

Readers I need your help! I'm not completely sold on having Derpy speak in the 3rd person. I think it might get tedious to read and is just plain unflattering to her character. Please let me know your feelings on the matter back where this story was linked from. Your input is important! -EDIT- I made an executive decision and changed her lines to 1st person. If you feel this was in error I would appreciate your feedback

It was an amazing day. The sun was beaming down on the whole valley and it just felt good to be alive. Well it did to everyone else. I just sat there on the bench and watched the ponies go about their business. The park was one of the few places where I could kinda blend in and not stick out so much. I mean as much as I could blend in. I'm an ape from another dimension living in a world filled with colorful little ponies that acted just like people. It was so surreal it kinda burned out the wiring in my head and I just accepted it. I mean why should I fight it? I can't get home ever again and I'm not sure I would even want to. Humanity had been dying for centuries before I arrived here... Hell, they might be gone already.

This could be considered paradise, honestly. For a while I was quite the oddity and everybody, ahem, everypony wanted to hear about my journey. They marveled at the stories I told of galactic battles and conquest. How I had been genetically modified to withstand harsh environments and how my body was actually a weapon and I fought on faraway planets that didn't even appear in the skies here at night. I was truly a unique creature here... back home I was just one of millions of soldiers tasked with the defense of the human federation. No family or friends. I was a clone like all my squad mates. Humanity was running on auto-pilot and the flight was almost over. When a call went out for experimental weapons testing duty I happily volunteered. That was actually how I- Hey, here she comes again...

Everyday about this time a grey pegasus with a blond mane and tail would fly high over the trees with a satchel pack strapped on her side. She would dive down and cruise over the path in the park that passed by the bench I sat on everyday. She would slow her flight and look over and wave at me. I dunno why but it was the highlight of my day. She would always have a cute smile on her face and squeeze her eyes shut in the most adorable fashion as she would enthusiastically wiggle that hoof at me. Today was no different. I honestly couldn't help but grin and wave back at her. I didn't know who she was or why she flew this way everyday, maybe she was a courier. You know, like a daily smile delivery for me? That's actually a kinda cute thought. They didn't have any type of network here in Ponyville (or beyond for all I knew) so maybe they sent actual written letters about. A quaint thought. Regardless, she was a bright spot in this paradise cum purgatory I was imprisoned in. She finished waving and looked back at the sky. A couple pumps of her wings and she regained altitude and soared out of sight beyond the trees from which she came. I should try talking to her one day. She seemed like she would be nice.

The unnamed pegasus had been gone for at least an hour or more and the sun was getting low in the horizon. Soon the moon princess would raise the night, most of the ponies would retire to their homes, and the town would be mine. This was my favorite time of day. I'll hit the bar and get blitzed before I head home in the dark. Erase the problems for a few hours and then black out till morning. The time here didn't pass like it did back home. It was murder on my mind. I never feel rested after sleeping, even on nights I didn't drink. Again, this place might be

hell. I wouldn't doubt it. Absolute hell. *Ah eff this. I'm going drinking.* Standing up I stretched and let out a groan. The bench was nothing more than a soreness generator. Obviously designed for ponies, not humans. Shocking.

My normal bar was hosting a live band... I hate live bands (human or pony, didn't matter). I like to drink in a dark bar with others who are trying to escape their misery not dance the night away. There has to be another bar around here... I'll check in the main square. I mean where else would you put one? The place was deserted. Looks like most ponies were inside eating dinner or tending to their families. How cute. Bah. I could never have a family. Besides, how would I be a father? Not only was I a different species than everything in this universe, my genes were mixed up so much that I could never procreate even if I found another human. Why am I thinking about this? I hate thinking about this shit. *I need a drink, bad!*

There isn't anything here in the square! *Seriously? One bar?* There has to be another. You can't have a town this size with only one bar. That's just criminal. *Screw it.* If I can find a liquor store I'll just brown bag it. God I wish I had paid attention to the layout of this place before. I know where the park is as well as the boutique, the nurse's office (where I spent a few weeks after arriving here. Yeah, that was fun.) and even the sweet shop... Sugar Cube something or other... I just want one bottle of apple sour. *IS THAT TOO MUCH TO ASK?! Honestly!* If I don't find one soon I'm gonna- hey, is that? It can't be. Why is she out here so late? And what on earth is she doing? Is she...

