

Please go to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3fzuNk0Oaw> for audio accompaniment. :)

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"You call yourself a colt? I'm surprised they haven't locked you away in a comfortable padded room yet. You know. For such incurable delusions."

"Aw, don't listen to that big meanyface! Well, she doesn't really have a face, but meanyvoice doesn't sound the same even though that's what she is, isn't it? Hey, are you *listening* to me?"

Dark circles and heavy wrinkles outlined the colt's bloodshot eyes in sharp relief. He rocked slowly, front hooves bent protectively over his head. Moaning in agony, he bucked the plastic cube before him with his forehead. "You're not real!" He gripped his scraggly mane between his hooves. "You're just a voice in my head!"

The high-pitched filly voice gasped in indignation. "How could you be so rude? I'm trying to help you! But noooo, I'm just a voice in your head. Hmph! And I was so happy about throwing you a party afterwards too!"

"Auditory hallucinations. Often a symptom of further deterioration of the equestrian mind. Or the weighted companion cube could just be talking to you. Yes, that certainly seems a sounder explanation."

"And I was going to bake you a cake with vanilla and chocolate icing and chocolate pudding and chocolate chips and chocolate on a stick and..."

A bead of sweat rolled down the lab pony's temple, leaving a dark stain against the fur. His left eye twitched spasmodically, the pupil expanded, contracted to a tiny dot. A violent tremor rolled down his spine. Then his body lost all its tenseness and flopped bonelessly to the floor. "Alright," he whispered. "What do I have to do?"

"...and I said to her, no no no, balloons can always use more sparkles and, oo, you know what would be even better? We should have sparkles on the sparkles and..."

"What do I have to do?" he yelled, nose pressed against the cube.

Beat.

"Well, it's about time!"

The cameras swiveled to follow his progress as he trotted across the gleaming white tiles, newfound guide perched precariously on his back.

"Where do you think you're going with that thing? I thought you were a more stable test subject

than that. It says so right here in your files. Ninety-seven percent on the psychiatric evaluation entrance exam. Oh, excuse me, that's a decimal point and not a punctuation mark for emphasis. You only scored nine point seven percent. I guess that explains some things. We could have accomplished so much science."

A companion cube bobbing happily down the corridor, if it's at all possible to decipher emotion from mere straight edges and a small pink heart. "Hoo-ray! We're gonna party!"