

Blank Flank

Chapter 1

It was another beautiful day over Ponyville, the air was filled with the fragrance of flowers and sweets, along with the laughter of ponies playing around the village square, everypony was busy in some manner, but having fun nonetheless. All but one pony.

Shut off in his own home, Colour Palette watched through his window in envy at all those ponies running around, happily playing tag and other games or working in that which they do best, but unfortunately he couldn't join them, he didn't know what he did best, and gazed sadly upon his flank, bereft of any mark to identify himself with.

Colour Palette was part of the few and rare ponies, who grew up without ever figuring out what their life calling was and as such, became a pariah to the pony society. Many took pity upon the poor colt, while others shunned him for being a 'freak', leaving the poor pony alone for the most part of his life.

He tried a little bit of everything, seeking out that which would bring about his cutie mark, but nothing worked. So he watched in dismay as everyone in his class earned theirs, while his had never come.

The only thing he actually enjoyed doing, was painting and drawing, be it on paper or canvas, but his artistic skills were severely lacking, and his father did nothing to guide him in such a path. Being a farmer, he wished his son to follow in his footsteps and work the field like he did, but that was not his passion, and he only did so in order to please his father.

Eventually, without guidance, or a friend to count on for support, he gave up on his dream of being an artist, the drawings and paintings he made when he was but a kid, hung from the walls of his humble home, or stored in notebooks in an old dusty bookcase.

As the day dragged along, the colt realized he still needed to go out and do some shopping, his dispenser was empty and so was his stomach.

"I wished I could go outside without having to hide myself, but... at least they don't know I don't have a cutie mark" he thought to himself, despite his lack of practice, he learned well how to fake his own cutie mark using a bit of paint and a brush.

Colour looked over his brownish coat, imagining what cutie mark he should draw on his flank today, something to match his brown coat, white mane, and his unicorn heritage, gift from his mother side.

He decided on something modest, and simple, easy to draw even, as a simple wooden water bucket would do, and so he used his magic to draw the fake cutie mark

on his flank, it wouldn't last though, he knew as much, he couldn't afford the more expensive and better quality paint, but he made do with what he had in hooves.

With trepidation, he opened the door of his home, stepping out into the bright and shiny day, walking silently among the crowd, in an effort to remain as invisible as possible.

_Hey! Colour! Over here! – yelled a filly over by the Sugarcube Corner entrance.

Colour perked his ears, and looked in the direction of a filly, waving her arms high. The pink pony smiled widely and brightly while waving, before tilting her head, noticing how the colt wasn't moving towards her, despite having called out.

_Come on! Don't just stand there silly! – she yelled out once more.

The colt flattened his ears against his head, as he began to head towards the flailing filly, such energy... and yet, she seemed to be one of the few interested in talking to him, and much as he is thankful for that, he also fears that her antics may lead to someone discovering his secret.

_Hi Pinkie Pie, did you... need something? – Colour asked a bit nervous and still a few paces away from the hyperactive pony.

_Well! Yeah! I want to know why you didn't show up at my party yesterday! Everypony was there but you!

_Oh! Uhm... yeah... about that, well... I... - the colt stammered, he didn't know what to say.

The pink pony gazed upon the colt, waiting for his answer, rather impatiently though.

_I... I had a lot to do! Kind of... - there was a long silence while Pinkie Pie continued to stare at him, until he finally caved - *S-sorry Pinkie Pie, you know I'm not that good at social gatherings like that* – the colt said, having noticed how his excuse came out flat and frankly, unconvincing.

_Pffft! That's silly! You're more outgoing than Fluttershy! Or at least you're less shy around ponies! – replied the hopping pony – *Anyway, no more excuses from now on alright? Next party I throw, you're going to be there!* – said the filly before hopping away, giving the colt no time to reply back.

"Oh Pinkie Pie... if only you knew the truth..." he thought to himself, before shaking his head to clear those thoughts.

He made his way to the market square, looking around at all the ponies haggling and announcing what they had for sale, it was certainly a busy afternoon.

Colour made his way towards the apple stand, looking over the fruits on display as if to access which were in better condition and therefore tastier, an orange pony with a cowboy hat was just finishing with another client, before turning to the brown colt.

_Howdy partner! Lookin' to buy some apples are you? – the mare asked, taking the colt by surprise while he was browsing.

_Ack! Uh... uhm... yes! Yes I am, could I have – he looked into his money pouch, sighing softly – *two apples please?*

The mare took notice of the colt's frown when he stared into his money pouch.