"Um, excuse me Miss..." *Shit.* I don't know her name. "Uh, Miss? Are you alright?" The grey pegasus that had waved at me earlier in the day (and everyday for several weeks before) was sitting on the curb openly crying. I'll admit it was a shocking sight. She was always so happy when I saw her but now she was in obvious distress. She kept sobbing but pointed to her midsection and tried to speak but couldn't get the words out. I have no idea what she means. Maybe she can't speak. *Hmmm...* "Are you injured? I can help you to nurse Redheart's office. It isn't far." She shook her head no to the question. Well she can understand me, that's a start I guess. Still don't know what the heck is wrong though.

"Lost..." she sniffled before continuing "lost bag". She sniffled as she pointed to her midsection again. Oh right! She always had that satchel pack strapped to her side. That must be the one she was talking about. It really didn't look that important. Just an ordinary bag, kinda worn out from what I could remember.

"It's alright. You can always get another-" I was cut off.

"No. It's a mailbag. It has letters for delivery and if lost Derpy loses her job. If Derpy loses her job then she can't feed Dinky!" She looked up at me and for the first time I saw that she had big golden colored eyes. Swollen and red from crying, but still very pretty. Even cute I guess you could say.

"When did you lose it?" I asked.

"Derpy doesn't know." she replied. Derpy? Who the hell was Derpy? And who is Dinky? Wait... did she just refer to herself in the 3rd person? That's odd if it's true. Again, cute but odd. Well this pony was going to see something pretty odd herself.

"Hey, I'm gonna show you a trick. Don't freak out, it's alright. This is gonna seem strange and I may look weird for a second, but It'll help me find your bag. Check this out!" I pressed my finger to the right side of my throat and engaged the olfactory sensing boosters. Normally it

would be used to sniff out enemy soldiers or explosives, but a mail bag should be easily found as well. Only problem is it hurt like a bitch to activate... and it made my neck glow bright blue. Fun at parties! A few more prodding finger clicks should get it running. Damn that stings... Alright I can see the glow. Now we're ready to rock and roll.

sniff *Hmmm...* *sniff* *too weak...* "Hey, I don't mean to get personal, but can I get a sniff of where that bag rides on you? I need to register the scent because I don't know what it smells like." She nodded without hesitation and unfurled her wings to allow access to her sides and back. I leaned in *sniff*. *Huh*. She smelled of salty tears, obviously, but there was also a mix of other odors. The strongest was sweat but it wasn't unpleasant. She must fly all day so working up a little musk is to be expected. Wait, something else. It's kinda like a bakery, not sweet like the shop in town, more like- Gotcha! Canvas and paper. That's the scent of the mailbag! Now just follow it. "OK, let's go find it!" I turned and pointed in the direction where the smell was coming from. I was running down the avenue and looked back to see that the pony (Derpy? Dinky?) was right behind me. She didn't look as upset as she did before. Well that's good, right? *Getting stronger...* It can't be far. *sniff, sniff, sniff* *Turn the corner here.* *sniff* We're almost on top of it now! *Wait, here!* I skidded to a stop but the pony in tow was not as quick on the brakes and crashed into me. For being small they could pack a wallop especially when you're not expecting them. Ass over apple cart we tumbled into the bushes just shy of the edge of town. Damn... I think I knocked a few screws loose on that one. *No harm, no foul*. It was kinda like being a kid again. I laughed out loud as I got up. I dusted myself off and walked over to help the pony (pegasus pony or is it just pegasus?) up but only made it a step before catching my foot on something and hitting the dirt again.

