

Chapter 4

The world was quiet. Her hair floated around her face; she didn't feel the sting of her wounds here. Everything felt the same like this. It seemed almost as if all her cares were a mile away...

The last of her oxygen left her mouth and flew past her face. Her lungs began to burn. She wanted to hold it for a little longer, but her body defied her.

Pinkie gasped, taking in a huge breath of air as she surfaced from the bucket of water. She panted heavily as she tried to relax and calm her beating heart. She had just survived staring death in its face. That thing...that monster...that...Slender Pony...she knew just getting close to it was a death wish. When it had gotten close her mind had fallen into a haze unlike she'd ever experienced before...then there was the head-splitting pain...

She gingerly touched her re-wrapped head wounds. The cuts from the attack in her room had started to heal, but the slender pony had left a deep gash down the middle of her forehead. But she'd survive, the cut only stung a little now and that would fade soon. The bandages on her leg had also needed to be changed. All that running had reopened the bite wound and her leg was currently throbbing as it recovered.

She shook her head and mane, casting the water off of her head. That soak had relaxed her some, but she was still inside of that school. The school where she had been chased inside of that...that...the only word that came to her mind that could describe it was as an 'Otherworld', one that was separate yet almost the same...

She lowered her head and started gulping down the bucket of water. She hadn't realized how thirsty she was at first, but she remembered how much crying and running she'd been doing and suddenly her throat felt as dry as a desert. She very quickly emptied the bucket of its contents.

Her tongue lapped at the bottom of the bucket expectantly, but there was no more water to be had. She softly sighed as she pulled her head back up and looked around at the empty cafeteria she was in.

She was able to imagine back when it was in pristine condition, all the little foals that would gather around, eating lunch as they took a break from their day of learning. Friends would share gossip stories, adventures in the games they were playing at home, some would doodle, some would spend time by themselves, but lunchtime and recess were always the foals' favorite part of school.

"Those days are long gone in this place, aren't they?" Pinkie sighed as she stared at the

empty, dust covered room. The tables had been empty and abandoned for a long time now and no foals visited these halls. Even the brief glimpse at the playful ghost foals had gone away and left the empty silence.

She took a soft breath and picked up the red ribbon, she had taken it off to soak her head. She gently tied it into a bow at the end of her mane once more. She was growing very fond of this ribbon, not only being a gift from Gummy; it seemed to give her a sense of normalcy during these calm moments, when she just had time to herself. It seemed to put her mind at a bit of ease just knowing it was there.

"I guess..." she said taking a deep breath and turning her head, "All that's left to do now is...open this box..." She said looking at the brown box that sat next to the bucket. She hadn't looked inside of it; in fact she had wanted to leave it there. Even more she wanted to smash it; she wanted to destroy the box. Anything that Slender Pony had to offer just made her stomach twist in anger. But forces beyond her understanding compelled her to bring it with her. She had put it down to get some water and now that she had finished it, it sat there mocking her.

"...Maybe I can smash it after I find out what's inside." She reasoned with herself, giving herself enough confidence to finally open it. She carefully lifted open the brown lid, half expecting it to burst into fire upon her touching it. The lid slid off easily as she looked inside it.

"...W-why is this in here?" She said as she stared in shock at what sat inside the box. It was the key to Sugar Cube Corner. "Why would he have this? Why would he give it to me?" The questions racked Pinkie's mind, but no answers came. She had just come from that area, after all her home was right above Sugar Cube corner.

"I-I can't believe I forgot to check on the store itself!" Pinkie kicked herself mentally. She looked at the key again, then remembered what she had seen in her room and sighed, "No...I can believe I didn't check it. Not after that filly attacked me...I did want to get out of there as quickly as I could."

She carefully picked up the key and placed it in her bag. She had to go back and find out what had happened to Sugar Cube Corner now. She then carefully replaced the lid on the brown box, before picking it up and dropping it on the ground.

She lifted her good leg and smashed the box under hoof. It let off a satisfying crunch as she crushed it.

The snow had started to pile up thickly at her hooves. The town looked like it had a white

blanket covering it. Every part of the town had snow on it, the streets, the roofs and the trees...Pinkie had never seen the town covered in the snow this way before. There had always been ponies that made sure the town was still useable during the winter, clearing the streets and making sure the snow didn't pile up too thickly...

