

Chapter 5

A groan escaped Pinkie's lips. That had not been a restful sleep by any stretch of the imagination. She rubbed her throbbing head as she began to stand up.

Her body was wracked with aches the moment she tried. She laid back down and took several deep breaths, her senses being hit with the overwhelming stench of decay. She pulled her head away from the ground coughing as the stench tried to gag her. Her eyes shot open as she tried to look around; however, it was far too dark for her to be able to see anything.

She fumbled around in her backpack reaching for her lantern before pulling it out and turning it on.

The floor she sat on was a mess of rotting wood and grime, the normal pristine floors of Sugar Cube Corner had become one with the otherworld now. She lifted her head up to look around, seeing the walls and furniture were also rotting away, bodies of ponies hung from the corners of the room, bad confectionaries were placed on various counters on the shop.

Pinkie quickly turned her head away, closing her eyes from the images. She had seen so much of it already, yet it still wasn't any easier to see any of this. She had kind of wished that waking up would've made this whole place go away, as if it were just some bad dream.

"At least I wasn't attacked by a monster..." she groaned as she began to stand up onto her wobbly feet. She looked down at the blood soaked bandages that covered her legs.

Images of herself attacking her assaulted her mind, as the events replayed in her mind. She remembered each cut, then of her own hoof ending the life of herself.

A pang of guilt coursed through her. She hadn't wanted to kill her, but in her state of self-defense she hadn't been given any other option. If only this town hadn't warped everything, if only things went back to the way they always were...

"Wait!" Pinkie said as a thought reached her mind. She looked around Sugar Cube Corner once more, before looking down at her feet, viewing the grime-riddled floor. "Sugar Cube Corner didn't look this way when I came in..." she said aloud as she began to realize what was happening around her, "Which means...oh no...that siren didn't go off again! I'm still in this...otherworld!" Pinkie began to panic as the realization hit.

"No...no no no, calm down Pinkie!" Pinkie said sitting herself down taking in deep breaths, "If you panic then nothing good will happen!" She shook her head, before gently tapping it with her hooves, "Stay calm...stay calm and just...just think."

Her heartbeat began to slow down as she managed to rationalize with herself.

“Okay...okay first things first...” she said as she looked at her legs, “I need to change these bandages...” she reached into her bag and grabbed the bandages she’d put in there from before. She quickly unwrapped her wounds, inspecting each of them to make sure they were healing properly before reapplying fresh bandages. She used up the last of her gauze, but she felt satisfied with the fresh wrappings.

“It’d probably be better if I had some disinfectant...but I gotta work with what I have.” She sighed softly. “So now what?” She asked herself as she reached into her backpack and pulled out her map. She unfurled it to try and see where she should go.

She gasped in shock. The map was blank now. The entire map only consisted of one word,

Nowhere

“Nowhere? I’m not anywhere?” She asked herself confused. She pressed against the map looking for any clue as to what happened to the old one, but there were no clues to be had. Letting out a defeated sigh, she placed the map bag into her bag.

“I...guess I should get a look at my surroundings...before I decide where to go next.” She softly gulped down a bit of anxiety. She wasn’t sure what to expect outside now that the siren hadn’t turned the world back to normal.

“Alright...you’ve been through a lot already Pinkie...you can handle this...” she softly motivated herself as she gripped the lantern in her mouth, standing up. She headed for the door and softly pushed it open, expecting a blast of cold air.

Walking out of the store, she found that all of Ponyville had succumbed to the otherworld. The entire street was paved with the rotting floor, littered with holes that showed the metal framing that held it together above a dark bottomless pit. The houses had mutated into decrepit, rust-colored shacks that were falling apart at the seams. The fog still only illuminated part of the town, but was now as black as the sky. The only light that penetrated the area was that which came from her lantern.

She carefully looked around, before stepping down from the front steps of the shop. She didn’t have any idea of where she should head first. The other version of herself hadn’t dropped any clues, and if she had she didn’t want to go back to find it.

