“Come on, Rainbow, I’m just asking you to try it,” Twilight said, positioned in the perfect way to keep her friend from reading her book.

Said friend pulled *Daring Do and Diamond Dog’s Dagger* up and turned her back to Twilight. Rainbow Dash, jaw set in a scowl and brow furrowed, chose not to even dignify the pleading with a response.

“Just try it. One day, no stress, no mess... probably, and no obligations. That’s a key phrase here, *no obligations.*”

“Ugh!” Rainbow slapped her book closed and stood up. “Does your checkup system still work? ‘Cause I’m about ready to go home and read by myself if you’re going to keep doing this.”

“That’s check*out*, Dash.” Twilight rested an elbow on the table, chin to her hoof. “And you know I don’t charge friends to take books from the library.”

“Great. But you know what else you don’t do with good friends? Bug them about something over and over and over again!” Huffing, Rainbow slapped her book back on the table and cracked it open. “Gah, ponyfeathers, you made me lose my page.”

Twilight stuck her tongue out before saying, “I didn’t make you do anything.”

“You’re trying to make me do something, and doing that made me flip out and lose my place. Therefore, it’s your fault. That’s my infallible logic and I’m sticking to it.”

“Infallible? I see somepony has been using that thesaurus I gave them for Hearth’s Warming~”

There was a moment where Rainbow debated making her scowl deeper. “Believe me, Twilight, that was the last book I wanted to read. I needed something to do while waiting for the slowpokes to catch up, and I grabbed that dumb book on accident.”

“You can’t tell me you didn’t enjoy it a little bit.” Smirking, Twilight added, “Loyalty is your thing, and a loyal friend would tell another friend if their present they spent so much thought on was being enjoyed.”

Rainbow considered denying any such accusation and pretending it wasn’t fun finding ‘smart’ ways to say some of the normal things she said and confusing the heck out of Applejack with some fancy talk while on break. The challenge had been issued, though; how loyal was Rainbow Dash? Neither a quitter nor a loser, since quitters never finished things and losers didn’t win, Dash couldn’t let a confrontation fly by, no matter how small . “*Fine*, I liked it. Calling Flitter an ignoramus made me all warm and tingly inside. There, are you happy?”

“Content, for the time being. I’d be happy if you gave this brochure another read.” A folded piece of glossy paper floated before Rainbow Dash, opening wide.

The heavy scowl returned with a vendetta, which she had learned was like saying ‘revenge’ but with the added bonus of being Istallion. “Okay, Twilight, this is getting silly. Not the kind of silly Pinkie Pie is, either. The kind of silly where Celestia gives you an assignment and you start freaking out when you have a whole month to complete it.”

“Hey! That hasn’t happened for a long time and you know it!”

“*Tch*, only because Celestia doesn’t give you homework anymore. Just wait until you have some important princess duty with a due date, then we’ll see what you’re really made of.”

Twilight rolled her eyes as Dash pushed the brochure back onto the table. “Let’s be serious for a second here, Rainbow. Being a princess is a stressful job. More than once I’ve almost thrown a bookshelf out the window to resist pulling my mane out.” She tapped her hoof on the brochure’s cover page, right over the words *Fontaine de Jouvence*. “This place right here? Lots of relaxation going on. It refreshes my being and makes me feel as spry as, well…” With a giggle, she said, “As spry as a foal.”

“That’s weird. *You’re* weird.” Looking down at the pamphlet, Rainbow raised a brow and ruminated, which sounded similar to ‘ruinous’ and’ ‘annihilated’ but was actually rather distant in meaning. Never had a piece of paper seemed so confusing and enigmatic (she filed that one away for if and when she decided to don the Mare-Do-Well costume) as this one in front of the pegasus. Snatching the paper from Twilight’s purple glow, she let the question that burned in her being make itself known through the creases in the downward curl of her lips and the tilt of her head.

“I go here regularly, especially when I need a break from *everything*. And that seems like what you need right now.” Twilight’s smile was as sincere as could be, genuine as possible.

There was no doubt in Rainbow’s mind that Twilight was being honest. Wanting to take her to this spa, though… this very *peculiar* spa had Rainbow question if the stress of being a princess was driving her mad. Like, a new kind of mad that was so mad, you couldn’t use *mad* to describe it anymore. Rainbow made a note to find a super version of ‘insane’ in her thesaurus later.

“You go here regularly?”

“Every other week.”

“You *schedule* going here. Even though you’ve got all kinds of important stuff to do, you make time to go *here*.”

“That’s correct. If I didn’t make time for it, I’d go crazy.”

“I think you might already be there.”

“Hey!”

Rainbow rubbed her face with a hoof, letting it slide down and limply fall onto her book. “Do you even hear yourself? You are asking me to go to a *nursery* to get put in *diapers* and treated like a *foal*.” Picking up the brochure, Rainbow opened it and jabbed it towards Twilight. “This isn’t normal. Those are grown ponies being bottle fed and using pacifiers and... and...” Rainbow shook her head and let the pamphlet drop. “It’s weird, Twilight. Your thesaurus can’t come up with a better word. *Weird*.”

The unicorn smirked and resisted the urge to snicker. “Well, duh, of course it’s weird. You don’t see ponies walking around in diapers and bibs on a daily basis. And that’s what the *Fontaine* exists for, to give ponies a safe place to be foals.”

The blunt honesty coming from Twilight seemed wrong to Rainbow. Where was the unicorn that freaked out if her bookshelf wasn’t set the right way? Prancing around in anything that could hint at not being a fully functional *adult* mare should have made Twilight reel back and incinerate (she liked to imagine ‘incinerate’ came with a fireball and an explosion better than fireworks) the offensive object.

Rainbow Dash looked her friend up and down, searching for any sign that this wasn’t Twilight and some kind of shape shifting creature. Changelings seemed like a likely excuse, but Twilight hadn’t made any attempt to eat Rainbow’s ‘love’, however that worked. The only other kind of shapeshifter Rainbow knew of turned into inanimate objects, and Twilight wasn’t lacking in the ability to move of her own accord. “Twilight, you do realize you’re admitting you like to... ugh, it feels weird just to say it. To wear *diapers* and act like a foal. Does any of that sound a little bit strange? Just a tiny bit?”

At long last a blush worked its way onto Twilight’s cheeks. It was the first hint of shame Dash had seen on her friend’s face all day. “Look, I know it’s not normal, alright? My research suggests that only one in every thirty ponies are into this, even on a rudimentary level. That means, for me, there are twenty-nine other ponies who would be really confused by this. I know you’re one of them, and that’s fine. Don’t be one of the five ponies that would mock me and call me a freak.”

