

## The Creature That Came to Ponyville

A My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic fanfiction by Friendly Uncle

### Part 6: The Discovery

"Rarity?"

Sweetie Belle blinked as she peered down into Carousel Boutique from the top of the stairs. She was sure she'd heard her sister's voice, but the ground floor was empty and silent. Frowning, the filly trotted down the stairs and looked around. Her sister's saddlebags were lying on the floor in front of the boutique's entrance, along with a small paper bundle.

"Sis? Are you home? Why did you just leave your things on the floor like you're always telling me not to? Is everything o-"

Sweetie went quiet as she stepped in something slimy. Grimacing, the tiny unicorn raised her hoof to find it trailing strands of sticky mucous from the floor.

"Eeeeeeeewwww... I hope Rarity *isn't* home, she's going to have a manure fit if she sees this."

Following the trail of slime, Sweetie Belle found herself at the boutique's back door, which was slightly open. Sweetie Belle frowned as she examined the door. It wasn't just open, it was hanging off one hinge, and cracked diagonally halfway down the middle. Two splintered hoofprints were visible on the outside.

Somepony had broken into her home.

Eyes wide with terror, Sweetie Belle turned and ran for the front door. If she went out the back, whoever had broken in might still be in the alley behind the boutique and waiting for her. Sweetie Belle quickly pawed open the front door and ran outside. The library was just across the town square, and she made for it as fast as her little legs could carry her. Twilight Sparkle would know what to do.

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Fluttershy emerged from her bathroom, heaving a deep sigh as she fanned her wings to help them dry. She loved Scuttles, but its drool was so viscous it took ages to wash out. She'd been planning on rushing over to Sweet Apple Acres as soon as possible, but she couldn't leave without feeding her animals first, and now she was late getting *that* done.

Some days were enough to make Fluttershy want to thump a pillow slightly harder than was strictly necessary.

She paused as she passed the couch, where Scuttles was lying down watching her, an enormous grin on its face. Not that it ever *didn't* have a grin on its face, but for reasons that Fluttershy couldn't quite put her hoof on the strange creature seemed unusually smug. She knew animal behavior, and she had seen that kind of body language before in kittens who had just finished polishing off an illicit dish of cream.

"... Scuttles? What are you up to?"

Scuttles cocked its head to one side and regarded Fluttershy with an unchanging expression. Not that there was much about its expression that it could change. Fluttershy narrowed her eyes just slightly.

The creature let out a soft hiss and jumped to its hooves, striding quickly across the floor to nuzzle along the length of Fluttershy's flank. Fluttershy had to grit her teeth with the effort of not turning tail and running when that nightmare visage rubbed itself across her body, but she couldn't help relaxing as its knobby carapace pressed affectionately against her. Unable to communicate through speech, Scuttles seemed intent on reassuring her physically. Fluttershy sighed and let herself melt into the near embrace, returning Scuttles' nuzzle with one of her own.

"Okay baby, mommy has to go feed the animals now. Let's go get you some fish, hm?"

Fluttershy didn't know how Scuttles expressed a cheer with strident hissing noises, but it was downright adorable.

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"...and at that point the only real option is surgery," said Nurse Redheart. She paused and glanced back at her companions, most of whom were staring at her in open-mouthed horror.

"So yeah, that's why I'm really hoping Fluttershy is wrong about this 'giant botfly' thing," said the Nurse, ears laid back over her skull in worry.

"That's... really terrifying," said Twilight, shivering.

"The process is usually quite slow," mused Zecora, the only other pony in the group who'd already known about the parasites and consequently was not still reeling in shock, "the odds that a botfly is responsible for Dollars to Donuts is low."

"True," agreed Twilight, "an infestation like that seems like it would take a long time to develop to the size that it must have to make that kind of hole. Especially if it penetrated her rib cage."

"... I don't see how you can be so clinical about this," said Rainbow Dash softly. The cyan pegasus wasn't hovering above the group as she usually did, instead sticking to the ground among the other ponies. Her head had drooped further towards the forest floor as Twilight, Redheart, and Zecora discussed the dead pony's fate.

"I... I don't know how else to be," answered Twilight, taken aback. "I'm sorry, I'm not trying to be insensitive..."

"Naw, that's alright," Big Macintosh spoke up, "times like this, somepony needs to keep their head on straight. I sure know I don't have a clue what's goin' on. I'm glad you'e thinkin' about it."