Suddenly, a loud thud hit her ears as the ground shook slightly. She looked at the ground

carefully, as another tremor passed through, a few pebbles shaking at her hooves. Pinkie's heart began to race, she had no idea what this meant but it couldn't be anything good. She looked around her, trying to find a source for the rumbling.

"Ghhuuurrrrgghhh..." Came the groan of a monster Pinkie had become familiar with. She quickly turned her head in that direction as her phonograph began to pick up with the sound of static. Coming slowly out of the darkness was a Groaner, hobbling its way slowly towards her.

'...There's no way he's the source...' the thoughts ran through Pinkie's head for a moment, when suddenly she was deafened by a loud roar that cut through the foggy air. The rumbling picked up its speed, as if the source was now running. Pinkie took a few steps away from the Groaner, not sure what she should do.

"Ruuuaaaaa..." The Groaner groaned as it tried to move faster. Pinkie couldn't help but notice that it looked as if it was trying to escape, but escape from what?

"Ruuu-GHRA" The Groaner let out a final cry of pain as from the darkness a massive mouth appeared, biting into the creature, taking it in one bite. It swiveled its head back up before chomping the Groaner in a single bite. Pinkie stared in shock at the giant monster before her.

It was a single body, a large mouth at its front, with no eyes, its skin was curved and pink running straight back, large muscular legs that held its entire frame up. It was as if someone had taken off a pony's head and neck and put a giant mouth at its body. It stood as tall as a dragon.

It let out another roar that knocked Pinkie back to her senses. It had finished its meal and it was looking for its next one.

Pinkie turned on her heels and ran with all her might. The creature let out a roar as it began to chase, every stomp of its legs shook the ground under her hooves.

Her heart was pounding as she tried her best to run, she constantly felt her hooves about to slip from the shaking ground and she panted like crazy, rushing air to her lungs.

She felt and heard a massive thud behind her. She looked over her shoulder and saw the creature had tried to bite down on her, its head crashing into the floor. It quickly pulled its head back out, letting out a pained roar as it began running again.

She watched it run, its loud thudding feet doing its best to keep up with her. However, it was slower than her and she knew it, this thing wasn't nearly as fast as the last thing that chased her before. Confidence built up inside of her, she turned to face the road ahead of her.

She made a quick turn, noticing the path ended before her. She ran quickly, looking behind her as she saw the creature run straight into the buildings, letting out another pained

roar.

'I can do this...I can out run this thing.' She thought to herself as she felt her confidence skyrocket. She didn't know what it was, but she could outrun it...

She looked ahead of her and saw the rotting town pass her by with every hoof step.

'But where do I outrun it to?' She asked herself, not sure of that answer.

She heard it let out another roar as the tremors under her legs began once again. It was coming after her again, but it didn't seem too bright. It was a thing to be feared, it could eat her if she wasn't careful, but she could get away from it...

She quickly made the turn around another bend, increasing her distance from the creature.

Her attention was caught by what she saw in the distance. It looked as if a giant gate of metal bars had been erected in the middle of the world, cutting off one half of the world from the other. As she ran towards it she could tell it stretched up into the sky but couldn't see where it ended.

She looked behind her; the pink monster was slowly starting to catch up as it meshed its jaw and roared for her blood.

She looked back at the gate, seeing a normal sized door open in it for her to fit through. She kicked herself into high gear and charged straight for the door.

She slipped through with ease and quickly slammed it shut behind her. She stared through the metal bars at the creature running straight for the gate. She panted as she watched it charge with all of its might straight forward.

It crashed loudly against the gate, letting out a wild roar as it came to an abrupt stop. The gate was strong enough to hold it back. It let out another roar as it stepped backwards, rushing straight into the gate again. The bars bent slightly, but held strong. Pinkie stood there amazed, watching the creature fight with all its strength to break through the bars, roaring and hollering as it slammed its head repeatedly against the bars.

A loud cracking sound echoed through the area as the creature stopped its thrashing. It let out grunts as it tried to figure out what the sound meant, before it crashed its head once more against the gate.

