

Dusk
Chapter Three
Part One: Rainbow dash

It'd been several days since I'd first been up to the highest cloud with Fluttershy. It had helped me to relax and slow things down in my life and It was slowly helping me forget about my love for Applejack. I had been up to the cloud every day since Fluttershy had shown it to me, looking down from such a great height let me appreciate how minor all of my troubles really were in the grand scheme of things.

Falling out of love with Applejack was going well. At least it was, until Twilight and Applejack had invited me and the rest of the gang over to her library, not giving a reason why. It seemed that as soon as I was progressing in life, as soon as I was getting over my longing, then something came to just bring it all back again.

I wasn't sure what the two ponies were even going to say or do when we all got there, but I had an idea and I knew that I was definitely not looking forward to it. Despite every cell in my body being opposed to going to Twilight's library, I knew it was something I needed to do. When Twilight had told me about it she seemed very adamant that I must go, I had to be loyal to my friends, I had to go no matter how I felt.

I tried to calm my mind as I flew to the library. My flying speed was a lot lower than it was just a few days earlier, the simple act of slowing down my movements had allowed me to better keep my nerves in check. On my way there I caught sight of Rarity heading in the same direction, I decided to land and walk with her to further keep my mind off of what was about to happen, this proved to be a bad decision.

"Hello Rainbow, heading to Twilight's too?" She asked, but before I could respond she continued speaking. "I wonder what she and Applejack have to tell us, what do you think it might be?"

We kept on walking, but she waited for a response this time. "Uhhh... I don't know," I said awkwardly and looked away from Rarity to hide the apprehension in my expression. "Do... do you have any ideas?"

"I'm sure I have no clue," Rarity claimed, but then immediately put forward several ideas. "Maybe they've set up a great party together, although that really is more Pinkie Pie's thing. Hmm. Maybe Twilight got an urgent letter from Celestia! But then why would Applejack be there? Ooh, I bet it's something scandalous, but then again Twilight isn't really the type to *do* anything scandalous, or to gossip about it. Well, whatever it is, I'm intrigued to find out, aren't you Rainbow?"

"Huh? Oh, yeah, well I'm sure it'll at least be something interesting," I commented, a lump forming in my throat. Shortly after I had uttered those words we arrived at Twilight's library;

Rarity knocked on the door.

Soon enough the door opened to reveal Applejack's beaming face, before she even had a chance to speak my mind exploded with activity. The mere sight of her was enough to make me lose myself. I loved her so much. "Hey ya'll come on in, Pinkie and Fluttershy are already here so with you two arrivin' we can get this started!" She gestured for us to enter.

Rarity and I walked into the room and stood beside Pinkie and Fluttershy, spike was also there, looking just as expectant as the rest of us. Applejack walked to Twilight's side, the two of them were standing opposite the rest of us. After a nudge from Applejack, Twilight began to speak "Hello everyone. Thank you all for coming here, me and Applejack have something important to say," her nervousness was audible. Evidently Applejack could hear it too as she took over the speaking duties.

"Look I'm gonna cut to the chase here. Me an' Twilight are in a relationship and we have been for about a week now," Applejack's words made all of the pain I had felt from losing her rush back to me. *You can't lose what you never had*, I told myself. Suddenly I needed to get out of there, I felt claustrophobic, it felt like the walls were closing in on me. I couldn't take it.

But I had to stay, what would it look like if I left right now? They would think I was some kind of crazy pony. I just tried as hard as I possibly could to remain calm. *Why do they have to say this now!? When I was finally getting over her...* It was almost as if they had set this up just to let me know for sure that I would never be free of my love for Applejack.

Spike looked at the two loveponies with a somewhat confused expression. "Like a *relationship* relationship?" he asked.

"Yeah, like that," at Applejack's response Spike just shrugged and mumbled under his breath something about '*mushy, girly, stuff*'.

"I think this is *great!*" Pinkie shouted unnecessarily loudly while jumping up and down. "Happy ponies are always the best ponies and you two definitely seem happy together."

"I agree. I think it's wonderful that you two have found each other. Love is such a great thing," said Fluttershy serenely.