"I wasn't trying to say it was wrong," Rainbow said, "it just... seems strange. I don't know why. I guess it's because you weren't there when we found out, Twilight. I mean, I didn't really know Dollars to Donuts, but... when Applejack saw her... and she just... she just *broke*... I don't..."

Zecora gave the pegasus a brief nuzzle, which Rainbow responded to with a grateful half-smile. Twilight Sparkle frowned sadly at her friend for a moment before a determined expression settled on

her features, and she continued forwards with a new urgency in her step.

"Applejack will be alright. She's got Rarity with her, and if I know Fluttershy she'll probably be by to help too. And we're going to make sure this doesn't happen again. To anypony."

"Speaking of Fluttershy," piped up Pokey Pierce, "exactly what kind of animal is her new pet? I thought I saw something with a *scorpion* tail behind her. She's not playing with manticores is she?"

"I'd feel better if she was," Twilight answered, "she showed me a drawing of what it looked like when she found it. Like a snake if you took away the skin and gave it even more teeth. And then she said it got... a lot... bigger..."

The other ponies stopped as Twilight came to a sudden halt, eyes staring intently ahead at nothing.

"Twilight?" asked Nurse Redheart, "are you alright?"

"I... yes... I just... I think... does anypony else feel that!?" she burst out suddenly, looking around. The other ponies blinked and glanced around as well. They had been walking along the banks of the Everfree stream for almost an hour now, and as near as they could tell the scenery now was much the same as it had been for the majority of their trip; a river, and lots of trees.

"Now that you mention it," said Colgate slowly, "my horn feels kind of weird."

"Zecora, are we...?"

"We have nearly arrived at the very place,  
it will not be much further if we move with haste."

The ponies broke into a gallop. After another minute Zecora slowed to a stop and indicated a matted patch of grass with her hoof.

"I found her here,  
the poor dear."

"I feel it now," Pokey said suddenly, wincing. "Feels like my horn's rattling!"

"It's like a hoof on a chalkboard," Colgate agreed.

"Our horns are resonating with a powerful magical field," said Twilight Sparkle, looking around sharply.

"Somepony's doing magic?" asked Rainbow Dash.

"A reaction like this indicates a persistent magical effect," Twilight answered, "somepony did cast a spell, and either it's still in effect, or it was so powerful that it left an imprint in the forest's background magic. There!"

She darted forward suddenly, and the other ponies followed. Twilight soon found a large circle of singed and broken trees, and the crater in the middle of them. Sitting in the crater was a large round object. It resembled a clay pot, but the opening looked like the peeled back petals of a large flower. Twilight prodded it once with her hoof, but the leathery husk didn't move.

"It looks like an egg," said Big Macintosh.

"This magic field smarts," grumbled Pokey.

"It wasn't just a spell," said Twilight, not so much to answer Pokey as because she was thinking out loud. "The fabric of Equestria's background magic has been disrupted. This... this could be an egg... it could be the egg of something that we've never seen in Equestria before. Maybe this is where that spider thing Zecora found came from. Maybe Dollars to Donuts found it... and..."

"I don't think the monster Zecora found came from an egg," said Nurse Redheart, "I examined it last night after you left to organize this expedition. It didn't have many identifiable organs that I could see. I don't know how it ate, especially with the tube that comes out of its mouth. I did find what looked a lot like a womb. I think it gives birth to live young."

"What was the tube connected to?" asked Colgate suddenly.

Everypony slowly turned to stare at her.

"The tube... was connected... to the womb," the nurse answered, eyes widening.

"Dollars to Donuts was not allowed to die with grace," said Zecora haltingly, "when I found her, there were many small cuts and bruises on her... face..."

"The egg lays the... face clinging monster," said Nurse Redheart, "the monster finds a pony, it... it... *impregnates* them..."

"I'm going to be sick," Rainbow Dash whined.

"The hole in Dollars' chest was as big around as my hoof," said Twilight.

"So whatever... came *out* of her... was..." Pokey looked about as sick as Rainbow Dash.

"Fluttershy said that when she fished Scuttles out of the river, it was about as big as her foreleg," Twilight finished quietly.

Everypony went completely silent.

"I'm going back to Ponyville," said Rainbow Dash, jumping into the air. "*Now.*"

"We'll follow as fast as we can," said Big Macintosh.

"I'll meet you all there," said Twilight, narrowing her eyes.

"Wait, what do you-"

The purple unicorn's horn flared briefly with a blinding magical glow, and then she disappeared in a flash of light.

