

I guess I always knew *something* was different about me. Just by going through life, comparing myself to the other ponies, I noticed odd things. Most ponies didn't care when they had to pay with an odd number of bits. Or when there wasn't an even number of stairs. These things bothered me, frustrated me even, but they weren't the real problem.

It was *everything*. All these little things that annoyed me to no end, but didn't bother anypony else, all thrown together in a terrible ball, combined with the very fact that it made me different. It was a horrendous existence.

You, one of my closest friends, recall when I submitted plans to increase the size of my illustrious establishment. So many high profile clients, so many friends to please, I simply *had* to acquire a larger work space. Not to mention the need for a bigger storage area. It was my plan to build for myself the greatest, most fabulous boutique in all of Equestria!

Pure coincidence I assure you, but it was then that I decided I would do something about my psychological problem. I avowed to myself that I wouldn't fuss over these things anymore. If something silly happened, I would ignore it and wait for the offending event to pass, and my frustration with it. After all, on at least one occasion previous, I recall tearing myself away from my vexations with little negative consequence.

And so my trials began. From the very beginning, things were looking down. When I received the construction permits for my project, I noticed they were misnumbered. Undoubtedly this was a mild oversight on the government's part, and wouldn't cause any real problems for me. Nevertheless I had to fight off the urge to point it out, and demand refileing under the appropriate numbers. With my terrible permits in hoof, I bid the mayor good day and left.

I proceeded to the boutique, set the offensive permits down, and gathered up the orders for the needed

materials, which I had filled out in advance. I was going to do this work myself. Granted, it was a significant step up in difficulty from the original boutique, but I had built that with my own hooves, and it had come out wonderfully. It was simply a fact that nopony else could be expected to construct a building to my satisfaction. With all the orders in hoof, I quickly walked to the post office and dropped them off, thoughts of the number mishap with the permits mostly forgotten.

For the next week I finalised my plans, while continuing the last bits of sewing and design work I had scheduled before the boutique would close for expansion. And every day I was met with a new challenge to overcome. If my table was jostled and no longer in the proper spot, I didn't move it back. I tried to stop counting stitches on my dresses. Nopony ever noticed they were always multiples of three, and sometimes making them so was to the detriment of the design. I stopped eating my food in the "proper" order, and I didn't make a big fuss when Opalescence knocked something over or otherwise got into mischief.

I felt terrible. I was frustrated all the time, and I could feel the stress mounting. But I assured myself it would pass. These things, I knew they didn't matter, and I hoped I'd eventually *feel* like they didn't matter too. Luckily my friends weren't spending too much time with me. They knew I was busy. The only thing that happened of note was going to the spa with Fluttershy, as we did every week. It made me feel a little better, because nothing went wrong, but all the stress and anxiety and frustration returned as soon as I got back to the boutique.

Everything was wrong. The tables were askew, the mannequins weren't in a symmetrical pattern, the fabrics weren't organised by frequency or texture, and the cat hair was building up. It was summer, Opalescence was shedding more than usual, and I wasn't fussing about it. It burned me up inside, seeing it everywhere.

When she came trotting up as if nothing was wrong, I got even more angry. She was the cause of at least

some of my problems, and there she was acting like nothing was wrong. I proceeded to pick her up by the scruff and throw her outside, something I'd never done before. I love Opalescence, but at that particular time I didn't. I just wanted her gone.

I proceeded with the very last parts of my work for the week, trying to ignore Opal's distressed meowing from outside. She'd been outside before, but at the moment she clearly didn't want to be there. But that didn't matter. For once, what I wanted seemed more important.

The next week began, and the boutique was officially closed, and breakables and other unneeded things were packed and moved out temporarily.

My orders were staggered, and so long as everything went on schedule, construction would be orderly and completed in a little over a month. First thing was the foundation. Cement and concrete are dangerous and I had to be careful. But it was nothing I hadn't done before, and everything went smoothly.

The following week I got a visit from my parents, along with my sister Sweetie Belle. I knew immediately I was in trouble. I hardly ever saw my parents unless it was to take care of Sweetie. And this time was no exception.

They were going on a trip to Manehatten, and didn't want to bring Sweetie. I was extremely annoyed.

They knew for months that I was going to be busy, and yet they decided to go off on some trip and thrust the added responsibility of caring for Sweetie upon me. Nevertheless, I forced a smile, and nodded, accepting the job of being Sweetie's babysitter for the next two weeks. I hoped she wouldn't be too much trouble. I made a mental note that no matter what, her friends were not visiting during this time. If she wanted to play with them, she'd go away and do it.

Unfortunately she didn't seem interested in leaving to stay with friends. She knew I was busy, and as

always, she wanted to help. Also as always, she did nothing but cause trouble.

The entire first week was a nightmare. She messed up my stacks of wood, my piles of bricks, and would constantly endanger herself near the cement, not knowing how caustic it was. And every time she'd frown and open up those big eyes of hers and say how sorry she was.

