

Pony of a Different Color

by AugieDog

Steeling herself, Fluttershy stopped in front of Sugarcube Corner. "I'm sorry, Rarity," she said, pushing the words out when her friend paused to take a breath in the middle of another funny story about her cat, "but I just have to stop off here for a moment."

"Here?" Rarity arched an eyebrow at the bakery's door. "On April Fools' Day? With Pinkie Pie inside?"

Fluttershy forced a chuckle past the nervous clench in her throat. "Oh, now, Rarity. You know Pinkie always takes April Fools' Day off. It's for amateur jokers, she says, not professionals like her."

"I know what she says." Rarity turned and marched to the opposite side of the street. "However, I believe I'll wait out here, if you don't mind."

Feeling doubly guilty now, Fluttershy ducked her head. "I'm sorry," she said again. "I'll be as quick as I can, then we can get on to the spa."

Rarity nodded, and Fluttershy pushed the bakery door open, the bell making her flinch as it always did.

"Fluttershy!" Pinkie Pie's voice called from somewhere in the vicinity of an eight-layer cake that covered most of the floor in one corner. "I'll be with you in one three-quarters of a sec!"

"Oh!" Fluttershy swallowed. "That's all right! Take your time! I'm not--!"

"You're not?" Pinkie popped up from behind the cake, her eyes blinking rapidly behind frosting-covered goggles. "But you look exactly like Fluttershy! Are you--?" She gasped and shot straight into the air, her mane and tail frizzing like dandelion fluff. "Are you your own evil twin??"

"No!" Alarmed, Fluttershy looked down at herself, put a hoof to her chest to see if she felt the way she usually did. "I mean, I don't think so! At least, I wasn't when I came in!" She looked imploringly at her friend. "I promise, Pinkie!"

"Huh." Pinkie trotted around to the front of the giant cake. "Well, it'd be totally OK if you were, y'know, 'cause I'm an expert on that evil twin stuff." Her face curved into her usual big grin. "Something non-evil-twinny I can help you with today?"

"Yes! I mean, no! I mean--" Fluttershy stopped, took a breath, told herself again that this was going to be fun, took a

wide-hoofed stance on the bakery floor, and blurted out, "Is your refrigerator running??"

Pinkie blinked. "Well, yeah. Unless the ants have gotten in and stolen the motor again."

Heart quivering, Fluttershy opened her mouth...and couldn't do it, couldn't make herself say the words she'd been practicing in secret all March. "Oh. Good. If it's running, I mean." She sighed and turned for the door. "Thank you, Pinkie. I'm sorry to take up so much of your--"

"Wait a minute!" A whoosh overhead, and Pinkie was suddenly on the doorstep in front of Fluttershy, the earth pony's eyes wide and her grin even bigger than before. "You were gonna say that if it was running, I'd better hurry up and catch it, weren't you??"

Fluttershy's ears folded, her cheeks burning; she tried to step back, but her hoofs were shaking so much, she couldn't figure out how to move them. "I...I...I--"

Sparks seemed to burst from between Pinkie's ears. "You were gonna April Fool me!" She clasped her front hoofs together. "Oh, Fluttershy! This is the happiest day of my life!" She started a little dance on the doorstep. "Your first ever April Fool joke, and you chose me! Me!"

"You--" Fluttershy stared at her friend. "You don't mind?"

"Mind??" Pinkie's eyes wavered. "Fluttershy, I'm so proud of you!"

Fluttershy wasn't sure if she was blushing in pleasure or shame at this point. "I...I just thought I'd try..."

Pinkie nodded. "And that refrigerator one's a classic! It never gets old!" A little wickedness came into her grin. "So! Who's the next victim in your campaign of jokery?"

"Next??" A shiver shook Fluttershy from the tips of her ears to the last hair of her tail. "I...this...it was...I almost fainted just doing this!"

"That's OK, Fluttershy." Pinkie danced past her and back into the bakery. "One step at a time, y'know? You'll do it next year! I know you will!" She shouldered another pack of frosting onto her back and started for the cake again. "I'll see you later!"

