

To Fix You

Chapter 1

*When you try your best, but you don't succeed,
When you get what you want, but not what you need,
When you feel so tired, but you can't sleep,
Stuck in reverse,
And the tears come streaming down your face,
When you lose something, that you can't replace,
When you love someone, but it goes to waste,
Could it be worse?*

In an empty field outside of Ponyville, drops of liquid fell out of the sky and hit the ground. The citizens of Ponyville were more than familiar with rain, especially those weather pegasi who created it, but this particular event was different. Ponyville had, of course, experienced strange weather phenomena before, with the chocolate milk raining down from cotton candy clouds during the brief reign of Discord still fresh in everypony's mind, but most ponies had another reason to avoid the falling drops in this field. That is, if they even came across them and paid attention to them at all. For one thing, unlike what most rain was apt to do, these drops fell not from a large bank of clouds, but instead from a single cloud that floated alone, high in the sky. Had anypony bothered to investigate, they would have discovered that these salty drops were not, in fact, rain. The cloud they fell from was not a rain cloud, but a small white one, and they fell not from the interior of the cloud but from the edges. But nopony noticed the strange, lonely, drops as they fell to earth.

Had anypony noticed, they might have discovered this peculiarity. Had a pegasus discovered it and flown up to investigate, they would have discovered the source of the faux rain. They would have seen the drops slipping over the edge of the small cloud, dripping down from the small puddles where they had pooled. But no one did fly up there, so no one saw the abnormal pools of liquid that had collected in dimples on the surface of the cloud. But most importantly, no one saw the cyan pony with the Rainbow mane who actively filled these pools with one of the only liquids that could be supported by clouds - the tears of a pegasus. The tears that came streaming down her face after slipping from her magenta eyes, only to pool on the surface of the cloud, and eventually slip off and fall down.

Rainbow Dash had never been one for showing much emotion. On the rare occasions when stress or emotion got to be too much for her to hold behind her tough façade, Rainbow had always retreated to a cloud high above town to allow herself a few minutes to calm down. Today however, was different. Minutes had turned into hours as she lay on the cloud, crying. The hours had stretched out over the entire duration of the day, yet she was still unable to bring herself to return to the ground below. No amount of time seemed able to take away any of her pain. In the waning afternoon light, Rainbow was surrounded by nothing but the open sky around her, memories from the day before, and a deep, overwhelming sense of failure.

“Sorry, Rainbow Dash. Looks like you just didn’t make the team this year.” The disembodied voice of Spitfire played through Rainbow’s head for what felt like the hundredth time in the last few hours.

“Yeah.” Soarin’s voice joined his teammate’s in Rainbow’s mind, “We’re really thankful to you for saving our lives at the Best Young Flier’s Competition, but we can’t exactly favor you in the contest now, that wouldn’t be fair to the other contestants.”

“We were still rooting for you,” Spitfire’s voice continued, “but you were outperformed by just one other pony. We had to give them the spot on the team.”

“Don’t feel too bad, you still did really well.” Soarin’ had tried to reassure her, “I’m sure that when we have another opening, you’ll make the team for sure!”

“You’re a great flier, and you’ve still got your whole life left to live. Don’t let this get you down too much. There will always be another chance.” Spitfire’s voice faded to nothingness after this remark. It didn’t matter how many times the reassuring words from her memory ran through her consciousness, they were still just words. Words couldn’t change reality, and the reality of the situation was simple.

“I failed.” Rainbow sobbed to herself as she lay forlornly on the soaking cloud. “I failed the tryout. I failed my best chance at getting on the team. I’ll never be a Wonderbolt.”