A little yellow pony with a red mane tied up in a big pink bow answered the door to the Sweet Apple Acres farmhouse. Her eyes widened somewhat in surprise at the sight in front of her. A small white pony with a pink and purple mane, eyes red and gasping for breath, was standing on the front porch. Beside her was a purple and green baby dragon, who also seemed more than a little winded.

"Sweetie Belle? Spike?" Apple Bloom quickly ushered her two friends inside. "What brings y'all out thisaway?"

"I'm really sorry to bother you," said Sweetie Belle, "but is my sister still here?"

"Rarity?" asked Apple Bloom. "Well I don't think so. She was still here when I went to bed, but she wasn't there when I went in to check on Applejack this mornin', and I ain't seen her in the guest room. Why do y'all ask?"

"I found her saddlebags on the floor of the boutique," said Sweetie Belle, eyes welling with tears, "and Rarity *never* just leaves her stuff lying around. And the back door was busted open, and I'm worried."

"Sweetie Belle came to get Twilight," Spike added, "but she's still in the Everfree forest with Zecora and the others, and now Princess Celestia thinks there's something weird going on with Fluttershy's new pet, and after everything that's happened I'm starting to get really worried too!"

"Well... well waddya want me to do?" asked Apple Bloom, taken aback. "Big Mac went with Twilight, Granny's having her nap, and I don't wanna bother-"

"Apple Bloom? What's going on? Is something the matter?"

"Applejack!" Apple Bloom turned to her sister with a frown, "I'm sorry fer wakin' you up, but Sweetie Belle says she can't find Rarity."

"Can't find her?" Applejack stepped into the front room, her mane still disheveled from sleep, muzzle twisted in a worried frown.

"Yeah!" said Sweetie Belle, "Rarity didn't get me up today or make me breakfast, and then when I went downstairs she'd just left her saddlebags and some stuff on the floor! And that's not like her, Applejack, I've got up in the middle of the night to pee before and she was still up because she saw a few loose threads in the curtains and stayed up to sew new ones! And there was a trail of this, like, slimy stuff on the floor and it lead from her bags to the back door and the back door was all *broken* like somepony had busted into the store, and now I'm really scared Applejack. Please, do you know where she is please?"

Sweetie Belle sniffled, and Spike patted her gently on the shoulder. Applejack's frown intensified, her nostrils flaring in worry.

"Well no Sweetie Belle I'm afraid ah don't... but you're right, that don't sound like Rarity at all, and a broken down door can't possibly be good... a trail of slime, you said? Like a slug or somethin'?"

"Bigger than that," said Sweetie Belle, waving her sticky hoof for emphasis. "It was really weird."

"Ah don't like it," muttered Applejack, "there's somethin' rotten in Ponyville, and it keeps gettin' worse."

Apple Bloom, where's your brother?"

"He's in the Everfree forest."

"He's in the *what*? Why the *buck* would he do *that*!?"

"He went with Twilight Sparkle and Zecora and some other ponies," said Apple Bloom, recoiling from her sister's outburst. "They were... they were goin' to where... to where Zecora found Dollars... to try and find out what happened..."

Applejack looked like she was going to start shouting for a moment, then suddenly pulled her little sister into a hug, draping her neck over Apple Bloom's back and gently nuzzling her ear.

"That's a good thing for them to do," she said quietly, "that's mah friends right there, puttin' themselves in danger to help other ponies. That's what we're all about. ...but I really wish a few of 'em were around right now. Ah ain't book smart like Twilight, ah know Rarity's missin', but ah wouldn't know where to look first..."

"Maybe I should send Princess Celestia a letter," said Spike, "she seems to think something weird's going on. She was definitely worried about Fluttershy's new pet."

"Fluttershy's new pet?" Applejack blinked. "Why would that get Princess Celestia worried?"

"Mostly because it looks like something I've seen in my nightmares," said Spike with a shudder, "and the Princess says she doesn't know what it is. And if *she* doesn't know what it is..."

"...that's that," said Applejack, releasing Apple Bloom and straightening up. "Ah don't like that at all. Ponies gettin' killed and kidnapped and all of a sudden Fluttershy finds some kinda critter than even makes Celestia worried? There's gotta be some kind of connection there. Any of y'all know where Rainbow Dash is at?"

"Forest," said Apple Bloom mournfully.

