerly tilt it back.

“Now, put your mouth over theirs like you’re kissing and exhale twice into their mouth.”

You let out two breaths and go back to pushing her chest. “Come on!” You yell. “COME ON!”

With a final push, Scootaloo starts coughing and choking on the water in her throat. Learning her forward, you strike her on the back to force the water out.

Sweetie Belle was in tears by this point. "OH THANK CELESTIA, YOU'RE ALIVE!" She yells.

Scootaloo looked at you, utterly confused.

"You gave us both a scare. I really thought we had lost you there."

She finally realizes what happened to her. Wrapping her hooves around your neck, she cries into your chest. "T-T-Thank you! T-Thank you so much!" She wails.

You hug her back and rock back and forth. "Please, don't. I goaded you into it. It's my fault."

"N-N-No, it's m-m-my fault! It was stupid and dangerous and I knew it! But I did it anyway!" She cries.

You didn't say anything, but continue to hold her.

"I'm going to get someone to help!" Sweetie Belle yelled, wiping away her tears. A look of panic went across Scootaloo's face. "No! Please! Don't tell anyone!" You stop holding Scootaloo and make her face you. "You almost drowned, remember?!? Please, just let someone take a look at you! Just to make sure you're okay!" She looked away from you and cried. Bringing a hoof to her cheek, you make her look at you in the eyes. "If not for you, then for me?" You ask.

She nodded and held onto you tighter. "Okay... Okay... But I-I want to wait here... With you..."

"Sweetie Belle, go to the Hospital and tell them where we are and what happened. I'll stay here and watch over Scootaloo." Sweetie Belle gives you a nod before galloping off.

Scootaloo calmed down and stopped crying, but didn't say anything for the longest time.

"My scooters at the bottom of the lake, isn't it?" She finally asks.

“We’ll get someone to fish it out later.” You assure her.

“What are we going to use for bait?” She asks. You look at her before bursting out in laughter.

You breathe a sigh of relief when you see Sweetie Belle come down the road with an adult in tow.

“I came as fast as I could!” A white mare with a cutie mark of a red cross says.

You help Scootaloo to her hooves and let the nurse look her over. “Take a deep breath.” She says as she presses a stethoscope to her chest. “And out. And another deep breath.” The instructions cause Scootaloo to go into a coughing fit for a few seconds, giving the nurse a scare. “You sound like you’ve still got some water in your lungs, but otherwise, you seem to be fine. However, I want to take you back to the Ponyville General for overnight observation.” Scootaloo looks at you and for a moment and then to the nurse. You think she’s going to argue that she’s fine, but she doesn’t.

“Can he stay with me?” She asks as she tries to hold you closer.

The nurse smiles softly. “Of course he can.”

She nuzzles up to you and smiles. “Thank you.”

Scootaloo was sad when you had to leave, but she understood that you couldn’t stay the entire night. She was grateful though that you were there to help her explain what had happened. Her parents weren’t mad at her, just scared.

“It was stupid of me. I should have listened to my friends, but I didn’t. I’m sorry.” Scootaloo had said, scared that they were going to lock her up and never let her outside again. Her parents were just thankful that she was alive and okay. They knew she learned her lesson and you could see that. However, when they pulled you aside, you started to think they were going to come after you with the police or a lawsuit for endangering their daughter like that. It was the opposite, however and you were shocked when Scootaloo’s mother hugged you and said how grateful they were that their daughter had such an amazing friend to look out for her. You were a little embarrassed and tried to tell them that

it was nothing and that anyone would have done the same, but they wouldn't hear a word of it.

"Her unicorn friend told me you were off, like a bolt of lightning the second she hit the water." Scootaloo's father had said, shaking your hoof. "I owe you a debt of gratitude that I don't think I'll ever be able to repay. Thank you."

Scootaloo made you and Sweetie Belle promise that you wouldn't tell anyone what happened and begged her parents to do the same. Nurse Redheart told you there was doctor-patient confidentiality, so she couldn't tell anyone if she wanted to. You were happy, even if you didn't know what she meant.

When you finally made it home, your mother was waiting for you. She was angry that you were so late in coming home, but when you got inside and explained everything that happened, she could only look at you fondly and smile. "Your father would be so proud of you." she said.

You let out a long yawn and decide it's time to go to bed. Turning out the lights and covering up, you don't as much fall asleep as pass out.

The next morning, your muscles ache all over and you still want to sleep, but your mother is calling you.

"It's time for breakfast!"

Forcing yourself out of bed, you make your way down the stairs and join your mother at the table.

You really don't talk about anything but thank her for the breakfast before you leave and make your way for the schoolhouse. On the way, you meet up with Apple Bloom, Scootaloo, and Sweetie Belle. Sweetie Belle was telling Apple Bloom what had happened. You really weren't listening to what they were saying since you were there, but instead focused on Scootaloo. She hadn't said anything or even looked at you since you arrived. "How are you feeling?" You ask her.

She turns to you and gives you a cold glare. "I'm fine," she said before huffing off. You wanted to chase after her, but decided against it.