Rainbow Dash stood up on the cloud’s surface. She had always enjoyed the springy yet firm feeling of a cloud beneath her hooves, but today it was of no comfort to the cyan pegasus. Her pelt was soaked across her face and in places where she had lain in the pool of tears that had grown beneath her while she wept. As high up in the sky as she was, the cold air of the altitude bit into the wet areas of her pelt and chilled her to the bone. She shook herself in an attempt to warm up and sniffed to gain control of her rebellious tear-ducts. As she stood, somewhat under control of herself for the moment, she surveyed her surroundings. She was almost shocked when she saw the cloud’s surface - she hadn’t cried this much in a long time. ‘Nice going, Rainbow Crash.’ She told herself, feeling some insatiable need to punish herself in her own mind, ‘You think you’re a tough pony? You’re just weak. Look at yourself, crying your eyes out on some cloud. Why? Because you’re weak. You’re pathetic. You’re a failure. You’ll never be a Wonderbolt and you don’t deserve to be. You didn’t even deserve the chance.’

“STOP IT!” Rainbow yelled out, more to her own mind than anything else. “I already know I’m weak.” She said to the sky, with the cold, unfaltering, tone of a pony who has given up evident in her voice. “I already know I’m a failure.” She stopped for a moment. Hours had already passed in this cold, lonely, place for her, it was almost sunset. It seemed like nothing she did up here was working to get her out of her latest depression. ‘Maybe,’ she thought, ‘Maybe saying everything out loud will be better than just storing it all up.’, with this decision made, she continued speaking to empty air. “This is nothing new. My whole life has been nothing but a series of failures. It’s been my life’s dream to become a Wonderbolt, and now I went and blew that chance. I guess my dream is... is... over.” The finality of that statement nearly brought her

to tears again. ‘No, Rainbow.’ She thought, trying desperately not to go back there again, ‘No more crying. I’m a tough pony. I don’t need to cry. I can get through this. I’ve gotten through worse before on my own. This is nowhere near as bad as the... the... the accident.’

She couldn’t help it. This final memory was too much. Collapsing back to the cloud surface, she broke down crying again. For years, ever since she was just a little filly, she had blocked out memories of that day – the day of the accident. Thinking about it was always too much for her. It was all she could stand to refer to it as now, ‘the accident’, the memories were too painful to think of it by any other name. Without warning, before she could even think to try and stop them, images and memories from the day she would like most to forget flashed unbidden through her mind. A lone cyan blue pegasus filly with a rainbow mane, happily trotting home from a friend’s house in the dark. The faint orange glow seen over the crest of a hilltop in front of her. Her childhood home, glowing bright with the orange flames that were beginning to engulf the structure, as seen from the hilltop. The feel of the wind rushing in her hair and the blood pounding in her ears as she flew furiously towards the burning house. The frantic tone of emergency in her voice as she screamed: “MOM!” “DAD!”. The licking tongues of orange flame singing the hairs of her pelt and the tips of her wings’ feathers and she tried to find an opening in the advancing fire to see through and reach through. The sound of other ponies dashing to the scene, shouting orders, screaming, hollering, calling for water. The strong front hooves of the earth pony stallion who had grabbed her around the midsection and pulled her away to a safe distance from the growing inferno. The astonishment and disbelief of watching her own home, weakened by a blaze she knew not the cause of, collapse right in front of her. The cold, unfathomable certainty of knowing that her parents wouldn’t have, couldn’t have, didn’t, get out alive.

Tears had not fallen that night, for there was too much shock and disbelief for them on that day. They had fallen on nights afterward, keeping her awake every single night of the two weeks she spent at her friend’s house in town after that night. They had prevented sleep for the three days she had spent on the road after fleeing her small hometown, desperate to escape from the memories. They had even followed her into Cloudsdale, where she had fled to, before finally subsiding. She gave the entire event the title: ‘the accident’ and filed it away in the back of her subconscious, forcefully locked away to keep out the pain.

Locked away, that is, until this day. On this day, the tears for her parents fell afresh. For years, the distractions of Flight School, followed by racing, and finally dreams of the Wonderbolts, had kept her preoccupied with a purpose in life and a goal to reach forward to, a crowning achievement to attain. In one fell swoop, those dreams were gone, gone and replaced by the sadness and the fear they had helped keep locked away for so long.

