

# THE COMBINATORICS PROJECT

## APPENDIX A

### MEETING OF THE INTERDIMENSIONAL COUNCIL OF SCOOTALOOS

[by popular demand]

- BEGIN ARCHIVE -

#### ***World S-22 (Slippenslide)***

*Ponyville—Town Hall*

#### TODAY'S SCHEDULE

Tilling 14th

*11a.m.*— Confirmation of Vows: Lyra & Bonbon

*1p.m.*— Ovine Suffrage Society

*3p.m.*— Interdimensional Council of Scootaloos

*7p.m.*— Lunar Republic Quilting Bee

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***3:06 p.m.***

An excited yet strangely monotonic hubbub filled the town hall's main chamber, broken only by the repeated rap of a gavel on a sounding block that had, until recently, been part of the local Fluttershy's living room table. Gradually, voices hushed, wings folded, and heads turned toward the podium, where the chairfilly awaited the room's reasonably complete attention.

Once she had it, the gavel banged twice more. "This meeting of the Interdimensional Council of Scootaloos is now called to order!"

"Yeah! Order!!" echoed the enthusiastic Scootaloo-3, only to be shushed by her neighbors.

"I'd like to thank you," began Scootaloo Prime, "for making your way here to world S-22, even if the sheep here are kind of crazy. And the friction coefficient is weirdly low."

"Are you kidding?" interjected Scootaloo-18. "That's the best part!"

"What's a friction coefficient?" asked Scootaloo-41.

The gavel struck once more. "And I'd also like to thank Scootaloo-22 for making her world available to us for the week, and also for arranging that big popcorn festival thing we did. Let's give her a round of applause!"

There was a clatter of clomping hooves, a smattering of cheers and a buzzing of wings. "I totally got a popcorn cutie mark!" exulted Scootaloo Delta.

This revelation prompted an explosion of Scootaloos clamoring to discuss cutie marks and how to get them, which in turn resolved into an eerie chant: "*Cutie marks!! Cutie marks!! Cutie marks!!*" It was broken by Scootaloo Prime, who had to bang her gavel six times in order to recapture the floor.

"No!! Cutie marks come *last* on the agenda! We *agreed* that after last time!"

The chant lingered quietly before fading away.

"As I was saying," continued Scootaloo Prime. "The first order of business is...business." A surprisingly uniform groan swept the room. "Does everypony have their status reports ready?"

There came a flurry of simultaneous excuses. "I got mud on mine." "Sweetie Belle turned mine into a sweater!" "I didn't feel like doing one this week." "I was busy practicing my scooter moves on this awesome new halfpipe!" "I don't know how to write!" "I had my report all done, but then I ate so much chili sauce that I belched a whole plume of fire, and it burned up! It was like...QUAAAWWW!!" And so forth.

Eventually, Scootaloo Prime reinstated order and glared at the crowd. "Didn't *anypony* bring a report this week?"

Scootaloo-38 cleared her throat. "Well, I mean...I just spent the week playing with this really great doll, so I didn't actually get any work done. So I just brought this blank sheet of paper. But at least that means my report is accurate, right?"

At this, a number of groans went up. "Scootaloo-38," said Scootaloo Prime slowly, "are those hearts in your eyes??"

"Huh?"

"They totally are!" cried Scootaloo-17. "38, you've got hearts in your eyes! You're in love!"

"I bet you're in love with that stupid Smarty Pants doll," said Scootaloo Delta.

Nacho Everyday Scootaloo piped up. "Didn't your Twilight undo the enchantment she put on that thing? You were *supposed* to be there for that, but I guess you were off...scooting somewhere."

"Says you!" retorted Scootaloo-38, defensively pulling out a ragged donkey doll. "I worked hard for this doll! I had to wrestle Big Macintosh!"

"Nooo!!" shrieked Scootaloo-54, whose irises had become big, pulsing pink hearts. "I'm not inoculated against that thing!!" She began creeping toward the doll, all the while struggling to hold herself back. A few other Scootaloos were exhibiting similar behavior.

Scootaloo Prime acted swiftly. "The chair moves that Smarty Pants be banned from all council meetings, in the interest of Scootasafety!"