"Is she okay?" Apple Bloom asks. You shake your head.

"I hope so."

Ms. Cheerilee was just about to start class when you, Apple Bloom, and Sweetie Belle walked in. She looked at you three annoyed that you were late and opened her mouth to say something. She stopped however and stared at you. "I'll let it slide this time, okay?" She says with a smile. You begin to wonder how the news of this was spreading and if it was going to stop, for Scootaloo's sake.

"Uh, thanks." You say as you sit down at your seat.

"Okay class! Today we're going to be doing math that's a bit harder, so get your notebooks out." Ms. Cheerilee said, trying to make math sound exciting. As you reach under your seat to grab the notebook you stashed there, you feel a hoof connect with your temple. "Ow! Who-" Scootaloo was looking down at you, both literally and figuratively. She still wore that scowl she had before. "ScootaOW!" you begin to say as her hoof connects with your head again. Bolting up, you look at her, hurting physically and emotionally. "What did I do?" You ask. She doesn't say anything, but continues to stare at you. Sitting down you wonder what you did to deserve this kind of treatment. Scootaloo kept up the barrage of kicks to you back all through class, even after Apple Bloom and Sweetie Belle asked her to stop and Ms. Cheerilee told her to stop. When the class ends, Scootaloo runs for the door. You run after her and manage to block the doorway. "Scootaloo, please! Just tell me what's going on!" You plead. Scootaloo looks at you, her eyes beginning to well up with tears.

"Sco-HUMPH!" Scootaloo had punched you in the chest, knocking the wind out of you, causing you to crumple to the floor. She jumps over you and bolts out the door.

"What is WRONG with her?!?" Apple Bloom asks as she helps you to your feet.

“It looked like she was going to cry.” Sweetie Belle says with a twinge of sadness in her voice. Taking deep breaths you look at the two fillies.

“I’ll... I’ll see you two later.” you gasp out. “I’ve got something I need to take care of.”

You run out the door before giving Apple Bloom and Sweetie Belle a chance to ask you anything. One of your friends was mad at you and you needed to set it right. “What do I do to make her stop hating me?” You ask yourself as you wander the streets of Ponyville. “She just ran off before...” A light goes off and you figure it out. “Her scooter!” You yell before galloping off to the lake.

Standing at the water’s edge, you relive those moments in which you thought your friend was dead and that you were to blame. Taking a breath, you dive into the lake and begin making your way to the spot where Scootaloo fell. Taking one final gulp of air you let yourself sink down.

“I’ve got a minute of air in me, maybe a minute and a half at most.” you think as the water starts to get darker and darker. Seeing anything in this was near impossible. How you found Scootaloo in the first place was a miracle, but finding her scooter was going to be impossible. You touch bottom finally and squint in the darkness. Groping around, all you can feel is seaweed. You hurry back to the surface, relishing the taste of fresh air. You don’t give yourself much time to rest, taking in another deep breath and going down again.

You repeated this process for hours until your lungs ached. You almost give up as the sun goes down, but convince yourself to take one more dive. You feel yourself land on something as you hit bottom. You grab it and swim for surface thinking *“This better not be another stick...”*

Breaching the surface, you look at what you’re holding your teeth and almost drop it as you smile. You had found her scooter. *“Maybe she’ll stop hating me if I give her this... Or at least kick me less.”* you think to yourself. Getting it to the shore was a whole new challenge, however and you almost let go of it out of exhaustion multiple times. But you hold on and

collapse on the shore with it. “I...I...I did it...” you pant out. Opening your eyes, you find Scootaloo looking down at you.

“Why did you do that?” She asked with a scowl.

You get to your hooves, only to have your knees buckle out from under you. “I thought... I thought you were mad at me for something. I wanted to make it up to you.” Scootaloo didn’t smile or thank you, like you thought she would. Her face didn’t change, but her eyes began to tear up. “Why are you doing this to me?” she asks. You get to your hooves again and start to panic.

“What? What did I do? What am I doing wrong?” you ask frantically, hoping to find some way to please her.

Her tears started flow more freely. “I-It’s not what y-you’re doing wrong. I-It’s what y-y-you’re doing right.”

You let your mouth go agape and you shake your head. “What are you talking about?” you ask, puzzled.

Scootaloo stands there and doesn’t say anything for a long time. Then she finally breaks down.

“You’re so kind and nice to me! You’re so selfless and cute and wonderful and every time I think of you, it makes me feel so weird! And I’ve never felt this way before!” she yells in between sobs “You’re the one doing this to me and all I want to do is hit you and make it stop!”

Without warning she starts pounding on your shoulders as she cries. Instead of running from it, you stand there and take it, letting her vent all of what she’s feeling. She hits you for a minute straight until a hoof connects with your face and busts open your lip. She looks at her bloody hoof and your bloody lip before crying even louder.

“I’M SORRY!” she cries “I’M SO, SO SORRY!”

You wrap your hooves around her and embrace her like you did after the incident with the lake and in the hospital. She simply cries into your chest and you let her, ready to comfort the filly for as long as it takes. Her tears stopped eventually, but you remained silent for what felt like hours. Risking it, you ask her.

