Pony Feathers
By Nathaniel Shepard

All the ponies had gathered in Ponyville's main square to hear the Mayor give his speech. The town had just completed the final Winter Wrap up of the Mayor's term in office and everypony was excited to hear his parting words before the election season began.

In the midst of the crowd a yellow pegasus filly with pink hair sat quietly, shying away from the noise and bustle around her. Flutterby did not much like crowded places; she preferred to wander the fields and forests by herself and listen to all the animals. But this was too noisy, too much hustle and bustle. Squeaking softly, she huddled closer to her mother's leg.

As the Mayor stepped up to the podium to deliver his speech, a quiet fell over the assembled ponies. Flutterby poked her head up to see what was going on (and a little bit curious about what the old pony was going to say), when noticed that another pegasus was staring at her from across the square. She was blue with messy, multi colored hair. When the other pegasus saw that Flutterby had noticed her, she raised a hoof and waved across the crowd. Flutterby let out soft squeak huddled closer to her mother who gave her a quiet shush.

"Fillies and Gentlecolts…"

After the speech ended, the noise returned. Flutterby finally got her mother's approval to go somewhere else and get away from all the sounds. Just on the edge of Ponyville, she lied down next to a small creek that many animals used for a watering hole. Sighing contently, she settled in and waited for some cute critters to show up. It wasn't long at all before a family of rabbits passed through, followed by a couple of squirrel and a single deer. All in all, it was much more peaceful than the hubbub and hoofshakes occurring in the square.

"Heya! What's your name?"

Flutterby gasped, jumping across the creek and spinning around. Hovering in the air above where she had been laying was the blue pegasus from earlier.

The blue pegasus laughed. "Sorry, didn't mean to scare you. I'm Rainbow Dash!" she struck a pose in the air. "What's your name?"

"I'm Flutterby…" came the yellow pegasus' response.

"What did you say?"

"I'm Flutterby…"

"Flutterlie?"

"Flutterby…"

Rainbow Dash frowned and cocked her head. "You're don't like talking much, do you?"

Flutterby shook her head, letting out a little squeak.

"Well I got the Flutter part, and you seem like a pretty timid pony. How about I call you Fluttershy?"

Flutterby shook her head, but Dash was clearly no longer paying attention. She was still not sure what to make of this new pegasus.

"I'm kinda new in town and this was my first Winter Wrap Up EVER!" Dash shouted with glee, zipping up into the air. "We don't have to do it all ourselves in Phillydelphia, we just use magic, but seeing everypony out there doing their job and letting Spring in was AMAZING! When I grow up, I'm going to be the best weather pony EVER!" To demonstrate, Dash zipped up towards a cloud and gave it a good kick. The cloud puffed and broke into a couple smaller clouds. "Huh, still got to work on it I guess." She turned back towards where the yellow pegasus had been. "Hey, where did she go?"

Flutterby trotted up to her house and opened the door. She loved her home. Situated at the edge of town, it seemed to literally grow out of a hill. The nearby stream and trees attracted all sorts of nice wildlife. It was her hope that she would be able to have the house to herself someday when she was grown. It was a place away from the hubbub of the busy town, peaceful and quiet…

"Hey! Hey Fluttershy!"

Flutterby sighed and turned around, seeing Rainbow Dash zooming to catch up to her.

"Is this where you live? Wow it's… pretty cool, I guess." Ranbow Dash landed and walked across the bridge towards Flutterby. "I don't know any other pegasus ponies that live on the ground. Or under it for that matter."

Flutterby turned away and walked into her house, praying the blue pegasus pony wouldn't follow her.

"So who's your friend, Flutterby?" Flutterby's mother, Shimmerfly, poked her head in from the kitchen.

Rainbow Dash came zipping in the room. "I'm Rainbow Dash! I'm new!"

Shimmerfly smiled. "Oh, you're Firefly's daughter, right? Are you guys all settling in then?"

The rainbow-haired filly nodded. "Oh yes. Our house is amazing! It's all clouds and rainbows and waterfalls and awesome!"

"Really? That sounds nice. Perhaps Flutterby and I should come visit soon, maybe even bring a house warming gift. What do you think, Flutterby?"

The yellow pegasus shrugged noncommittally.

"It's settled then!" Flutterby's mother turned back to Rainbow Dash. "I'll go ahead and contact your mom with what time we'll be over."

Rainbow Dash beamed up at Flutterby's mom before looking back at Flutterby. "Hear that, Fluttershy? We get to hang out!"

Great, thought Flutterby.

The little blue pegasus zipped out the door and into the sky, bursting with energy and eager to tell her mom the good news.

The day was crisp and clear. The air still had a touch of winter's bite to it, but already the fields appeared greener and flowers were beginning to bud in a few of the bushes. Flutterby clung to her mother's back as they rose into the air, passing through the clouds on their way to Rainbow Dash and Firefly's house.

"It's nice that you're finally making some friends, Flutterby," the mother called over her shoulder. "I've been telling you that you should go out and meet new people."

"She's not my friend, or at least not yet." Flutterby sighed. "She just kind of… followed me home."

"Well I'm sure that the two of you will get along just fine. Oh look, we're here!"

The house looked pretty much exactly as Rainbow Dash had described it. Built from clouds and some kind of white, lightweight stone, rainbows seemed to pour from its windows and off its edge much in the way a waterfall would. It was quite the flashy place to live.

Pulling up to the front door, Shimmerfly landed and allowed her daughter to dismount. The house was even gaudier up close. Shimmerfly raised her hoof to knock on the front door but it flew open before she had the chance and a blue streak zoomed out to tackle her daughter.

"Oh my gosh, you're here!" Rainbow Dash shouted with glee.

