

Filly on Fire

“Sweet dreams are made of this,

Who am I to disagree?

I traveled the World and the seven seas,

Everypony’s looking for something...”

“Thank Celestia,” said the magenta pony to herself, finding solace in the knowledge that the song was just about over. The prom of ‘86 was going badly enough for her without having to hear *that* band perform on stage. How bad was it for the high school filly? For one thing, she had gone all by herself. “Cheerilee,” she continued, again to herself, “I have more dignity than this. Like, way more than this.” The young pony sighed. The colt she was supposed to have gone with had dumped her just days before, leaving her for a skanky bimchette of a filly. And now she was alone, heart broken, dateless, and hiding in the corner next to some balloons and a bowl full of apple juice. Perhaps it was pride, or simply the optimistic hope that she’d find a dateless colt, somepony in the same situation she was in, to dance with, that compelled her to come anyway. Finding romance on the most romantic night of her young life, wouldn’t that be so totally awesome? Alas, no such luck.

All those colts and fillies, dancing the night away on the black and white checkered floor of the dance hall, dressed in the best fashions of the 80s(the best!) and having the time of their lives. Everypony, except her. To think that her last memories of high school would involve her drinking herself silly while everypony else danced to “Sweet Dreams” by the Ponythmics. She hated “Sweet Dreams.” She hated the Ponythmics. She hated her dink of an ex-coltfriend. She hated that the apple juice was nonalcoholic.

“Everypony’s looking for something....”

The song was mercifully over. The majority of the ponies stopped dancing, and as the next band set up for their song, Cheerilee decided to ditch the bowl and balloons before anypony could come her way. She was immediately spotted before she could even move. “Hey Cheerilee!” said a hyperactive bright pink filly, accompanied by her similarly colored and hyperactive colt friend, “What a rad party doncha think?! I’m having such a majorly magical time! This is like, the best night of my life. What about you? Hey, where’s your date? Like- oh my gosh look, it’s Posey and Firefly! I’m so stoked, I haven’t seen them since forever! So totally gotta run, later galpal!”

Though the hyperactive pink filly was a friend of hers, she was relieved she didn’t have to engage in conversation right then and there. Though the pink pony did have the

right idea. The prom was supposed to be the night of a lifetime for her too, and nopony was going to take that from her. Cheerilee took her last gulp of apple juice (hopefully) and left the safety of her punch bowl and balloon fortress. Maybe a colt would take pity and dance with her. The filly smiled, looking at herself in a nearby mirror. No, they wouldn't pity her, they would love her. After all she was an attractive, fun loving pony, and dressed in the latest of 80s fashion, the last one very much so. Her pink leg warmers bounced lightly with each step of her trot, her mane was wavy and decorated with vibrant clip-ons, she wore plenty of jelly bracelets and donned a fashionable checkered scarf about her neck. In a material Equestria, she was a material filly, and she was growing more confident that somepony, anypony, would fall for her in under a second flat.

“Hey, look everypony, it's Loserlee,” cruelly announced Lickety Split, the most popular filly in school, and the skank that stole her colt friend, “looks like you made it to the prom after all. So what, did you somehow sucker somepony into coming with you or are you here all by yourself?” Lickety Split nuzzled her cheek against her ex as she spoke, taunting the stung Cheerilee. The rage and longing and sheer embarrassment that coursed through her tore at her. She didn't even know where to start.

“You, I-I-”

“Save it Loserlee,” mocked Sweet Stuff, the other most popular filly in school, by her own date, a well built pony named Big Mac, “I know who your date is. I'm sure you and the punch bowl will have a totally rad time together!” The two fillies and their friends all laughed. Big Mac seemed to a bit more sympathetic, even if he didn't actually say anything. Nevertheless, when they trotted away, Cheerilee was absolutely sure no colt would ever want to talk to her.

“I wonder if anypony's spiked the juice yet?” she solemnly asked herself, dragging her hooves back to the punch bowl. Probably not. Despite her usually unyielding optimism, love of children and aspiration to become a teacher, she had always been a bit of a dork, even if Cheerilee herself didn't see it that way. Still, the poor filly, with tears welling in her eyes, and hiding herself behind a cluster of balloons, wondered what she did to deserve her fate. Why couldn't she just drop dead right there? Or at least find something better to drink than apple juice. And now Madonna's “Material Filly” was playing. She liked that song. “Urgh, like, how much worse can things possibly get?”

POP

“AH!” screamed the filly, shocked from her thoughts by the loud bursting of balloons. A blue pony with a needle for a cutie mark was stabbing at her balloons with his wickedly sharp horn.