"Thanks, Pinkie." Fluttershy stepped outside, Rarity still waiting across the street.

The white unicorn was smiling. "Well, you certainly made Pinkie Pie's day." She started up the street toward the spa.

Fluttershy shook her head and moved into step beside her.

"I just wish I could've gone through with it. Jokes are so important to Pinkie, I...I just wanted to make today special for her."

Rarity nudged her with a shoulder. "You did. But today's our special day, too, isn't it?"

"It certainly is!" Fluttershy gave her friend a smile she didn't quite feel, and Rarity picked up her cat story again, Opalescence's antics carrying them through the front door of the bathhouse, into the steam room, onto the massage tables, and right to the edge of the spa.

"Ahhh!" Rarity slipped into the bubbling water, and after a moment of hesitation, Fluttershy followed, still nervous despite the soothing atmosphere of the place. "What a pretty, witty kitty I have!"

"Then she's not scratching you anymore?" Fluttershy asked hopefully, the water so lovely and tingly around her.

Rarity waved a hoof. "One expects displays of temper from a purebred. Why, just the other day..." And she set off into another story, Fluttershy glad to have something she could focus on to take her mind off her worries.

This story lasted through their entire time in the spa, and they were toweled off and stepping back out onto the street when

Rarity finished. "But you've done such wonders with the little darling!" She turned to Fluttershy. "I can't thank you enough for--" Her eyes ballooned out, and she gave a little shriek.

"Fluttershy! You...you...you--!"

Fluttershy looked down, saw the usual creamy yellow of her coat glowing an emerald green, then looked back up and pointed a hoof at her friend. "Uhh, Rarity?"

Because the pure white of Rarity's hide was darkening, too, turning a green as bright as a party lantern.

Rarity's shriek this time turned into a growl halfway through. "Pinkie Pie!"

"Ummm, Rarity?"

"She...she...she must've dripped something on you at the bakery!"

"Actually, Rarity, it--"

"Something that would dye us both this horrible color when we went into the spa!"

"No, Rarity! It wasn't--!"

"I shall be avenged!" Rarity planted her front hoofs on the ground and snorted like a bull. "No one makes a fool out of--"

"It was me, Rarity!" Fluttershy threw herself into the air

and hovered right in front of Rarity's astonished face. "I spent all winter distilling it from plants I gathered last fall, made it into a powder, and sprinkled it on my coat so it would spread into the water!"

"You??" Rarity looked so funny, green from the neck down, shocked from the neck up, that Fluttershy couldn't help giggling. And it was even funnier since she knew she looked just as ridiculous. "But-- Why??"

"So we could be April Fools' twins!" She landed in front of Rarity and started doing her best version of Pinkie's little dance. "I knew Pinkie would want me to try fooling her first, but those kind of word jokes are so hard! This--" She waved a hoof between herself and the unicorn. "This is what I've been planning for six months!"

Rarity's eye twitched, but so did the corners of her mouth, a grin growing there that blossomed into full-bodied laughter. "April Fools' twins!" She threw back her head and stepped into the dance beside Fluttershy, ponies stopping on the street to stare at them.

Suddenly, though, hoofs seized Fluttershy, and she found herself staring right into Rarity's glare. "It will wash off, won't it?"

All Fluttershy's nervousness crashed back into place. "Oh! Oh, yes! It...it's just mostly chlorophyll. You can--" She swallowed, hung her head, couldn't meet Rarity's eyes. "You can go right back inside and wash it off if...if you want to..."

A moment of silence, then Rarity's laugh made Fluttershy look back up. "What say we stop by Sugarcube Corner first?"

Her heart soaring, Fluttershy couldn't keep her wings still, couldn't keep herself on the ground. "Oh, thank you! Can...can we dance the whole way there?"

Rarity poked her with a hoof. "Try to stop me!"

And laughing, they shimmied, shook, and boogied their bright green selves up the street together.