The loud crack sounded again and the large creature found its hind leg through the floor. It began to let out frantic roars as it thrashed around, trying to get its foot free. The ground below

it cracked and gave way, the creature roaring as it clawed at the metal gate for support. Its giant form soon fell through the ground, its loud roars disappearing into the dark sky as it fell into the bottomless pit.

Pinkie slowly walked towards the area he had crashed into the gate, peaking her head down towards the bottomless pit. The creature had fallen, it was nowhere to be seen or heard anymore. The ground it had stood on continued to crumble away, spread out towards the town. The whole town was slowly falling into the bottomless pit as well, as if the only place left in the whole town was this area behind the metal gate.

Pinkie stared at the crumbling town, in shock that it truly was crumbling away yet...it almost made her a little happy. The place that had caused her so much torment was slowly vanishing before her eyes. It had left her stranded there, but it was going away.

She turned her back from the crumbling town, to get a look at where she currently was before letting out another surprised gasp. She hadn't noticed what was actually behind the gate since she had been too focused on running.

The dirt before her was littered with rocks of all sizes, spread as far as the eye could see. In the center of all the rocks was a wooden house, small but quaint with a moderate windmill. It was the farm, the place she had lived and grown when she was a foal.

'The farm? It's not supposed to be this close to Ponyville!' She thought as she began to run towards it. Its familiarity and comfort was calling for her.

The image of a ghost-like filly appeared before the front door as she ran closer to the house. The little filly ran forward, going through the door to the house. Pinkie had to follow it.

She quickly reached the front door opening it and going inside.

Inside, in the living room, was the ghostly image of her younger sister, Bellamina stood there looking at her.

"B-Bellamina!" She called out, dropping the lantern from her mouth. It hit the ground with a clang, rolling over to the young ghost filly, who stopped it with her hoof.

"I'm...surprised you made it all the way here Pinkamena." Bellamina sat the lantern right-side up, "I guess I was wrong, I guess you can handle the truth."

"Bellamina! Y-You're..." Pinkie started, but stopped herself as she looked at her sister. "You're...not really here, are you?" she said, her cheerfulness dipping as she could see through the ghostly image of her sister.

“You’ll see the truth here.” Bellamina turned and pointed, directing Pinkie to the stairs to the upper floor, “This house is your last safe haven though. After this, there is no turning back.” Her younger sister said ominously.

“...What do you mean?”

“Goodbye sis.” Bellamina’s last words echoed as her image faded from the living room.

Pinkie could only stare at where her sister had stood, not sure what to make of what she saw. She felt a pang of sadness and yet...a bit of comfort as well. It was short, it was brief, and it didn’t last as long as she had wished it could’ve, but...

She had talked with her sister.

She walked over to the lantern and picked it up once more with her mouth. She couldn’t stop here, not now. Her sister’s last words gave her a boost of strength, a boost that she could use to see this through. She looked at the stairs her sister had pointed to; they lead to the bedrooms on the second floor.

‘The truth...I guess it’s time to find out what that means.’ She thought to herself as she took the careful steps up to her destiny.

At the top of the stairs she was met by a wooden door. She carefully pushed it open, revealing a hallway. On the sides of the hallway were four square holes with writing below them. At the end of the hallway was another wooden door. She stepped into the hallway, when suddenly the wooden door snapped closed behind her. She quickly looked at the door, trying the handle, only to find it locked.

She let out a soft sigh as she turned back to the hallway, before almost jumping out of her skin again. The Slender Pony stood at the end of the hallway, right outside the door on the other side. Her heart started beating in her throat as she stepped back against the door that had locked closed behind her.

However, the Slender Pony turned around and seemed to phase through the last door, as if telling her he was waiting for her on the other side.

She took a deep breath as she tried to calm her beating heart. The very sight of the creature was instilling fear into her...

She shook her head as she calmed down.

‘My sister said that the truth was here...I have to have faith in her.’ Pinkie carefully got back on her hooves, stepping forward slowly, ‘She said I was ready for it. I’ve managed to come

through this far through hell and back, I can handle this.' She took a deep breath as she turned to the first hole in the wall, reading the words written under it:

*Eyes gleamed over,
It stalks before striking,
Its tail wags in anticipation.*

Pinkie thought it over in her head. The square shaped hole was just the right size for her to place in one of the tiles she had gotten from Sugar Cube Corner. She assumed the riddle meant that she had to put one of them in the slot.