Each step gave a crunch in the snow, as the cold ground sank underneath her. She shivered even more now, wishing she had brought some winter clothes to keep warm. Normally she did well in the cold, but the snow kept wetting her coat. She could feel ice starting to form at the base of her legs.

Sugar Cube Corner finally came into view. She sighed in relief; she had seen groaners in the distant fog but none had come close to her, she had managed to make it here only suffering from the cold.

She went up to the door of her favorite bakery and gently tried to open it. The door was locked, as she had expected. So even if she had tried to check on it earlier she would have just had to move on.

She carefully pulled the key to store out of her bag and placed it into the lock, the door unlocking. Pinkie watched as the key turned to ash, just as the school key had before it. She just let out a soft sigh as she pushed open the door, stepping inside.

As she expected, Sugar Cube Corner was dark, just like her room had been. Scant amount of light entered the room as she looked around. She quickly reached into her bag, pulling out the lantern. She was thankful she had refilled it with the oil back at the cafeteria as she set the flame alight.

To her surprise, Sugar Cube Corner looked fine. There were no pastries on the shelves or counters, but there was a lack of dust and decay. In fact, the place was even decorated. There were ribbons and banners and balloons set up all around the shop. There was a table set up for holding snacks and punch, several games placed in various locations as well as a pile of presents on another table.

There was a banner tied from one pole to the other above it all that read, 'Welcome Pinkie Pie'.

"Are these decorations for me?" Pinkie asked placing her lantern down on a table so it could illuminate the room.

"Oh! Do we have a guest? I love guests!" Came a voice that sounded all too familiar. Pinkie stopped as she looked around, she hadn't heard ANY ponies voice since she'd entered this horrible place and she was suddenly filled with hope.

"Yes! You do have a guest! It's me! Pinkie Pie!" Pinkie Pie quickly called out excitedly, wanting to meet the other pony right now. "Where are you? Come on out! I promise I'm not like those monsters outside!"

"Oh, really?" The voice chuckled, "It's just so hard to tell these days who is and isn't." The voice said cheerfully.

"Please, will you come out? I'd really like to see your face." Pinkie said, she didn't care that the voice seemed to sound familiar; she just wanted to see the pony.

"Okie-dokie-loki! Since you asked so nicely!" A blob of darkness in the corner of the room began to move, it seemed to manifest into the form of a pony before Pinkie's eyes. The shadows surrounding the pony faded as light soon gave her a form. Pinkie gasped in shock, covering her mouth with a hoof.

"What's the matter? You seem surprised to see me! You said your name was Pinkie Pie right? What a coincidence! My name's Pinkie Pie too!" There was no doubt about it, the bright pink coat, the frizzed up curly mane and tail, the blue and yellow balloons for a cutie mark, the bouncing bubbly attitude...it was Pinkie Pie. "But that's going to get confusing if we BOTH start calling each other Pinkie Pie!" She explained as she stopped bouncing for a moment, thinking about, "We should give you a nickname!"

"W-What...but I'm..." Pinkie couldn't think of anything to say. Why was there two of her? And this Pinkie didn't seem to be suffering at all from any sadness or despair, she wasn't covered in any bandages and she didn't look hurt. This Pinkie looked exactly like she did before the nightmares had started to affect her, and this town wasn't helping her.

"Oh! I see your hair is down, does that mean you're sad? You must be! The only time my hair goes down is when I'm sad! We can call you Saddie Pie!" The happy version of Pinkie bounced again, "Why are you sad Saddie Pie? Did someone steal your sweets? You can always make more you know!" She giggled merrily, "Oh! I know what'll turn that frown upside-down! Let's have some cupcakes!"

"C-cupcakes?" Pinkie asked a little hesitantly, "But...I want to get out of this town..."

"Awww, you want to go?" Happy Pinkie Pie said, tilting her head, "But you only just got here! Come on! There's so much fun for us to have!" She bounced over to a door on the side of Sugar Cube Corner, one that led to the basement. She opened the door then turned back around, "Come on and follow me! We'll have lots of fun! Then we'll make those Cupcakes!" The happy Pinkie Pie bounced into the darkness of the stairs, disappearing from sight.

