

Sick Day

By Cereal Velocity

Inspired by an anonymous request.

Rainbow Dash dunked her forehead gently in the water she had poured, closed her eyes, and moaned. This fever was awful, and her head was still pounding with her heartbeat. She had woken up this morning feeling like death incarnate, but couldn't quite put a hoof on the reason why. She hadn't eaten any of Pinkie's cakes for days, after all.

She removed her head from the water and listlessly looked at her reflection. Past the sopping rainbow-dyed hair lay a tired-looking pony, with none of the usual enthusiasm in her lidded eyes.

I should just go back to bed, she thought dully. She had sent a message with Ponyville's ever-present gray mailmare to fetch one of the nurse ponies when she had come to deliver the post, but she didn't expect the aid to come quickly. Her home in the clouds wasn't the most accessible of domiciles, but she didn't want to risk putting stress on her sore wings. Besides, she wasn't feeling all that terrible. Whenever the doctor could make it up here was fine, she supposed. It was a little embarrassing to her that she had went to such measures to begin with. She was hardly ever sick. She hoped it wasn't serious- or contagious. Then again, she was here by herself this morning.

The blue mare took a quick lap of the water to wet her mouth before turning away from the pool and awkwardly cantering back to her bed, head still spinning a bit. She stretched her wings gingerly and nuzzled the covers back, crawling back to where she knew the mattress was still warm. As soon as her head hit the pillow (which, unsurprisingly, was made of cloud) she began to feel a little better. She sighed deeply- maybe all she needed was a nap. Yeah, maybe it was just a little stress messing with her. She'd take a nap and make some hot tomato soup when she awoke. With that happy food thought, she settled down to sleep.

It almost worked. She had almost drifted off when she heard a familiar sound near the door.

"Rainbow Dash! Are you home?" she heard Pinkie Pie's sing-song voice call out. She grimaced and shut her eyes tighter. Oh, not now. How did she even get up here? She thought about hiding, but the bed was far too comfortable. She settled for pulling the covers over her head.

It didn't take long for the pink pony to find her in her bedroom. She poked her head through the doorway. "Rainbow! What are you doing asleep, silly? It's the middle of the afternoon!"

Rainbow Dash moved the covers and opened her eyes a bit to address Pinkie, and saw that not only was she here, but so were Twilight and Applejack. The two were behind Pinkie, looking over her shoulders with mild concern on their faces. Far later than it should

have, it occurred to Rainbow that Pinkie still had her ridiculous hot air balloon from the running of the leaves. *Awesome*. She groaned lightly and replaced the covers over her face.

"I told you she was sick," Applejack noted to the other two ponies. "There's only one thing that can keep that pony down. We're here to help, sugarcube."

"I'm fine," Rainbow mumbled underneath the sheets.

"No you're not," Twilight chimed in. "You just need a little shot of magic. I've been reading up on arcane remedies--"

Applejack scoffed. "Magic- horseradish. She just needs a little down-to-earth medicine."

Twilight looked poker-faced at the earth pony, as if they'd had this conversation just prior to arriving, which they probably had. "Apples?" she asked flatly.

"Apples' good for the soul," she responded, pulling a bright red fruit out of her pack with her teeth. Pinkie Pie bounced once on her hooves in response.

"Ooh! Oh! I can make her some nice hot apple fritters! Or an apple pie. Or candied apples! I keep hearing Rainbow loves candy, but I've never seen her eat any. This'll be so fun! I've never gotten to cook for sick ponies before!" Applejack gave her an oblong look.

"Wait, what? Hold up, never mind, she doesn't need any of those fancy baked goods. Just a plain apple and some milk. There's no need to unbalance her. She's already sick."

Twilight shook her head. "No, no, none of that crunchy granola stuff. One spell can fix all her problems. Maybe two."