_You look like a mighty fine and strong colt, what do you say 'bout workin' on the Sweet

Apples Acre? – asked the mare.

The colt smiled, but shook his head.

—Oh no! I couldn't take such an offer, but thank you Apple Jack, I'll keep that in mind – he said with a faint smile, placing the coins for the apples in the bucket in front of the orange mare, before placing two apples inside his saddle bag, and making his way through the crowd.

AJ squinted her eyes as the colt left *“Somethin's wrong with that fella... wish I could say what it was...”* she thought to herself, before returning to tending her stall.

The colt sighed once he was outside AJ's sight, all the ponies were all so friendly towards him, but he was too afraid of his secret being discovered to let anyone come too close, such paranoia made any possibility of making friends slim at best.

Once the shopping was done, he began to make his way back home, passing by the fountain when he heard someone yell out.

—Look out bellooooooow! – yelled a blue Pegasus pony, spiraling out of control in the sky, too fast for Colour to even notice, as the mare collided with the distracted pony, sending them both splashing into the fountain.

Disoriented for a moment, Colour shook his head in a daze, rubbing at his head for a moment, before he realized he was inside the fountain! The water would surely wash off his fake cutie mark painting! He had to get out of there!

The colt quickly jumped off the fountain, and rushed back towards home, before even the blue pony could recompose herself.

—Sorry about that! Should be... hey! Where did he go? – she asked while looking around, and only seeing a brown blur vanishing down the road – *Huh... strange guy.*

Rainbow Dash then noticed a saddle bag left in the middle of the road, looking over the abandoned bag. *“Colour Palette...”* she read upon the bag's tag *“must be that colt that just fled, I wonder why he ran like that! Was he stealing?”* she thought to herself, picking up the bag and flying towards the market square to ask around.

Meanwhile Colour was frantically rushing through the streets, barely watching where he was going, and only narrowly avoiding the many ponies on his path, he didn't rest until he reached his home, entering and closing the door with a hard SLAM!

Panting and breathing heavily, the colt fell to the floor, trying to regain his breath, until he noticed that something was missing... his saddle bag! All his groceries were left in that bag!

The colt sighed as his stomach growled, he didn't have the courage to go back to the fountain, at least, not while it was still broad day light, that incident left him even more paranoid, fearing that someone may have seen his fake cutie mark fading away.

Colour made his way to the window, looking out once more at the many ponies playing around, they looked so happy... he sighed, and watched as life went on, while he was a prisoner, in his own house.

A sudden knock upon his door was enough to break the colt's stupor, anxiety took over as he nervously looked towards the door.

“Oooohh! They've found out! I'm doooooomed!” he thought to himself as he slowly approached the door, hoping that whoever it was would go away soon, though a second knock and a voice made it clear that they would not be leaving.

_Helloooo? Colour? Colour Palette? It's Twilight Sparkle! Can you please answer the door? – asked the lavender pony, right before a male voice chipped in.

_Come on Twilight, the guy's not home, he would've answered by now! – said the purple baby dragon.

_Don't be so impatient Spike, he could be hurt! Rainbow did ram at him quite hard after all – she replied.

Eventually, the colt did open the door, ever so slightly and slowly, peeking through the crack.

_Oh... erm... hello there Twilight, how can I help you?

The mare gasped as she was startled, she didn't even notice the door opening while arguing with Spike.

_Oh! I'm sorry Colour, I just wanted to know if you were alright, after all, Rainbow Dash did crash into you quite hard.

The colt began to sweat nervously, shifting while peeking through the door, as Twilight began to wonder why he didn't open the door fully, perhaps he was like Fluttershy?

_Y-yeah! I'm fine! T-thank you for asking! But... if you don't mind... how did you know about that accident? – he asked a bit nervous, his imagination already working on wild scenarios about what was to come, should Twilight have seen his fake cutie mark fading after the dip in the fountain.

_I was studying on the balcony when I heard Rainbow Dash yelling out, right before she hit you, the fountain isn't too far from the library, so I could see her crashing into you – she said, while trying to peek into the mysterious colt's home.

_I see! W-well, I'm fine, just... just lost my groceries, that's all, just realized that when I got home.

_Oh, the bag, those were your groceries? I saw Rainbow Dash carrying it off to the market, I thought it was hers, we should go find her before it gets any later – the lavender pony offered with a smile.

_I-it's okay! It really is! I'll just... I'll just ask her to give it back tomorrow – he replied, giving her the best fake smile he could.