Pinkie just stared in disbelief as the second Pinkie disappeared from sight. She couldn't believe her own eyes. Surely she was the only Pinkie Pie...right? She had to find out why there

was a second Pinkie Pie. She grabbed the lantern and slowly began to follow down the stairs to the basement. She could hear the constant giggling of herself far down in the darkness. For some reason, she might have preferred the silence...

She hit the bottom of the stairs and looked up, expecting to see the basement. Instead there was a long hallway before her, with a series of four wooden doors along it with a final wooden door at the end.

"Come on come on! Let's play already!" The chipper voice echoed throughout the hallway. Pinkie couldn't tell which direction it had come from. She slowly walked up to the first door and opened it, entering slowly. Inside the room she got a shock, as she saw the familiar look the living room from the farm.

"Here...you should eat something." The ghostly image of her father had placed a bowl of soup before a ghostly image of her younger self, wrapped up in a blanket.

"...I'm not hungry..." her younger self had softly muttered in response. She bundled herself up tighter into the blanket.

"You haven't eaten anything since you got back...please, you have to eat." Her father sat down on the couch next to his daughter.

"...I don't ever want to eat again..." Young Pinkie said, her voice quivering with fear. Her father placed his head around his shaking daughter, holding her close to his body.

The images faded away. The room was quiet as Pinkie stared at the images she had just seen. 'Was that...a memory?' she asked herself. It wasn't a memory she could remember. The words her father had spoken felt ominous, but she couldn't think of why they would seem that way.

She saw something out of the corner of her eye, looking down on the table where the soup had been placed. On top of it was a green tile with the image of a cat on it. She wasn't sure what it meant, but she felt it was something important. She made sure to quickly grab it and place it inside of her bag.

She then exited the room, closing the door behind her.

"You do want to have fun, don't you?" Came the cheerful voice that echoed through the hallway once again. Pinkie ignored it for the moment, opening the door across from the first one. Inside the door she saw an interrogation room, one she would've seen at the local authorities when she was little.

"Can't you see she's been through a lot?" The ghostly image of her mother told a ghostly

police colt, as she hugged her pink daughter, "Your questions are upsetting her!" The pink filly was shaking in her mother's arms.

"I apologize profusely...we're not trying to scare her, but we need to know what happened." The colt said reassuringly.

"You need to give my daughter time," her father said adamantly, "This has been a tough time...for all of us."

"We understand, and you have our condolences, but if we need to know the details. Once we do, we can bring this whole affair to an end quickly." The colt returned.

The images faded from the room once more, leaving behind a pink tile on the interrogation table. It was another scene that didn't exist in her memories. This one confused her more than the last one, not knowing what reason she would have to be in an interrogation room like that...

She examined the tile, seeing that it had the picture of a bird on it. She quickly placed it inside of her bag before exiting this room as well.

"Ooooh, you're going to make me wait, aren't you?" The chipper Pinkie Pie voice echoed in the hallway, sounding dissapointed. Pinkie softly shook her head. The voice of that other Pinkie was unsettling to her. Hearing herself talk without it being her just felt...unnatural.

She carefully walked to the next door, opening it and stepping inside. This time she saw her bedroom from the farm. Three beds filled the room, one for each of them as their parents had slept in a different room.

"Come on sis...you need to get some sleep...it's getting late." The ghostly image of her older sister Octavia was trying to comfort the young pink filly. They were sleeping in the same bed as her sister hugged her tightly, "I know you're having a hard time...but I'm here...you know I won't let anything happen to you."

The young pink filly began to sob into Octavia's coat. The two of them embraced as the images faded once more. On the bed sat a red tile with the picture of a snake on it.

Pinkie wiped away a tear that had begun to form at the edge of her eye. She didn't know why these emotions were welling up inside of her, the images were too real to not be true...but why couldn't she remember them?

She carefully placed the red tile in her bag before exiting the room.

"Come oooooon...I've prepared a party for you and everything!" She still sounded happy,

but like she was getting impatient.

Pinkie shook her head softly; she had to see what was in this other door now. That other Pinkie could wait.

She opened the final door on the sides of the hallway, stepping into a room that had its walls painted like the sky, the ground was covered in sand and rocks. It looked like the outside of the rock farm.

“So...you’re sure this is what you want?” Her ghostly father asked once again.