“Do you feel better now?”

Scootaloo shakes her head. “No...I don’t know.” you hold her tighter and watch the sun go down.

“I’m sorry. For everything.” Scootaloo says. “I’m sorry for risking my life stupidly like that... I’m sorry for hitting you... And I’m sorry for being such a crybaby.”

“Scootaloo, you’re the strongest pony I know. And you just proved it.”

“What do you mean by that?” Scootaloo asks, wiping away her tears.

“My mom tells me that the greatest sign of strength is admitting weakness. You’re strong, Scootaloo. You’re great and you’re talented. Don’t let anybody tell you differently.” You say with a smile.

Scootaloo blushes heavily and looks you in the eyes. You didn’t expect it when she placed her lips on yours and kissed you, which sent a shock through your whole body.

Scootaloo pulled back from the kiss and smiled.

“Now I feel better.”

You, Apple Bloom, Scootaloo, and Sweetie Belle walked through Ponyville with your heads hung low. All of you were covered in tree sap with clumps of saw dust and twigs stuck to it. Apple Bloom sighed aloud.

“Looks like woodcuttin’ ain’t our special talent neither.”

“Well I didn’t think it would be in the first place.” you say, trying to dig an acorn out of your mane.

“Well I didn’t think Mr. Tinder could move that fast!” Scootaloo said with a chuckle. “Did you see the look on his face when the tree started to fall?” She put her hooves on her cheeks and made a startled expression, trying to recreate Mr. Tinder’s terror.

“At least it wasn’t as bad as our last fiasco when we tried to renovate that abandoned house.” Sweetie Belle said.

“Ya, I’m still hurting from that.” You say, rubbing your back gingerly.

A look of panic shoots across Scootaloo’s face. “I said I was sorry! How was I supposed to know that ONE beam was holding up the entire house?”

“I was only joking. Learn to take a joke, why don’t you?” you say with a playful push.

“So, you’re feeling better now?” Apple Bloom asks. You give her a nod and tap on your back.

“That medicine you brought over really did the trick. Thanks a lot, Apple Bloom.”

Apple Bloom smiles shyly and blushes. Walking over to a nearby water barrel, you and the fillies dip your hooves and begin to wash yourself off.

“So, I guess we should be getting home by now.” you say aloud as you get the last of the sap off.

“Aww, I was actually having fun. Do we have to?” Scootaloo says, nearly begging.

“Ya, we haven’t hung out like this in long time, you know with school and applebuck season and whatnot.” Apple Bloom says, disappointed.

You see a flash of inspiration goes across Sweetie Belle’s face. “What if we had a sleepover!” she says excitedly.

“You mean like camping?” you ask.

“Ooh! Let’s do that!” Scootaloo says. “We can roast marshmallows and tell scary stories! My dad has a tent we can use!”

“Uhh... Yeah, we can do that.” Sweetie Belle says. You notice she’s forcing a smile, but don’t say anything about it.

“Alright!” Apple Bloom declares. “It’s decided. Let’s meet up at the hill outside Ponyville. I’ve got food covered. Scootaloo’s got the tent. Sweetie Belle, can you get sleeping bags?”

Sweetie Belle thinks for a second and nods. “Yes, I’m pretty sure Rarity has something we can use. What about you?” Sweetie Belle asks, turning to you.

You think all the bases are covered, but a lightbulb goes on upstairs. “I’ll take care of entertainment.”

Without a word, the three fillies nodded and scattered. You run off as well and make your way to the library. You let yourself in and startle Twilight. “Wha-What are you doing?!? You could at least knock, you know!” She says as she hides the book under the desk.

“Sorry Twilight. I need a book that has scary stories. The girls and I are going camping.”

She nods and points you to the horror section. There, you grab the first book you see, which has the title “101 Spine-Tingling Stories”

“Alright, thanks Twilight!” you say as you run out the library door. Twilight thinks you’re out of earshot as you close the door, but you hear her flip through pages furiously before giggling. “Oh Nathaniel, you animal, you.” Deciding to pick up the pace so she doesn’t think you’re spying, you ran home, wanting to let your mother know where you are going and more importantly, pick up your telescope. There was supposed to be a full moon tonight and the weather team had made sure there wasn’t a cloud in the sky.

Walking through the door, your mother smiles and gives you a hug.

“Hi honey, how did it go?” she asked with a snicker. You regret telling her about the Cutie Mark Crusader’s exploits, but she thought it was cute that you were trying to find out who you are and couldn’t help but laugh at some of the crazy antics.

“We almost crushed Mr. Tinder and Mr. Tinder’s house with a tree.” you say nonchalantly as you head upstairs.

As soon as you’re in your room, you can hear your mom cackling. “I won’t be sleeping here tonight.” you call down. She stops laughing and pokes her head into your room. “Oh come on now! Just because I find it funny doesn’t mean you have to get all upset about it!” she says teasingly. Putting your telescope into your saddle-bag, you shake your head.

“No, I’m just going to go camping with my friends. I wanted to let you know, I hope that’s okay.”