The emotional assault grew to be too much. In one movement, Rainbow shakily stood herself back up on the wet cloud. The cold wind chilled her again, but she no longer cared. In a solemn, grave voice, she began to speak to the emptiness again. “I... am a failure. I watched my parents die in a house fire, I didn’t save them, I didn’t protect them; I failed. I left Cloudsdale flight school to escape the bullying and the rules, I fled; I failed. I struggled for years to admit my feelings to the mare of my dreams, I made excuses, and I chickened out; I failed. I didn’t

perform well enough to join the Wonderbolts, I flew horribly, and I was outshone by another pony; I failed.” She drew in a deep breath as she reached her final conclusion and spoke it to the world in front of her. “There is nothing left here for me.”

With that, she spread her wings and took flight. She left her tiny safe haven of a cloud behind and soared out over the open sky, feeling the cold wind biting at her wet fur. She looked down. Fields, trees, roads, even her cloud house looked small from her height. It was from this height, staring down at the wide expanse of the world below her, that Rainbow really got a feeling of how small and insignificant she was compared to the world. She didn't matter in the grand scheme of things. Right then, at that moment, the ground looked so comforting, so inviting, so final. Without a moment's hesitation, she locked her wings to her side. Without their provided lift, the cyan pegasus immediately began plummeting towards the ground, gathering speed as she fell, faster and faster. She closed her eyes and let the wind play with her body as she tumbled through the unforgiving sky.

Thoughts of her mother and father passed through her mind as the wind passed through her hair. Images of their faces before cruel fate and an accident had ripped them from her.

‘I'm sorry, Mom and Dad.’ She thought.

Images of the Wonderbolts soared by, faces apologetic as they denied her greatest dream. As did images of her friends, Fluttershy, Twilight Sparkle, Pinkie Pie, Rarity, laughing and having fun without her. She didn't deserve friends.

‘I'm sorry, everypony.’

But lastly, and most importantly of all, the face of the one mare she cared about the most. The face of the mare of her dreams, who she had been too afraid, too weak, to tell the truth to for the years they had known each other, remained as a fixed image burned into her mind's eye as she sped towards the earth. An image of the face she knew she would never see again.

‘I'm sorry, Applejack.’

Pinkie Pie was working at Sugarcube Corner that afternoon, standing at the counter in front of the bakery. Today had been a somewhat slow day, causing her to feel unnaturally bored. Assortments of treats, muffins, cupcakes, and every other snack available for consumption by the citizens of Ponyville, were on display in the glass case below the counter that she rested her head on, but surprisingly few of those citizens had stopped by to purchase treats on this day.

Pinkie was bored. ‘But all that is going to change at the party tonight!’ She thought excitedly, ‘Rainbow Dash is going to be a Wonderbolt, and she's going to love the surprise party I have planned for her this evening! I can't wait for her and Fluttershy to come home from Cloudsdale!’ Pinkie Pie felt a pang of sadness for not being able to come with her friend to support her like she did at the Best Young Flier's competition, but Mr. and Mrs. Cake had

entrusted the shop to her while they were out of town. Lost in thought, Pinkie barely even registered any recognition when the bell hanging above the door rang, signaling that someone had entered the shop.

“Um... Hello... Excuse me, Pinkie Pie?” A soft, quiet voice wafted through the air of the shop, causing Pinkie to look up and see her friend Fluttershy standing before her.

“Fluttershy!” Pinkie Pie cried, her boredom forgotten at the sight of her returned friend, “you’re back! How’s Rainbow! Is she a Wonderbolt now? Huh? Huh? She must be! I have a party planned and everything! This is so exciting!”

“Well... actually... Pinkie, she got... second place in the competition. She didn’t win. She isn’t a Wonderbolt.” Fluttershy stammered, saddened as she thought of her grief-stricken friend who had flown out of Cloudsdale in tears before Fluttershy could even say anything to her.

Pinkie’s cheeriness also visibly diminished. “All of this is my fault. If I hadn’t been working the shop I could have been there to cheer for her.” She stated glumly.