“Yea...it is. I just...I don’t think I should stay here anymore.” Her younger self responded slowly.

“I understand.” Her mother commented, standing next to her father, “Just please be careful out there. I know you’ll have Octavia with you.”

“Are you sure you guys don’t want to come? I don’t know if I’ll be coming back either.” Octavia said looking from her younger sister to her parents.

“I was left this farm by my father; I can’t just leave it now.” Their father shook his head slowly, “This farm is my whole life now, good and bad memories alike. So I hope you can forgive us for not coming with you. Just please be safe.”

“Don’t worry father, I’ll guarantee that nothing shall happen.” Octavia smiled.

“We trust you Octavia.” Her mother nodded, tears in her eyes. The images faded away, a blue tile with a fish on it sat in the middle of the room.

‘That was when we left the farm, wasn’t it?’ Pinkie thought remembering having left the farm with her parent’s approval...but she hadn’t remembered that conversation before they had left. Yet...she was sure it had happened. All of these images were experiences she’d had when she was younger...yet she had forgotten them.

‘Why would I have forgotten these memories?’ She asked herself as she walked over to the blue tile, before placing it in her bag. ‘There must be a good reason for why I have forgotten...maybe...maybe that other Pinkie Pie knows...’ She thought to herself as she exited the room.

The other Pinkie Pie voice huffed softly, “You’re not very fun Saddle Pie! If I was told I was being thrown a party I would just go straight to it!” The voice sounded like her patience was wearing thin.

Pinkie walked down the rest of the length of the hallway, reaching the door at the end of it. She pushed the door open, walking inside.

"Oh! There you are! I was afraid you'd gotten lost somehow! Which would be weird, how do you get lost in a straight hallway? I mean I'm sure there's a way but you sure have delayed the party!" The other Pinkie stood in the middle of the room, illuminated by a lantern that hung from the ceiling. The rest of the room was pitch black except for the circle of light that showed where she was.

Pinkie carefully turned off her lantern, before storing it back in her bag and then turning to face herself.

"Tell me...you know what those images were about, don't you?" She asked as seriously as she could.

The other pinkie frowned, "What? You made me wait for that? That's not very nice." She said giving a huff, "But I'll forgive you! After all now that you're here we can have fun together!" She bounced happily.

"Please! I want to have fun as much as you do...but I can't enjoy myself until I find some answers." Pinkie shook her head, "What happened to Ponyville? Why are there monsters? Why am I seeing the images I'm seeing? I want nothing more than to go back to throwing parties and hanging out with my friends..." she lowered her head a little, "But I can't...not so long as all these questions are eating me up inside."

The other Pinkie stopped bouncing and just seemed to frown.

"Fine, I see how it is." The other Pinkie turned around, "I guess I'll just have to remove that sadness from you Saddie Pie."

Pinkie blinked in confusion. She had no idea what the other Pinkie meant, but she hadn't answered any of her burning questions...

Her thoughts were stopped as her heart sunk. Her ears could hear the siren going off. The light in the room was dimming, turning it pitch black slowly.

'Oh no...oh no no no no no no no!' She thought beginning to panic as the light faded completely. She tried to brace herself for anything, the world was changing; she could feel it shifting under her hooves. As the siren began to die out, the lantern began to flicker back to life, re-illuminating the spot the other Pinkie was standing.

The ground around them had turned into the rotting, grime-covered floor that had appeared the first time she had heard the siren. The other Pinkie Pie was still standing where

she had been; the only difference now was that she was wearing a strange dress with wings...

As the other Pinkie began to turn around, the phonograph began to come to life with static.

"You know..." the other Pinkie spoke up, "playing with myself really might be the most fun I'll ever have." She let out a soft chuckle, turning around fully to give Pinkie a full view of the outfit, "I'll have to make it last...but all things do come to an end."

Pinkie stared at the outfit, beginning to notice details about it she wish she hadn't. The wings on the back, 6 in total, were each a different color and were crudely stitched on. Around her neck was a necklace with multiple unicorn horns dangling from it. The cloth her dress was made out of looked like a patchwork quilt made of leather, each square of the dress had a different cutie mark on it.