Your mom nods and gives you a peck on the cheek. “Have fun. I know you’ll be responsible.”

You smile at her. “Thanks. I’ll see you tomorrow.”

It didn’t take you long to find ‘the hill’ as Apple Bloom had described it. It was at least a half a mile from the lake, which you hoped didn’t make Scootaloo uncomfortable. You couldn’t believe it had already been a week since it happened, but Scootaloo was still having nightmares about it.

You finally come across the gang, who were already trying to get the campsite set up, but failing at it miserably. Scootaloo did indeed have a tent, but had gotten tangled up in a mess of rope, while Apple Bloom was rubbing two sticks together to get a fire started, and going nowhere fast. Sweetie Belle just looked back, trying to give them advice to help. You laughed aloud, which got their attention.

“What’s so funny?” Apple Bloom asks defiantly.

“Just calm down everypony. I got this.”

You start with the tent and walk over to Scootaloo and untangle her from the mess of rope.

“Stand back and hand me things when I ask for them.” you tell her. She nods without a word and you begin to get to work.

The tent went up quickly and actually looked good. It was more than big enough to hold all of you.

“Okay! Now onto that fire!” you say as you walk over to an exhausted Apple Bloom who had whittled the two sticks into nubs trying to get a spark.

“Scootaloo, can you go find a bunch of rocks?” you ask her, which is received with a puzzled look.

“Why rocks?” Apple Bloom asks, trying to figure out what she did wrong.

“It’s just so we don’t burn down half of Ponyville. And Apple Bloom, this would have never stayed lit. It’s still green. Look around for wood again, but this time, get the stuff on the ground. The dryer the better.”

“Ohhh, I get it.” Apple Bloom says, realizing her mistake before trotting off to get more firewood.

Sweetie Belle stared at you, a confused look on her face. “How did you know all that?” she asks.

“My dad used to take me camping at the end of the week. He never really taught me, I just picked it up and learned more after each trip.” you say with a modest smile. Sweetie Belle doesn’t say anything but stares at you with admiration. It finally got awkward around the five minute mark. “Uhh, Sweetie Belle, do you mind getting the bedding laid out in the tent?” you ask. She snapped out of her daze and blushed.

“I, uh, sure! Yes! One moment!” she said before running off.

“I got the rocks!” Scootaloo said as she balanced a stack of rocks on her back before letting them fall before you.

“And I got the wood!” Apple Bloom announced, carrying more than enough firewood. She looks at the sticks and stones, puzzled. “But what do we use to light it?” she asks.

You reach into your pack and pull out a box of matches. Apple Bloom scowls.

“I COULD’AVE THOUGHT OF THAT!” she yells.

Before you knew it, the fire was roaring and all four of you were roasting marshmallows. The sound of the crackling fire was hypnotic and the starry night was just beautiful.

“I have to ask...” Sweetie Belle starts, getting everyone’s attention. “Why do you act so grown up all of the time? I mean, it’s not a bad thing. It’s just...weird.”

You sigh and look up at the stars before answering. “Before my dad d...” you stop. It suddenly got harder to talk. “Before he...”

Apple Bloom scooted next to you and leaned on you. “It’s okay.” she says in a soothing tone. You don’t know why, but just those two words calms you down and make it easier for you.

“Before he disappeared,” you finally manage to say “He would tell me ‘Son, you’re the man of the house while I’m gone.’ before going out to sea. He said that it meant I had to be strong and brave so I can look after everyone I love. I guess I really won’t be a kid until I see him again.” you say. Taking your eyes off of the stars, you look at the three fillies, who were apparently touched by the story. “Come on now! None of that! We’re here to have fun! How about a scary story or two?” you ask, bringing out the book you borrowed from Twilight.

“Okay, but not too scary.” Sweetie Belle cautions. Giving her a nod, you begin.

“This is a true story, told by an anonymous pony,” you begin. “While I was still working my way through college, I used to babysit for some extra money. On one night, I was called over to look after two sleeping fillies. Their parents told me to call them if there was any trouble and that they’d be back in a couple hours. After they left, I went upstairs to

check in on them. Sure enough, they were sleeping. But the thing that bugged me was the clown statue in the corner of the room. It was bright and colorful, sure, but it was also creepy. Like it was watching me,” you look up to see the three fillies on the edge of their seat, waiting for you to continue “I tried to push it to the back of my mind, but it kept bugging me. So I finally decided to call the parents. They asked me if there was a problem. I told them that their kids were still sleeping, but that the clown statue was giving me the creeps. They didn’t answer for a long time. I thought they hung up until they finally spoke up. What they said horrified me. ‘Get the kids out of there and call the police. We don’t have a clown statue.’”

You closed the book, a little creeped out by the story yourself. Scootaloo was doing her best to keep her composure and Apple Bloom was fidgeting in her seat. Sweetie Belle was lying on the grass and had her hooves over her ears. Getting up you walk towards Sweetie Belle.