On the one hoof, Dash resented being reduced to a number. On the other, guilt welled up inside Dash as she realized she would be one of those five if it had been anypony other than one of her friends saying they liked... this sort of thing. “Hey, loyalty is my thing. Being loyal means not making fun of my friends. Except when they’re an egghead.” A sigh escaped Dash as she rubbed her temple. “Look, I get that this is your thing. You like it and that’s your business. But I have mine, and my business doesn’t involve bottles and making kissy faces at ponies I don’t know trying to make a foal out of me.”

“It’s not about making kissy faces,” Twilight said. “It’s about relaxing. Just like a regular spa, that’s what this place does. You go and leave your troubles at the door. No responsibility, just being playful and silly.”

“First of all, I don’t need to *relax*,” Dash bit back. This was something of a lie, or at least it was Dash being her usual ‘tough’ self. She’d said earlier that she’d do anything to get away from work and the new limitations placed on her. While lazing about was something Dash usually enjoyed, she was practicing for the Wonderbolts Reserves. Every breathing moment had to be dedicated to becoming the best athlete possible.

So what if she bucked clouds faster than other pegasi could fart them? That should have been a good thing, or so Dash thought. But no, it apparently put other ponies out of the job and meant they weren’t making money. As such, a good chunk of her work time was just sitting around and reading. She couldn’t practice her tricks in case she was needed for an emergency, but she wasn’t *doing* anything. All the pent up energy being wasted when she could have been awesome all that time. Sitting around and not being awesome took a lot more energy than one might assume.

Dash tried to shake her agitation away, hoping the tension wasn’t showing in her shoulders or wherever back rubbing ponies said that stuff got stuck in. “Second, even if I did, this isn’t how I’d want to do it.”

“A few months ago, I would have said the same thing,” Twilight replied. “But I gave it a shot and now it’s a part of my life.”

“Well I don’t want it to be part of *my* life,” Rainbow said, slamming her hoof on the table. “Do you see this pony? Rainbow Dash, the coolest, most tenacious pony that ever flew in the sky. I’m not a baby, Twilight, and you aren’t either.”

Twilight scoffed. “It’s not like I’m always a foal, you know. The only reason you even know about this is because I told you.”

Curses, Twilight went logical being logical and fair. “Maybe ponies don’t know you’re a... a foal. But what if they did?”

“But they don’t.”

“But if they *did*? Even if nopony made fun of you, how could anypony take you seriously? And the Wonderbolts are all kinds of serious.”

With a roll of her eyes, Twilight said, “That’s why Spitfire was asking Pinkie Pie for pranking tips the other day. Practical jokes are just soooo important for flying, aren’t they?”

Rainbow scowled. “I hate it when you’re right.”

“Why so serious?” Twilight stuck her tongue out. “Look, Dash, I get it. This is weird and strange and far from what you know to be normal. But as a good friend, I have good reasons for suggesting this. One; You’re tense and need to relax. Two; You’ll never know until you try. Remember what we learned from the book fiasco?”

“Not to break into hospitals.” Memories of running from disgruntled nurses and doctors came to Rainbow’s mind. “They smell funny.”

“And?” Twilight egged on.

“*And* to not knock something until you try it,” Dash grumbled. “This is different, though.”

“I get that, I really do.” Blushing, Twilight added, “There’s a third reason for asking you. Going to this spa is nice, but it’s always better with a friend. This is just as much for me as it is for you.”

Rainbow wanted to say *aha!* and call Twilight out on being selfish, but couldn’t bring herself to do it. This was Twilight asking for a friend as much as offering help.

Twilight asked with great big eyes, “Can you just think about it? It doesn’t have to be just for you. It can be for us both. You’d get to relax from not doing anything, and I’d get somepony to play with.”

The irony was not lost to Dash, especially since she now knew the meaning of ‘irony’. “More ‘not doing anything’ won’t make me relax, you know.”

“Trust me, you wouldn’t be doing nothing,” Twilight replied. “There are lots of fun games and toys and stuff to do to keep you active.”

Rainbow gave up on trying to make sense of Twilight ramblings or convincing her that anything requiring diapers acting like a dumb baby couldn’t be fun. “Good for you.”

Twilight shrugged. “Fine, Rainbow, I’ll stop pushing it. Just know that the offer is open and you have nothing to be scared of.”

“Scared?” Dash furrowed her brow. “I’m not scared of anything, especially not some dumb nursery.”

“Oh? Is that true?” A devious smile curled across Twilight’s lips as she rubbed her chin. “You aren’t scared of going to a spa designed to put you in diapers, give you toys to play with, and make you feel like a foal?”

“Of course not! There’s nothing to be scared of, not for Rainbow Dash!”

“Glad you agree. Why don’t you prove it?”

Dash blinked. “Prove it?

“That’s right. If you aren’t scared, come with me and show it. But if you don’t go, you *must* be scared.” Twilight turned away from Rainbow, her voice betraying the smile she was still wearing. “That’s okay. Nopony will know. Except me.”

Realizing the trap she’d so easily fallen into, Dash clenched her teeth and gave Twilight’s back the best stink-eye she could manage. Rainbow’s bravery had been challenged, and Dash could not accept losing a challenge, not without a fight.

“Hypothetically, if I *were* to go to this spa...”

Twilight turned around so fast, it was amazing she didn’t get whiplash. “Yes?”

Dash sighed. “If I were to go, nopony is going to find out?”

“Not a soul that doesn’t work there or visits the *Fontaine* already,” Twilight replied. “Unless you’re scared of anypony getting a look at your cute little bottom~”

Not in a million years would Dash admit to being scared. Because she wasn’t. Nope, not ever. “I’m not doing this because I wanna relax.”

“Yes, yes, yes!” Twilight yelled over and over, hopping up from her seat and jumping around the table.

“It’s so you know I’m not scared! Because I’m not!” Rainbow sighed and sunk into her chair. “What the hay did I just agree to?”

Twilight grappled Dash into a hug, cheeks pressing together. “A whole day of being an innocent little pony. Tomorrow, after breakfast, we’ll head on over and have the best foal day ever! This is gonna be great, I promise!”

“Yeah, great,” Dash grumbled. She looked at all the windows of the library before returning Twilight’s hug.