"Well, I have to say I wasn't expecting this, but it's totally fine with me. Having been brought up in such a high class family my parents were against 'filly fooling' as they called it, but they were from a different generation, they just didn't understand. Anyway, nothing should stand in the way of love, especially not something as meaningless as gender, so I'm very happy for you two," Rarity said, showing off, as she often did, that she wasn't just some simpleminded fashion lover, but was in fact an extremely intelligent and insightful pony.

I realized then that I was the only one who hadn't said anything about their relationship, when I saw that everypony was staring at me expectantly. It was stressful enough having to see everything I loved being wrenched away from in front of me, but now I had to express how their relationship was *so great*, because if I didn't everypony would turn on me. Telling the truth was not an option, I would just ruin everything Applejack had. I couldn't do that to her.

Putting on my usual mask of courage I began. "Yeah, it's great that you two are together! Everypony else has pretty much said everything by now, so I guess you don't need to hear me drone on about it," I said, trying to avoid becoming the center of attention for too long. I didn't know how much more of being there, with them, I could take.

Shortly after I had said my part Twilight began to speak. "I'm so glad that you're all so understanding of us. I thought that some of you might be hostile because of us being 'filly foolers', but I was wrong. You really are the best friends in the world!"

Why did I have to love Applejack, it wasn't fair. It made life so difficult sometimes. Why couldn't I be in Twilight's position?

Part Two: Applejack

"Yeah, it's great that you two are together! Everypony else has pretty much said everything by now, so I guess you don't need to hear me drone on about it," and with Rainbow's words *all* of our best friends had accepted us, without hesitation, just as I knew they would. It had taken me a little while to convince Twilight that this would be a good idea and now I'd proven to her that I was right all along.

"I *told* ya they would be fine with us," I whispered playfully to Twilight.

"Alright, alright, you were correct on this occasion," she replied in a hushed tone before addressing the whole room. "I'm so glad that you're all so understanding of us. I thought that some of you might be hostile because of us being 'filly foolers', but I was wrong. You really are the best friends in the world!"

"You should have known we would have accepted you. I mean *really* darling, we're living in the modern age," said Rarity. At first I'd thought that if anyone was gonna have objections with me and Twi's relationship then it woulda been her, but she'd proven me wrong and shown that she was actually one of the most understanding of all our friends.

"I *told* her you'd all be fine with it! But the silly filly wouldn't listen, she can be so cautious at times," I said to Rarity. Twilight blushed in embarrassment at my comment, so I gave her a reassuring kiss on the cheek.

"You two are so cute together!" Exclaimed Pinkie Pie. She already knew that we were together

before this meeting, Twilight had told her. Twi' said that she'd asked Pinkie for advice before comin' to tell me about her feelings and so she also told Pinkie the '*results*'. We'd asked her to act surprised at this meeting though, so that it wouldn't look like we were favoritizin' her.

After a little more casual chatter about me an' Twilight's relationship ponies began to leave. Rarity was the first to go, she said she was very busy with dressmaking at the moment, Rainbow went with her, presumably just to give us a little privacy. Soon after they left, Pinkie and Fluttershy followed suit leaving only me, Twilight and Spike behind.

"Uh, Spike?" Said Twilight, nodding her head towards the door, clearly hinting at him to leave us in peace for a bit.

"What?" Responded the dragon, he clearly didn't understand what Twilight was suggesting.

"Do you mind if you go out for a while? Well, you're welcome to stay here if you want but..." Twilight trailed off and left the rest to his imagination.

"Oh! I don't want to get in the way of your *lovey-dovey* stuff," Spike asserted quickly. "I'll go, uh, get some food or something."

With that me and Twilight were left alone together.

"That certainly went better than I expected," remarked Twilight breathing a sigh of relief.

"See, if ya listened to me we coulda got that over and done with ages ago," I teased, ruffling her hair.

"I know, I know. I should have listened to you. At least we've done it now."

I grinned and hugged Twilight firmly. "Just so ya know, I won't be able to meet ya tomorrow 'cause I've got a lotta work to do back on the orchard. We're plantin' some new trees and-" As I was talking I could see Twilight's features morph from happiness, to annoyance and then to anger. I knew what was coming and I didn't want to hear it. I thought she might have learned a thing or two from her past mistakes, but it sure didn't seem that way. She overreacted once and admitted it, but now she was just doing the same thing all over again.