“Oh, Pinkie,” Fluttershy soothed, “Don’t blame yourself. You needed to run the shop because the Cakes aren’t here. And Rarity is still working on that big order of dresses, Applejack was busy on the farm, and Twilight won’t get back from Canterlot until later tonight. It’s none of you girls’ faults for not being there. I just wish I could have helped her win since I was there. She seemed so sad when it was announced that she only got second place.” Fluttershy lamented.

“Well where is she! She needs cheering up! We have to find her!” Pinkie Pie exclaimed, bolting to the door without a second thought.

“But, Pinkie, don’t you have to stay in the shop?” Fluttershy asked, afraid of letting her friend ditch her responsibilities.

“This is more important, Fluttershy.” Pinkie said with a certainty that surprised the yellow pegasus.

“But I don’t know where she is. She flew off without me right when she found out that she didn’t win.” Fluttershy said, suddenly ashamed that she had lost her friend.

“Well then I guess we’ll just have to fin-” Pinkie started to say, but was cut off as her entire body began to vibrate up and down violently.

“Oh dear.” Fluttershy cried, “Pinkie, are you OK?”

“It’s just my Pinkie sense!” Pinkie Pie exclaimed when she had gotten out of the bout of vibrating. “I haven’t gotten that one in a while. It means there’s a doozy coming!”

“W...w-what does that mean?” Fluttershy asked tentatively, scared of what this

premonition foretold.

“It means something really unexpected is going to happen! The last time I got this feeling was when Twilight accepted my Pinkie sense!” Pinkie exclaimed, “Something is going to happen, and we need to be ready for it-” she was cut off again as another bout of shaking rocked her for a few moments, “And it’s going to happen at Dashie’s house!” She cried when it stopped, “We have to go now!” She shouted at Fluttershy, tearing off down the road that led to Rainbow Dash’s house, Fluttershy having to fly to keep up with her energetic friend, even with Pinkie halting intermittently to vibrate in place.

It didn’t take long to reach the field underneath Rainbow’s house. Fluttershy and Pinkie stopped there, looking up at the cloud castle with its flowing Rainbow waterfalls. “Can you fly up there and see if she’s there?” Pinkie asked.

“I already tried that when I got back to town. I thought she’d be here after she flew off, but she wasn’t.” Fluttershy lamented.

“But she has to be here! Why else would the doozy be happening here?” Pinkie Pie cried out, before scanning the skies for several moments, hoping to catch a glimpse of rainbow hair somewhere up in the clouds. “There she is!” She cried out suddenly, as both ponies craned their necks to see, high above them, a familiar blue pony shape with barely-visible rainbow mane and tail spread her wings and take off into the sky from a high cloud. From their vantage point down below, both Pinkie Pie and Fluttershy could see the exact moment when Rainbow Dash’s wings, which had been spread wide, retracted sharply to snap into her body. Both watched agape as their friend began to fall, plummeting towards the hard ground and picking up speed as she passed through the air.

It was at this moment, when she realized what was happening, that Pinkie’s body went into convulsions. Gathering up speed at the same rate as Dashie fell and contorting itself into all manner of strange contusions. This was the doozy. For her own part, Fluttershy just stood there for a few seconds, mouth agape. Unwilling or unable to accept the situation she was being faced with, she watched as her oldest friend fell nearer and nearer to impact, until a switch flipped in her mind.

With Rainbow Dash still plummeting and Pinkie Pie rendered immobile, Fluttershy shot off the ground and took off on an intercept course for the downed pegasus before her. “Oh my goodness oh my goodness oh my goodness,” she cried as she flew, her heart racing with adrenaline brought on by the fear of losing her oldest and best friend. Putting on an additional burst of speed, Fluttershy soon found herself directly below her falling friend. With mere seconds to prepare herself, Fluttershy flipped over in the air and caught Rainbow Dash in all four hooves. She ignored the pain as she felt the momentum of her friend transfer into her. With Rainbow in her embrace, Fluttershy cautioned a look down to see that the ground was still approaching. Fast.