"You've got to be effing kidding me!" I yelled grabbing at the offending object as I stood up. *Honestly who would leave a-* I looked down and in my hand (the object that tripped me) was her missing mailbag. Damn I'm good! I carried it over with me and untangled her from the branches of the thicket we crashed through and she got to her feet. She seemed to take the collision better than expected as she wiggled this way and that to see if anything was injured.

She smiled and said "Derpy is fine. Nothing broken!" So it was 3rd person. She was named Derpy? That's an odd name but I've heard odder, honestly. I wonder if she switches from 1st person to 3rd person or just stays in 3rd. Strange. Oh wait, I should show her this thing. I held up the bag for her to see. Her eyes went wide and she started to hop up and down.

"You found it! You found it! You found it! You found it! You found the mailbag! Derpy gets to keep her job! Dinky gets to eat! You're a hero! You're *my* hero!" She continued to hop and added flapping her wings to the impromptu dance. It was an adorable sight. She was so happy you couldn't even tell she had been crying mere minutes ago.

"Well I don't know about hero. I just- OOOOF!" my wind was almost knocked out as she tackled me to the ground and gave me a bear hug. Mind you this pegasus is about half my size, but she could hug the air right out of me! I was unsure what to do at first then I just figured I'd return the hug.

I never really touched a pony before. I mean I patted Applebloom and her crusader friends on the head a few times but nothing so intimate like a hug. You know this isn't a bad feeling. Warm, friendly and kinda nice. This was what all those stories I read about said it was like when people interacted in the old days. Before all the cloning started and we were all grown in tanks. I could

feel the heat of her body under my palms. She was muscular but had a soft layer of fat just under her coat. It was a supple combination. Also her coat was so soft it felt like it wasn't even there. Almost like velvet or velour. She finally released me from the hug and we got back to our feet. She was all smiles.

"You helped Derpy out of a bind. Derpy owes you big time. Derpy would do anything for you!" she smiled and for the first time I noticed that her golden eyes didn't line up exactly center when she was looking at me. Not really that conspicuous from afar and barely noticeable even when up close. It was kinda cute actually. You know I've thought that a few times about this mare. 'Cute'. Am I feeling alright? I did take quite a tumble. I'm not sure how that would even- Wait. Did she say anything? I raised an eyebrow.

"*Anything?*" I asked turning my thoughts into reality.

"Anything!" she replied more enthusiastically than before.

"Alright then, I want you to answer one question: Why do you fly by me everyday in the park and wave?"

"Because you always look so sad! Derpy makes a trip over to the park to see you and make you smile. Before you see Derpy you don't smile. After you see Derpy you smile. So Derpy wanted to make you smile everyday!" She playfully shifted her weight from left feet to right feet grinning as she spoke.

Ho-ly shit. There is no way I just heard that right. She makes a trip to the park *everyday* just to make me smile? Seriously? No way. *No effing way.* Why on Earth (or where ever the hell I was) would she do that?

"Wha- Why would you do that?" I asked completely dumbfounded.

"Sometimes Derpy isn't smiling. Dinky smiles and that makes Derpy smile. Derpy is happy and a smile makes her happy so she wanted you to be happy too! So you needed to smile to be happy and Derpy smiling made you smile. That makes you happy! It's science!" she replied without said smile ever leaving her little pewter face.

"Heh. You know something?" I scratched my head as the glow finally started to fade away on my neck. She never even seemed to notice that. Either she was oblivious or ignored it outright. I smiled back at her and replied, "You're right. You do make me smile. It *is* science!" I laughed and she joined in. Kneeling down to be at eye level with her I said, "Thank you, Derpy. Thank you for taking time out of your busy day to make me smile. Life here has been a big adjustment for me and I don't really feel like I fit in that well and...well, it does make me sad. But seeing you smile and wave makes me smile. When I wave back at you I do feel happy. Because of that you are *my* hero." The expression in her eyes changed from happy to bashful. A slight rose colored tint spread across her cheeks. I just made her blush. Ha! How's *that* for science! I let out a chuckle as thoughts rolled around in my head. You know what? Screw it. I've been here for months and in just these few minutes I've had more fun then ever before. I wanted to see her again. "Hey Derpy, would you like to get some dinner tomorrow night? You know, just the two of us?" I asked.