“Hey Sweetie Belle, are you okay?” you ask as you go to place a hoof on her shoulder. As soon as you touch her, she jumps into the air and screams at the top of her lungs, making you, Apple Bloom, and Scootaloo scream as well. Sweetie Belle tries to look everywhere at once and is freaking out. She’s babbling and not making any sense, but is obviously scared. Without a second thought, you embrace her.

“Hey, hey, hey. It’s okay. It was only a story. Nothing will hurt you, I promise.” you say. She starts to calm down and you let go of her. “Better?” you ask.

She nods. “Yes... I’m sorry.”

Scootaloo shakes her head. “Don’t be! That was a really scary story!” freaked out as well.

“Yeah, let’s not read anymore or I’ll be having nightmares.” Apple Bloom says sheepishly.

You agree with them, not being a particular fan of scary stories anyway, and put away the book. “I brought my telescope with me, too. Want to do some stargazing?” you ask, holding it up. Sweetie Belle smiles.

“That sounds great.”

“You see, that’s the Pegasus constellation.” you say, pointing to a group of stars. “I don’t see it.” Apple Bloom said, squinting. “It’s right there, Apple Bloom, see? These stars are its wings, those are its body and head, and here are its legs.” Sweetie Belle says as she traces the stars with her hoof.

You, Apple Bloom, Scootaloo, and Sweetie Belle had found a cliff that was perfect for stargazing. All four of you huddled together as you and Sweetie Belle pointed out constellations. You were really surprised that she knew so much about the stars and even more so that she knew the story behind each one, something that you never bothered to learn.

Scootaloo let out a long yawn and got up. “Well, I think I’m going to hit the hay.” she says as she walks back to the camp site. Apple Bloom gets up as well. “Yeah, I’m tired too. You two coming?” she asks.

“I thought I’d stay out for just a bit longer.” you say as you focus your telescope. Sweetie Belle nods. “Me too.”

“Alright then, but don’t stay up for too long. We’ve got school tomorrow.” Apple Bloom says before joining Scootaloo.

You and Sweetie Belle sat there, just looking up at the stars without a word.

“How did you know so much about the stars?” you finally ask, breaking the silence.

“I’ll tell you if you tell me.” Sweetie Belle retorts.

“My dad used to take my mom and I out on the ocean on nights like this and just look at the stars. My mom loves the night sky and the moon when it’s full like this,” you laugh under your breath “I remember when my dad said he would throw a rope around the moon and bring it down for my mom. She told him not to, because she didn’t want to rob anyone of something as beautiful as the moon.”

“Aww, that’s so sweet,” Sweetie Belle said “As for me, I always liked looking at the stars at night when I couldn’t sleep. They’re just so pretty and soothing and sparkle like diamonds.”

A chilly wind washes over you two and Sweetie Belle starts to shiver. Wrapping a hoof around her shoulder, you draw her closer and share your body heat with her. “Beautiful...” Sweetie Belle muses a loud.

“It is a beautiful night.” you say.

You notice Sweetie Belle blush as she fidgets around in her seat. Before you can ask her what’s wrong, she opens her mouth and begins to sing.

So tired, it's the sky that makes you feel tried

It's a trick to make you see wide

It can all but break your heart in pieces

Staying back in your memory

Are the movies in the past

How you moved is all it takes

To sing a song of when I loved

The Prettiest Star

One day though it might

as well be someday

You and I will rise up all the way

All because of what you are

The Prettiest Star

All you can do is look at her in amazement as she finishes. “Sweetie Belle, that was beautiful. I never knew you could sing so well.” Sweetie Belle blushes heavily “It’s nothing, really. Rarity likes to listen to the guy who sings that song. I’ve heard it enough times that I’ve learned it.”

“Either way, it was very nice. Who did you say sings it?” you ask.

Sweetie Belle shrugs. "I don't know, but I think Rarity has a crush on him. She's even got a full body poster of the guy." she says with a laugh. You and Sweetie Belle remain silent for a while before she speaks up again.

"I'm not really that tired, do you want to go for a walk?" she asks.

You shrug. "Why not? There's more than enough moonlight so we won't get lost. Lead on."

You and Sweetie Belle find a path into the forest. Sweetie Belle points up to the night sky with a smile on her face. "Look at the birds flying around!"

"Uhhh, Sweetie Belle, those aren't birds" you say as you squint into the darkness. "Those are bats." The color drains from Sweetie Belle's face and is followed by a loud scream, causing the bats overhead to swarm around you. Sweetie Belle runs off in a direction and you run after her, calling her name. She runs into a cave without a second thought. Going in after her, you find her in the back, her eyes closed and her whole body trembling. You put a hoof on her shoulder. "Swee-" the moment you touch her, she screams at the top of her lungs, making the whole cave shake. In an instant, the whole cave begins to shake and make chunks of rock fall from the ceiling.

"SWEETIE BELLE WE HAV-" you begin to say as a rock hits you on the head. The cave shakes again and causes the mouth of the cave to become buried in rocks. When the shaking finally stops, you see Sweetie Belle running around the cave frantically. "WE'RE TRAPPED! OH DEAR CELESTIA, WE'RE TRAPPED!" she yells. You grab a hold of her and make her focus on you.