"Seconded!" cried a dozen voices.

"All in favor?"

"Aye!" shouted most of them. "Nay!" shouted a few.

"How many times do we have to go over this?" snapped Scootaloo Ultra. "If you want to say 'Nay', you wait until 'All opposed'!"

"But I *like* saying 'Nay'!" groused Scootaloo-46.

The bewitched Scootaloos were dangerously close to brawling over Smarty Pants, so the chair banged her gavel quickly. "The motion passes! Get that thing out of here!"

Scootaloo-38 bolted out the door. The other enamored Scootaloos dashed after her, the whole group soon fading from earshot. The remaining assemblage was left standing awkwardly for a few moments.

"Cutie marks?" suggested someone.

"*Cutie marks!! Cutie marks!!*" chanted the council.

"No! We're still on *business!*" yelled the chairpony. "If nopony has any status reports that aren't blank, can we at least *talk* about what we've been doing?"

There was uncontrolled murmuring for a few moments. Scootaloo Prime made an executive decision. "You!" she shouted, pointing at Scootaloo-10. "What have you accomplished this week?"

"Me? Aheh." The relatively shy (if talkative) Scootaloo was taken off guard. "Uh, well, I went back to checking out Pinkie-10 and how she claimed to have started this whole mess off with her Interdimensional Party Cannon. I went to Canterlot and found a crash test pony willing to come see if the cannon was safe for me to get fired out of—if I had a good enough helmet, I mean—but by the time we got back to Ponyville, Pinkie was gone again, so we left a letter for her and told the mayor to keep an eye out for her. So then I started interviewing everypony about just what that cannon of hers *does*, because apparently it's got something going on! They say it shoots decorations that Pinkie's never *seen* before, so I think it's probably sucking them up from some other dimension. Like, it sucks up whatever stuff is best for whatever she's firing at. I just hope wherever it all comes from doesn't get sucked *too* dry, or their parties won't be as much fun anymore. But—"

"Okay, okay," said Scootaloo Prime, waving a hoof. "You've been doing your thing. What

about you, Scootaloo-42?”

“Oh!” This filly rose to her hind legs and threw out her wings. “I went to a world where everypony's edgier and pointier than here, and they all move funny, like this!” She wobbled her body, taking a couple of steps. “I asked what the name of their world was, but they said they didn't know! So I said, hey! Didn't your Scootaloo give this world a registered Scootaloo identifier? But they were all, 'Aren't *you* Scootaloo?’ So then I tried to explain what was going on, but about then was when it started raining fire ants, and everyone started panicking! Then Fluttershy showed up. I mean, at least, I assume it was Fluttershy, but she looked bigger than usual, and had this big gap in her belly she used to suck up all the ants so she could sing them a lullaby. It was pretty freaky.”

“Ooooookaay...” said Scootaloo Prime, who then pointed to an upraised hoof.

“Yes—Scootaloo Supreme?”

“Did that place have its Rainbow Dash?”

“Uh, no, I don't think so,” Scootaloo-42 answered.

Scootaloo Supreme flexed dramatically. “Then I bet I know the Dash from there! Only she calls herself Painbow Smash and she's not just superultrextremawesomazing, she's superultrextremamazimaxiMEGAmazilatizing! Also, she can smash through steel walls! And she eats mailboxes!!”

“Yeah, that's probably her,” admitted Scootaloo-42.

Scootaloo Prime banged her gavel. “Right, then! Scootachicken, take a note—42 will leave directions on the bulletin board for Painbow Smash to reach home. Make sure she sees them, Supreme.”

“Ba-CHWAAWK!” chirped Scootachicken from the back of the room, one wing raised in a thumb-up.

“All right!” said Scootaloo Prime. “That's enough business for now. Next time, everypony make *sure* you turn in a report! Now, it's time for an address from our guest speaker!”

“*Another* guest speaker??” groaned Scootaloo-46.

“Tell me it's not another Applejack!” moaned Scootaloo-17.

“No, no, I think we've all had enough of Applejacks and their 'Your cutie mark will come when it's time' nonsense. No, this'll be much better. Here to talk to us about a topic near and dear to our hearts—please welcome Rainbow Dash-22!!”