POP

POP

“Hey, stop that, I’m wallowing in my suffering here, quit-”

POP

“Urgh! -quit popping my balloons!”

POP

POP

She was incensed. Not only would no one dance with her, but she was even being denied the right to endlessly mope. “Well you know what? I hope you never have kids!”

The pony’s eyes opened, an expression of shock and disbelief on his face. Perhaps she had been too harsh. Who knew a stupid insult like that could be so effective? “Oh, I uh,” she started, apologetically, “I didn’t really mean that, I mean, I just wanted to a little privacy. It hasn’t been a good night for me. Or if you want... do you wanna dance...?” Could he be the one, she wondered, the colt that would sweep her off her feet? He sure knew how to dance, even if only for the sole purpose of popping balloons. And my, what a horn! Perhaps they could even fall in love and marry, and get a beautiful cottage somewhere and raise lots of sharp-horned foals. But she would definitely have to teach them to not pop balloons, it’s so rude, definitely. “Wow, I think yo-”

The colt ran off.

“Oh you, you jerk! I take it back you grody, hellacious dweeb!” What she would have given to dance with that grody, hellacious balloon popping dweeb. Sweet Stuff and Lickety Split were right, she was a loser, a pony dressed up for the big dance with no colt willing to so much as touch her. And now it seemed that everypony was staring directly at her.

Wait, they really were staring directly at her. They murmured between themselves, stopping mid-dance just to leer at her, staring at her like they couldn’t believe she even existed, like they couldn’t believe a loser as massive as her could be amongst them. “Oh dear Celestia, why does everyone hate me so much?”

“Oh, I don’t believe that’s the case dear. I think it may be a simple case of misdirection.” To her side sat a rather large mare of a most elegant figure and form, a mare who had certainly not been there moments ago, who had a gloriously flowing mane of rainbow colored hair that concealed one of her brilliantly violet eyes. Her voice was calm and regal and yet hinted a mischievousness that made her even more of a mystery. And... she had wings, *and* a horn. There was only one pony in all of Equestria that had both wings and a horn. But it couldn’t be, no way. “Prin-Prin-Prin-”

“Oh you poor thing,” interrupted Princess Celestia, ruler of all Equestria. She giggled, even as the dumbstruck Cheerilee gawked at her. “I suppose it is a bit of a shock. I can’t believe the Ponythmics were playing here either.”

“Wha..?” said the still dumbstruck pony.

“Oh, I kid. I’ve known for quite a while that they were booked to perform here. I try to catch them whenever I can.”

“Ponythmics?”

“Yes, Ponythmics.”

“You’re here... for the Ponythmics?”

The princess giggled again, shaking her head as she looked down at the baffled Cheerilee. “Yes, that does sound a bit silly when you think about it. I do seem to be attracting a lot of attention, I suppose you and the entire senior class of ‘86 want to know what I’m doing here at your high school prom.”

“No, I- no way, I mean, look, it’s rockin’, I mean, cool, I mean, it’s nice, I- I -”

The princess presented herself to a dance hall full of ponies whom had already noticed her presence, told them her reason for being at their prom, blew a kiss at the still performing Maretonna, and bade the class of ‘86 to reach for their dreams.

“They won’t pay attention to me now,” explained the princess to Cheerilee, “students always tune adults out when they start rambling about ‘reaching for your dreams’.”

“What?”

“Exactly. So Cheerilee, what are you doing here, and not ‘getting your trot on’, out on the dance floor?”

Cheerilee’s eyes opened wide, and not just because her 80s slang was off. “You know my name? Totally gnarly...”

“Of course I do, your teachers speak very highly of your dedication to your studies and dream of becoming a teacher yourself.”

Cheerilee scoffed. Watching the popular girls, like Lickety Split, Sweet Stuff, and their friends, dancing with their dates, it practically made all her academic achievements seem not worth the effort. The thing that stung her the most was Lickety Split. The sad magenta pony sighed. “I got dumped by my colt friend, like a couple days ago. And right

now he's dancing with this total bimchette. It's totally not fair. And now look at me, whining to like, a princess, *the* princess! I'm sorry, I don't deserve to breath the same air you do. Unless you don't breath at all. Do you?"

"Which one of these colts leave you breathless Miss Cheerilee? If you could choose any colt to dance with, which one would you choose?"

