

Want

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Chapter 1

The night sang with silence in Cloudsdale. Thousands of stars twinkled brightly above: summer was ending, and the evening air became cooler each day. Many pegasi had already turned in for the night, leaving the city in an illustrious peace.

“Jeez it’s cold out here.”

At least, everywhere was peaceful except the thoughts in Rainbow Dash’s head.

She finally perfected an art that she created herself, the art of “arriving home.” She skipped like a rock over the clouds that made up her front yard and flared her wings at the last second, breaking her forward momentum without any shift in balance and alighting on the top doorstep. She looked back at her yard as if this was mildly interesting.

“Hm.”

For weeks now, Rainbow Dash had been looking for a smooth, spontaneous move she could do in case anypony important was watching. She heard about cloud skipping from one of her friends back in Flight School, but never had a good reason to try it. It was coincidence that the memory flashed through her mind moments before she arrived, and it was coincidence that her front yard had the perfect amount of cloud area to pull it off. What made it truly impressive was that she was still wearing Rarity's dress from the Grand Galloping Gala, meaning she had to deal with aerodynamic inconsistencies, the risk of being caught on something, or getting wet from the clouds' moisture; yet she landed with enough grace and perfection to drop anypony’s jaw to the floor.

Despite her incredible feat, Rainbow Dash grabbed the doorknob, flung the door open, and slammed it behind her. In one swift motion, she removed the dress, tossed it into the corner, and began pacing furiously up and down the dark living room with her tail flicking wildly. The caffeine she consumed at the donut shop made the situation worse, as she could find no way of calming herself down.

“Why did they blow me off like that? I can’t believe they just... *ignored* me!”

Normally Dash never spoke out loud to herself, but this was an exception. The Wonderbolts asked her to “hang out” with them. The only hanging out that actually occurred was Dash following Soarin’ and Spitfire around, trying *desperately* to get their attention, while they blew her off and decided to chat with the high-class jerks that didn’t happen to save their lives.

“I rescued them! What they hay kinda pony ignores somepony that saved their life?!”

She put her hooves on her temples, closed her eyes, and took a deep breath. “No... just cool it. Calm down Dash. You can't be mad. The whole reason you should have been there was to spend time with the girls, not to grab your one and only chance...” She plopped down onto her cloud couch with a heavy sigh. “...To get into the Wonderbolts.”

Her fate had taken a turn for the worse. All of her friends seemed to have totally gotten over the fact that the Gala wasn't what they hoped it would be. They moved on. Why couldn't she? Now it was almost pointless to go after a dream like the Wonderbolts, yet she was so close and could almost feel the soft, plush fabric of the flight suit.

Dash opened her eyes and examined her surroundings, completely lost in thought. The moon pierced the darkness in the room, illuminating everything into an almost dream-like state. She got up and went to the window that looked out toward Canterlot. She caught herself before she began speaking aloud again, just in the off chance that somepony might be listening. *They must be considering me. I mean... I saved their lives, didn't I? All while doing something that was supposed to be impossible! You don't just forget about somepony who saved your life while at the same time gaining major style points! I'm practically famous already!*

In reality, her Sonic Rainboom drew much less attention than she was expecting. Sure she won the Best Young Fliers Competition, got to spend a day with the Wonderbolts, and show them all her tricks and skills that she'd fought so hard to perfect, but during the whole day, they never seemed *impressed*. It may have been mild side effects from their concussions, or that the Rainboom wasn't as impressive to them because they didn't actually *witness* it. The bottom line was that they never made any attempt to contact her afterwards, which worried her to death.

But she was used to obsessing. She had these thoughts almost every waking moment since the competition. For as long as she could remember, her mind lingered on these same facts, pondering them for any sort of positive or useful bit of information that may come out. She had no reason to be upset except that the more she replayed the events of that evening, the more those events stressed her out.

She turned away from the window, punctuating each word with frustrated stamping. "Ugh, stupid... stupid... *stupid!* How did Spitfire even get into the Wonderbolts? She's only two years older than *me!*"

She worked herself up again. She hated doing that. The fact that her house was colder than a blizzard didn't help.

She was halfway through the room to the heater switch when something caught her eye. A box covered with every color of the rainbow stood out heavily against the moonlit marble of her kitchen counter. Curious, she went to it. She picked it up and examined it in her hooves for a moment, then tore it open. A fluorescent cloud of colorful smoke billowed out.

"What the..." She looked around the outside for some sort of identification, something describing what it was. But all she found were the inkblots of color, arranged in no particular fashion.

"Wait..." She focused her eyes on a tiny line in the lower corner, which appeared to be a set of words. She held it closer to the moonlight.

Mix in room-temperature water. Do not over-consume.

Then she remembered; Pinkie Pie had given her a weird rainbow-colored box at her last birthday party.