The first room of the building was every bit as overly-colorful as Rainbow had imagined. Burning pinks and blues that Rainbow knew as ‘baby’ colors from when she’d helped Fluttershy sew booties for puppies. Granted, the reception area was a lot more empty than she’d imagined. That other spa Rarity dragged all the girls to had a waiting area with enough furniture for a five-pony house, which Rainbow thought to be needlessly excessive. Here, it was almost the exact opposite. There was one shelf with reading material, likely about the establishment, and another shelf with various sorts of containers. Names were printed on them, but Rainbow’s tongue ached just trying to pronounce the words in her head.

There was also the smell. If Rainbow had to be honest, it wasn’t a bad smell. Pleasant, in fact. She didn’t have to be honest, thankfully, and could give her disgruntled stare to anything that crossed her path. So far, that wasn’t much. Other than the sets of doors, the only other thing in the room was a desk sitting in the center. The pony sitting behind it could have camouflaged into the walls if she stood in just the right way. She was running out of things to be gruntled at faster than she liked.

Said pony had a motherly look about her that Rainbow found condescending, but thought it best not to make mention of her feelings when the pony trotted out from behind the desk and ran up to Twilight to give her a hug. The familiarity between the two startled Rainbow, sending pangs of some indescribable emotion though Rainbow’s chest.

“Ahh, my sparkling star, how are you today?” the pony asked, placing a kiss on each of Twilight’s cheeks.

Twilight returned the gesture with the addition of rubbing their noses together. “Tired and achy, Nounou. I had to stay up all night going over laws regarding foreign ponies wanting to set up business establishments.”

The pony raised a brow, smirking as she pressed her nose against Twilight’s. “Oh dear, we are not under arrest, are we? Being taken to jail by my precious princess would be bad for business.”

“Don’t be silly, Nounou, you couldn’t make this place any more perfect if you tried. Unless it’s illegal to make ponies feel like the most important thing in the world, you should be just fine.”

“You are a princess now, aren’t you? Let’s make a prison filled with plush toys and baths and changing tables, then put all the bad ponies there so they can be foals.” She winked. “Then you can be my partner in crime, stealing all the cookies from the jar, so we can spend lots of time ‘locked up’.”

Rainbow Dash would normally have gagged at such a display of ooey-gooey emotion. The fact that it was *Twilight* doing this with a strange pony Rainbow had never seen before stopped the thought from getting any farther than her frontal lobe. Between giggles, sweet nothings, and so much physical contact, Rainbow wondered if her friend had found a way to teleport without any visible sign and been replaced with a whole other Twilight Sparkle. Never had Rainbow considered Twilight to be a tight-flank, but the sudden lack of clench in Twilight’s hindquarters and the lack of the stick usually being held in it was noticeable even to a pony like Dash. If she were any looser, she might just melt.

After a few more cutesy statements about a nursery-jail, Twilight pulled away from the hug and motioned to the pegasus. “Épingle, I’d like to introduce you to my friend, Rainbow Dash. Dash, meet Épingle, my Nounou.”

“A pleasure to meet you, Miss Dash,” Épingle said, extending a hoof to Rainbow. “My full name is Épingle Anglaise.”

Dash raised a brow as she took note of how the ‘s’ Épingle said came out sounding like a ‘z’. Each word came out like a coo, almost. The leftovers of speaking in another language? Her name alone made Dash think of the funny smelling perfumes that Rarity bought from the other spa. “Nounou, huh? Is that fancy for Mommy or something?” she’d said. In usual fashion, her mouth had moved faster than her brain had, and her brain chastised her mouth with guilty, awkward feelings once it caught up.

As Twilight’s face turned beat red, Épingle giggled and reached her hoof down to take Dash’s and shake. “No, though sometimes I can swear that’s what my Twinkle thinks it mean. *Nounou* is Prench for *Nanny*, which I am for all the good little ponies in the *Fontaine*.”

Dash snorted as Twilight’s face blushed even deeper. “Did you just call Twilight *Twinkle*?”

“It is a precious name, is it not? Especially when she is soggy. Then she is my Tinkle Twinkle.”

“Nounou, don’t tell her *that*!” Twilight groaned, shielding her face from Dash’s laughter with her mane.

Épingle turned and stuck her tongue out. “Do not act like you hate it, little one. *You* came up with the name.”

“Sweet Celestia, this is precious alright!” Dash said through fits of laughter. “Okay, okay, stop for a moment, I gotta breathe!”

“You promised you wouldn’t make fun of me!” Twilight said, stomping her hoof. “Stop laughing!”

“I’m trying! Oh *jeez*, woo! Okay, we’re good.” A few more snickers and Dash sized up Épingle up, taking note of her being an earth pony. Were all spa owners earth ponies, Dash wondered. “So, what, do you run the place?”

Épingle nodded. “Oui, this is my business. But you don’t need to worry about all the boring paperwork. Twilight scheduled for us to have playtime specifically. Err...” She turned to Twilight. “You did tell your friend what the *Fontaine* is, oui? We do not want a repeat of Rarity’s unfortunate incident.”

“Don’t worry, Rainbow knows all about it,” Twilight said.

“Not *all* about it,” Dash added. “Twilight still hasn’t spilled all the beans about Rarity having to baby talk all day.” Another smile forced itself onto Dash’s lips. “Hey, Épingle, am I a naughty pony for wanting to hear the embarrassing details?”

“You are, and the naughty little ones don’t get cookies at snack time.” Épingle flicked Dash’s nose. “So, why are you here, Miss Dash?”

“Same reason as everypony else, I guess,” Rainbow said with a shrug. “Hey, quick question. How many ponies come here, anyway?”

“A great many.” Épingle trotted back to her desk and picked up a binder, picking a pencil up in her mouth and jotting a few things down. “Why do you ask?”

“No reason, no reason at all.” Dash rubbed the back of her head, the awkward feeling returning. “Just kinda nice to know you’re not alone. You know?”

“I know.” Épingle took the pencil from her mouth and tapped her chin. “And what sort of experience are you after today?”

“Huh?”

Twilight sidled up next to Épingle, ever-smiling. “Give her the same one as me, Nounou. I don’t think Dash could take anything stronger.”

“Hey, what’s that supposed to mean?” the pegasus huffed, puffing out her chest. “I can take anything this place has got. Show me your worst and Rainbow Dash will come back tougher for it.”

“Worst? But miss Dash, we want to give you our best.” Épingle frowned and tilted her head to the side.

Something about Épingle’s eyes made Dash’s heart sink, the guilty-awkward feeling as bad as the time she’d told her mom her brussels sprout tacos tasted like chalk. Even worse was when her mom had asked why she knew what chalk tasted like. “Wait, I didn’t mean it like that. Just... uhh... you know, like, I can do the toughest thing you got. Bring it on! You know... like that?”