She carefully looked inside of her bag and went over the selection she had: a bird, a snake, a cat and a fish.

'This riddle refers to the Cat tile, doesn't it?' she asked herself thinking the clue over. She carefully grabbed the tile and gently placed it into the hole in the wall.

The tile began to glow white, spreading out from the hole it was in. Pinkie took a step back as she watched the plate spread out into an area the size of a door before her. The light soon faded away, revealing a door in its place.

She carefully opened the door, looking inside. It was a single room, almost like a closet. Four solid walls with no description to them, yet she felt compelled to go inside. She walked into the dark room, closing the door behind her.

Suddenly, the flame on her lantern went out on its own. As she reached out to try and relight it, the room was filled with light. Projected on the walls were images. Pinkie instantly recognized them as memories.

"I dunno Pinkamena...are you sure this is a good idea?" Bellamina asked as she walked with her bouncing older sister towards the edge of the rock farm.

"Of course it is!" Pinkie said happily as she lead her younger sister, "It's a super special party! I tried to invite Mother, Father and Octavia, but they were all too busy. So that means you get to enjoy the fun with me!"

"Well...I do love your parties." Bellamina smiled, it was true that she did. The two of them reached the edge of the forest.

"We're here!" Pinkamena called out happily.

"Who are you talking to?" Bellamina asked confused.

"Why the Party Host of course!" She giggled happily. Bellamina looked confused, but the confusion didn't last for long. From the forest walked a tall colt, his coat was pale and dull grey, his mane was unkempt and was curled into a mess of brown, he didn't look like he'd had a good bath in at least a week, and most odd of all was that his cutie mark was that of three dark red balloons.

"Hello Pinkamena, I see you brought a friend." The old colt said with a smile. His voice sent shivers down Bellamina's back.

"See? He's the party host! He's going to throw us a super-duper-wonderfully-fantastic party!" Pinkie bounced over to his side and pointed at his cutie mark, "And see? We both have a similar cutie mark! That means he's going to throw us the best party!" Pinkamena was very excited.

"Oh of course, I always throw the best parties." The colt let out a soft deep chuckle.

"R-Really?" Bellamina asked a little unsure, but if her sister believed in this guy, then he must be alright. Besides, they were going to a party, and parties were always fun.

"Come, the party is this way." The colt smiled as he turned and walked back into the forest.

"Yea! Party time!" Pinkie bounced happily after the colt. Bellamina followed slowly after the two.

The flame of the lantern flickered back to life as the images faded from the walls. Pinkie stared at the walls that had shown the images she had long since forced herself to forget about. She didn't like where this was going. Back then she was too ignorant to realize that the colt gave off a bad vibe, she was too focused on parties.

She gulped heavily as she opened the door back up and reentered the hallway. She looked at the hole before her, with the text written under it:

*Sleek and smooth,
Striking at its prey,
Its tail lets it move.*

The image of a snake came to her mind. A bad feeling ran through her as she carefully pulled out the tile with the snake on it, placing it carefully into the slot. The light turned the area into a door just as the previous one had.

She hesitantly walked into the room, trying to prepare herself for whatever it was she was about to witness. The light of her lantern faded away.

“W-What are you doing to my sister!?” the young Pinkamena cried from behind the bars of a steel cage. The colt had locked her inside under the guise that they’d be playing Pin the Tail on the Pony.

“Don’t look so sad little filly,” The colt said with a dazed over smile. Pinkamena looked into his eyes and saw nothing; it was as if the colt truly had no soul to him, “I’m just about to play one of the most wonderful games with your sister.”

“She doesn’t look like she’s having fun!” Pinkamena cried out, looking at her sister who was strapped down to a table. She was frantic, trying to pry herself free from her bonds. The straps were too tight; she could do little more than twitch various parts of her body. He knew what he was doing.