"Are you asking Derpy out on a date?" she replied while raising an eyebrow in my direction. Shit, I don't even know if she's married. This was a mistake. I'm an idiot.

"...Yes?" I said drawing out the word and ending it in an upward inflection. Good lord. I *am* an idiot! Her eyes grew bigger. This was a huge mistake. Yeah, I think I just lost my daily

smile delivery. Best part of my day gone *snap* just like that! Now I'll lose my new friend on the same day I met her. I should have left well enough alone. Married? Single? Lesbian? I blew it. I bet Dinky is the name of-

"Yes. YES! YES!" she nodded her head so fast it was only a blur. She stopped after a second, as it was obvious that her excited nodding had made her lightheaded. It was kinda cartoony as her eyes rolled around then locked back on me, well as best they could. I had to laugh. She was fun. Maybe she was just what I needed. Wait... there is something that's troubling me. Gotta clear the air right now.

"You don't mind going on a date with a human?" I asked, my voice dropping a little as I doubted my confidence.

"You're a human? What's a human?" she asked with her head cocked to the side. *Seriously? How?* How could she not see? My face became a twist of confusion as I tried to sort this all out. I mean I look so different. Hell, I tower over the ponies in this town. I'm so... not a pony. A sly grin caught my eye.

"Derpy got you!" She giggled out the words. Indeed she had, clever mare. She continued "Derpy knows what a human is and doesn't have a problem going on a date with one. Why should she? You seem nice. You helped Derpy and Derpy doesn't even know your name." No shit? It's almost like she doesn't even see the differences between us. Other ponies always remarked how different I was or how I was so 'unique' or 'unusual'. Nothing but codewords that meant I was strange. She didn't seem to even notice or she did a good job of not saying anything about it. Hold on a second. She had brought up a good point that I never did introduce myself.

"My name is Trooper Philip Marshall 71154. But you don't need to remember my clone number or rank. Sometimes I don't even remember it." I said. She extended a hoof in a formal fashion towards me for a hand/hoofshake.

"Aphrodite Bubbles Hooves. Everypony just calls Derpy, Derpy. Even Derpy calls Derpy, Derpy. You can call Derpy anything you want. Derpy is just fine with that." She shook my hand in a formal greeting. It was kinda funny that she was so formal as she had just been hugging me on the ground a few seconds ago. She was an odd one, this 'Derpy'.

"So wait, Derpy isn't even your middle name? Why does everyone call you Derpy then?" I asked.

"Derpy does Derpy things so Derpy gets called Derpy."

"What? Why would they do that? That doesn't sound nice at all." my voice lowered in tone as I became incensed that my new friend was being made fun of. My protective instincts clicked up a few notches.

"It's not mean. Derpy needs to be called Derpy. Some other ponies don't feel good about themselves and need to call somepony Derpy. To keep other ponies happy Derpy needs to be called Derpy." She spoke with a smile. *I... Wait... How can she...* my brain stalled as I tried to come to grips with what I just heard. Is she for real? *No way.* There is no way she subjects herself to verbal punches just to keep others happy. *Why? Why would anyone do that to themselves...* My eyes almost watered. That was the noblest thing I had ever heard. Wow. She was just... wow. *Amazing.*

"I, uh, I'll call you Bubbles. How's that?" I stammered as my brain came back online.