What a strange question, thought Cheerilee. Still, her gaze drifted over to one colt in particular. "Don't you dare try to get him over here, I'm already pathetic enough, but... him over there, next to the blue filly with the multi colored mane, what a stud he is," she lusted, directing the princess's gaze at the muscled, thundering Bronte of a stallion, "he's not even a senior, he was just born with that big studly bod, way Cloudsdale. They call him Big Macintosh, or Big Mac for short. Sometimes they call him Big Daddy Mac. I could never get anyone like that though. Princess, what's wrong with me?"

The princess, for her part, didn't seem to judge the poor filly or her troubles. "My dear, there is nothing wrong with you, either in style or in quality."

"Then why did I lose my coltfriend to that skank? Why won't anypony dance with me?"

The mare tilted her head just slightly. The princess was so beautiful to the sad pony. Her mane had a way of flowing even in the absence of wind, and her unconcealed eye, despite the centuries behind it, was still alight with a sort of youthful, sincere tenderness. But even she didn't know everything, this Cheerilee was sure about. Like, for instance, she knew the princess couldn't figure out what was so horribly wrong with her magenta colored Loserlee self. The next song started. "Alas," Princess Celestia started, with that mischievous smile back on her face, "the Ponythmics and Maredonna are finished for the night. However, I do enjoy this next singer as well."

"Don't be mistaken by the first impression," the singer began.

Cheerilee barely paid attention. "Yeah, she's ok I guess."

"And watch out for that innocent expression,"

"Better than ok," responded the princess, "she's one of my favorite singers. If you ever want, I can arrange a meeting between you and your favorite band. Doesn't that sound exciting?"

"She's not what she seems,"

"I'm sorry Princess Celestia, but I kinda get what you're trying to do, it isn't really helping much."

“Don't wait in her dreams,”

“No, I will not have you mope while I can still do something about it, come with me.”

“Coz when she breaks away from the filly,”

“Wha? Like... no way...”

“And the mare is wild,”

“Like, yes way. I won't have one of my subjects crying her eyes out on the most important night of her young life. And I know it is, I was once your age too, so long ago. So dance with me, it would be my honor.”

“So wild!”

Neither Cheerilee, nor any of the other students could believe it. And yet, Princess Celestia, the timeless mare with a mane of rainbow and not a single flourish or hint of the decade about her figure or personality, and the high school filly, born and bred of the contemporary, nevertheless, with the entire dance floor cleared by an entire school body of surprised seniors, Cheerilee, to her surprise, didn't object as much as she thought she would have. It was weird, Princess Celestia was certainly no Big Mac, she wasn't a total Cloudsdale stud, she wasn't even a colt, not to mention the thousand year age gap, and yet, she was somepony she found hard to resist.

“She's on fire,”

The mare's eyes radiated under the neon hue of the lights, her white coat glowed vibrantly. She had her right front leg outstretched and beckoning the younger pony, though without a hint of impatience, and with a small, sincere smile to her lips. Cheerilee could have sworn the temperature of the entire room had risen, her body tensed as she considered it, and was she blushing? With everypony watching, the heat of the moment overcame her. With the heat of the beat right beneath their hooves, they danced.

“And she's burning!”

Lickety Split looked on with her mouth wide open. “Like, gag me with a Rubik's Cube,” she blurted out, pretending to stick her hoof down her throat, “I can't believe what I'm looking at. Like, way totally bogus, to like, the max!”

“Yeah, for sure!” agreed Sweet Stuff. “That's so heinous. Poor Princess Celestia, she has to pity that dateless loser.”

“Well I think it's outrageous, truly truly truly outrageous!” said Cheerilee's

hyperactive pink pony friend, dancing by her similarly colored date of the same disposition, “I’m so glad for Cheerilee that I could sing! Only I can’t sing, I sure hope my children will though. That would be so rad!” The filly took a picture of the dancing Cheerilee, her front hooves in mid air, her eyes closed, and her leg warmers bouncing with the tempo of the song, and very much having the time of her life. “So majorly adorable!”

“Yeyup” agreed Big Mac.

Both Sweet Stuff and Lickety Split scoffed. “Whatever.”

The night went on, the two ponies dancing across their dance hall. The shock of the other ponies soon faded, it was their prom too after all, and they rejoined the checkered dance floor. Song after song Cheerilee danced with a passion she couldn’t quite fathom. She felt the occasional bead of sweat run down her face, her frizzled mane bouncing with each wild step she took, and her eyes locked on to the princess and her own gorgeous eyes. The princess kept herself so very close to her, their skin coming in contact from time to time, sometimes their faces were close enough for her to... but should she dare try? The evening, inside that dance hall, with its shades of neon and darkened pastel colors, seemed to pass by like a cassette tape on fast forward. Cheerilee almost couldn’t believe how things had turned out. Who knew her stallion would be a mare? And not just any mare, THE mare?