There was a chorus of whoops, cheers and clomping as a proud Rainbow Dash swooped down from her hiding place in the balcony, leaving a looping rainbow contrail in her wake. She soared around the hall for a while, soaking in applause, before finally settling behind the podium and hipchecking Scootaloo Prime out of the way.

“Scootaloos of the Multiverse!” she began, setting off a new round of cheers. “I come

here today with a message about *flying!* Does it sometimes feel like you'll *never* be able to fly? Yes?! Well, fear not! You *will* fly, and it'll be sooner than you think!"

Rainbow-22 paused to let the cheering die down, standing mightily against the podium while she stretched her wings. Abruptly, she leapt into a tense crouch at the stage's edge. "So who wants to learn? Any of you squirts know how to fly yet?"

"I can fly!" squawked Scootachicken.

"Only for like, five seconds!" retorted Scootaloo Numero Uno. "That doesn't count!"

"Actually, that counts pretty well," said Rainbow Dash. Instantly, all attention was on her again. "Ya see, flying, more than most things, is all about practice. To begin with, it's impossible. You all know that, right?"

The pegasus paused in her strutting to regard the now silenced audience.

"It is?" chirped Scootaloo-10.

"Absolutely and completely! Are you kidding? How does gravity work? Gravity makes it so that if you drop something, it falls! It doesn't go up, right?"

"Riiiiight..." agreed the Scootaloos.

"And yet, pegasus ponies go up!" She zipped upward to demonstrate. "How do we do it? It can't be done!"

"But you *do* do it!" pointed out Scootaloo-46.

"That's right," said Rainbow smugly, dropping to the stage. "We *do* do it. We make the impossible...possible."

Scootaloo-17 spoke up. "But is it really impossible to resist gravity? My Twilight says that the way air moves around an ob—"

"You mean you're gonna listen to *Twilight* instead of me? About *flying?!?*"

"Uh..." Scootaloo-17 sat down. "Nevermind."

"That's what I thought. As I was saying, flying is impossible. It's ridiculous! The very idea's crazy! The only way you can fly is to do what can't be done!" Rainbow zoomed to the back of the room in a quick polychromatic burst and spun around. "You've gotta stretch yourself to the limit!" She illustrated her subsequent instructions. "Then you've gotta take that limit, tie it in a knot, cut through it, turn around, and make fun of it, like this!" Rainbow finished by stretching her cheeks with her forehooves and blowing a messy raspberry. "Bleh-neh-neh naah nyeeeh-nyeeeh!"

Most of the Scootaloos enthusiastically copied her. "Bleh-neh-neh naah nyeeeh-nyeeeh!"

"*No!!!*" Rainbow yelled, stamping. "Not until you tie your limits in a knot and break them!"

Otherwise you're just being silly!"

"But we're just practicing!" called Scootaloo-31.

"Eh, well, I guess practice is good," said Rainbow, returning to the stage. "But what I want to go over right now is how to stretch limits out really thin, so you can just kind of...clip through them like you're carving cranberry sauce." She sliced the air with her wings sharply, and was again mimicked repeatedly by the crowd. "No! Not until you stretch them out really thin! You squirts are doing everything out of order!"

But then came a bustle at the entrance, and Scootaloo-5, who'd been standing guard, was tossed carelessly aside in a haze of magic. Before anyone knew it, a familiar purple unicorn was mounting the stairs to the stage, her hair out of place and a determined look in her eyes. The Scootaloos started to grumble and shout.

Rainbow Dash swiveled around, folding her wings tightly. "Twilight?!"

"Actually, I'm not the Twilight Sparkle you know. I'm Twilight-13! And you don't want to *know* how many Rainbows I've met this week."

"...I...I don't?"

"Unless you like numbers!" said Twilight hopefully. "But realistically speaking? Let me get to the point. I come from a world where everypony is gay *except* Rainbow Dash. And it's not fair! I want her! I love her! I'd transform myself into a stallion if I could, but Celestia says that spell is a state secret only used for procreation, not infatuation, and, well, *please* tell me you're a lesbian and you're single and I've got a chance. *Pleeease?!"*

Rainbow-22 flicked her ears and looked awkwardly at the crowd of wide-eyed, silent Scootaloos.