In a last ditch effort to slow themselves before impact, Fluttershy threw open her wings to

the widest extent that they could go. The addition of this extra surface area caught more air under them and instantly had the effect of beginning to slow the pair of pegasi, but space to stop was quickly running out. Fluttershy continued to glance downward as they slowed, tears being ripped involuntarily from her eyes as she realized that they were still going to hit the ground below, and entirely too hard. Her wings still thrown out as far as possible, Fluttershy shut her eyes and tried to brace as best she could for the unpreventable impact. The motionless body of Rainbow Dash enveloped in a tight embrace as they both neared the ground.

Pinkie Pie stared. Eyes locked on the scene unfolding before her even as her body continued its random and seemingly impossible pattern of contortions. The horror of the situation was quickly becoming apparent. Two of her best friends in the whole wide world were crashing to the ground, and she could do nothing about it.

Fifty feet.

Twenty feet.

Ten feet.

Five feet.

One foot.

The sound that hit Pinkie Pie's ears as she was finally released from the grip of her own Pinkie Sense was that of a low, dull, earthen thud. Nothing but a dull thud and the sharp but brief cry of a pony in pain before silence reigned. The deep, all-encompassing, unfathomably relentless silence carried with it a note of quiet finality. No sound, not even the sobbing of an injured pony or the snap of breaking bones could be worse than the silence that permeated through the scene.

Pinkie Pie's mane fell straight against her neck and her tail hit the ground as her usually bright colors instantly changed to dull shades. Slowly and with no small amount of trepidation, Pinkie Pie began to make her way towards the spot on the ground where she could see the bodies of two of her best friends lying motionless. Neither one making a sound.

The small stones and pebbles of the path to Sweet Apple Acres crunched beneath Applejack's hooves as she trotted into town. Her chores had taken excruciatingly long today, which was doubly bothersome on this particular day, seeing as how it had forced her to miss out on Rainbow Dash's Wonderbolt tryouts. Applejack felt somewhat annoyed with herself for missing out on the chance to cheer on her best friend, but work was work, and if she didn't do it, no one would. Trotting down the road with fields on both her right and left sides, Applejack noticed a large floating cloud house in the distance - Rainbow Dash's house. The sight of it brought another tinge of guilt to her mind, but she was able to push it aside at the thought that she was heading into town to attend Pinkie Pie's "Congratulations, Rainbow Dash!" party. Even

if she wasn't able to make it to her best friend's tryouts, she could still support her at the party, and Applejack entertained this thought as she continued on down the road.

Then, suddenly, unexpectedly, a voice reached her ears. "AAAAPPLEEJAAACK!". The voice sounded familiar, but it had a strange note to it... almost like...

"Pinkie Pie?" Applejack asked incredulously as she caught sight of the pink party pony bounding towards the road. But something was wrong. Pinkie Pie looked as if her colors were noticeably dimmer, and even at this distance, AJ could clearly see that her friend's hair had fallen straight. This wasn't the Pinkie Pie she knew, this was a Pinkie Pie that she hadn't seen since the day of the surprise birthday party in the barn so long ago. It was a view of her friend that Applejack had wished to never see again, ever since she had come to know this side of her personality, but here she was coming straight towards her.

"Applejack!" Pinkie Pie cried when she reached her orange friend, "Help me! Help me please! I... I... I can't.... I can't move them on my own!" Something was clearly wrong. Tears were streaming thickly down her face and Pinkie was making no effort to stop them. "Please. Help!"

"Woah, there Sugarcube!" Applejack said, concern for her distraught friend clearly evident in her voice. "What exactly do ya mean?"

At this question, Pinkie broke down completely. She hung her head, straight mane cascading down all around it, Applejack could barely understand her through her sobs. "I... I... I-I... I-look..." She finally managed to choke out as she lifted a shaking hoof to point behind her. Applejack's gaze following Pinkie's unsteady hoof, and off in that general direction she saw a hint of rainbow color showing through the green of the surrounding flora.