“I think you’ll have far less trouble getting the colts now,” said the Princess, with a wink, “that Big Mac you spoke about, he fortuitously seems to have lost his date. And he seems to be coming over. It’s ‘way excellent,’ yes?”

She turned to see that stud of a pony behind her. When he asked the thing she had been hoping for the entire night, she did something that surprised the princess, and even Cheerilee herself. “No thanks Mac... that’s ok,” she said, winking back at the princess, “I think I’ll stick with the mare with the bodacious bod. I mean, no, uh, I mean no disrespect, I just-”

The princess giggled. “Cheerilee, I think I enjoy you much more with a smile on your face and a skip to your canter. So, do you want to go get a drink from the punch bowl, which I’ve heard has finally been spiked, or should we continue dancing?”

The little filly hopped. “We gotta keep dancing princess, for sure. Yeah, you’re the ruler of Equestria and all that, but that doesn’t mean you’re allowed to be a bad dancer. You’re so behind the times, let me show how it’s done, 80s style.”

The kiss came as a surprise. The magenta filly’s eyes opened wide before slowly shutting, her mind blank during the whole kiss, the sounds and sights of fireworks going off in her head. Surely everyone else could see and hear them too. When their lips parted, Cheerilee whimpered in protest.

“So tell me, is my kissing behind the times as well?”

Cheerilee couldn't hope to hide the stupid, drunken grin spreading across her face. “Wow. I really am having the time of my life. And I owe it all to you.”

“And I owe it all to you.”

Twilight Sparkle looked at Princess Celestia with a most curious, and completely baffled expression. “Um... that sure was one heck of a story.” The unicorn could feel herself blushing. Twilight had come to Canterlot to pick up some books that the Ponyville library didn't have, books that only someone with an extensive library as the princess could possibly possess. In between the pages of one of those books was a strange little Polaroid of a dancing filly in dated clothing. It was Cheerilee, the Ponyville school teacher, she had realized, and for absolutely no reason other than curiosity, she had asked the princess about it. She had gotten far more than she had bargained for.

“It was a wondrous evening, all those years ago,” reminisced the princess, starry eyed, “we danced the night away, passion burning inside us both, its flames scorching us in its red love, and all that sweet, silly stuff. I still get all tingly thinking about it. I haven't felt like that since then, that's for sure.” The princess looked onto the face of the confounded unicorn, and smiled even wider.

“I know what you're thinking, my dearest Twilight. What a dirty pervert I must be, to be hanging about a high school prom, what with my advanced age and all. Oh, the scandal!”

“No, no! I would never, I mean, it's sweet, I guess. It's just...”

“Why would a mare like myself be hanging about a high school prom, like a dirty old pervert?”

“Well... I mean, her, of all the ponies...”

“For one thing, when you're over a thousand years old, let's see you find a date who isn't a foal by comparison. And of course, there's also the matter of being the princess of an entire nation, I can do whatever I want, and so what if I'm a little naughty every now and then?” the princess giggled, her gaze turning from her faithful student to the sun, her charge, beaming down its rays through the windows of her throne room, ever warming her. She sighed, her glowing eyes growing just a bit dim. “But those aren't real answers, are they? There's something magical about the passage of time, so very beautiful. Those little moments, like the first date, the first kiss, the first love, passing by like, a cassette tape on fast forward. Such a shame no one uses those anymore. And, it's

always good to find out that, from time to time, that even though I've seen and done so much, and while I have within me the heart of a mature mare, I can still be swept off my feet like a giggling school filly on prom night."

"It does seem kind of cute when you put it in that perspective. Still, whatever happened with you and...?"

"She moved on, like the ambitious young 80's mare that she was. We dated for awhile, in secret, but that ended a long time ago. I heard she's a teacher now, a very dedicated one. But enough about that, I can see that you're still blushing, and is that a hint of jealousy I detect in your voice, and in your eyes, and just about everywhere else?"

Twilight's eyes grew wide. "What? No, of course not, why would I be jeal-

The princess's hoof touched hers, silencing her mid-word. The succeeding kiss shut the violet unicorn's mind off completely. When their lips parted, and Twilight wasn't sure when that was, she could only utter a mild protest. When her mind cleared just a bit more, she uttered a small, barely conscious 'wow'.

"So tell me Twilight, have you ever listened to the Ponythmics? Way back in the day they were totally righteous."

Twilight giddily giggled. "The best band ever..."

"Way gnarly."