Twilight laughed nervous. "Oh, aheheh. Right. Let's take this outside...shall we?"

Rainbow's face flushed, and she waved sheepishly to the council before zipping out the door. Twilight-13 followed in a puff of teleportation magic.

Scootaloo Prime climbed back to the podium, straightening her hair. "Well...*that* was weird," she summed up.

There was a smattering of uncertain applause. The sound of hooves on wood soon segued into that familiar chant: "*Cutie marks! Cutie marks!*"

"NO!" yelled Scootaloo Prime. "We're not done!! We had this whole exercise planned where we were gonna take turns throwing each other into the air! And there were teams and everything—*unnngh*, Rainbow-22 had all the notes!!"

"Let's do it anyway!!" exclaimed Scootaloo-3.

"YEAH!!" shouted practically everypony.

"I call Scootachicken as my partner!" shouted Scootaloo Delta.

"Can I be my own partner?" asked Scootaloo-10.

"We're all Scootaloos here!" answered Scootaloo Prime. "*Everyone* is their own partner!"

With that, the dozens of oranges fillies broke randomly into groups of two, three, and even four (the rules never having been clearly explained), and took turns hurling each other into the air. Due to the unfamiliar low-friction conditions (and general chaos), several Scootaloos were dazed in mid-air collisions; others crashed through closed windows and staggered back inside, eyes spinning.

"Ugh," moaned Scootaloo Prime. "There goes our deposit." She banged the gavel. "Order, everypony! Order!!"

"You never say *what* order!" complained Scootaloo-41.

"The *right* order," clarified the chair.

But dozens of voices were now talking at once, and Scootaloo Prime began frantically banging her gavel on every wooden surface she could find, to no avail.

"You've got to keep order!" implored Scootaloo-5.

"I'm trying!! Hey everypony, stop talking and listen to me!!"

"Why should we?" returned Scootaloo Alpha. "Who put you in charge?"

"I *have* to be in charge! I'm Scootaloo Prime."

"Well, I'm Scootaloo Double Prime!" countered Scootaloo Double Prime. "Maybe I should be the chairfilly!"

"And I'm Scootaloo Numero Uno!" said Scootaloo Numero Uno. "That means I'm first among Scootaloos!"

"Well, what about me?" demanded Scootaloo Alpha.

"And me?!" demanded Scootaloo Ultra and Scootaloo Supreme in unison.

"I've got the coolest name," insisted Nacho Everyday Scootaloo.

"Gaaah," muttered Scootaloo-1. "Sometimes I think we should just have stuck with doing numbers."

Eventually, the six or seven most dominant Scootaloos managed to quash the chaos enough for Scootaloo Prime to wrest back control of the proceedings. "I don't think all this tossing is doing any good," she told the throng, shoving back Scootaloo Alpha with a hind hoof. "Sure, we all get our cutie marks at different times, but *none* of us can fly."

"Ba-CHAAWWK!" interjected Scootachicken.

"None of us can fly for *real*," the chairfilly amended, satiating Scootachicken. "I think that probably means we're all gonna develop our muscles and feathers and everything at the exact same rate until suddenly someday, *whoosh*, we all start flying at once!"

There was a flurry of wing-flapping. "CUTIE MARKS!" shouted somepony.

"NO!" shouted Scootaloo-22. "Dancing!!"

"DANCING!!" roared the council.

"Dancing is more fun than earning cutie marks anyway!" called Scootaloo-17, unaware of the irony of her statement.

"NO IT'S NOT!!" retorted several others.

"But let's do it anyway!" asserted Scootaloo Prime. "We deserve a break, and besides, it's on the agenda! Let's hear it, everypony, for the dubtrot stylings of our very own...DJ Scootalot!"

A smug Scootaloo in striped purple shades and a purple velvet jacket trotted out from backstage to assorted cheers, hauling a dual turntable. Before long, an intense, curve-heavy beat was rocking the Town Hall. Scootaloo-5 hurried about drawing the curtains to darken the room, with the bonus purpose of concealing the broken windows. Twin strobe lights drenched the room in a crossfire of electric green and hot pink.