"Calm down! We're fine!" you say.

"But we're trapped!"

"We can dig our way out."

"What if we run out of air?" Sweetie Belle asks frantically as she starts to breathe faster.

Looking around, you notice it's much brighter than you think a cave in would be and see a hole in the ceiling, at least twenty feet up. "We're fine. We just have to get to work." You say as you walk over to the pile of rocks. Grabbing a loose one, you push it out of the way and to the back of the cave. Sweetie Belle watches you do this a few times before joining in. She has a harder time than you do, but manages.

"I'm sorry for getting us into this mess. I feel horrible." Sweetie Belle says, beating herself up about the whole thing.

"Don't be," you grunt as you move another rock "If I didn't point out that those were bats, you wouldn't have freaked."

It doesn't help Sweetie Belle that much and she continues to sulk.

"I got to say, though, I'm impressed." you say aloud.

"About what?" Sweetie Belle asks.

"You brought down an entire cave with a scream. You have a powerful set of lungs!" you say with a laugh.

Sweetie Belle tries to keep a straight face, but bursts out laughing. "Yeah, I guess I do." she says.

You and her laugh for a bit before getting back to work.

After an hour of work, you had put a dent into the pile of rubble. You stand back to take a look at the work so far. "Another hour, maybe two and we'll be able to get back and get some shuteye before breakfast." You say with confidence. You blink a few times as your vision goes hazy for a second and turn to Sweetie Belle.

"How are you holding up?" you ask.

She smiles fondly at you. "Great, thanks to you. I probably would have given up at the beginning if you weren't here. Thank you for looking out for me."

“Oh come on, I’m only doing what you do.” you say, receiving a puzzled look from her.

“Like when the tree started to fall over and I didn’t notice it. You pushed me out of the way and saved me. You’re always there for not only me, but Apple Bloom and Scootaloo as well. You’re really something Sw-” you stop as the whole world begins to spin. You can barely hear Sweetie Belle call your name out over the buzzing in your ears. Your knees buckle out from under you and you hit the cave floor.

“You’re bleeding!” you hear Sweetie Belle call out before everything goes dark.

* * * * *

“Ah, good, you’re awake.” you hear a mare’s voice say. Opening your eyes, you find yourself in what looks like a small hospital. A white unicorn standing over you, her purple and pink mane stuffed into a nurse’s habit. “Your crew brought you in from off the ship.” she says in a soothing voice.

“My crew?” you ask as you rub your head. The unicorn nods.

“Yes, they said you were attacked by pirates, but you managed to drive them off. That was a brave thing to do.”

Getting to your hooves, you rub your head. “No... No. I was hit by a rock in the cave in...Nurse-“

Looking around, you’re surprised to find her gone. You make your way for the door and walk through, only to fall forward and grab onto the edge. There was nothing outside the door, just black, empty void. Suddenly, you find that the hospital room is gone as well and that you’re now falling and falling fast. Looking down, you see the world form below you. As if guided by some unseen hand, you begin to move towards a Hospital building and phase through the roof. You hit the bed of a sleeping patient with extreme force and-

Your eyes open. Looking around, you find yourself in Ponyville Urgent Care. Sleeping by the side of your bed was Sweetie Belle, who was covered in dirt and dust.

“Ah, good, you’re awake.” Nurse Redheart said with a smile.

“What happened” you ask as you rub the side of your head and find a layer of bandages.

Nurse Redheart looked at Sweetie Belle and smiled. “This little girl saved your life. She said you and her got caught in a cave in and that you hit your head. You passed out halfway through trying to dig your way out and she dug the other half. Her and her friends dragged you from that cave all the way here. You’re lucky, too. You’ve got a nasty concussion that needed some stitches and probably going to end up with a scar. I’d thank her, if I were you.” She tells you before walking off. Looking at Sweetie Belle, you can’t help but feel so grateful to the young filly. Placing a hoof on her head, you stroke her mane softly, causing her to wake up. She looks at you, surprised.

“You’re awake!” she yells out as she wraps her hooves around you “I was so worried!” she plants her lips onto yours and kisses you deeply. She stops suddenly and a look of panic washes over her.

“I...Err... Uh...I’m sorry for being-” you stop her and kiss her back. She blushes heavily and looks at you, dumbfounded.

“Thank you.”

This portion of the story will be told in narrative form, not 2nd person for the purpose of exposition.

Sweetie Belle walked out of the hospital room in a daze. Her heart was aflutter with new and strange emotions she’s never felt before, all for the colt that was in that room. She found herself in Ponyville Square, washing the dirt off of herself in the same barrel that they used so many times to clean after their misadventures. Sweetie Belle chuckled, thinking back to how he was running around; doing everything he could to stop the tree from falling. She blushed heavily as her mind wandered back to him and the kiss. She smiled, happy that

she not only got to kiss him, but he kissed back. She tried to remember when she exactly fell in love with him, but couldn't settle on a single point when it happened and chocked it up to 'love at first sight'.

The school day passed and Sweetie Belle missed it without much regret. She was still confused about these new feelings she had and decided to ask the one person she knew could help.