"What?" Twilight snapped, she stared daggers into me. "Why can't you just put that aside and be with me? Isn't our love more important? First you go off with Fluttershy for a day and now this." Her change of mood was so sudden, so jarring that it almost frightened me. As long as I was with her she seemed completely fine, but with even a mention of leaving she went hysteric. It was as if she couldn't live unless someone was there, with her, at all times.

She just infuriated me when she was like this, her reactions seemed insane, illogical. I thought a

pony like Twi' would be as logical as they come, but that didn't look to be the case. I shook my head angrily and stared right back at her, letting her know that she couldn't just act like this and expect to get away with it.

"Gosh Twi' you can be so clingy sometimes!" I retorted, becoming annoyed. "You *know* our love is the most important thing to me, but the orchard isn't just some silly venture, I *need* to work on it with Big Macintosh to support our family. You know that Twi'. Stop this crazy mood switching, you can deal with being on your own. It's not like you haven't done that before, heck before you came to Ponyville you basically lived with your books an' nothin' else."

Twilight looked dejected and I almost felt bad for being so harsh, but she couldn't expect to just get away with such an insane reaction. "I'm sorry for acting so 'high-maintenance' Applejack, but it's because I love you so much! I can't bear it when I'm not around you, even if it's for such a short time," *I've noticed, thanks*. She needed to realize fast that she *couldn't* always be around me. "I know that I've been alone before, but I'm sick of the old me, I didn't have anything to hold on to, I didn't have anypony to love or anypony to love me. It was horrible," admitted Twilight. "I will love you forever and for always Applejack," she hesitated for a second. "Don't you feel the same about me?"

I couldn't answer that. We had been together for a pretty short time and although even before getting together I had admired twilight from a distance, that didn't mean I could *definitely* and *honestly* say that I would love her forever. Forever is a long time. True love isn't decided on a crush.

And then there was her erratic mood switching, I couldn't deal with this behavior for much longer. Sure it didn't happen often, but that was only because I wasn't *away* from her often. She'd made sure of that. In spite of all this, I couldn't help but still be in love her, I had wanted her for so long and I wasn't about to drop her this easily. Although, if she continued acting the way she was now, I sure as heck wouldn't stand for any more of it.

"Well, Twilight. I love you, but how could I possibly promise eternity? I can't tell what the future will bring to us. However, I can tell you that I hope that this will last forever and that's the truth right now. But I'm not gonna lie and promise what I can't deliver. You can't go around reactin' like you have jus' now and makin' a fool of yourself. You have to deal with the fact that I can't always be there for you. I love you Twi', but please learn this," I said, hoping that she would take my advice for once.

Twilight's melancholy expression told me that I hadn't managed to cheer her up, not that I had intended to. At least she wasn't angry or hysterical anymore. "That's just like you isn't it Applejack, always so honest, won't ever tell a lie," She said, a smile began to return to her face. "That's why I love you," she leaned towards me and nuzzled me softly.

I was so relieved.

"Good, honest is the one thing I can always be," I said sincerely.

Part Three: Rainbow Dash

I had followed Rarity back to her boutique after Applejack and Twilight's announcement, so that I would have someone to talk to. Being alone at a time like this would have just driven me insane. All the way back to her house Rarity told me about what she thought of the announcement whilst I pretended that the whole thing didn't bother me massively.

In spite of the constant chatter, I couldn't divert my mind from depression. I still wanted Applejack, I couldn't give just up, however hard I tried. Keeping these thoughts to myself was killing me, I needed to just tell somepony, no matter the consequences. Rarity seemed like as good a pony as any to express myself to, she was very understanding of the new couple's announcement and always seemed to act maturely. Despite her outward appearance she very obviously possessed a high level of intelligence. Upon entering the boutique I turned to her.

"I really need to talk," I said plainly.

Rarity looked at me with a bemused expression. "What about?" She asked.

I sighed, fatigued by all I had endured recently. I had no idea how Rarity was going to react to what I was about to say. Searching my brain for a good way to start was proving difficult, there was a lot I wanted to get across. Getting the courage to actually say anything was even more challenging, I had been keeping these things secret for such a long time now that it felt unnatural to be telling them to others.

"It tears me apart to see Applejack with Twilight," I confessed.

"Why? I didn't think you would be against unorthodox relationships," Rarity grimaced and gave me a disapproving stare.