A pink pegasus with blue hair stepped out of the house to welcome her guests. "Hey there, welcome to our home." She turned to Shimmerfly. "You must be Shimmerfly. Thanks for coming out here; it's nice to feel welcome in a new town." She smiled and leaned towards Flutterby. "And you must be the little pegasus my daughter has been going on and on about. My name's Firefly."

Flutterby took the opportunity to snuggle closer to her mother.

"Heh, you are pretty shy. Anyway, feel free to come on in. I cooked up some nice food for you all to eat."

After they had all eaten, the adults settled down in front of a fireplace and began to talk. Rainbow Dash trotted up to Flutterby and bent to whisper in her ear. "Psst, Fluttershy."

The yellow Pegasus looked at Rainbow Dash apprehensively. "It's Flutterby."

"Whatever. All this grown up stuff is boring, let's go outside and play."

Well, at least Dash was right about one thing. Grown up talk *is* boring. Reluctantly, Flutterby got up and followed Dash outside.

"Check out some of my moves!" Rainbow Dash took to the skies and began twirling around and zipping about amongst the clouds. Many of the "moves" were wobbly or not quite perfect yet, but there was some talent there. It just needed to be refined.

Flutterby smiled and nodded. "You're very good."

"You think?" Rainbow Dash pulled up in front of Flutterby. "I don't know if I'm all that good. My mom promised to take me to see some REAL flyers next week. The Wonderbolts! I've never heard of them before, but they're supposed to be really good. I can't wait!" She paused and looked down at Flutterby, "Hey, why don't you show me some of your moves?"

Flutterby squeaked and shook her head.

"Aw come on, why not?"

"I don't want to."

"Please?" Rainbow Dash pleaded.

"No."

"Hey come to think of it, you came here riding on your mom's back, right?"

Flutterby nodded and looked away.

"Do you even know how to fly?"

She shook her head and blushed.

"Really? Well then I guess I'll just have to teach you!"

Flutterby looked up and squeaked. "N-no, it's alright. Really. I-I'm sure I'll get the hang of it eventually."

"Oh come on," Rainbow Dash laughed, "it's not that hard. Just kind of a hop, skip and a jump, spread your wings and then…" she demonstrated, propelling herself into the air, "ta-da!"

Flutterby cautiously got up on her feet and feebly attempted to imitate Dash. "A hop… skip and a jump…" She looked back at her wings and spread them as far as they could go. Nothing. Rainbow Dash started giggling and Fluttershy blushed.

"Silly filly, you have to put them all together! Hop! Skip! Jump! Spread!" Dash demonstrated again.

Taking a running start this time, Flutterby took a leap and snapped her wings open. This time she glided for a few short seconds. Letting out a startled squeak, she snapped her wings to her sides and crashed back to the misty floor.

"Well at least the clouds up here are soft…" Dash muttered. "Hey, looks like you're starting to get the idea! Just remember to keep your wings open until you touch down unless you're looking for a rough landing!"

Flutterby nodded and got ready for another go. This was exciting! She was learning how to fly! Remembering what she did the last time, she took another running leap and snapped her wings open, making sure to keep them open this time. She felt the wind blow past her as she glided along. "Look Rainbow Dash, I'm doing it! I'm doing it!" And then the ground dropped out from beneath her.

She had flown too far, leaving the soft safety of the clouds behind. Flutterby now soared a hundred feet above the pastures of Equestria, the horizon stretching out in all directions. Panicking, she wobbled in the sky and began to lose altitude.

"Keep your wings steady, Fluttershy!" Dash shouted as she rushed out to guide her back to the house. "Steady wings give steady flight!"

Working through her panicking mind, Flutterby focused on keeping her wings stiff and extended. "How do I get back up?" she called out to Rainbow Dash.

"Flap your wings. Make sure to keep it slow and steady. On a warmer day you could probably find a warm pocket of air to ride up, but there aren't many of those this time of year."

Carefully following Dash's instructions, Flutterby began to steadily beat her wings. Slowly she began to rise. Flying was a lot harder than she had expected.

"Once you reach the right height, tilt your wings to one side to turn in that direction." Dash said, having caught up to her. "You're doing pretty well for your first day."

You would too if you were in my position, Flutterby thought angrily with a nervous glance at the ground. She slowly tilted her wing angle to the right and felt her body swing around that direction until she was facing Rainbow Dash's house again. Beating her wings to gain a little altitude, She coasted in to land on the front porch.

"See? That wasn't so bad," Rainbow Dash joked. Flutterby gave her a glare. "Oh come on, you did good! The cool thing about flying is that once you know how, you never forget! Not to mention it's one of the coolest things in the WORLD!"

Flutterby had to admit it; she did feel pretty cool. She had flown for the first time today, really flown! Despite the terror she had felt dangling a hundred feet above the ground, it was… exhilarating. She smiled weakly at Rainbow Dash.

"Flutterby, time to go!" Shimmerfly exited from the house, followed by Firefly. "Did you two have fun out here?"

Rainbow Dash nodded enthusiastically and Flutterby smiled.

"Good, I knew you two would get along!" Shimmerfly grinned and lowered herself for her daughter to mount. "Go ahead and hop on, Flutterby."

"Actually… um… would it be okay if I flew myself?"

Shimmerfly blinked in surprise. "Why… of course it's okay. Just let me know if you get tired and need a ride." She lifted into the air and waited for her daughter.

Rainbow Dash turned to Flutterby with a big grin on her face. "This was a lot of fun, maybe we can hang out at your house soon!"

Flutterby nodded. "That would be nice." Carefully, she extended her wings and flapped, lifting herself gently into the air. "Bye-bye Rainbow Dash."

"Bye-bye Fluttershy!"

Flutterby almost corrected the blue pegasus again but stopped herself. *Fluttershy… it's kind of cute I guess.* Smiling, she turned and followed her mother towards home.