The low-friction dancing that emerged was extreme. Hips were bumped; joints swung wildly; backflips went down. "What color do you suppose the DJ's eyes are?" Scootaloo-31 wondered.

"I bet they're green!" said Scootaloo-18.

"No way—they're probably yellow!" speculated Nacho Everyday Scootaloo.

"Uh...what are you guys talking about?" objected Scootaloo-1. "She's a Scootaloo, just like us. Her eyes are lavender!"

"Well you're no fun!" retorted Nacho Everyday Scootaloo.

"I can't hear you guys!" shouted Scootaloo-31. "I bet her eyes are, like, bright red!"

But at that moment, both turntables scratched simultaneously to a halt. The council looked to the stage. Three pairs of ominous eyes were glinting in the darkness. All three were green, hypnotic, and swirly.

"Hi!" shouted an enthusiastic, fractured, almost demonic voice.

"Oh no!!" shouted Scootaloo Numero Uno. "It's EVIL PINKIE PIE!!"

"It's the Evil Pinkie Pie *Club!!!*" chirped one of the shadowy Pinkies, her iron-studded leather clinking.

One of her companions stepped forward, wearing drab felt and ribbons. "Sooo many Scootaloos!!" she savored in a high pitch.

"And you know what thaaat means!" taunted the third, clad in gothic rags.

The room was silent. "Wh...what does it mean?" whimpered Scootaloo-10.

"...SCOOTABUSE TIME!!!" shouted all three Pinkies.

"NOOO!! No Scootabuse!!!" wailed several Scootaloos, diving for cover.

"SO MUCH SCOOTABUSE!!!" repeated the leather-clad Pinkie, throwing herself like a crowd-surfer onto the dance floor.

What followed was a chaotic strobe-lit brawl during which the three Evil Pinkie Pies ran hither and thither, scooping up hapless Scootaloos and bopping them on the head, hurling them into walls, buffeting them about like volleyballs, dancing overzealously with them, popping balloons in their faces, and force-feeding them hot sauce from steel flasks. The music somehow got started again, only now it was a head-banging metal cut that exacerbated the headaches various Scootaloos got from flying willy-nilly through the air, flung or kicked by sadistic Pinkie Pies whose malignant laughter overpowered the crash of the record and filled the councilmembers' hearts with dread.

Then, abruptly, the lights were restored, the music was halted, and a loud, raspy voice thundered: "Will you fillies SHUT IT, or am I gonna have to get medieval!?"

The Scootaloos looked up to the stage from wherever they'd gotten tossed or had fled, and beheld a powerful lion-eagle hybrid, tail swishing like an angry whip, wings raised and face enraged. The Evil Pinkies stopped what they were doing and froze in place. "It's Gilda!!"

"Run!"

"I'm not running! *You* run!"

"We can *all* run! Let's go see if Spike's home! He's always fun to mess with!" The three Evil Pinkie Pies surged out the door in a puff of caustic, sulfurous smoke.

The crowd of Scootaloos erupted once more in cacophonous cheering that broke down into coughing.

The griffon was not amused. "Enough! Scootaloo-18, we are going *home!!!*"

Scootaloo-18 crawled out from behind an overturned table. "Aw, but *Moom!!!*"

There was a collective intake of breath. "She's your *mom???*" cried Scootaloos Ultra and

Alpha.

Scotaloo-18 looked around in surprise. "You mean Gilda isn't *your* mom?"

"No!" shouted the rest of the council.

"Huh," said Scotaloo-18.

"That's so *cool*," reflected Scotaloo-22.

"Yeah, yeah," said Gilda. "Admit it. You girls have lame mothers, don'tcha?"

"Yeah, pretty much," said Scotaloo-3.

"I wish I had a lame mother," mumbled Scotaloo-41. "Or any mother at all."

"But I don't want to go, mom!" implored Scotaloo-18. "We haven't done cutie marks yet!"

"Don't give me guff, Scotaloo-18! I didn't raise you to be a...a guff-giver!"

"...Fine," said Scotaloo-18, allowing herself to be dragged out. "But next time, I'm staying for *cutie marks!!!*"

The doors to the Town Hall slammed shut behind the griffon and her daughter. For two seconds, there was perfect silence.