Épingle nodded, though still had a brow raised. “Miss Dash, you are either a very confused pony, or a very confusing pony. Either way, I am confused. This is a place of peace. What you want matters most to us.”

“It does, huh?” Dash tapped her chin and thought about saying she wanted the highest level of treatment they had, just to show Twilight up.

As if the alicorn had mind-reading powers she didn’t tell Dash about, Twilight said, “The strongest foal-time therapy they have is the same as what Rarity took. You know, total loss of control.”

Rainbow’s mouth almost outran her brain, but fortunately was only half-opened before snapping shut with tooth-rattling speed. Twilight wasn’t doing it, so neither was Dash. Going all-out was more Lightning Dust’s thing, anyways. “Okay, okay, fine, I’ll do whatever Twilight’s doing.

Épingle wrote a few more things down. “Two *Little Big Pony* packages then. So you know, this will include a bath meant to relax your muscles. You will lose control of certain functions and a diaper will be required on you while in the play area.”

“So I’m not gonna control when I pee. It’ll just kinda... happen.” Rainbow frowned, then shot Twilight a dirty look. “If you call me Rainbow Splash, I will end you.”

Twilight hummed as she looked up towards the ceiling. “What? Me, make fun of you? Perish the thought.”

Dash grunted and turned back to Épingle. “And what about the... other thing?”

“You mean messing?” Épingle replied.

“*Ech*, yeah. What about that? Losing control over... *that* doesn’t sound like fun.”

“You’ll certainly feel the need more than normal, but you will be allowed to remove your diaper and be led to a restroom, should the need arise.”

“Okay, as long as I don’t have to worry about fertilizing myself,” Dash said.

Twilight raised a brow. “You really have been using that thesaurus.”

Dash’s nose wrinkled. “Yeah, but Applejack got bored once and explained the best way to grow corn. I can’t eat the stuff anymore because of that.”

With a giggle, Épingle said, “Don’t worry, Miss Dash, we don’t grow crops here. Now, since decisions are clearly important to you, I think you should make one more choice.”

“Oh yeah?” Dash couldn’t help but notice how reassuring Épingle’s smile alone was. *If this mare’s acting, she’s doing a real good job. That’s the same way mom smiled when I came home screaming about the races I always won. Huh, this is the most I’ve thought about mom in a while.* Shaking her head, Dash asked, “What’s that?”

Épingle turned her binder around, presenting Dash a list of names with either checkmarks or X’s next to them. “You shall choose your caretaker. This is a list of all my employees. The checkmarked ones are available, the X’d ones aren’t.”

“I pick who takes care of me?” Dash asked, eyes quickly scanning over the page. “Huh. Okay, I guess.”

“But that’s not how you—” Twilight began before Épingle brought a hoof to the alicorn’s lips.

“Trust your Nounou, everything will work out. Your friend here knows what’s best for her.”

Dash questioned how Épingle could know that Dash knew, but kept it to herself. Anything to get this started faster and ended sooner. The names were each Prench words, which looked like gibberish to Rainbow. Some had words-within-the-words that sounded familiar, but the extra apostrophe thingies over so the E’s and the like turned her away. What was she supposed to pick up from just names, anyway? Okay, sure, pony names often said a lot about the pony in question, for whatever reason, but that only applied when one could interpret them.

One name stood out, and Rainbow had to take a double take to make sure she was seeing it right. *Thank Celestia, a pony with a name I can say.* Sure, it was strange that there was only one Equestrian name despite all the others in Prench, but at least it was familiar. Dash brought her hoof up and tapped the name *Love Tap* on the page. “I’ll take that one.”

“Our newest caretaker? Excellent choice.” Épingle closed the binder once Rainbow pulled her hoof away. “Let me just call her in and we’ll get started.” The elder mare stood up and walked behind one of the sets of double doors.

“So, how do you like my Nounou?” Twilight asked, unable to stop the giggle that followed afterwards.

“She’s alright,” Rainbow replied. “I’m just waiting for the ooey gooey stuff to start coming. No way am I kissing back if anypony makes fishy faces at me.”

“You might be surprised, Rainbow,” Twilight said.

“What, you think I’m going to pucker my lips for any of these ponies? Rainbow Dash doesn’t do *smoochies*.”

“No, I mean by the lack of kissy faces,” Twilight said.

Dash opened her mouth to question what that was supposed to mean, but didn’t get the chance. Épingle returned, a new pony following. Another earth pony, brown and light brown colors for the mane and coat, respectively. Remarkably plain compared the the blues and pinks of Épingle, Dash noted. This new mare, Love Tap, had that same motherly slant in her eyes, but otherwise lacked the features that suggested a pony to be from a foreign land.

A local, Rainbow realized with a pang of something that most certainly was *not* fright, since Rainbow Dash didn’t get scared. This pony might know Dash, even if she didn’t know this mare. Worse still, Love Tap’s cutie mark was a heart with a bottle of milk in front of it. She was probably going to be even more lovey-dovey than Épingle was.

“Heya,” Love Tap said in a completely normal voice as if she were meeting Dash on the street. “So, you’re Rainbow Dash, hmm? Nice to meet you.”

Dash blinked, raising her hood up to shake Love Tap’s. “Uh, hi. Nice to meet you?”

“I’d like to think it is,” she said without missing a beat, a playful smirk curling her lips.

“Right. Umm...” Rainbow looked around, tapping the tips of her hooves against the floor. “Boss pony says you’re new. How new we talking?”

“About a month now, but we’ll have plenty of time to get acquainted.” Love Tap turned to her boss. “Épingle, mind if I take this one to a private bath? I think she’ll need it.”

“Private?” Dash echoed.

“Aww, but I wanted to have bathtime with Rainbow,” Twilight bemoaned, Épingle taking her hoof a moment later.

“Hush, Twinkle, let the big ponies make the big decisions. We will get you all cleaned up and then you can have plenty of playtime with your friend.”

Twilight beamed, waving after Dash as Épingle led her along. “See you in the nursery,” she called before vanishing behind some doors.

An awkward moment of silence passed, or at least it was awkward for Rainbow. “Why a private bath?” Dash said when she found she had nothing else relevant to say.

“Because it’s clear you need it.” Unlike Épingle, Love Tap made no attempt to take Rainbow’s hoof, instead trotting to the same doors that Twilight and her caretaker had gone through. “Something you learn when you have kids, and I do use that plural on purpose, is that every colt and filly needs different things.”

“You already have kids?” Dash asked, following after Love Tap.

