Title: Assertion
Author: Sectus
Reviewed by: Quillbit Marelor

Murder mystery fanfics haven't exactly been very prevalent in this fandom and there are few that are actually spoken of or remembered. The reason behind this is that, with this fandom being what it is, reading a story that might possibly kill off a pony very dear to the reader might not come off as very appealing. While some may be completely apathetic to the ordeal, it still runs the risk of being cast in a negative light. However, when used correctly, murder mysteries can provide an audience with a gripping tale with plenty of twists and turns that will keep them on the edge of their seats. On the other hand, a writer must be careful when creating a story such as this, seeing as when it begins to spiral, it has the potential to leave readers unsatisfied and overall disappointed in what they have been given. Sectus' story, "Assertion", may be able to instill suspense into its readers, but holds some flaws that may cause some readers to turn in the other direction.

What may be jarring for some people is the change in perspective that the author does between the first two chapters. At first, the story seems to focus solely on Fluttershy, as it is her actions being mainly narrated and the description for the story only mentions her. In the second chapter, though, there is a slight shift in narration, leaning more towards Twilight Sparkle. At a first glance, this might not seem like a big flaw. The author clearly decided to switch the main point of view to a pony that was going through more action and exposition than the one it initially began with. And yet, the writer also pointed out some interesting details about Fluttershy's time away from Ponyville. They go into how she met rare creatures and traveled with a band of other ponies at one time. These two points about her excursion appear to be somewhat fascinating, but are hardly given a moment of reflection. The second chapter could have at least focused partly on the pegasus' travels and her thoughts on the shape Ponyville was in upon her arrival. While it may not be a crucial detail, it is still one that can gnaw at the edge of a reader's mind.

Breaking character is another hindrance for this story, no matter how fleeting the scene may be. For example, after Twilight and Fluttershy go to Canterlot to inform the princesses about a nefarious event that happened in Ponyville, they leave with very little resolution to this problem and decide to go to the spa to relax after a stressful day. This simply does not add up. Twilight, with her need to figure out every problem presented to her immediately, would not simply forget about this crime that had happened a mere day ago. While it has been shown that she has become less obsessive, the unicorn still has that drive to get to the bottom of things even when there is little information presented to her. Instead of giving Twilight the possibility to do some sleuthing and moving the story forward, the author gives readers a scene that may or may not play into the story in the future.

Lastly, there is something to be said about the groups of ponies that serve as the Ponyville and Canterlot Police Forces. The first thing that comes to one's mind is why a police force in Equestria is needed, seeing as there is already a Royal Guard, though this question

could easily be stamped out by saying the land needs more protection other than the Royal Guard. Similarly, the author states that these groups were created due to recent complications. Whether their origins will be discussed fully is still yet to be seen, but still greatly desired. Yet the main problem isn't the vagueness of their creation, but their personalities. From their dialogue and actions, these pony police officers fill out the stereotype of a bad cop: rude, uses profanity, and belligerent for no reason. Although these groups are mainly used to be antagonists, that does not mean they have to embrace this stereotype. Since the overly rude cop trope has been used time and time again, it works against this new set of characters, making them much less memorable or interesting. Antagonists are meant to work against the goals of the main characters, which can be done without pushing and shoving them with verbal jibes. With a bit of tweeking, these characters could become intimidating and strong enough to the point where this bad stereotype won't be seen as needed.

Despite these flaws, this story can be a worthwhile read to those who enjoy a good amount of suspense and enough questions floating around in the air. Even though something may be rife with problems and events that don't quite add up, it can bring entertainment to those looking for it. "Assertion" is a passable read and will possibly unravel into some truly interesting situations.

Score: 6.5/10