"Rainbow Dash?" She called, galloping towards the spot where she could see the mane of her best friend when she didn't receive a reply. Pinkie Pie was right behind her. The sight that reached her eyes when the fallen body of her friend befell her vision would haunt her for a long time to come. Rainbow Dash lay motionless, she was clearly unconscious. Her mane and tail were askew haphazardly, and her left front leg appeared to be bent at an odd angle. Crimson liquid slowly leaked from several gashes on her body and Applejack had to fight to urge to cry out in terror. For the first few seconds, she found herself so entranced by the seemingly lifeless body of Rainbow Dash that she failed to notice one of the most glaring discrepancies of the spectacle - two yellow wings that lay splayed out from a position under the blue pegasus. Feathers ruffled and bent, some lying on the ground next to the wings they had been part of, they could only belong to one pony. "Fl-Fluttershy?" Applejack said weakly as the full situation dawned on her. Pinkie could only nod in response.

Before another thought crossed her mind, Applejack had her muzzle down by the cerulean pegasus's chest. She gently wriggled her head underneath, careful not to damage anything further as she pried the body up off of the yellow one beneath. Then, with her head directly beneath Rainbow Dash's chest, she stopped. She listened. She listened for a sign, for

anything, to tell her what she wanted to hear. She listened and hoped beyond hope for any sign of life. Then, when her own stressed breathing slowed and quieted enough, she heard it. The sound was distant, faint, and almost non-existent, but sure as sugar it was there.

“Ka-thump... ka-thump... ka-thump...” It was weak, but it was good enough for AJ. In one smooth move she pushed her head out the other side, getting her neck all the way underneath the lighter pony’s body, and lifted up to roll the cyan pegasus onto her back. Her muscles strained under the extra weight, but she lifted herself back to her hooves with the new load all the same. She stepped backwards to reveal Fluttershy below her, and almost immediately regretted it. Fluttershy was in even worse shape than Rainbow Dash had been. She had obviously been pinned beneath the other pony, and from the looks of things both of her ragged wings seemed bent to an odd angle by an obvious direct impact with the ground. Her head was thrown backward and her mouth opened in a cut-off scream. Applejack couldn’t tell if she was breathing or not, but she certainly wasn’t moving. Judging from her body and the ground around her, she had clearly lost a lot of blood. With Rainbow Dash on her back, Applejack couldn’t hope to bend down enough to check for a heartbeat, so she turned to Pinkie, now standing on the other side of the stricken yellow pegasus.

“P-Pinkie? F-Fluttershy is l-lighter than R-Rainbow.” She stammered, unable to move her eyes from her fallen friend; Fluttershy, the image of innocence, torn and perverted by a terrible accident. “Do... do ya... do ya think ya can lift her? We... we need ta... ta get them to the hospital.” She finished, voice almost cracking.

Pinkie only nodded in response. She lay herself down next to Fluttershy, wiggling close to try and get a wing and two side hooves across her back. Applejack hung her head down and used her muzzle to roll Fluttershy over once and the rest of the way onto Pinkie’s back. She hoped she didn’t further any of Fluttershy’s injuries by moving her, but she had to, or else Pinkie could never lift her.

They both stood up, somewhat unbalanced by the weight on their backs, but Applejack led on towards the path. She had a look of steely determination set in her eyes. Her friends were still losing blood, and she needed to pick up the pace if she was going to reach the town and the hospital in time. “Come on Applejack,” She started talking to herself, “You can do this. You’re the strongest pony in Ponyville. Rainbow Dash, Pinkie Pie, Fluttershy, and all the girls are counting on you to get to the hospital. Faster. Faster. Come on. It’s just one hoof in front of the other.” Pinkie Pie’s seemingly endless reserves of energy helped her keep up with Applejack as momentum and ever-increasing hoof-falls propelled the orange mare surely forward. “One hoof in front of the other.” She repeated.

A shaky, nearly dismayed voice sounded from behind her. “One hoof in front of the other. One hoof in front of the other.”

“One hoof in front of the other.”