“Oh, she may not look like it now, but I’ve played this game with lots of ponies before. Just look around you, I’ve had many friends over the years.” A wry smile came to his face before he turned his back to her.

Pinkamena looked around the room; it was the first time she’d paid any attention to it. Suddenly, the horrifying stench of the room was obvious; it was coming from the various states of decay from the ponies that adorned the room. Most were of young fillies, with little more than their heads remaining as decorations. The colt had dressed the room up for a party using the bones and skin of the ponies he had killed.

“NO! STOP! PLEASE!” Came the hysterical cries from her sister. Pinkamena’s attention instantly snapped back to what was happening before her.

“That’s right, make the noise. It’s what I long for.” The colt laughed as Pinkamena watched as he carefully placed a scalpel against her skin. With precision he began to cut away at her.

The scream of her younger sister echoed around the room as the image faded. The flame came to life, illuminating the dark room once more.

Tears streamed down Pinkie's face like they'd never fell before.

'Bellamina...' She sobbed to herself as she remembered the horrific images of her sister being dissected alive by the colt. She had tossed the memory aside a long time ago, a memory that had been too horrific for her to want to remember. Her precious sister had become nothing more than a plaything for that colt.

She hiccupped as she gasped for breath between her sobs. She still had two tiles left to go; she had more memories to remember. She had to remember everything that had happened, for the sake of her sister.

It took her a long time to leave that room, very quietly closing the door behind her. She had to see everything first, see it all before she could say anything. She very quietly walked to the next section of the wall and read the text bellow the square hole:

*Soft to the touch,
It soars over its fears,
Its tail stabilizes.*

Pinkie quickly took the tile with the bird on it and placed it into the hole. The door appeared just as it had with the others. She walked inside, staring at the walls as the light once again faded from her lantern.

"Come now, you must eat. There's no point in letting yourself go hungry." The colt chuckled to himself, his cold, harsh, cutting laugh. Pinkamena had curled up in the back of the cage, having cried her heart out. All that remained of her sister now was the lifeless upper-half that still was strapped to the table. She hadn't seen what he'd done with the rest of her after he'd finished.

"Here, I even made you this special treat." He said opening a small hole in the cage, pushing a plate with a cupcake on it. Pinkamena didn't want his treat; nothing made by this cruel colt could truly be worth eating.

Her stomach let out a growl; she hadn't eaten since breakfast and had been hoping to stuff her face with a feast from the party.

“See? You’re hungry. You should eat.” The colt smiled.

Pinkamena’s body defied her mind, as it slowly got up and walked over to the cupcake. She sniffed the cupcake carefully, but it was hard to smell anything past the stench of decay in the room. She then, very carefully, licked at the frosting that lay on top of the cupcake. The sweet sugary taste hit her tongue, almost as if in defiance of what her mind was telling her. Her mind screamed that something was wrong.

She very carefully opened her mouth and took a bite out of the cupcake.

“Good, I’m so glad you’re eating. It would be a shame if your sister went to waste.” The colt chuckled ominously.

The flavor of the cupcake hit Pinkamena’s senses like a brick. This wasn’t a sweet and sugary cupcake; it was salty and chewy, almost as if the main ingredient had been...

The colt laughed as he watched the expression on the young fillies face distort. Pinkamena vomited, rushing back to the back of the cage where she coughed and sputtered, trying to get the vile from her mouth. The imposing laugh of the colt hit her ears, causing her tears to return.

A loud crash was heard from the top of the staircase leading to this basement. The colt looked up surprised, his eyes widening. He suddenly tried to open the cage like a mad beast, as if he absolutely had to reach Pinkamena. He managed to open it as he began to reach a hoof inside, when he was suddenly tackled by another large figure.

There was loud yelling, as if there was a fight going on. Another large figure appeared before the cage, reaching to try and grab Pinkamena.

“No! No!” Pinkamena cried out as she tried to resist the figure pulling her out of the cage.

“It’s okay! Don’t be afraid, that evil colt can’t hurt you anymore.” The voice that came from the figure was comforting, reassuring. It was nothing like that of the colt’s.