"No, no it's not that at all," I stressed, shaking my head from side to side, before blurting out the truth. "It's just that... I'm in love with Applejack. And I have been for a long time."

"Oh... darling, this must feel so awful for you!" Rarity said sympathetically. Her expression changing to one of empathy. "It must have hurt for you to see those two together."

"It did," came my grim, but truthful response. "More than you could imagine. I still want Applejack so much, I have no idea what to do," Rarity moved over to me and briefly embraced me.

"Well I'm sad to say this darling, but I'm afraid your only real option is to grin and bear it. You

can't go and jeopardize your friends relationship just because of a silly crush-"

"It's not just a crush! I tried to forget about loving her, I tried to just stop, but I couldn't. As soon as I felt like I was making progress, those two arranged this whole thing and it all came back to my mind, fresh as ever. I can't win."

"I really am sorry for you Rainbow, but think about it. Don't ruin our dear friends relationship just because it didn't work out well for you. Try and be happy for them, it will take time but you'll eventually get over Applejack. It will hurt for you to see them together, you might be torn apart from the inside out, but you'll get over her."

"I don't know if I can. She's all I can think about. I've even become *jealous* of Twilight and when I'm not jealous of her I'm *angry* at her," I paced back and forth around the room. "Twilight hasn't done anything wrong and I know that, but I can't help these feelings."

"Sometimes we just can't have what we want Rainbow. I'm trying my hardest to help you out here, please just listen. There is no point endangering a friends chance at happiness to get to your own. You of all people should know that Rainbow, you're the element of loyalty for Celestia's sake. It's tragic that it has all worked out this way, but nothing can be done about it now."

I was silent for a few moments, trying to compose myself and trying to get my thoughts together. What I was about to say next had to come out just right.

"What's the point of being loyal to others if I can't even be loyal to myself?" I spoke slowly. Rarity didn't have a response to that one, she looked defeated. I wanted to just breakdown and cry right there, but I couldn't. Not while I was in front of a dear friend, I needed to look respectable. "I need to just think for a while..."

Rarity just nodded, I walked out of her boutique and began to fly to the highest cloud. It was peaceful there, no one would hear or see me as I cried my heart out.

Part Four: Twilight Sparkle

I was going to Sweet Apple Acres. Applejack was working on her orchard today, but I was adamant to meet her regardless. She was rightly annoyed at me yesterday when I asked her to drop her work and meet with me, so I'd decided to meet her instead, hopefully she would let me stay and help her out with whatever she was doing. When I wasn't with her everything felt pointless, why wouldn't I want to be with the one I loved all of the time?

Upon reaching the Acres I caught sight of Granny Smith, she was sitting just inside the front gate looking wistfully out into the fields around her, her wizened eyes full of a lifetime's worth of experience. I approached her and asked where I could find Applejack. She pointed in a vague

direction towards the orchard so I thanked her and followed her gesture.

Soon enough I was within the orchard itself. The imposing apple trees surrounded me as I searched for the one I wanted to be with. The sky above was a welcoming and cheerful shade of pale blue and the sun had risen far above my head, the peacefulness of the day seemed like a good omen and had put me in a cheerful mood.

Lost in contentment I almost didn't see Applejack when I burst into the clearing. Big Macintosh was also there helping her to plant some new apple trees, he noticed me first and waved a hoof at me.

"Hey there Twilight, what're you doin' out here?" He asked with his calming voice. Applejack sharply turned around to see me, she looked completely shocked at my presence.

"Twilight!?" Uttered Applejack in disbelief. She hesitantly took a few steps in my direction before turning to her brother. "Hey, uh, Big Macintosh, is it ok if I talk to Twi' in private for a minute here?"

"Eeyup," said the older earth pony. "I'll just take a quick walk and be back here in a few. That alright sis'?"

"Yeah that'd be great. I won't be too long here," Big Mac began to walk off through the trees and Applejack walked right up to me, her expression was blank. I was unsure where this was leading. "What the *hay* do you think you're achievin' by comin' here?"

Shocked at her almost violent response I took a step backwards. "I- I just wanted to see you. I knew you couldn't come to me, so I thought I would come over here and help you out."

Applejack rolled her eyes and then turned away from me, as if disgusted. "An' how exactly did ya think *you* could help? Me an' Big Mac have it covered thank ya. Look I told ya yesterday to stop bein' so darn clingy and needy and then you do this. How the heck am I supposed to react? Don't you understand that you aren't the be all and end all? I love you, but you aren't the only thing in the world."