"Well...I, uh...What was the question again?" Rarity sputtered out before almost sewing her hoof to the dress.

"I said, what does it mean when you love someone?" Sweetie Belle asked again.

Rarity put down the dress and cleared her throat, hoping to buy enough time to come up with something. She never expected be having the love talk today.

"Well, when you love someone, they make you feel... Special." Rarity said more confidently as the words came easier.

"Like you are the only one who matters in the world and will do whatever they can to make you feel happy. And when two ponies feel love for each other, there's no greater feeling in all of Equestria." Rarity says with emotion. She stared at Sweetie Belle.

"Why? Have you found that special pony in your life?" Rarity asked with a tease. Sweetie Belle blushed heavily and gave a nod. Rarity gasped and smiled. "Oh Sweetie Belle, I am ever so happy for you! Who's the lucky colt?"

Sweetie Belle's entire face goes red as she begins to tell the whole story. By the end of it, Rarity is tearing up and wiping away her tears with a handkerchief. "That's so sweet... Well Sweetie Belle, I see only one possible course of action!" Rarity says defiantly. Sweetie Belle cocked her head, not seeing where Rarity was going with this.

"You're going to declare your love to him!"

Sweetie Belle began to panic "Wh-What if he says he doesn't love me back? Or he says he hates me or-" Rarity put a hoof over Sweetie Belle's mouth.

“Sweetie Belle, if you are to ever get anywhere in life, you have to put those doubts behind you. Now go out there and bear your heart to him.” Rarity said as she pointing towards the door. Sweetie Belle took a deep breath and put on a look of determination. “Alright.” and with that, she galloped off to find him.

You, Apple Bloom, and Scootaloo left the hospital that afternoon, relieved when Nurse Redheart told you and your mother that you were ready to be discharged. Apple Bloom and Scootaloo were waiting for you in the waiting room.

“We thought we’d stop by and see how you were doing.” Scootaloo had explained. As you made your way out of hospital and into Ponyville square, you see Sweetie Belle running towards you.

“Well there ya are! Ms. Cheerilee was wondering where you were, but we didn’t tell her-” was all Apple Bloom could say before Sweetie Belle collides with you and kisses you deeply. “I love you!” she exclaims.

This display leaves Apple Bloom and Scootaloo stunned.

“Now hold on there! You can’t love him!” Apple Bloom yells as she stomps her hoof. Sweetie Belle looks to her friend, confused. “And why can’t I?” she asks.

Apple Bloom blushes but stands her ground. “Because I love him!” she declares.

Scootaloo scoffs. “That’s nice and all, but I’m the one who loves him, not you two.”

The three fillies glare each other, their gazes full of hate. Without a word, they pounce on each other and roll in the street, mane tugging, name calling, and biting.

“STOP IT!” you yell. They stop fighting and look at you.

“Well then, why don’t we let him decide?” Sweetie Belle says as she gets up, looking to you.

Apple Bloom nods. “Yeah, but we already know he’s going to choose me.”

“Says you, sister. I’m obviously the best choice here.” Scootaloo says as she leans in closer to you.

“I...I...Uh...” was all you could stammer out. “Umm.... I mean....”

“WELL?” Scootaloo asks angrily.

Apple Bloom looks at you with the same stare she gave you when she asked you to join the Cutie Mark Crusaders “Who’s it gonna to be?”

Sweetie Belle bats her eyelashes and says your name “Please...” she says softly.

Without a word, you gallop off as fast as you can, leaving the three fillies standing there, confused and disappointed. “After him!” Apple Bloom yells. You round corners and do your best to lose them. Ducking inside Sugar Cube Corner, you look at the window and hope that they didn’t see you.

“You lost him!” Scootaloo yelled at Apple Bloom.

“Well you’re the one who said he came this way!” Apple Bloom exclaims.

Sweetie Belle throws her hoofs into the air and groans. “I can’t take this anymore! You two ruined everything! You’re the worst friends ever!”

Scootaloo gasps and narrows her eyes. “Well if that’s the way you feel, then I guess I’m not your friend anymore!”

“The same goes for me! I never want to see either of you again!” Apple Bloom yells. “The Cutie Mark Crusaders are done!”

The three fillies run off in opposite directions, leaving you in the kitchen of Sugar Cube Corner. In an instant, you collapse to the floor and begin crying. You felt horrible that you couldn’t say anything to them, but how could you? No matter what you do, someone is going to be hurt. You continue to cry until you feel a hoof go through your mane. Looking up, you see the pink pony with the cotton candy mane looking down at you.

“There, there. Tell Auntie Pinkie Pie what’s wrong.” You snivel as you get to your feet and are guided to a chair by Pinkie. She brings over a plate of cupcakes and two glasses of milk. Taking a cupcake, you take a bite, but don’t feel much like eating right now.

“So why were you crying?” Pinkie Pie asks, her voice sounding so soothing. You wipe away your tears and look at her. Sighing, you put your head onto the table. “It’s really complicated...” you mumble.

“So?”