Pinkamena looked up fearfully at the figure as it pulled her out of the cage, holding her in one of his legs. The colt had a white coat with striking red hair; he wore a blue uniform adorned with a blue hat.

“It’s okay, we’re the good guys. We’ve come to take you home.” He said with a smile as he moved quickly to get her out of the basement.

'I was rescued...' she said remembering as the light came back, 'But it had been too late...they didn't make it in time to save my sister.' Pinkie shook her head, 'and that...that vile treat...' even the thought of the cupcake was making her stomach turn. 'It's...it's hard to believe anypony could be that cruel.'

She walked back into the hallway as the thoughts continued to bounce through her head. 'Those words I spoke in another memory make sense now though...after having eaten that; I really didn't feel like ever eating again...'

She looked up at the last hole in the wall, the words underneath it read:

*A slick texture,
Its sustenance for most,
Its tail propels it forward.*

Pinkie carefully pulled out the last tile, the picture of a fish on it, and placed it in the hole. She carefully wiped away a few tears forming in her eyes as the door appeared. She carefully walked through, seeing what the last of her hidden memories had to offer.

Pinkamena sobbed into Octavia's coat. The older sister had been doing her best to comfort her younger sister, but no matter what she tried she couldn't get the filly to sleep.

Pinkamena had barely eaten, she refused to sleep and she constantly was sobbing. Octavia had no idea what it was that her sister had seen; all she knew was the Bellamina was dead. That fact alone seemed to have Pinkamena jumping at the shadows.

"Oh my, I hear crying." Came a very soft, soothing voice.

"Grammy Pie." Octavia said, surprised, looking up to see their grandmother walking into the dark room carrying a lantern.

"Grammy..." Pinkamena sniffed as she saw her grandmother.

"It's me child." She smiled warmly as she walked closer, placing the lantern on the night stand, then nuzzling the crying filly, "What troubles you?" The sound of her gentle voice seemed to sooth something deep in the filly's soul. Pinkamena's sobs slowly turned to sniffles as she composed herself enough to speak before her grandmother.

"B-B-Bell...Bellamina's...dead grammy..." Pinkamena choked a little.

“Yes...I know dear. It’s a fact we all must deal with now.” Grammy said solemnly. “We all have done our share of mourning, and we shall forever mourn her loss. But your tears seem to hide something more my child. They seem to hide more than just your loss.”

Pinkamena rubbed her eyes as she sniffed, looking away from her grandmother, burying her head into Octavia’s coat.

“I’m...never throwing another party as long as I live.” She sobbed.

“Oh child, why would you say such a thing? You know we love your parties, and you love to throw them.” Grammy Pie said, surprised at the sudden words from her granddaughter.

“M-M-My partying...got Bellamina killed.” She sobbed the words out into Octavia’s coat. Octavia did her best to try and comfort the filly. Their grandmother looked a little sad, but closed her eyes as she seemed to understand.

“My dear Pinkamena...if nothing else, you should continue to throw your parties.” She spoke softly but truly.

“Huh?” Pinkamena and Octavia said in unison as they both turned to look at their grandmother.

“You see dear Pinkamena; your sister loved your parties. She truly had fun at them; sometimes all she could talk about with me was how much fun she had had at your last party.” Grammy Pie chuckled softly to herself as she remembered, “Which is why I’m telling you; continue to throw your parties child, in honor and memory of your sister. Your sister would not want you to live the rest of your life being afraid and crying. She’d want to see you smiling for the rest of your days.” Grammy Pie’s smile was warm as the words she spoke were the truth.

“B-But...” Pinkamena sniffed as she tried to comprehend her Grandmother’s words, being only a filly as she was. “But...the world is so scary Grammy. How...How can I have a smile in it?”

“Simple my child,” she chuckled softly to herself, “You have to laugh your fears away.”

“Laugh?” Pinkamena asked curiously.