"Why are you so angry all of a sudden? I just came here to help, I thought you would be *pleased* to see me," I said, in a state of shock at Applejack's seemingly extreme reaction to my presence.

"I'm angry, Twilight, because this is unacceptable behavior," her language and tone of voice were highly patronizing. "If I wanted your help I woulda asked. You need to understand that I can't be with you whenever you want me to, I have other things in my life beside you," Applejack sighed, a deep heavy sigh filled with mixed emotion, she seemed almost tired.

"Well 'sorry' Applejack, I just thought it would be nice if we could be together for once," I responded scathingly, anger building up inside of me at her rude words. *I just came here to help out.*

"*For Once?* Are you *serious?* We're almost always together as it is, you make sure of that. I'm 'sorry' if ya can't buckin' understand that I have other things to do than be with you *every, single, second,*" she grunted in annoyance and walked a few steps away from me.

"B-but I just thought... I just wanted to be with you. I feel lost without you." I said, my anger leaving me just as soon as it had appeared. I approached Applejack slowly as I spoke. She shuddered as I finished talking, it seemed that something had snapped inside of her.

"I'm not here to be your *darn* safety net!" Applejack sharply turned to stare at me, fire burning in her eyes. "I can't *always* be there to catch you when you fall. I *can't* be. You demand so much of me Twilight, what the hay am I supposed to do? This is nothing more than emotional blackmail, you won't *let* me do anything other than be with you. I'm not gonna stand for this," she was raising her voice more with every passing word, getting progressively more worked up as she vented her pent up frustration. "I can't believe I thought I loved you. I can't believe I ever had a crush on you. And most of all I can't believe I put up with you for even this long. You are the epitome of selfishness Twilight, I hope you know that. I'm sick of this. I'm sick of *you!*" Applejack stood there panting, the anger fading from her eyes, being replaced by a look of utter depression. "Leave me. Now."

I was completely floored by Applejack's words. I had no idea how to respond. But the worst part was that I couldn't disagree with anything she'd said. I had acted completely selfishly, I had used her to my own ends. She was my safety net. I had hidden it from even myself, but all I had done was take advantage of a dear friend to make myself feel better. My coming here must have been the final straw for her. I didn't want it to end this way.

"But Applej-"

"NOW!" Tears were streaming down her face as she screamed the final command.

My horn began to glow as I prepared my teleportation spell, tears fell down my face freely. I wanted to say something to Applejack, to apologize, but the words wouldn't come. Light flashed all around me and I was back at the Sweet Apple Acres entrance, I took one final longing look into the orchard and turned away to begin my shameful walk home. I hoped that nopony would see me on my way.

Part Five: Rainbow Dash

Two days had passed since the meeting Twilight and Applejack had put together and all I had done since then was sulk and wallow in self hatred. I was pacing around my house, as I had

been doing for hours, when I heard Rarity call up to me from the ground. I hastily flew down to her and asked her what she wanted with me so late in the day.

“Applejack and Twilight have broken up and they won't tell anyone much about it, Applejack just muttered something to me about Twilight '*restricting her*', but I'm not convinced. I came here to see if you had anything to do with it,” Rarity said, looking at me suspiciously. “Going from our conversation the other day, you might well have.”

“They've broken up?” I was ecstatic, this was the best news I'd heard in a long time. “Yes!” My wings extended and fluttered about from sheer excitement, a massive smile spread across my face. I didn't even feel slightly bad for reveling in my friends misfortunes.

“Well, I guess you *didn't* have anything to do with it then,” said Rarity dryly, she began to walk away and leave me to my celebrations when she stopped. “I wish you good luck with Applejack, but you should know that right now she won't be in a good mood to say the least, you should give her some time to recover before you try anything.”

I began to hover a few feet off the ground to unleash some of my excitement. “But I've already been waiting for a very long time. This is my chance, I won't wait anymore!”

“Think about it Rainbow, this is the *worst* time to try anything,” Rarity warned me, but I wasn't listening.

“Whatever you say, but I've just learned that I have someplace to be, see ya!” I yelled gleefully and flew in the direction of Sweet Apple Acres as fast as I possibly could.

This was my chance.