

Meringuebow Dash

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For the Equestria Daily Speedfic Challenge

(This story can also be found in my Fanfiction.net profile at <http://www.fanfiction.net/u/665450> – reviews appreciated!)

Rainbow Dash kicked back and relaxed atop a small fluffy cloud floating in the vicinity of downtown Ponyville. It was a perfect day, not a cloud in the sky—well, okay, Dash had to admit, there was *one*. But no others. She'd seen to that. And now was the time to catch some premium Zs, with nothing to prevent the sun's warming rays from penetrating deep into her light-blue hide. Nothing to prevent her from making another joyride through the land of happy REM. Nothing to...

“Hey, Dashie!” a cheerful voice called up from below. Rainbow Dash jerked awake as a cluster of helium balloons surfaced through her cloud, followed by a bright pink pony with matching balloons on her flank hanging by one hoof.

“Hey, you!” Rainbow Dash grumbled. “Get offa my cloud.”

“You got your dish ready yet?” Pinkie Pie asked, cheerfully oblivious to Rainbow Dash's glare.

“Dish?” Rainbow Dash blinked for a moment, trying to figure out what Pinkie Pie meant—without much luck. Figuring out what Pinkie Pie meant, she had learned, was usually a full-time occupation.

“For the Fall Harvest Festival Pot Luck, silly!” Pinkie Pie said, as if it was the most obvious thing in the world. “It's tomorrow, remember?”

Rainbow Dash blinked twice, and nearly fell off the cloud. “Oh! I completely forgot!” The Fall Harvest Festival Pot Luck was a dinner event organized by Twilight Sparkle, who had found something in some old book about the way harvest festivals used to be celebrated before Luna's banishment to the moon. She said it had originally been called a “potlatch,” and the more modern term “pot luck” was a corruption. But it didn't make much sense to Rainbow Dash—since when did pots ever have latches?

Oddly enough, Pinkie Pie, Ponyville's usual event organizer, had been happy to take a pass this time. She'd said it wasn't party-like enough for her. (Dash privately suspected Pinkie was just biding her time, ready to pounce and partify the event at a moment's notice. But that was her affair.) So Twilight Sparkle had attacked the event with her usual enthusiasm for doing things “by the book—any book,” and one of the hard-and-fast rules of the thing was that everyone who attended had to bring some sort of food item they had made themselves.

“Remember, we all promised to bring something!” Pinkie Pie continued cheerfully. “I've already got three trays of muffins ready!”

“Do you really think we're going to need three whole trays?” Rainbow Dash asked.

“Muffins!” a wall-eyed grey-and-blonde pegasus cheered as she flew unsteadily by, rummaging in the mailbag on her shoulder.

“As I was saying, do you really think three trays will be enough?” Rainbow Dash asked.

Pinkie Pie giggled. “I think we’ll get by!” She paused, then cocked her head to peer thoughtfully at Rainbow Dash. “Um...ya need any help? It couldn’t be you...haven’t gotten started yet?”

“Oh, don’t be silly!” Rainbow Dash said. “I’ve just been waiting for...the right moment to *strike!* Yeah!”

“Hmmm.” Pinkie Pie frowned for a moment, then shook her head. “Have you decided what you’re gonna make?”

“Um...yes! Of course!” Dash said, trying to ignore the beads of sweat popping up on her forehead.

“Good! ‘cuz, y’know, I think you’d be good at meringue.”

Rainbow Dash cocked her head. “Is that like, one of those things Zecora has that comes back when you throw it?”

Pinkie Pie giggled. “No, silly, that’s a *boomerang!* Though I dunno why they call it that ‘cuz it doesn’t explode or anything. I think something called a BOOM-erang ought to explode, don’t you? But anyway, y’know, meringue, the stuff on top of lemon pies? All white and fluffy like your clouds?”

“Oh! Huh! Yeah!” Rainbow Dash thought about that for a few seconds. “That’s *exactly* what I’m making! A lemon meringue pie! It’ll be a cinch!”

“Are you sure you don’t want my help?” Pinkie Pie asked. “You know I’m really good at cooking! I’ll be happy to help you! The rules say that’s allowed!”

“Thanks, but...there are some things a pony’s just gotta do on her own, y’know?” Rainbow Dash said. “Besides, how hard could it be?” The cloud shook as thunder rumbled ominously.

“Hey!” Dash yelped, glaring down at the grey-and-blonde mailpegasus’s hindquarters, which were now poking out of the lower half of her cloud. “Be more careful, okay?”

The wall-eyed pegasus’s head popped out of the cloud next to Rainbow Dash. “Sorry!” she giggled. “Muffins!”

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A few minutes later, Rainbow Dash ducked through the front gate of her castle in the clouds, saddlebags bulging with her purchases. She’d borrowed a recipe book from Twilight Sparkle—that was fair, right? Recipes had to come from somewhere, and she didn’t have any cookbooks herself. Then she’d swung by Fluttershy’s for some eggs, and Applejack’s for lemons and butter, and gotten some sugar and other things from the Cakes at Sugarcube Corner...she had everything the recipe called for.

She was all set.

“About time I got to use some of these fancy gizmos,” Rainbow Dash said, looking around her kitchen. When she’d made the castle, she’d made sure to stock it with every kind of major appliance she might ever need. After all, even if she didn’t cook much—or at all—at the time, who knew what she might need to do in the future? The enchantments to make sure it all didn’t fall through the clouds hadn’t been cheap, but she was proud to say she had the best-equipped kitchen this side of Sugarcube Corner.