The elder mare opened the door, letting Dash step into was felt like a giant bathroom. Lots of bathtubs, tiled floor and ceiling, and wall paintings that looked like somepony had let their foals go at the walls with all their crayons. Twilight was being set into a bath, acknowledging Dash with a wave as she and Love Tap walked by.

“Three, if you want to get technical,” Love Tap said with a chuckle, taking Dash to a side room. “My youngest, my oldest, and my husband.”

This bath-within-a-bath looked the same as the last room, save for there being only one tub and being much smaller. Sized more like a real bathroom, actually. “That’s... weird.”

Love Tap trotted to the bathtub and turned the faucet on, letting steamy water pour out. “Not really. I’ve always been the kind of pony that liked taking care of others. Marrying a big kid at heart was inevitable. The only real difference between him and my littlest is one of them brings home a paycheck.” As she spoke, Love Tap picked up what looked like a giant saltshaker and plopped some crystal-like chunks into the water. They dissolved almost as soon as they touched the surface.

“No, not your husband being a kid... well, okay, that is kinda weird,” Dash said, watching the salt-like chunks vanish. “You don’t, like, diaper him up and treat him like a foal, do you?”

“Are you kidding? I’m worrying too much about my older son wetting the bed. My husband’s too thoughtful to give me another padded butt I need to clean.” Love Tap snickered as she swirled the water around with her hoof. “Oh, come on, it’s a joke! My husband isn’t into this sort of thing. He’s a normal grownup-kid. Video games, model trains, can’t pick up when I need some *intense* snuggling. That sort of thing.”

Dash’s face had a hard time settling between disgust at the excess of information or a grin at the idea of somepony worse at picking up on cues than she was. “I’m not into romance, that’s my friend Rarity’s thing. Can’t help with *snuggling*, sorry.”

“Don’t be silly. *You’re* the foal, here, so no worrying about anything.”

Rainbow rolled her eyes and trotted over to the bathtub, sticking a hoof in to test the waters. Warm and comfortable; that was a passing grade, in Dash’s book. “You said the older kid wets the bed. Is he...?”

“Into foaling out? If he is, it’s none of my business.” Much to Dash’s surprise, Love Tap’s nose wrinkled. “I don’t think I’d be able to handle changing either of my son’s diapers again. I spent years trying to get them *out* of those things. He changes himself, like a big pony should.”

“But... I... huh?” Dash blinked several times. The steam could practically be seen coming out of her ears as her brain tried to make sense of what she’d just heard. “Wait a second there, lady. Aren’t you, ya know, working in a nursery where ponies act like foals?”

“Am I? I hadn’t noticed.” Love Tap stuck her tongue out. “Do you like bubbles in your bath? Unless you’re one of those frou-frou types who does it regularly, I’d go for it. When are you ever gonna get bubbles in the tub at home?”

*Is this what it’s like to be Derpy? Note to self, give Derpy more days off.* “Tap, I think you lost me somewhere. Can you come back a few turns and pick me up?”

Love Tap snickered and reached for a shelf where several bathing supplies sat. “Let’s get you soaking and you can ask me anything you like. And since you couldn’t answer, I’ll decide. Grape scented bubbles it is.” Taking a bottle, she poured purple liquid into the splashing water, suds appearing instantly.

“Hmm...What’s the big deal about bubbles, anyway?” Dash raised a brow, wondering if she should complain about the bubbles or not. They were already there and, truth be told, Love Tap had something of a point as far as Dash was concerned. The last time she’d had a bubble bath was forever and a half ago, and she’d never care enough to buy something like that from the store. True, she didn’t see a point, but they wouldn’t kill her. Plus, there was no doubt Twilight asked for bubbles and Dash wouldn’t be outdone in any way. So in she went, one hoof at a time, easing into the hot water until she was up to her neck in warmth.

“They’re fun, plain and simple,” Love Tap said, smiling wider once Rainbow was in the tub. To prove her point, the older mare scooped up a hooful of suds and blew them upward, making it ‘snow’ white clumps of the stuff. “Don’t have to be a pegasus to make things fall from the sky.”

“Hardy har,” Dash said while shaking some soup from her nose. Still, a point had been made. One could play with bubbles, and Dash was nothing if not playful. She scooped up a hooful as well, shaping them into a ball before chucking it at Love Tap.

With reflexes even a cat would be jealous of, Love Tap slapped the bubble ball, making it explode into nothingness. “Gonna have to be faster.”

“Whoa...” Rainbow blanked. “How did you...?”

“Don’t let my youngest son find out, but video games.” Love Tap turned back to the shelf, scanning the washcloths that sat in waiting. Her gaze darted between stacks of colorful, really colorful, or plain white before picking up a red one. “There’s the slow kinds that make you ponder the nature of the universe, and then there’s the fast ones where you see a thing to shoot and you shoot it. I’ve played *a lot* of the second kind.” Frowning, she added, “Too much of both, really.”

Rainbow snickered before take a quick breath and dunking her head under, rising up a moment later with a dripping mane. “Okay, I’m soaking in the tub. Now, about the... uh...”

The water turned off as Love Tap set the facet’s valve’s closed. “Trouble with words, Dash? Maybe we’ll go read *Foal’s First Alphabet Book* when you’re done.”

“Yuk it up, lady, but I’m *not* a foal,” Dash said, brushing her mane out of her eyes’ view. “So, spill. What’s your deal with this place and the whole...” Raising a hoof up, she motioned to everything around them, as if it encompassed the end of her sentence, “...foal thing.”

“I get paid depending on the satisfaction of my charges and how much effort my boss sees me putting in, and she’s quite generous in that regard.” Chuckling at Dash’s deadpan stare, Love Tap continued, “Sheesh, can’t take a joke, can you? Okay, for real, this is a business like any other, capitalizing on the select group of ponies that like to act younger or just be a bit more cuddly than normal.”

“I get that,” Dash replied, pointing a hoof Love Tap’s way. “But you’ve got kids, right? Why are *you* here?”

Love Tap picked up a bar of soap and lathered it up with the cloth. “What, just because I’m already a mother means I can’t take care of other big babies?”

“If it were me, yeah.” Dash shrugged. “You don’t like the idea of changing your own kid’s diaper, but a total stranger is okay?”

“I may not like it. Doesn’t mean I wouldn’t, if the need arose. Hoof, please.”

“Huh?”

“Hoof up. Somepony’s gotta wash you, and I’m getting paid to do it. Unless you want to clean yourself.” Love Tap offered the soapy washcloth, which Dash stared at for a moment.

“Is Twilight getting hoof washed?”

“Knowing the kind of caretaker Épingle is, yes.”

Dash sighed and lifted a leg up. “Clean me off, just watch the hooves.”