Rainbow Dash shifted underneath the covers to expose her head. All the talking was making her headache worse. "Everypony, I appreciate it, but--"

Applejack raised a hoof in Rainbow's direction, clearly telling her to hush. "Twilight, you can't just go around solving all your problems with magic. Magic is not the answer to everything. Do you see Big Mac or me using magic to harvest our food every spring? Do you see anyone using magic to get around; teleporting, like you do? That's just not how we do things here in Ponyville."

Twilight huffed, while Pinkie Pie uncharacteristically silently began to gather apples out of Applejack's pack, which she had put on the ground and was now ignoring. "I do not teleport everywhere! Don't be so closed-minded! If done properly, it's completely safe, and she'll be back to normal--"

"That's just the thing, Twilight!" Applejack interrupted. "If it's done right! I've never trusted that kind of arcane magic and I'm not about to start now. Especially not on Rainbow."

Rainbow, meanwhile, had given up any hope of getting any sleep. She propped herself up in her bed and rubbed her temples lightly with her hooves. She wouldn't mind a little magic, truthfully, if it could make this go away, but she wasn't about to exert herself to get a word in. As she looked on at the two ponies arguing about what to do with her, she noticed something that had escaped her before- a yellow pegasus hiding just behind the doorframe, clutching a bowl full of water and a clean rag. Rainbow wondered how long she had been there. Fluttershy, ducking her head, was looking between Twilight and Applejack, clearly trying to get a word in herself, but there wasn't much chance of that. Rainbow made a motion with her hoof at the mare to get her attention, and Fluttershy looked over. It took her a second to get the message, but eventually she grabbed the bowl in her mouth and shyly tried to slip past the argument, but got bumped into by Twilight, causing her to spill the water and drop the rag. Rainbow winced. The timid mare looked at the mess, a horrified and helpless look on her face far out of proportion to the size of the spill. Applejack pointed at the water with her hoof.

"See what you've done now?" she hissed at Twilight.

"What *I*'ve done?" she snapped back. "You pushed me!"

"Excuses!" Applejack exclaimed. "Every since you floated into town you've been nothing but trouble!" As this was going on, Rainbow noticed that Pinkie Pie had set up, quite quietly, an impossibly large array of cooking implements off to the side of her bedroom, including mixing bowls and cupcake molds, and had already started to prepare some concoction with Applejack's apples. She was right in the middle of adding flour to a bowl when Twilight gave Applejack a shove back, causing her to trip backwards into the baking area. Flour flew everywhere as she stumbled over the bowl, falling slowly to cover everything and everyone in a fine white powder, including Fluttershy, who turned her petrified expression to herself as she was coated in the dust. She looked as if she could cry.

"Oh!" Applejack shouted from the floor, tangled in Pinkie Pie. "Oh! Excellent! Are you going to clean this up the right way, Twilight, or set the room on fire trying to do it with magic?"

"You can't set a cloud on fire!" Twilight sputtered.

"*You* probably could!" Applejack fired back.

Pinkie Pie struggled to get out from underneath the earth pony that had fallen on her. "My flour!" she yelped. Applejack rolled off of the pink mare, only to find the crushed remains of a few of her apples lying all over the floor.

"My apples!" she countered. "Pinkie, these were for Rainbow Dash!"

At the mention of the name of the pony they had all come to help, the flour-covered four looked over at Rainbow Dash, who was wearing a deadpan expression, hooves crossed over her chest, her mane covered in flour. For several heartbeats everyone held the uncomfortable silence, not sure what to say next. It was at this exact moment that Rarity entered the room, escorting another white pony with a red cross cutie mark and a nurse's

handbag in her mouth. Upon entering the room, both new ponies slackened their jaws at the scene- Applejack and Pinkie Pie on the floor, covered in bits of apple; Twilight, her horn glowing slightly; Fluttershy, who was now turning in a small circle around herself, making small whimpering noises; and Rainbow Dash, still wearing her unamused face. All covered in a fine powder, of course. Rarity made a face at the mess.

"What-" she started, unable to finish her thought.

Rainbow Dash gave up trying to sit upright. She fell backwards into her pillow with a sigh, scattering flour dust as she did. *Remind me never to get sick again*, she thought.