Then: "CUTIE MARKS!!!" erupted the throng. "*Cutie marks!! Cutie marks!!*"

Scotaloo Prime popped up and banged her gavel on the capsized podium. "Not YET!!" she shouted. "We just got massacred by a gang of Evil Pinkie Pies!"

"Yeah, that was creepy," said Scotaloo-42. "Does anyone even know what universe they came from?"

"I think the leader came from the one with that creepy rainbow factory," said Scotaloo-1. Every filly in the room shuddered simultaneously, the draft thus created sending several loose papers flying.

"But what are we supposed to do about them?!" asked Scotaloo-5.

"Yeah, what *can* we do?" asked Scotaloo-31.

What they could do, it turned out, was pass a strongly worded council resolution banning Scootabuse and calling for more Scootalove. The vote was unanimous and enthusiastic.

"...And now," said Scotaloo Prime. "We've worked our way to the very end of the agenda..."

"*CUTIE MARKS!!!!!!*" exploded the room. Several Scootaloos leapt and scrambled over

each other in excitement.

"Yes!! Yes, it's time to discuss cutie marks! Please remain calm!"

"But we're not calm now!" shrieked Scootaloo-30.

"Well, *get* calm and then remain that way!" countered Scootaloo Prime. "Do you guys want to actually discuss getting cutie marks, or do you just want to stand there and yell 'Cutie marks!' all day?"

This surprisingly complex question set off a chaotic debate. Scootaloo Prime was unable to regain the floor with her gavel this time. It wasn't until DJ Scootalot put on a famous piece of classical music that everypony gradually stopped arguing and fell quiet to listen.

"<<...Running and tripping, merrily skipping...watching the morning unfold!>>"

"What the hay is *that!*?" demanded Scootaloo-3.

"I think it's nice," said Scootaloo-22.

"It's corny!" shouted Scootaloo Alpha.

"It's only the greatest piece of music of *all time*," said DJ Scootalot, affecting a jivester's rasp. "You kids dunno how to appreciate the *classics*."

"<<...May all your days be bright!>>" the song concluded.

"Yeah! Bright days!" exclaimed Scootaloo-31. "With plenty of Scootalove!"

"And there's no doubt we'll have bright days ahead if we can just all get our cutie marks," summed up Scootaloo Prime. "Now, I believe we're up to twenty-five confirmed Scootiemarks." She trotted back to Scootachicken's easel and pulled out a huge chart illustrating the cutie marks of various Scootaloos and detailing where and how they were obtained. "So with that, let's begin show and tell! Who wants to go first?"

"Oohh!" chirped Scootaloo Delta. "Popcorn! I got a kernel of popcorn!!"

"Just one kernel?" asked Scootaloo Alpha. "That's kinda lame. I thought maybe you had a whole bag."

"But it's a really big kernel!" Scootaloo Delta argued. "Look!" She clambered up on stage, and Scootachicken carefully copied the popcorn kernel onto the easel for inclusion in future charts.

"How did you get it?" asked somepony.

"Did it start out unpopped?" asked somepony else.

"Did it *hurt* when it popped?" asked a third filly.

"No, it just came this way," said Scootaloo Delta. "Remember after we got Banana Fluff to cast that Super Sun Spell and pop all the popcorn in the field?"

"YEAH!" shouted all the Scootaloos who'd been there.

"Well, I got a needle and thread from the farmhouse and I went around making popcorn chains! I held the needle in my mouth and just caught all the kernels one at a time..." She dashed around, focusing upward and reenacting the moment.

"But then why is your mark just one kernel, and not a whole chain?" asked Scootaloo-10.

"It's a *really big* kernel!!"

"I know, but—"

"Maybe it means she can do all kinds of things with popcorn, not just making chains out of it," suggested Scootaloo-22.

"What else can you do with popcorn?" Scootaloo-30 challenged.

"Sell it?" suggested Scootaloo Supreme.

"Cover it in caramel?" offered Scootaloo-41.

"Butter it?" put in Scootaloo Numero Uno.

"Eat it!" cried Scootachicken.

"Well, I can *definitely* eat it!" agreed Scootaloo Delta cheerfully.