“Oh no, somepony else is doing all the work for you! *The horror!*” Love Tap chortled as she set to work scrubbing Dash off, getting deep into her coat.

“Eh, s’alright, I guess,” Rainbow replied with a smirk. “Ponies call me lazy, you know, but that doesn’t mean I don’t like doing things myself.”

“Of course. And that’s what moms are supposed to teach their kids, how to take care of themselves.” Love Tap’s eyes wandered around as she rubbed Dash’s elbow. “But I’m not a mom for any of the ponies that come here. My job is to be their caretaker. A glorified babysitter, if you will.”

Rainbow raised a brow, dipping her head forward when Love Tap pushed the back of her head to better wash the pegasus’s neck. “What about all the smoochy goo-goo stuff Twilight was doing with Épingle? Are you going to do that?”

“Not unless that’s what you want. Just like every kid is different, so’s every patron.” Love Tap smirked as she pulled Dash’s wings up to wash the base of each. “Since you are a grown up pony and not a foal, you have the privilege of telling me what that is.”

“Huh.” Rainbow had been saying *huh* a lot today, she’d noticed. “So... your boss said you’d only been working here a little bit. How’d you wind up with a job like this if you weren’t already doing it? Or were you and there’s some other nursery for adult foals in Ponyville?”

Love Tap hummed for a moment as she glided her hooves across Dash’s shoulders to get to her other leg. “There are shops that sell supplies, but this is the only giant nursery I know about. Taking care of kids is kind of my calling, as you might have noticed from the neon sign declaring it on my butt.”

Rainbow snickered and lifted her other leg up. “The bottle does give it away.”

“Being a mom was always my calling, I think, but taking care of others makes me happy. I’ve been a nurse in the local hospital, helped out in a few of those shops, sometimes for regular foals, sometimes for big ones. This was all a long time ago, though, before I was married. Once my husband and I said our vows, I became a stay-at-home mom. Cooking and cleaning, all that stuff.”

“I don’t get how parents can stay home all the time. That would drive me nuts.”

“It would make anypony go up a wall, even somepony who’s calling is to be a mom. With my older one old enough to watch his little brother and both of them going to school, I thought I’d find something to occupy myself with.” Love Tap smiled and began scrubbing Dash’s fetlock. “Long story short, I looked in the help wanted ads for jobs that involved caring for others. That’s my talent and that’s where my experience is. I find this place, completely unashamed of what it it. Not yelling it at the top of their lungs, but not shying away and being the kind of place you already know exists. I was impressed and interested. That and there wasn’t anypony else hiring.”

Rainbow smirked, brow raised. “So you don’t mind taking care of grown ponies acting like foals?”

“Like I said, different ponies need different things. Not everypony here acts like a foal. Some of them act like Twilight.”

“Twilight?” Rainbow asked. “What does that mean?”

“Maybe you’ll see when you meet her in the playroom. That’s not going to happen if you keep squirming like an earthworm.” Love Tap grunted as she struggled to keep Dash’s leg still.

“I-I said watch the hooves!” Rainbow said, also trying to keep herself still and failing. “Maybe we should stop, I don’t like ponies touching the underside.”

Love Tap smirked, letting go of the pegasus’s hoof. “Why? Are you... ticklish?”

Dash’s pupils shrunk to pinpricks. “N-No! It just, uh, feels funny. Yeah, that’s it.”

With a shrug, Love Tap moved to wash Rainbow’s face. “Hey, I don’t need a reason. You say no hoof touching, I say okay. The rest of you still needs cleaning, though. If you smell like a dirty diaper before you’re even in one, I’ll be fired.”

“Oh, *ha, ha*. You should be a standup comedian with jokes like those.” Rainbow stuck her tongue out, then stood up in the tub to make the cleaning process easier for them both. “You know, you’re not at all what I thought I’d get coming here.”

“Really now?” Even though Love Tap’s expressions had changed multiple times during their time together, this latest questioning one was deeper than any before it.

Which made Dash smile. “You’re a lot more normal than I thought a pony running a daycare for big babies would be. I kinda like that.”

Love Tap smiled again, in a way that made Rainbow think of Twilight when she’d heard her sleepovers weren’t the worst ever. “That means a lot to me, Dashie.”

“Dashie? *Ugh*, looks like I spoke too soon.”

“Hey, I am your caretaker, remember?” Love Tap bent over so Dash couldn’t see her, though the pegasus could hear rummaging going on. “Pet names are the bread and butter of this kind of job. Now hold still, your ears clearly haven’t been washed for the last several centuries. Didn’t your mother teach you to wash back there?”

Rainbow’s snout scrunched back. “She might have mentioned it once or twice,” she said right before a stream of water blasted against the side of her head.

Love Tap laughed, squirt gun in her hooves and already pumping for another shot. “Hopefully this will get the message across. It’s going to take another dozen blasts just to get the first layer off.”

“Hey!” Dash shouted before another blast hit het. “Oh, a wisecracker, eh?” Bringing a hoof up and slamming it against the surface of the water, Rainbow sent a tidal wave of water to splash against Love Tap’s face. “Ha! Your super reflexes can’t dodge an attack as big as you are!” Another gush of water hit the side of Dash’s head.

Shaking the water from her mane, Love Tap said, “Maybe not, but we’ll see who gets the last laugh.”

A war on the low seas took place between the two as withering water attacks, bubble barrages and the occasional rubber duck of doom were traded between the two factions. By the end both were soaking wet, despite Love Tap having not once entering the bath. The tub itself was missing half the water it had been holding earlier, most of it going into a drain on the floor. When Love Tap noticed how empty the tub was, she stopped the splash fight and declared Rainbow the winner, even if making cloud grenades was cheating.

Strangely, Dash felt some disappointment when the game ended. Not crushing, but the same kind she’d get when Applejack ended their game of horseshoes early because of some chores. The sensation was surprising to feel, considering it was a nonsense game and Love Tap was a total stranger.

The thoughts were pushed aside. Something to worry about later, if ever. The rest of Dash was washed, hoof bottoms carefully avoided, and dried off.

“I don’t get real spa baths,” Rainbow said as Love Tap pulled the towel she’d been using to dry Dash’s mane away. “They’re either full of mud, which is backwards and stupid, or you gotta hold still for an hour.”

“There’s a reason, Dash,” Love Tap said, tossing both their towels into a hamper by the door. “Same reason you were just having a bath, to get those minerals into your pores so they can do pleasant things to your body.”

“Oh, right.” The real reason Dash had been soaking in the water had been completely forgotten by this point. Dash scratched the back of her head. “So that means I’m going to need a diaper now, huh?”