“Okay, preheat the oven to 350 degrees...going to need to bake it for ten minutes.” She considered. “Ten minutes? Who has that kind of time? If I make it a thousand degrees, I should only need about three minutes!” She grinned, twisting the dials on her big shiny oven into the red danger area. “This cooking stuff is easy!”

She looked at the recipe. “Okay, let’s see. ‘Two lemons, juiced and zested.’” She thought for a moment. “Okay, we got plenty of juice up here, but how do you ‘zest’?” She considered. “Give it a pep talk maybe? Oh well, juice first.”

She carried the lemons up to the highest tower of her cloud castle, where the lightning rods poked up out of the roof, and placed them between the metal electrodes. Then she took off, and came back a few minutes later with a small, fluffy cloud. She positioned it directly over the lightning rods. “All the juice we need, coming up!” She gave the cloud a good swift kick, generating a lightning bolt that sizzled between the lightning rods, leaving behind a couple of slightly charred, steaming lemons.

“All right, great, they’re juiced!” Dash rubbed her forehooves together eagerly. “Now they just need to be zested! Okay, um, listen up, lemons! You guys are gonna do things no lemon has done before! You are not gonna believe how awesome and cool it’s gonna be! All the other lemons are gonna look at you and go, ‘Damn, how come we don’t get to do that? Those guys are at least 20% cooler than we are!’” She paused. “Feeling, oh, y’know, zesty yet?”

The lemons did not react, save to steam a little more. “Iiiii’ll take that as a yes,” Rainbow Dash decided, swooping in to grab the steaming, presumably-zesty lemons. “Ow! Ow, hot!”

Back in the kitchen, Rainbow Dash looked at the next set of instructions. “‘In a medium saucepan, whisk together 1 cup sugar, flour, cornstarch, and salt. Stir in water, lemon juice and lemon zest. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring frequently, until mixture comes to a boil.’” She grinned, grabbing the saucepan and dumping ingredients in. “I can do that, no sweat! Rainbow Dash is the one you count on in high-whisk situations!”

Half an hour later, Rainbow Dash was still stirring the saucepan. It was on medium-high heat, but showed no signs of boiling. “Hey! What’s going on here?” Dash grumbled. “Hmm, okay, maybe this recipe book is...out of date. Not set up to deal with today’s kitchen technology. Maybe medium-high heat just isn’t hot enough.” She adjusted the stove to high, and waited a while longer—but there were still no signs of boiling to be had.

“Aw, c’mon, what gives here?” Rainbow Dash grumbled. “Okay, that’s it.” She twisted the dial into the “super-duper high” red zone and waited. Concentrating intently on watching the saucepan, Rainbow Dash completely failed to notice the odd crackling sound that was starting to come from her kitchen’s

fuse box.

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On the ground, Pinkie Pie stared thoughtfully up at Rainbow Dash's castle in the distance, and in particular at the rosy red glow that was starting to emanate from the back of it. "I wonder if anyone ever told her stuff doesn't boil well at high altitudes?" she wondered rhetorically. "Oh well, she's from Cloudsdale, so pro'ly lots of people know it up there!"

Then she suddenly spasmed upright. Her tail had started jerking back and forth. "Oh no! Twitch-a-twitch!"

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Rainbow Dash gritted her teeth in concentration, glaring at the saucepan. The ingredients were starting to dry out at the edges, but still showed absolutely no sign of boiling. "C'mon already! What is with you?!" She paused. "Is it getting hot in here?"

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Pinkie Pie was still peering thoughtfully up at the castle when, with a loud rumble of thunder, its entire back wall blew out. A moment later, a light blue shape came tumbling end over end through the sky, getting bigger and bigger as it came.

"Oh no! Dashie!" Pinkie Pie stared up into the sky, bracketing the shape with her hooves. She hastily licked the end of one hoof and held it up, then nodded. She ran around the back of Sugarcube Corner where a huge, bulging tarp was held down by pegs at the four corners. With two quick bucks, she knocked the nearest pegs free.

"I was saving these for tomorrow, but this is more important!" As a thousand brightly-colored balloons surged into the sky, she lunged forward, spun, and stuck her hind-hooves through the thick rope made up of all their interwoven strings. The balloons drifted into the air, hauling Pinkie Pie up with them, backward.

A few moments later, Rainbow Dash hurtled right into the top of the balloon bunch, breaking her fall. Then, as she tumbled between and through the balloons, Pinkie Pie reached out and bit down firmly on the plummeting pegasus's tail.

The shock of being snapped like a whip brought Rainbow Dash back to consciousness. "Ow! What'd you do that f—" she began. Then she blinked, looking down. "...oh."

"Silly filly!" Pinkie Pie said brightly, from behind teeth still clenched tight on Rainbow Dash's tail. "You didn't have to go and make BOOM-meringue just for me!"

"Eh, heh heh." Rainbow Dash blushed, beating her wings to get lift back. "I, uh, thought you deserved it."

Pinkie Pie released Rainbow Dash's tail, then produced a slingshot from somewhere and started popping balloons with it to bring herself back to earth. "So, about that help...?"

"Um...meet you at Sugarcube Corner?"

Pinkie Pie giggled. "Thought you'd never ask!"

THE END