"All right, then!" said Scootaloo Prime. "Let's divide up into teams! Butter team, collect on the far side of the room! Team Caramel, by the window! Eating Team...we'll call you Team Glutton, as usual...gather in the middle! And Team Sales, over by me!"

"But what are we selling?" asked somepony.

"And buttering?" someone else added.

"Anything you like!" said the chair. "Chances are most of us won't have popcorn marks, so choose whatever food's your favorite and sell, butter, sweeten or eat the hay out of it! Five minutes to confer, then take two hours and meet back here!"

"Isn't there a quilting bee here in two hours?" asked Scootaloo-3.

"So what? Maybe we'll earn quilting marks *and* bee marks. Now scatter! I want this whole *town* smelling and selling like popcorn by the time we're done!"

The Scootaloos scattered. The largest group was Team Glutton, despite the fact that several of its members had been on Team Glutton or its equivalents before. Anytime some Scootaloo got a food-related mark—Nacho Everyday Scootaloo had been the most

recent—a Team Glutton was formed, just in case other Scootaloos were fostering hidden eating talents. As a rule, this group was not very beloved in most host worlds...except by Pinkie Pies. They therefore made a beeline for Sugarcube Corner, where a delighted and surprised Pinkie Pie-22 (who was decidedly non-evil) went out of her way to test the various ins and outs of their eating abilities. Were they speed eaters? Connoisseurs? Inspired food-blenders? Blindfolded food identifiers?

Pinkie-22 was so thorough in her tests that there was simply no room or attention to spare for Team Butter or Team Caramel when they arrived. So these teams found new destinations. Team Butter headed over the river and the fields to the cow barns, where they chatted up the cattle population in an effort to discover the secrets of buttery goodness. Team Caramel predictably paid a visit to Caramel the blacksmith, hoping that his name wasn't completely meaningless.

Meanwhile, Team Sales was roving the marketplace, looking for something cheap to buy so that they could practice selling it again. This was going poorly, however, since any bits the Scootaloos on that team had possessed had gone toward the expense of renting the Town Hall. Led by Scootaloo Prime, they eventually hit on the idea of finding somepony to borrow some money from so that they could get their undoubtedly lucrative trading business underway.

The Sales team therefore began touring the commercial district in search of interested speculators. After several embarrassing failures, they were given a pity offer by Mr. Davenport of Quills and Sofas. He informed them that his wife was always looking for suitable new materials to make quills from, since sufficiently long bird feathers were somewhat scarce and pegasus feathers were right out. If the band of Scootaloos could bring back proof of concept of such a thing, he would gladly advance them a loan against their further business ventures.

The group tried out a number of materials—prairie grass, braided hay, porcupine quills...before finally settling on evergreen needles as the most feasible choice. They borrowed some ladders and buckets and set out to begin the harvest. In doing so, they happened to run into the Caramel Team, who explained that Caramel the blacksmith had furnished them with a spigot and suggested that if they wanted to try their hooves at caramel making, they'd do best to start right at the source by collecting some sap for refining. The two teams agreed to work together, sharing their buckets and making sure *not* to jostle each others' ladders.

Meanwhile, the Butter Team had been eating and chatting for some time with the cattle, who had suggested an intriguing butter-related activity for the Scootaloos to try out: butter skating! Some of them were skeptical that one could simply pour butter over a road and skate along on it, but world S-22's low friction coefficient turned out to make such a thing eminently possible. The team therefore assigned a few butter pourers to run ahead while the rest set about skating merrily down the road, flipping and leaping and strutting their stuff. A few members of the team had brought their own scooters from home and were pleased to incorporate them into the proceedings.

Two hours had nearly passed, and Team Glutton was waddling back to Town Hall, satiated and somewhat inspired, even though none of them had gotten new cutie marks in the course of their gobbling. These fillies, whose reflexes would ordinarily have allowed them

to easily dodge the out-of-control butter skaters careening toward them, were so engrossed in their conversation and stuffed from their time at Sugarcube Corner that they failed to notice the frantic Butter Team until it was too late. The two groups collided, skidding forward in a huge low-friction heap of Scootalosity. The road happened to curve away from Town Hall at that point, which would have been a relief except that Team Sales and Team Caramel happened to be returning from their errand in the forest just then, and were struck in turn by the sliding pile of Scootaloos just as they rounded the corner of the building.