Love Tap nodded, opening the door for Dash. “Little big ponies first.”

Rainbow huffed, but trotted along back into the area clustered with bathtubs. They didn’t linger long, Love Tap guiding Rainbow through another set of double door and into a room that made Dash’s brain itch. Several changing table were waiting for them, though they were the only two ponies in the room.

“Is it a slow day or something?” Dash asked. “Because this seems like a lot of stuff for just a few ponies.”

“It’s more a ‘better safe than sorry’ kind of thing.” The elder mare patted one of the tables. “Sometimes the foals come slowly, and sometimes it’s like the ice cream cart parked in front of here. Which they do fairly often, seeing as how our patrons love ice cream after their session. At least this way we know there’s always at least one clean and ready for use. Hop up, please.”

Sighing, Dash climbed up onto the table. “Don’t make this weird, alright?”

Love Tap chuckled, pressing a hoof against Dash’s chest to have her lay back. “I’m a married mare, Dashie, and I used to be a nurse. You don’t have anything I haven’t seen already. Or am interested in.” With Rainbow lying on her back, Love Tap opened a drawer, tapping her lower lip. “What kind of padding would you like?”

“Huh?”

“Your diaper.” Love Tap picked two of the garments up to show Rainbow. One of them was pure white, plain as could be. The other one had designs on it, things like ABC blocks and teddy bears. “There’s plain, prints of all kinds, and ones with wetness indicators. There’s also cloth, if plastic isn’t your thing.”

Dash’s ears drooped and her cheeks turned red. “You’re kidding. How many diapers do you have?”

“In terms of type, two. In actual number, we keep about five hundred on hoof at all times, give or take a pack depending on how booked we are. In terms of silly designs?” Love Tap scratched her chin. “... I’m going to have to go over our stocks again. There’s more types of prints than there are diapers. The unicorns on staff know how to cast illusions on them to make different designs, so we keep a book of them for clients to choose from.”

“Please, spare me.” Waving Love Tap off, Dash flopped against the plastic-coated mattress of the changing table. “I don’t know, anything that doesn’t make me look like a helpless little foal.”

Love Tap leaned on the side of the table, a calm gaze aimed at Dash. “Diapers have a tendency to do that, some would say.”

“Yeah, and that’s why I *don’t* wanna do this. But I’ve already taken the stupid bath, so I gotta do it,” Dash grumbled.

“If you don’t wanna look like a foal, Dashie, you came to the wrong spa for that.” Instead of laughing like Dash has expected, Love Tap frowned. “Did Twilight drag you here or did you really want to come?”

Dash debated with herself a moment before saying, “Neither. Twilight brought me here to relax, really. And I agreed to prove I’m not scared of this place. Because I’m not! I don’t get scared, especially not of looking like a foal.”

With a hum, Love Tap sat back up. “You know, Rainbow, foals aren’t the only ponies that wear diapers.”

“Yeah, apparently there are grown ponies that do, too.”

The elder of the two opened the drawer back up, rummaging through the diapers, rash creams, and foal powders. “There are. Did you know guards that have to stay in one place for long periods of time wear them so they can remain at their posts?”

Rainbow lifted her head up. “They do?”

“Indeed. And ponies that stay in tight clothing for extended periods usually wear a little protection. Ponies like, say, the Wonderbolts.”

“You’re bluffing.” Dash poked Love Tap in the chest. “*You’re bluffing.*”

Love Tap shrugged. “I don’t know the exact reasons for it, just that it has something to do with multi-day non-stop flights and not wanting to make a manure missile after a few unfortunate incidents. Either way, you need to wear some protection right now, and you’re not getting off this table until you do. Just like with the bubbles in the bath, you might as well make the most of it.” She held up a diaper covered in clouds, smiling wide. “You know Twilight will be wearing something silly, and you can’t let her beat you.”

Dash huffed. No, she couldn’t.

“So, do you like them? Not too foalish, but cute enough that your friend won’t be disappointed.”

“They’re good enough,” Dash said, settling down once again. “At least they aren’t pink. They don’t come in pink do they?”

“Well, if that’s what you want~”

“No! No, no thanks, *no*.”

Love Tap giggled and flicked the diaper open. “Joking, Dashie, joking. Sheesh, lighten up a little, you’re supposed to be a kid without worries. Spread your legs, please.”

That phrase made Rainbow uneasy, but she obeyed regardless. Closing her eyes and steeling her nerves, Dash prepared for what guaranteed to be the most embarrassing thing in her entire life.

The diaper was slipped under Dash’s bottom, Love Tap pulling Rainbow’s tail through the tailhole until the base was surrounded in fluff and she was laying on what felt like a pillow.

“This is what they feel like?” Dash blurted before she could stop herself. Another case of her mouth going off before her brain could perform dumb-talk calculations.

Love Tap looked over Dash’s stomach and snickered. “Cushier than you ever thought they’d be, huh?”

“Uh...” Dash closed her mouth before she could incriminate herself any further.

“Just wait until the whole thing is on, then tell me how it is,” Love Tap teased as she squeezed some cream onto Dash’d nethers.

Rainbow squirmed from the strange sensation, her tail twitching. Or at least trying to twitch. The diaper’s bulk made movement difficult, as far as her tail was concerned.

A gentle hoof ran across Dash, spreading the rash cream all around until she was sufficiently covered. Next came several puffs of foal powder, making a cloud of white dust fly through the air and into Dash’s nose. The pegasus released some of her tension as she sniffed at its pleasingly sweet scent, realizing Love Tap meant to spread this stuff around and nothing else.

Once Rainbow’s rump was covered, Love Tap pulled the diaper up and over Dash. Slowly, letting Dash get a feel for every bit of fluff brushing against her, every bit of plastic pressing against her thighs.

“Almost done,” Love Tap teased through a coo. “Still haven’t died of embarrassment, have you?”

Rainbow’s face burned red, much to the pegasus’s chagrin. “Just hurry up and get it on.”

“Eager to show off that adorable bottom? Say no more, we’ll get you playing with Twilight in a moment.” Love Tap grabbed the wings on each side of the diaper and pulled them around Dash’s hips, sticking the tapes onto the landing zone. With a giggle, Love Tap said, “You know, red looks as good on your cheeks as it does in your mane. You should try it more often. Now, let’s not keep your friend waiting any longer than she needs to, okay? I’m sure she’ll think you’re adorable~”

Dash took Love Tap’s hoof when it was offered, allowing herself to be pulled up. The rounded shape of the diaper she now wore made made the process easy, acting as a fulcrum and letting her roll up and off the changing table and back onto her hooves. Her first attempt at walking resulted in a severe amount of crinkles, a small puff of powder blowing out the waistband, and a wobbling pegasus with an even redder face than she’s had before.