"Thanks... what is it exactly?" Dash asked Pinkie as she unwrapped the gift.

“Dunno.” She giggled. “The buffalo make it with pure rainbow! Drink it, it’s the best! And it makes you feel all warm and fuzzy.”

“Uhh. Ok.”

Dash wasn’t very keen on the idea of consuming rainbows, nor was she on drinking an unidentifiable beverage. In order not to insult Pinkie, she had simply tossed it in among the clutter of stuff in her cabinets and forgot about it. Now, she was desperate to calm herself and unable to think of anything else.

She took a glass from the cabinet and turned on the faucet, feeling the water until it was neither cold nor hot. She filled the glass and poured the powder, which fizzled and steamed as it made contact with the water. The liquid glowed an odd color, as if a rainbow had been compressed and packed into one spot.

“Pure rainbow.” She bit her lip and stared at the glass. “Pinkie’d better not have done anything to this.” She held up the glass to the window, as if to toast the moon. “Oh well. Bottoms up,” she said, and she took a gulp.

Her eyes shot open. She inhaled a huge gasp and screamed as she slammed the mug on the counter. She felt a surge of sharp pain all around her face and her tongue felt like it was on fire. She threw her hooves to her mouth, taking huge breaths between yells, but the liquid was moving... and running down the back of her throat.

She took a few steps backward and landed her rump against the wall. It went down further and heated her esophagus, splashing fire into her stomach. The sensation then spread outward into her muscles, feeling as if they were being massaged with hot silk. Then, it rose into her head and caressed her sinuses, filling every empty space with warmth. Her eyes watered and her nose moistened. It was almost more than she could handle. She exhaled a hot, misty breath.

"Holy..."

Still gasping for air, she looked at the box sitting on the counter.

“That was... *awesome*.”

She filled the glass and poured the powder again, producing the liquid with nondescript color. She took a gulp, winced at the initial pain, and exhaled a noise that was halfway between a sigh and a scream. She repeated this process several times until the powder in the box was gone. “Aw, man!” she said as she looked inside the empty box. Nevertheless, she had never felt her body so relaxed before. Every inch of her swam with warm feeling.

“I wish I would’ve had this earlier-” She froze. She thought back to the Gala. She thought back to how the Bolts didn’t care at all. How they didn’t even speak to her.

Her rump fell to the floor, and she sighed. She looked at the mess she had created on the counter. It was late, and she had cloud patrol the next morning. Sulking, she floated up to her cloud bed hoping she would actually be able to sleep. She alighted upon the cloud she made fresh the night before and pulled a soft layer over herself, then took a chunk of cloud and fluffed it up for a pillow. She closed her eyes and sank her head deep into it.

Almost every night, she created scenarios in her head of what it would be like once the Wonderbolts accepted her. This extinguished much of the stress and made her goal seem all the more achievable. There won't be some big official ceremony or anything like that; it will just be a private meeting with her and either Soarin' or Spitfire... She'll somehow get invited to a nightclub with them...

Rainbow Dash was lying atop a bed of clouds that rose to nearly touch the sun. The sky was a deep yellow, and white clouds covered the horizon. A soft breeze glided through her mane. This place was comfortable beyond any description. The surface of the sun was right in front of her, stretching for miles in every direction. It shimmered like diamonds that were on fire, hypnotizing her into a stupor of insensibility.

An angelic figure appeared out of the light, a bright yellow pegasus with blazing orange eyes. Her long mane burned like fire and flowed through the air as if underwater.

Wait, is that... Spitfire?

It was Spitfire. She could recognize that pegasus anywhere, except her hair was brushed.

Her wings were outstretched as she glided out of the sun, coming to hover just above Rainbow Dash. Their eyes locked in an endless stare. The silence between them lasted an eternity.

A smile slowly came to life across Spitfire's face.

"Hey, Dash."

Rainbow Dash's heart nearly jumped out of her chest. Spitfire's voice was soothing, comforting, and understanding. She wished she would talk to her forever. Under the current circumstances, she wasn't at all expecting a casual "hey." Spitfire was laid back. She was cool. Rainbow Dash noticed that she was getting closer.

"Hi," she croaked. Spitfire's smile widened. She got even closer.

"So Dash. What are you up to here?"

"You know, just... hangin' out..." She couldn't move. She wasn't aware of the conversation

anymore. She was lost in Spitfire's gaze, getting closer and closer.

"Right in front of the sun? What a place to hang out."

Rainbow Dash was shaking. Somehow she knew exactly what was about to happen.

"Well, there wasn't... anywhere else to go..."

Now Spitfire was laughing. Her voice became softer. "You are hilarious, Dash."

"Heh... i'm here 'till... Thurs..." her voice trailed off. Spitfire was much too close now.