"Whatever makes you happy!" she winked at me. "Derpy needs to complete her delivery route. Thanks to you finding the bag she can finish just in time!" She reached down and took the bag in her teeth. Lifting a wing she slipped the bag over it and it landed on her side. However it didn't stay there and dropped back to the ground. We both looked down at it in disbelief. How did that happen? She picked it up in her mouth and shook it around to get a view of the straps. The problem became clear as one of the straps wiggled into view. It had been chaffed around the buckle and broken free. Most likely it snapped in flight and landed here unnoticed by the mailmare. Her eyes went sad again as she dropped the bag to the ground. "Derpy will have to carry the bag in her mouth because it's broken. Can't breathe well like that and will have to fly low and slow. Derpy won't make her deliveries like that." Her eyes became wet all over again as she inspected the bag with a hoof.

Why doesn't she just tie- She doesn't have hands! She can't fix it... but I sure can. "Hey, don't worry. You got a human here. See my hands?" my fingers wiggling for emphasis. "I can fix this in a second, just watch!" I gathered up the bag and set to work on it. She watched intently as I laid out the straps and inspected the broken one. The buckle was no longer usable with the frayed strap so I put in the bag for safekeeping. By tying it together instead it would be tighter on her but should be fine for now. I tied a loose knot in the strap and held up the finished product. Damn I'm good. "There. I just have to finish the knot after it's mounted on you. Shouldn't give you any more trouble, I think."

"Really?" She beamed a renewed smile. Turning sideways she lifted her wings to the sky to afford me access. I slipped the normal straps into the respective places and then worked on my knot. The repaired strap ran down her side under her left wing and the knot would be just behind it. I knelt down to get a better look and started to tighten the knot. I pushed her wing up a little as it was almost patting me on the head as she breathed. A giggle came out of her and without thinking I gave her wing a scratch on the underside. She gasped and rolled her wing forward out of my reach. "You can't do that. If you make Derpy's wings stiff she won't be able to fly!" she laughed.

"Oh. I'm sorry. I didn't know." and I honestly didn't. Stiff wings? I must be missing something. How would that even happen?

"Derpy knows you didn't mean to." She continued to giggle. I shrugged and went back to work on the knot. I tugged on the knot a few times and with each tug she teetered sideways. They were light on their feet, but man if they crash into you... *damn*. One final tug and it was done. I leaned back and smiled. Not a bad repair job. Again, I'm good! She looked back and inspected the work. She hopped around a bit and jostled her body to test the strap. It never moved from its position under her wing. She smiled as she bounced over to me crying, "You got it perfect! You *are* my hero!" I smiled returning her smile. The happy mare stopped in front of where I was kneeling. She leaned her head towards me placing her soft cheek against mine and with closed eyes she whispered in my ear "You are a good human, Trooper Philip Marshall 71154. Derpy will never forget the kindness you have shown her. Derpy wants to stay and spend time with you but she must deliver the mail." She leaned back and her amber eyes were no longer filled with just happiness at the fixed mailbag, but mixed in was a look of caring and infatuation. I just nodded as I couldn't really think of anything to say at the moment. I think she likes me. Like, she like-likes me!

The wash from her wings stirred the leaves as she lifted off the ground. Hovering at about six feet of altitude I stood up to meet her gaze. "Tomorrow night Derpy will meet you in the main square at sunset. Don't forget you have a date with Derpy!" She said seriously.

"I would never forget. I'll be there, Bubbles." I said choosing to call her by her middle name.

"Derpy believes you, Trooper Philip Marshall 71154. She is looking forward to spending the evening with you." She replied gaining altitude. I watched as she lifted above the trees and leveled off. She dipped her wing and made a slow circle overhead, waving her hoof as she did every other day when I sat on the park bench, tightly closed eyes, smile and all. I smiled and waved back at her. She completed her circle while waving and then accelerated out of sight.

Wow. Never thought the night would take me in this direction. Heh, I have a date tomorrow! Shit, I have to get ready. I don't even have any nice date clothes to wear... and where the heck should I take her? Damn, I gotta get my ducks in a row. I walked down the road towards Sweet Apple Acres where I had been staying since I got out of the nurses office. Only this time I did I with a spring in my step and a smile on my face.

You know, I could get used to this.