"Oh, do you like my dress?" The other Pinkie noticed her gaping stare. The other Pinkie angled her body to show it off better, "I'm so glad you like it, I worked very hard to make it. It wasn't easy getting everything to be so intact. Ponies really like to squirm you know." She laughed as she gently played with one of her wings, "I'm quite proud of how it came out too. But I must admit, I see something I can add to it that would make it even better!"

The lantern grew brighter, illuminating more of the room, revealing a table that had been hiding in the darkness. The other Pinkie turned and walked towards the table, reaching into a medical bag that was placed on the table.

From the bag she pulled out a large, sharp butcher's knife.

"Now be a good pony and hold still will you? I don't want to mess up that beautiful Cutie Mark of yours." The other Pinkie said as if it was a natural thing, before putting the butcher's knife in her mouth. The phonograph began to let out its wailing rings.

Pinkie's heart felt like it had stopped. She couldn't even comprehend everything that this other Pinkie was saying. But it was very clear that the other Pinkie wasn't going to give her a chance, as the other Pinkie began to charge full gallop at her. The other Pinkie appeared to be aiming for her legs.

She jumped out of the way, as the knife came close to cutting deep into her. She tried to back up away from the other Pinkie, into the darkness when she hit something hard. She looked behind her, and as if following her eyes the lantern hanging from the ceiling glowed brighter, revealing the entire room to her.

She had run into the dried remains of a pony hanging from the ceiling by a butchers hook. She jumped away, not wanting to even touch it as her eyes quickly began to see the

decorations of the room. She felt her stomach reach her throat.

Pony bodies hung from several parts of the room, their bodies dried and caked pools of blood lay underneath them. Skulls decorated the walls, while the furniture was made up of bones and skin, balloons floated that were dyed with blood, streamers and ribbons had been given the same treatment, piles of body parts and organs lay stacked in the corners of the room. On the table with the medical bag, appearing from the darkness that had hid it before was a plate adorned with four foals surrounded it, with a pile of cupcakes in the center of the plate.

Her ears twitched as she heard the galloping of hooves and jumped into the air, as the sound of a blade being swung struck the body she had run into. Pinkie ran away from the twisted version of herself, panting heavily as she galloped to the other side of the room. She turned around, watching as the other her pulled the knife out of the body.

“Saddie Pie, this isn’t any fun if you just keep running!” The other Pinkie said cheerfully, pulling the knife out of the body, “I admire you though; you have the will to fight! I like that in a pony.” She chuckled happily as she placed the knife back into her mouth.

The other Pinkie said everything in that same, happy voice. It terrified her, thinking that such things could be said with such a happy tone. That Pinkie had every intention of killing her, and not quickly; it was obvious she wanted to make it a slow, painful process.

The other Pinkie was charging again. She could dodge it from this distance though; she jumped out of the way, avoiding Pinkie.

“GAH” She cried out as a searing pain sailed across her right leg. She stumbled away as she looked at the other Pinkie, who was giggling, blood dripping from the end of the butcher’s knife. The other Pinkie had tilted her head and changed her direction when she had dodged. The knife had cut deeply into her leg; she could feel the blood trickling down her leg.

With a playful hoof stomp, the other Pinkie broke into another charge straight for her. She mustered all her strength to jump away again.

“GAAAAH” she let out another painful cry as a gash cut down on her back leg, causing her to trip and collapse on the ground. Her leg twitched in pain as the gash reached diagonally down half her leg. She was severely bleeding now; the other Pinkie was able to maneuver too well for her to dodge. The attacks had all but immobilized her movement now.

“I give you an A for the effort, but a C for the execution. That gives you a good round B!” The other Pinkie cheered happily for her. “I do hope you won’t completely give up once you lose your legs though! I know it’ll be tough, but keep on fighting!” The twisted words sounded so cheerful it sickened Pinkie.

She turned her head to watch the other Pinkie put the knife back in her mouth. She had come up to her from behind and was raising her head now. She was going to bring the knife down, bring down right into her leg.

With all of her might she pulled her back leg in, as the other Pinkie began to throw her head down with all her might to chop the leg off, Pinkie bucked the leg with all of her might into the other Pinkie's jaw.

A loud crack sounded through the room as Pinkie felt the body of the other Pinkie fly backwards, away from her. She heard a loud thud, followed by the clanging of the knife hitting the hard ground. She panted in pain, trying not to focus too much on her bleeding legs. She turned her head weakly to look in the direction the other Pinkie had flown.