_Well, okay, if you're sure... - she answered, albeit not all convinced, but decided not to pry any further, he must have his own reasons after all.

_Yes! I'll just seek her out tomorrow, thank you for the offer though! Bye! – he quickly said, before closing the door, and flopping down with a huge sigh of relief “Nnngh... I'm hungry, yes, but it's still better to be hungry than to have those ponies find out about my blank flank” he thought.

Twilight was rather surprised when the door closed before she could even reply back, the pony furrowing her brows at the situation.

_Hmm... the girls were right Spike, this guy is acting awfully suspicious... -

Twilight whispered to the dragon sitting on her back as she moved away from Colour's house.

_Who cares? He isn't doing anything bad to anyone is he?

"No... no he isn't, but, when he got out of the fountain... I could swear I saw his cutie mark melting..." she thought, before shaking her head *"Nah, I'm just seeing things, blank flanks at his age are nigh inexistent, I doubt there would be one in a small village like this one"*

The following day began with a rough awakening to the poor colt, a loud knock on his front door also managed to knock him off his own bed, startled as he were, since visitors to his house were more rare than dragons sleeping atop mountains and snoring dark clouds of smoke.

"Oooowww! My head..." the colt lifted himself, rubbing at his own head as the second round of knocks landed on his door.

Colour wandered to the door, peeking through a small hole he made with his own horn to see whom was at the door, though whoever it was, was too close to the hole for him to see anything but the mane.

_Who is it? – the colt yelled through the door.

_It's us! Twilight and Applejack! We've brought you your bag!

_One moment! – he yelled before he began fussing through his home in search of his brush and paint, trying to redraw some sort of cutie mark before answering the door.

Twilight and Applejack furrowed their brows and looked at each other as they heard the noise coming from behind the door, as if someone was hastily moving things about.

Colour hurried as fast as he could to repaint the fake cutie mark, and to then hide his paint brush and paint under the kitchen sink before he would open the door.

_H-hello you two! Sorry I took so long to answer, I had to... uhm... wash my face first! – he said as he faked a wide smile.

_T'was nothin' friend, here you go, your saddle bag, safe'n'sound, Rainbow Dash couldn't come to deliver it herself though, said sumthin' about clearing the skies and took off like a rocket – Applejack said, as she lowered the saddle bag in front of the brown colt.

_Thank you very much for returning my bag, now I can have some breakfast! – he said with a sincere smile, hoping his stomach wasn't growling too loud, though just thinking about it made his stomach roar like a thunder, the colt blushing furiously.

_Hehe! Hungry are you? I suppose you would be since your groceries were with Dash earlier – Twilight said with a giggle – *We're meeting our friends over at the Sugarcube Corner, would you like to come with us? Our treat!*

_Oh no! I couldn't impose on you like that! Besides, my groceries are here, I'm sure I can make something to satisfy my hunger – the colt said, before his stomach growled once more.

_Heh! It seems your stomach's against you! We're takin' you with us and that's final! – said Applejack, walking behind Colour, and pushing the colt towards the bakery.

_Hey! No! I can't! – he yelled out all along the way while Twilight giggled, following the two from behind, after pushing the bag inside Colour's house and closing the door.

The three ponies eventually made it to the Sugarcube Corner, despite Colour's protest, he was pushed inside the store, his cheeks tinted red after being pushed around the village by Applejack.

Within the bakery, Twilight and Applejack began to look around for their friends, while Colour was looking for a an opportunity to slip away from Applejack and return home before his painted cutie mark would melt away.

Rarity waved towards Twilight and Applejack from her table, Fluttershy was there as well, nursing a cup of tea.

_Oh my! I didn't know we would be having a guest along for our tea party! I would have spruced up a little more had I known! – Rarity said as she gazed over the colt.

Colour blushed as he flattened his ears against his head, he always had a thing for the purple maned mare, but then again, so did most of the other colts who lived in Ponyville.

Fluttershy squeaked softly as she looked away, avoiding staring into Colour's eyes, despite the fact that they knew each other, if anything, by sight.

_T-thank you all for inviting me, though I can't for the life of me imagine why you would want to share a table with me like this – he said, looking down at the table and avoiding gazing into anyone else's eyes.

_Well dear, to be fair, we're all very curious about you, you never really talk to anyone, you barely leave your house as it is – Rarity said, taking a sip of tea soon after.

_I... I just like my home! It's... lovely! – he said without much enthusiasm in his voice, despite his attempt at faking it, he knew it didn't work, seeing how everypony on the table looked at him in disbelief.