It was a lesson she remembered often from her childhood. Her grandmother would often visit her and teach her how to laugh at her fears, stand up to the shadows and the idea of monsters and to laugh her fears away. She could face anything the world had to throw at her so

long as she had the inner strength to laugh when the day was over.

She had forgotten why her grandmother had repeated the lesson so often to her, in her memories before she had just thought it was because she had been afraid of the dark as a filly. She knew now that it was because of something much deeper.

A small smile crept onto her face as she remembered all of the memories she had forgotten now. The good memories, the bad memories, the ugly ones, the beautiful ones. She had locked them all away to keep herself happy, to try and keep Bellamina's wishes true. She hadn't been ready to accept the memories into her heart as fact...

She carefully left the last of the rooms that contained her memories. She could feel the slow, rhythmic beats of her heart that resonated loudly through her. A smile was on her face as she remembered her sister fondly.

'So...there's just one last thing to do then.' She said as she looked to the door at the end of the hallway. She slowly walked towards it, her resolution holding firm in her heart. She knew what she had to do now.

She opened the door, stepping out.

Outside the door she saw four torches lit around an open arena. A pathway was lit for her leading to it. A fence was placed along the path and arena so she couldn't go anywhere else.

She gently put her lantern away as she walked towards the center of the arena. She could feel small tremors shaking through the world as she walked.

As she reached one side of the arena, from the ground on the opposite side the Slender Pony emerged from ground. He stood tall over her, his presence still bearing down.

But...she wasn't afraid this time.

"I finally understand now." Pinkie said softly, shaking her head slowly before looking at the Slender Pony with a smile, "My fear of your presence, your stature over me, your very existence...you're the colt aren't you." The Slender Pony just stood there, unchanging from Pinkie's words. "Well...you're not him exactly...but you're my image of him." She closed her eyes and smiled, "which means...I'm not afraid of you anymore."

The Slender Pony began to walk towards her, every step seeming to echo across the arena. Pinkie opened her eyes as she watched the pony walk towards her. Her mouth began to quiver as she saw him getting closer. She felt the haze beginning to hit her mind, the phonograph letting out its static.

She stood firm where she was, remembering fondly the words of her grandmother, the memories of her younger sister, of her friends back in Ponyville, of the fun she's had throughout her life thanks to the help everyone she's ever known gave her. All of them helped her live a life she could say she was proud of.

The Slender Pony stood a few feet from her, but the haze he brought to her mind began to fade. Her quivering mouth puckered up for a moment, before a soft sound came from it.

"Heh..."

It started off low, as it gained its footing inside of Pinkie.

"Heh, heh, heh..."

The confidence grew in her with each sound that came out of her, the haze lifting, the static of the phonograph becoming more quiet.

"Hahahahaha"

She was laughing. She was laughing at the fear that this Pony...no, that this whole town had brought upon her, just so that she could become strong enough to face her fears.

"Ahahahahahaha!"

She laughed, she giggled, she snorted, she chuckled. It felt like it'd been a lifetime since she had last let out a laugh, she'd let out so many tears that had been pent up for years, so many pains and torments she had kept inside. For the first time in a long, long while, she laughed with all of her heart.

A bright light shone from her neck, as a golden necklace with a blue balloon gem appeared. Her laughter continued as the light from the necklace made the Slender Pony jump back, letting out a shrilling cry as it seemed to hurt him.

The entire arena began to shake with a gigantic tremor as it began to fall apart. All of the scenery around her began to fall into the bottomless pit that lay beneath them. The entire world was crumbling and shattering around them.

The Slender Pony let out another painful roar as he dissolved back into the ground, disappearing from Pinkie's sight.

She calmed her laughing, enough so that she could speak.

“I won’t forget you Mr. Colt. And I don’t think I can ever truly forgive you for what you did, but I can move on now.” She closed her eyes as she smiled brightly. The golden necklace around her neck shined brightly as it shot a beam of light forward, hitting the air before forming into a door of light. The necklace then vanished, to wait for the next time it would be needed.

“It’s time for me to head home. For real this time.” Pinkie smiled happily as she walked through the door of light, the last of the world crumbling away behind her.

To be Concluded