The other Pinkie groaned, having landed on her back. She rolled over, lying on the ground as her head wobbled. Her mouth was bleeding severely. She coughed and hacked, bits of teeth and chunks of blood flying out. She panted as best she could through the blood oozing out of her mouth, turning to look at the Pinkie she had attacked.

"Nicbth...truhth..." The other Pinkie tried to speak, but she just sputtered out what sounded like nonsense. She looked in pain as she tried to speak, but she slowly got to her wobbly hooves.

Pinkie slowly got to her hooves as well. Putting weight on her injured legs made her body cry out in pain for relief, but she did her best to silence the cries.

"Ahlbth...finthith...yoobth..." The other Pinkie sputtered out more blood, as she gripped the butcher's knife as best she could with her hoof, dragging it along the ground as she began to walk towards Pinkie. Pinkie took in sharp breaths of air as she concentrated on the vile Pink mare before her.

The other Pinkie began to pick up the pace, before going out into a full on run straight for Pinkie. She seemed groggy, but determined, to bring that knife down into Pinkie's flesh. Pinkie had aimed the uninjured half of her body at the other Pinkie, bringing her hind hoof up once more.

The butcher's knife was raised into the air, sparks flying as it had scrapped along the ground. The frantic rush of the other Pinkie was closing in, ready to strike down. For a moment, everything seemed to hold still, right on the edge of death, two forces that never should've met collided.

The butcher's knife flew through the air, impaling itself into the ground. A loud crunching sound broke through the air.

Pinkie's hind leg had struck, landing with all its might straight into its victim's throat. The other Pinkie's eyes shrunk as her wind pipe was crushed, her forward energy being matched by the stopping force of the kick. Her body betrayed itself and swung itself free of the ground, her whole being shifting out from under the power of the kick and hitting the ground with a hard thud.

That Pinkie jerked and twitched on the ground, as it tried with all its might to get air from its broken wind pipe, only to be filled with blood that poured freely from the neck. She jerked and squirmed, as her eyes rolled into the back of her head. It seemed to last for an eternity, but the body finally stopped squirming as life escaped it.

The only thing that could be heard was the loud panting of Pinkie Pie, her phonograph had gone silent. She stared at the corpse that lay before her. She saw herself dead, killed by her own hoof.

She seemed to be numb to the pain that was trying to coarse through her body, her mind beginning to fall into a haze from the amount of blood she was losing down her legs. It seemed...insignificant at the moment. All she could do was stare numbly at the lifeless body before her. Nothing else seemed to even exist in the world.

However, her mind finally began to receive the signals her body was sending. She needed medical attention. Her legs became shaky as she finally began to take her first step. She limped, putting as little pressure on her injured legs as possible, over to the medical bag. She carefully pried it open, looking inside. There were many sharp instruments, scalpels, syringes filled with a strange liquid, even a saw for cutting bones.

However, she saw a roll of gauze bandages. She carefully grabbed it, pulling it out of the bag. She unrolled the length of it, before carefully, but tightly, wrapping it around her wounds. She wrapped slowly, but surely, wrapping up the large cut on her hind leg, then the smaller cut on her front leg.

The bandages quickly soaked with blood, but they would seal her wounds for the time being. She placed the remaining gauze inside of her bag and then turned towards the exit. She slowly limped her way back into the grimy hallway, walking past the steel doors. She carefully began to climb up the stairs, her wounds slipping once or twice due to the grime that had grown all over them. The climb was slow, her body ached with pain and exhaustion, but she made it to the top.

She slowly walked across the rotting floor of Sugar Cube Corner, heading straight to one of the grime covered counters. In a dry spot on the counter sat a brown bottle, the label of it called it a 'Health Drink'.

Pinkie's dulled mind pulled the cap of it off with her mouth, before taking it and drinking

the whole thing. The drink tasted like a mix of bitter herbs and strawberries for flavor, it was a lot like drinking medicine. But her body was grateful to have the liquid inside of her. She placed the empty bottle back down on the counter and slowly trudged to the middle of Sugar Cube Corner.

She laid down, panting heavily, as the haze of her mind finally came to a stop as she went into an uncomfortable sleep.