The upshot of all this was that the entire Interdimensional Council of Scootaloos wound up sprawling together on the grass, coated head to tail in the sticky fruits of their labors.

"Yyyep," said Scootaloo Prime. "Covered in pine needles and tree sap again. *This* is why we do cutie marks *last*, ponies!"

"How does this always happen!?" complained Scootaloo-1, peeling needles off her forelegs. "I swear, it must be some kind of multiversal law."

"No kidding!" added Scootaloo Ultra. "I thought at least last week, when we tried to get cutie marks in accounting, we'd be safe. But the sap always finds a way through!"

"Oh my gosh, you guys," ranted Scootaloo-31. "I think I just got my cutie mark!!"

Everypony stopped talking and gasped. "It's not just another shapeless sap-colored blob, is it?" asked Scootaloo Supreme.

"No no, this one's for real! It's..." She climbed to her hooves to show it off. "Um...it's..."

"It's an *explosion!!!*" shouted Scootaloo-42.

A chorus of murmurs and gasps followed as the council untangled itself and gathered around to stare at Scootaloo-31's flanks.

"Looks pretty amorphous to me," said Scootaloo Alpha.

"No, no," insisted Scootaloo-42. "It's an explosion! Look, that bit is a piece of shrapnel...and that looks kind of like an impact cloud!"

The others mumbled and tilted their heads so they could see it better.

Scootaloo-31 was ecstatic. "It must've happened when we slammed into each other! I bet this is 'cause of that awesome roll I did so I barely got hurt at all! Hey everyone, I think I'm a *stunt pony!*"

"Or maybe you're just good at explosions," said Scootaloo-5.

"Well in any case, I'll take it!" Scootaloo-31 stood a while, beaming at her ambiguously stamped rear end. There was silence as the assemblage of juvenile orange pegasi soaked in the feeling of another pine-scented group victory.

"Same time next week, right?" asked Scootaloo-10.

"Wouldn't miss it for the world!" agreed Scootaloo Prime. She was supported by cheers and enthusiastic chatter.

Scootaloos -1 and -5 excused themselves from the group so that they could get cleaned up in the Ponyville-5 spa, for which they had heavy duty season passes. They exchanged cheery goodbyes and headed off toward the nearby field.

"Kind of a dull meeting this week, huh?" remarked Scootaloo-5 as she revved up her Interdimensional Scootapiston.

"Yeah," agreed Scootaloo-1, charging her Mach III Hulaporter with a few well-timed revolutions of her body. "But hey, there's always next time!"

"There sure is," agreed Scootaloo-5 with a laugh. The pair vanished then into another realm of existence, leaving only the pine-strewn grass to mark their passing.

- END ARCHIVE -

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**A/N:** Ahoy, readers! While I was working on The Combinatorics Project, I found myself tempted here and there to explore a few tangential ideas. Apparently, some of my readers had the same idea. :-) If there was one request for extra material I got a lot of, it was to see the Interdimensional Council in action. So there you go—I hope you enjoyed it!

I expect this won't be the project's only appendix, either. We'll see how long it takes me to create something else. In the meantime, allow me to sing you out with this bonus song:

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## **SCOOTALOO'S SONG**

(Spoken: Scootaloooo! Scoot-Scootaloooo!)

Scoota-Scootaloo!  
Where are you?  
Your friends have all been lookin' for ya.  
No need to be blue  
Scootaloo  
'Cause Rainbow's fans'll still adore ya.

Though you cannot fly  
You get by  
In style on your wing-powered scooter.  
Someday you will match  
Rainbow Dash  
If she agrees to be your tutor.

You might be building jungle gyms or planting posies in the park...  
On a lark!  
But as long as you keep scooting you'll be sure to get your cutie mark!  
(What a spark!)

Scoota-Scootaloo!  
Look at you!  
You're with the Cutie Mark Crusaders.  
To yourself be true,  
Scootaloo  
And never listen to the haters.

Scooty! Scootalee-doo!  
Scooty! Scoot-Scootaloo!

...And you'll grow up to be a *star!*

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