Looking up at Pinkie Pie, you find yourself telling her the entire story.

“I mean, I love all of them. They all mean something to me. If I tell one of them that I love them, then the other two will be hurt forever... What should I do?” you ask.

Pinkie Pie smiles at you fondly and pats your head. “You are WAY too young to be involved in a love triangle this complicated... Wait. Would it be a love triangle?” she asks herself. “Triangles only have three points. There are four people involved, so wouldn’t be like a love square? But then again, there’s a lot of hate going around...Hate rhombus is a better term for your predicament.”

You look at Pinkie, completely confused. She sees your puzzlement and shakes her head. “Right, sorry. I got distracted there for a second. Anyway, there’s nothing written anywhere in Equestria that says you can love one and only one pony.” she says as she pops a cupcake into her mouth.

“What do you mean?” you ask.

“It means just that, silly!”

You can’t believe how easy she’s trying to make it sound. “But... But what do I do? How do I do it?” you ask.

Pinkie Pie puts a hoof around your shoulder and brings close. “Okay, this is what you’re going to do...” she says before whispering her plan into your ear. You smile as you

begin to understand what Pinkie Pie is getting at. You bound for the door, but turn to her before leaving. “Thank you so much Pinkie.”

She smiles. “No problem. Now we’re even-steven.” she says. You cock an eyebrow at her. “Even for what?” you ask.

“For when you four blew up that batch of gum.” She says nonchalantly. Your ears go back and you grimace.

“Uhh, sorry about tha-Hey. How is it that we’re even now?” you ask. Pinkie Pie smiles at you fondly.

“What can I say? I’m a sucker for romance. Knock ‘em dead Casanova!”

And with Pinkie Pie’s words of encouragement, you set off, hoping to make things right.

The afternoon came and went and the sun was setting. You were now waiting at the lake for them to show up. You could only hope that Pinkie’s friend, the mail pony with the strange eyes, delivered the letters on time. As the sun began to set, you saw them. Apple Bloom approached from the east, Scootaloo from the north, and Sweetie Belle the west. They all converged on you and then looked at each other.

“What are THEY doing here?!?” they all say simultaneously. Sure enough, they got your letters. Personally addressed to each pony, telling them to meet you by the lake at sundown.

“Girls.” you said, trying to get their attention. They were arguing again, as they did back in the square.

“Girls!” you say louder this time. Their response was to yell louder at each other.

“GIRLS!” you scream. This finally gets their attention.

“WHAT?” they yell simultaneously. Now that all eyes were on you, you felt nervous and wanted to run again. But you couldn’t, not without fixing this. You clear your throat and take a deep breath.

“I’ve made my decision.” you finally say. The three fillies tense up.

“Who is it?” Apple Bloom asks.

“Ah ah ah! I’m not telling until you promise me something. All of you.” you demand. They wait for you to say something and take this as a sign of their understanding.

“No matter who I choose, you will respect my choice and accept it. That’s all I want.” you say.

“...Fine. I’m cool that.” Scootaloo says.

Sweetie Belle nods. “I can respect your wishes.”

Apple Bloom just smiles. “Go ahead.”

“Apple Bloom., you were there when I needed somepony to lean on and a shoulder to cry on. You’re always trying to make everypony happy and that’s just what you did for me.” Apple Bloom blushes heavily and traces a hoof in the grass.

“Oh, it ain’t nothing. I’m just happy you pic-“

“I’m not finished yet.” you say, interrupting her.

“Scootaloo, you’re so headstrong and always moving forward so much that it rubs off on me. If you weren’t here, I probably wouldn’t have found the courage to say these words.” Scootaloo rubs the back of her head.

“Oh come on now, I just-“

“Still not done yet.” you say, interrupting again.

“Sweetie Belle, you’re always looking out for me and the others and tell us what’s best, even if we don’t listen. You went above and beyond the call of friendship and saved my life. And for that, I’m eternally grateful.”

You finished your speech and looked at the three fillies, who were still confused.

“If it isn’t Apple Bloom, Scootaloo, or me, then who is it?” Sweetie Belle asks. You feel tears of joy as you reach out and grab all three of them into a big hug.

“You haven’t figured it out yet have you, you silly fillies? It’s all of you! I love all of you! There’s no way I could break any of your hearts, even if Celestia herself told me to! You’re all so wonderful and unique and make me feel like the luckiest colt in the world!”

Apple Bloom, Scootaloo, and Sweetie Belle are stunned.

“I...I never thought of it that way.” Scootaloo says, choking back tears.

Apple Bloom hugs back and smiles. “I’m okay with this, as long as you all are.”

“Oh, I’m so sorry for being so mean! Will you two ever forgive me?” Sweetie Belle pleads as she holds her friends tight.

“We were the mean ones! Let’s never fight again!” Scootaloo says, joining in.

“The Cutie Mark Crusaders are back together!” Apple Bloom pronounces.

“With a boyfriend.” Sweetie Belle says, prompting all of you to laugh aloud.

And that’s all you did until sunrise. Hold each other and laugh until the sun came up on another beautiful day in the land of Equestria.