"Right then, guess it's just me. You lot stay here- no, don't argue with me right now sis, this is serious. I'm gonna check out the boutique and then head for Fluttershy's. Hopefully I'll find out Rarity just dropped her bags and went to buy all the bleach in Ponyville after she found something trailed a load of slime across her floor. She's done worse."

"But..." Sweetie Belle was starting to cry in earnest now, "but what if she's..."

"You listen to me Sugarcube," said Applejack, putting a comforting forearm over Sweetie Belle's withers. "Your sister is one tough mare. She don't look it, but I've seen her take on worse than slime monsters. She's gonna be okay."

"Okay," said Sweetie Belle, sniffing.

"Now you all wait here. I'll find out what's goin' on. ...and Spike, it might be a good idea for you to go ahead and write that there letter. Just let the Princess know what all's been goin' on. Maybe she'll be able to figure this out better than ah can."

"Gotcha."

Without another word, Applejack stepped out the door and immediately accelerated to a gallop, hooves pounding like thunder as she raced for Ponyville as fast as her earth pony legs could carry her. She couldn't match Rainbow Dash for top speed, but as long as her hooves were on the ground, she could keep going. It wouldn't take long to make it to Ponyville, or Fluttershy's cottage. She just had to hope that it would be enough.

"Rarity... please be okay..."

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Rarity came to slowly, eyelids fluttering open as a low moan escaped her lips. She felt absolutely terrible. Her head ached and the rest of her body was stiff as a board. In fact...

The unicorn gasped as she looked down to find herself glued to a wall by a cocoon of mucous-colored slime.

"Oh... oh no... oh what..."

Squirming, Rarity turned to see where she was, and just barely bit back a shriek of horror. Lined up along the wall beside her were three other ponies, all of them trapped in similar cocoons. She recognized Cloud Kicker, and felt her stomach convulse as she saw the hoof-sized hole in the pegasus' ribcage. Beside Cloud Kicker was the rotund form of Snips, his entire stomach bloated and burst open by a similar hole. Immediately to Rarity's right hung an earth pony she knew as Blues, an occasional farmhand over at Sweet Apple Acres. His eyes were closed, as if in sleep, and he didn't seem to have any openings that weren't supposed to be there. Rarity thought she could hear him breathing.

She could hear something else. A moist, leathery creaking sound that sent chills up and down her spine. Rarity slowly turned, eyes widening as she saw what was in front of her. It might have been a small pile of pony corpses once. But the bodies, now entirely unidentifiable, had been subsumed by a slimy bulbous mass. It pulsed and shifted as she watched, a pustule near the top slowly splitting open to reveal something slithering beneath the membranes within.

A single cry of absolute terror was all Rarity could get out before a thing beyond all her nightmares exploded out of its egg and catapulted across the space between them.

A voice that might have been Fluttershy's screamed her name, and then the thing hit Rarity dead in the face.

-End of Part 6

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*"Don't let anything happen to Rarity!"*

MUAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!!

*"I thought Twilight was just a bit too...accepting of the fact that Fluttershy now had such a creature*

*living in her house, and that given the evidence before her, she should have been a little quicker to put two and two together. Also, shouldn't Fluttershy have been able to keep track of Scuttles and ensure that he couldn't leave the house? How did he get to Rarity's boutique in the first place?"*

Honestly, I kind of feel like it's a bit contrived for Twilight to figure things out even as fast as she has. The xenomorph's lifecycle is really bizarre, trying to work it out based entirely on secondhand evidence seems incredibly difficult to me. As far as Fluttershy keeping track of Scuttles... it's hard to keep an eye on your pets when you're taking a shower...

*"Didn't she just get nabbed in broad daylight. In the middle of Ponyville. Moments after speaking to someone? Surely someone noticed that, right?"*

Given how long the "Cupcake" incident has remained unsolved, I'm willing to bet that Ponyville's police force is fairly incompetent.

*"Wait, if a queen is needed to make a hive, wtf is up with the scene with Roseluck and Cloud Kicker behind the shed (that last part came out wrong)?"*

As a couple other bronies have pointed out, there's a scene from the first movie where it is revealed that the alien has turned one of the ship's crew into an egg and used it to implant another character with a new alien. It was deleted from the film itself, but I really liked the scene when I read it in the novelization. It makes the alien that much creepier in my mind, if it can reproduce even without a queen and by using the bodies of its victims in multiple ways... the xenomorph's supposed to be the most adaptable creature in the universe right? The scene's probably not considered canon anymore, but I loved it, so it gets into the fanfic.