_That just won't do Colour, we know there's more to it than that, no one here in Ponyville lives as shut off as you do, we would like to help you if we could – Twilight said, while Mr. and Mrs. Cake served a tray of cupcakes and another cup of tea for the new arrivals.

The colt sighed, weighting his options at that point, as anything he could say could ruin what little he had built in Ponyville.

_Okay... I'm not exactly sure how to approach this, I mean, I barely know any of

you, but for some reason you're the only ones who seem interested in my story, but why now? Why after such a long time? – He asked, eyes still averting the surrounding ponies.

_We didn't know what to make of you at first Colour, you had just arrived, and yet, it seemed like you had lived here all your life, except, you never did talk to anyone, you sort of... blended with everypony else – Twilight said.

"I wish I could blend with everypony else, then I wouldn't have to worry about my blank flank" Colour thought, nibbling on a cupcake.

_What can I say? I don't really have much, so moving was a cinch, before I knew it, it was all unloaded and inside the house, then, I just started drifting around, doing a little of this and a little of that to earn a bit of money to pay the bills.

_So... wait, you came to Ponyville without any jobs in mind? You just... chose to move here? What about your family? Your friends? – Twilight asked, though she could likely relate if he had come without any friends, it was pretty much the same with her.

_My family, well, they are still living in the outskirts of Phillydelphia, tending to their farm and all, but that's not what I want for me, I could never do any of the chores at the farm right, so I had to move somewhere, anywhere, that's why I came here, and... uhm... friends... - the colt sighed heavily as he hung his head low, his hunger disappearing as the sense of nausea, or butterflies in his stomach began to replace it.

_I... I see, sorry I asked – Twilight said, being at a loss for words.

An awkward silence descended upon the group of ponies, until out of nowhere, a pink blur suddenly appeared, only to stop at an empty seat around the table.

_Well! Duh! The solution to THAT problem is easy! Just make some friends! It's not hard! We're friends already aren't we? – Pinkie Pie said while opening one of those wide smiles of hers.

_Hehe... I guess so, but the truth is a little more complicated than that... - Colour said while shifting a bit in discomfort.

_Whatever do you mean darling?

_Oh! It's nothing! At least... nothing I feel ready to share, nor something I can share without... tragic consequences.

_Well, if you don't tell us, it will be hard for us to help you out, you'll just have to trust us.

_It's not that simple, I just met you all, and while I'm thankful that you all have taken your time to talk to me, I don't feel like I can share my secret like this, or ever.

The ponies looked between one another, pondering what they could do to help Colour, as he was obviously sad and lonely, but what they could do?

_Well, as you said, you do a little job here and there every once in a while through Ponyville, what if we were to hire you to do a few chores for us? I could use some help on my studies, and I'm sure others here might have something suited for you

in case studying is not for you.

_Why yes! That's a grand idea! I myself would love to have your help on my shop, it would be of great help to have a colt modeling for me so I could design beautiful suits for the most regal of colts!

_I'm not sure if Mr. and Mrs. Cake are hiring, could sure ask though!

_And the offer to work on mah farm still stands, though given your story, you probably would want somethin' here in the town.

Through the entire conversation, the only one who didn't say a word was Fluttershy, the yellow pony couldn't find the courage to speak up to the newcomer, continuing to quietly sip her tea, content in just hearing the conversation.

_I'm thankful for all your offers, I'll be sure to take up on them though, I'm... rather short on money right now after all.

_Then that's settled! Now, how 'bout we eat these cup cakes?

Colour smiled, his hunger returning, the nausea vanishing, and his confidence was a little stronger now, it seemed like the colt would no longer be alone, at least, as long as they don't find out about his secret.

It was much later on the day when the group finally left Sugarcube Corner, again Colour was blushing since he didn't had to pay for what he ate, Rarity having paid for his share after they agreed he would model for her in the next day.

_Wait please? – said a soft voice from behind him.

The colt turned, finding the yellow Pegasus standing there, rubbing her hoof upon her leg, clearly just as shy as he was.

_H-hello, can I help you?

_Ah, I'm sorry, I just wanted to tell you that I could also hire you to help me tend to little animals by my cottage if you'd like.

_Oh sure sure! I'll keep that in mind as well.

The yellow pony smiled and nodded, waving good bye, before she quietly took flight, and began to head towards her own home.

"They are all so friendly, I've never met such wonderful ponies before, maybe... maybe I can trust them... maybe..." he thought, smiling from ear to ear as he trotted happily back home.