I tried to get her to stop. I told her to do something else. She would, for a while, but she'd always come back and ruin whatever I was doing. I told her to go outside and play with her friends. She did, maybe for an hour, but again she'd return to mess everything up. And every time I just accepted it. I didn't blow up at her. I didn't yell, or whine. I just smiled and tried to calmly wait for everything that bothered me to just go away. It never did.

I did my best to accept them, but the thousands of problems Sweetie Belle was causing drove me to finally consider a solution. I no longer know how I thought this was a good idea, but at the time my cracking psyche drove me to think it was the greatest idea in the world. And I bore it out without tipping my hat at all.

"Sweetie, I've been thinking," I said that fateful morning. I put on my most pleasant voice, careful to not let it crack under the forced sweetness. We were eating breakfast, and I was deliberately switching between items in an attempt to get used to less order, but only causing myself more frustration.

Sweetie's eyes got big with excitement at my words. She knew by my tone of voice I was about to tell her something she would like.

"What?" she asked, eyes wide as saucers.

"I know how much you want to help me with the construction, and today is a very special day. Do you know what I'm doing today?"

Sweetie shook her head.

"Today, I'll be bricklaying. It's a lot of work, but if you'd like, I suppose you could help me with it."

Sweetie grinned. "Really? I can?"

I smiled and nodded. "So long as you promise to do as I say. You also have to be careful. I wouldn't want you to get hurt. Do you think you can follow my instructions?"

"Yes, anything you say!" she said, and she dove into her breakfast with renewed vigour.

We finished our breakfast and proceeded to what was going to be a large underground storage area. I had needed a bigger basement for a while, and so had made sure to include one in the expansion. I had already moved the bricks and the cement there, and so I was ready to begin.

"I'm going to mix the cement Sweetie, please stand back."

For once, she did as she was told. I worked slowly, carefully. Putting everything into the mixer, I then turned to Sweetie.

"Be a dear and bring that sack of bricks over here," I said, indicating with my hoof what I was talking about. Sweetie looked at me incredulously.

"I don't think I can carry that," she said.

"I'm sure you can," I said. She shrugged, and turned. I slowly moved behind the mixer, and picked up a brick I had placed there for this moment. Sweetie grabbed the end of the sack, and pulled. She was right of course, she wasn't strong enough to carry it. But she kept trying, pulling with all her might in an attempt to move the bricks to where I said I wanted them. And slowly, I crept up on her, avoiding making a single clop as my hooves hit the ground.

All thoughts of what I was doing exited my head. I didn't think about my parents, that eventually they'd come back and wonder what happened to Sweetie. I didn't think about the law, that murder was a very serious offense, almost unheard of in Equestria. I didn't even think about how this was my sister. In fact, at that moment, she wasn't my sister. She was the source of my pain, the cause of endless troubles. So terrible was my pain, I had to get rid of it, by any means necessary. Even more, I had to make it known there was a problem. If I didn't, I was sure I would go mad.

I struck the back of her head as hard as I could. With a loud *thunk*, she collapsed on the bricks. It was so quick she hadn't even cried out in surprise. She wasn't dead though. I knew that. She was just unconscious. I dragged her towards the end of the room, where the brick wall was going to be. I measured out with my hooves several paces from where the plans said the wall needed to be placed, so there was some extra space between the back side of the future brick wall and the dirt. I knew I couldn't have Sweetie wake up in the middle of my construction and escape, so the first thing I did was dig a small hole, and place Sweetie's hooves in it. I then filled it with cement. By the time she woke up, it would be set.

I moved to add ingredients to the cement, to make a good mortar. When that was done, I started to lay the bricks. Brick by brick my problems were ending. I finished everywhere but where Sweetie was, intentionally saving that part for last. Finally, when I could wait no longer, I began to lay bricks there too.

She had woken up. She blinked, her eyes bleary.

"What?" She asked, her voice low. "Where am I?"

"You're helping me with my construction," I said. I smiled warmly at her.

She looked around, and then down at her hooves. She pulled at them, trying to get them out of the

cement, but they wouldn't budge.

"I'm stuck! Help me!" she screamed. I just smiled and nodded.

"Everything's fine," I said. "You'll be fine here."

"It burns," she cried, pulling at her hooves again.

"I know."

"Rarity, what are you doing? What did I do?!" she was becoming hysterical, but I knew nopony would hear her. We were underground, and she was behind a wall. I continued my brick laying. "I promise I won't bother you anymore! I'm sorry, I didn't mean it. Whatever I did, I'm sorry! Please Rarity, please help me!"

I was on the final tier, and Sweetie was completely frantic, crying and jostling wildly. I worried she might actually topple herself over somehow, and ruin my beautiful wall. Even now she was trying to cause problems.

I could just barely make out her next cry. "I love you Rarity! I'm so sorry!"

"I love you too," I said, and put the final brick in its place. I waited to see if I could hear anything else. It was quiet.

"Sweetie Belle?" I shouted. A pause. Still nothing. I suddenly felt sick to my stomach. It must have been the hard work catching up with me. It was time for a break. Soon, the bricks would be set and I could lay down the plaster. Everything would be fine.