Suddenly, she stopped. Her face was inches from Rainbow Dash's. Spitfire's smile faded into an expression that meant more than friendly smalltalk. Rainbow Dash's heart pounded and was about to explode. It was like Spitfire was purposefully drawing out the moment. Neither talked, neither moved. Dash could feel her fiery breath.

"Am I dead?" she asked sheepishly, scared of the answer. The angel-Spitfire smiled.

"Far, far from it," she whispered.

Then, reality lost its meaning.

She surrendered herself to euphoria. She was kissing Spitfire, who seemed to breathe fire into her. Nothing was real anymore. Intense heat filled every space inside her. Her eyes rolled into the back of her head. She was lost...

"AHH!"

Rainbow Dash's head shot up from her cloud bed as her consciousness came to life. She didn't know where she was, only that something amazing had just happened. She could still feel the fire flowing through her. Adrenaline coursed through her veins as sweat poured down her body.

Sitting upright, eyes wide open with shock, she gasped for air as she attempted to comprehend what had just happened. She realized she was still in her home, she was still totally blown off by her idols last night, the sun was starting to rise, and it was just another dream. Slowly, she came back to reality.

"What the hay is wrong with me?"

She buried her face in her hooves and took long, shaking breaths. Sweat dripped from her chin.

“What in the HAY is wrong with me?”

She sank back into her cloud bed. It had never been so cold and wet. No pony was around. So she rolled onto her side, curled up, and let herself cry.

The tears burned. She might as well have been crying rainbow.

The ballroom lay in ruins. Chunks of marble were scattered. The band's instruments were disfigured beyond recognition; a gray mare with a pink treble clef for a cutie mark stared at her broken cello in silent mourning. The animals from the gardens roamed free in the palace. The guests stood in groups, chatting fervently about the six ponies that destroyed the Gala. The palace servants were cleaning, relying on the unicorns who were less than thrilled.

Two very famous pegasus ponies sat with their backs against the upturned snack table, each holding a cup of punch in their hooves as they contemplated the rather eventful night. A royal guard tasked to be their escort stood watch next to the table.

Spitfire stared at her punch. She seemed very relaxed, despite the disaster that had just befallen her. Soarin' stared up at the ceiling, becoming lost in a daydream while observing the marvelously painted murals.

Then, a very excited dark-orange pegasus mare flew up to them.

“Oh my gosh. Oh my gosh. Oh my gosh.”

Soarin' and Spitfire looked at her. She shook from head to hoof. The guard stepped up, but Spitfire held up a hoof and shook her head. She noticed the pen and picture of the Wonderbolts the mare was holding.

“Oh my gosh. Sp-Spit... f-fi...”

Spitfire sighed and said, “Give it here.”

The mare whimpered as Spitfire took the picture and pen from her.

“What's your name?”

“Su-Sun... S-Set...”

She signed her signature and gave it to Soarin' who did the same. He handed Sunset the picture and said, "Here ya go, Sunset."

She stared at it in disbelief. Her gaze then shot up from the picture to Soarin' and Spitfire. One of her eyes twitched. Something about her facial expression told them that she had snapped.

"PICTURE TIME!"

In one swift movement, she pulled out a camera and threw a foreleg around Spitfire's neck. She took a picture of herself and Spitfire and proceeded to do the same with Soarin'. Just then, the royal guard picked her off of Soarin' and said, "All right, miss. Let's go."

Kicking and screaming, she yelled, "NO! Soarin' is the only Wonderbolt I haven't gotten a picture with yet!" She struggled against the guard's grasp as he walked away with her.

"I... MUST... HAVE... A COMPLETE... SET!"

Soarin' and Spitfire could still hear her screaming as she was carried out of the castle. They returned to their thoughts as if this kind of thing happened every few moments.

After another five minutes of total silence, Spitfire piped up.

"We screwed up."

Soarin' sighed. "Yeah... still, you gotta admit. That apple pie had to have been the most amazing-"

Spitfire cut him off with a look.

She screwed up. Spitfire knew that much. She had been more interested in keeping up the Bolts image by politely conversing with the snobs at the party than spending time with a valuable, potential recruit. Now she was almost certain that after the way they treated her, Rainbow Dash had decided that the Wonderbolts wasn't all it was made out to be.

Spitfire turned to Soarin' with a concerned expression. "She must be totally beside herself. She's wanted to be a Bolt more than any pegasus I've seen yet. *Way* more. I mean, have you *read* her fan mail?"

"Spitfire, we never read fan mail," he said without looking at her.

Spitfire let out a long sigh and turned her head to watch the clean-up crews.

"I feel terrible."

Soarin' tried reassuring her, "Hey, c'mon. I mean... think about how many other pegasus ponies you've had to let down. How is she any different?"

"That's just it. I can't figure it out. She's just... different."

"Ok, what do you mean, 'different?'"

"I don't know, I mean," she paused.

"What is it? Tell me."

"No, you're probably right. I shouldn't be obsessing."

"Oh, c'mon. I know you better than that. *Something's* up. Spill it."

Spitfire sighed. "She's just... really nice."

Soarin' laughed. "'Really nice?' That's it? You like her because she's 'really ni-'"

"She saved our *lives!*"

Soarin' fell silent.

"I mean, for that, you can't help but feel... *something.*" She sighed and took a huge swig of punch. "No pony's ever done anything like that for me."

Soarin' stared at his cup. "Yeah. I guess."

"And what've we been doing? Ignoring her." She chucked her empty punch cup at a nearby trash can and missed. "Since when do we ignore ponies that save our lives?"

"So, is this like your way of repaying her? Acting all interested all of a sudden?"

She paused to think. "I feel like anything I do won't repay her. I feel like I need to *be* there for her."

Soarin' rolled his eyes. "Oh stop. Don't start getting all touchy-feely."

A smirk slowly spread across Spitfire's face. "As I recall, Soarin', you *liked* it when I got touchy-feely."

At this, he blushed slightly and was angered into silence. Spitfire laughed and gave him a friendly punch on the shoulder.

"Just... think about it," said Soarin'. "She's barely grown and basically still a filly. Just about every pegasus we meet is the same. She could never realistically handle the pressures of being famous."

"Soarin', she's only two years younger than *me.*"

"That's what you say every time."

Spitfire had admitted it before, someone Dash's age should not have to handle fame. She knew from experience. She should never have joined the Wonderbolts when she did. She was just too young. Some days it felt like the whole world was going to collapse on top of her. Every single day there was a vital deadline that *had* to be met, otherwise it would "risk harming the Bolts' PR." She had to watch each action she took, or the media would tear her apart. Her entire life was under a tiny spotlight, and she couldn't go outside of it.

"But what about at the Best Young Fliers competition, when she won the day with the Bolts? All the stuff she showed us then was pretty cool, right?"

"Oh, you remember it now?"

She couldn't. Nor could Soarin'. All she remembered was somepony falling from the sky, and then going after that pony to rescue her. Then she remembered waking up in the hospital a day later, along with the rest of the Bolts. They told her that she and the team were conscious and awake to thank Rainbow Dash for saving their lives and spend the day with her flying, but neither Spitfire nor the Bolts could remember any of it. And to top it, they made a full recovery in twenty-four hours. The doctor said it was totally bizarre. After that day, the Wonderbolts had a whopping fourteen shows to perform in the next two weeks, so they weren't able to get back to Rainbow Dash.

"It's really warm in here," Spitfire said, despite taking off her flight suit. "I'm gonna go out on the balcony and get some air."

"Um... It's *freezing* outside."

"I kinda like the cold." She looked at the moon out of a nearby window. "It's refreshing."

"Heh, be my guest."

She glided over to the door, dodging the cleanup crews and chunks of broken ballroom. When she opened it, a blast of cool, damp air splashed her right in the face. All of her concerns and worries seemed to blow away.

Spitfire enjoyed the cold. She liked being outside during the winter, she sometimes even slept with no layer of cloud over her, and best of all, she *loved* flying in the rain. It was about ten times more exhilarating than flying during a normal day.

She walked to the edge, put her forelegs on the railing, and lost herself in the night.

Five minutes of silence passed, until Soarin' opened the door behind her. She heard him mutter a "Jeez!" at the sudden drop in temperature.

"You're just gonna come out here and freeze to death by yourself?" he said, obviously hiding shivers. "At least let me join the party." He trotted up next to her, put his forelegs over the railing, and sighed. "I guess it's not *that* cold out here."

Spitfire looked at him and smirked. "You're a pretty cool co-flier, Soarin'."

He shrugged and said, "Yeah... I do my best." He smiled at her. "Even if *my* co-flier has weird, sudden obsessions with other fliers."

Spitfire rolled her eyes and punched him on the shoulder. Soarin' chuckled.

Another five minutes of silence passed. Spitfire suddenly found the missing element to her argument.

"She did a Sonic Rainboom."

"Yes, I *know* she did a Sonic Rainboom." He frowned and threw his empty punch cup over the railing. "But I didn't *see* it. Ever since I was a colt I've tried to do it. Could never break the last barrier." He sighed. "I bet I'd be much more impressed with her if I actually *had* seen her do it."

Suddenly, Spitfire knew what she was going to do.

"Do we have a show tomorrow? Any engagements with the media?"

"Uhh... I don't think we have a show until Manehattan next week... why?"

She smirked and said, "Soarin'... I have an idea."

[Chapter 2](#)>