“Stop laughing!” Rainbow squeaked when Love Tap started snickering. “Have you ever tried walking around in these things? It’s not easy!”

“Sorry, sorry!” Love Tap brought her hooves up in a defensive manner as she tried to get ahold of her chortling. “You’d think seeing a pony try diapers for the first time would get old, but it never stops being cute.”

Rainbow took another tentative step, looking back at her now-poofy rear as she walked forward. “Jeez, this thing is huge.”

“Big diapers for big ponies,” the elder mare said as she watched Rainbow waddle around. “Need a moment to get used to it?”

“Yeah...” Rainbow stopped and turned her head forward, brow furrowing in thought. The sensation of so much fluff between her legs was weird, but not something to disagree with. She raised one hind leg up, then lowered it and lifted the other leg. Each shift of the diaper, each caress of the fluffy inside against her hindquarters left a mark on her mind as she tried to process what she was feeling.

Love Tap, brow raised, trotted around her charge and watched as Dash wiggled her rear an inch or two in each direction she could. The spectacle brought to Love Tap’s mind a memory when her foals had discovered how soft a fresh-from-the-dryer blanket felt. “Something wrong, Dashie?”

“I don’t think so.” Dash flicked her tail and frowned. Lifting a hoof to adjust the waistband, she said, “It’s just weird, is all. Like wearing a really thick, really stiff sock.”

“You’re not uncomfortable, right?” Love Tap patted Dash’s behind and received a mouthful of tail for her effort. “*Patooie!* Hey!”

Dash turned her head and stuck her tongue out before saying, “I thought you said you weren’t interested in mare butts, buster.”

Swatting Rainbow’s tail away, Love Tap pressed her hoof against Dash’s rump, mushing the cotton-like interior into and around the pegasus’s skin. “That only applies to the non-padded kind. Now you’re officially my little-big pony and this diaper is my business. Especially if you make *your* business in it.”

“Gross,” Dash said, though she couldn’t help but smirk back at this curiosity of a pony she’d gotten for a caretaker. “And you’re okay with that?”

“It’s what I do, paid, mommy, or otherwise.” Giving Rainbow’s diaper another pat, Love Tap ran her hoof across Rainbow’s back until she could pat the prismatic mane of her charge. “Ready to meet your puffy princess friend in the playroom?”

Rainbow nodded, lifting a hind leg again. “I think so. Just don’t be surprised if I fall over a couple times, this bulky thing makes it hard to walk right.”

Love Tap grinned and tussled Rainbow’s hair as she said, “I’m sure your butt-pillow will keep any spills from hurting too much.”

With a begrudging smirk at ‘butt-pillow’, Rainbow started to make her ponderous way towards what she assumed would be the playroom, her caretaker close behind. As always, the need to one-up others surfaced in her, along with a desire to show off her growing vocabulary. “Personally, I think posterior-padding is better,” she quipped.

“How about fanny fluff?” Love Tap replied without missing a beat.

“Nappied Nates.”

“Taped Tushie.”

“Hind hinderance.”

“Diapered derrière.”

“Hey, no using other languages, that’s cheating!” An attempt at a playful push instead resulted Dash keeling over like a tipped cow.

After she had finished giggling at the pouting pegasus’s predicament, Love Tap helped her up and said, “You’d best get used to it if you’re going to become a regular. Most of the other caretakers speak Prench, meaning trying to talk in Equestrian can lead to some rather funny misunderstandings.”

Rainbow stuck her nose up in her best approximation of Rarity’s snooty look. “Whatever says I’m going to be a ‘regular’, huh? So far it’s nothing special.”

“Oh, we’ve only just started. I’m sure you’ll change your tune,” Love Tap said with a knowing glance. Offering a hoof, Love Tap added, “Think you’ll want to try that hoof holding thing now? If this is your only time here–”

“Might as well make the most of it, right?” Looking back at her rear and shaking it again (and trying to ignore Love Tap’s snickers as crinkles came from her diaper), Rainbow placed her hoof in the older mare’s. “Only because I might fall over. No other reason.”

Love Tap took Dash’s hoof in firm-yet-gentle way. “Had it ever occurred to you that’s why foal’s hold their mommy’s hoof?”

Blinking, Dash felt her mind reel as she processed how much sense that made. “Huh.”

“Maybe you aren’t so different from a foal after all~” Love Tap tugged at Dash’s hoof and led her through the double-doors.

As Dash had presumed, the playroom she’d been hearing about was on the other side. After seeing how large the *Fontaine* was already, she supposed she shouldn’t have been surprised by the vast size of this room and all the objects and toys waiting for her. Shelves upon shelves of toys, ranging from simple oversized building blocks to those brick-things that snapped together. Tables with supplies for arts and crafts, a corner of the room filled with a multitude of plush toys, and even a tiny playground with tubes to crawl around in. All-in-all, there was a whole lot more stuff to play with than Dash had been expecting. A good chunk of it Dash *wanted* to get her hooves on. eventually.

“What, were you expecting we’d have anything less for our wonderful patrons?” Love Tap teased as she elbowed Dash’s side.

Rainbow realized her jaw had been hanging open and closed it before any sort of insect could get in. “Well... kinda.”

Love Tap rolled her eyes and led Dash further into the room. “Honestly, Dashie, it’s like you thought we’d be treating you like a drooling vegetable. That’s not what we’re about.”

“Guess I did think that.” Dash scratched the back of her head as she took another look at the construction paper and thought back to when Pinkie Pie had shown her how to make snowflakes with a few simple cuts. That hadn’t been foalish, that was neat. So why were there supplies for such an activity in a spa that specialized in making ponies feel like foals? Granted, Dash always thought of Pinkie as the ‘youngest’ of the group, but still. “Somehow I got the idea we wouldn’t be allowed to have scissors in a place like this. You know, ‘cause foals are too dumb to use them.”

“Firstly, foals aren’t dumb, they’re inexperienced.” Love Tap flicked Dash’s nose.

“Hey!”

“Second, you *aren’t* a foal. Even in a diaper, even in a playroom, and even if you wore hoofie pajamas, you wouldn’t be anymore a foal than you were coming in.”

Rainbow rubbed her nose, a question on the tip of her tongue that she wasn’t sure how to ask. “You got that right. Rainbow Dash ain’t no baby, no matter what. Speaking of ponies in diapers, where’s Twilight, anyway?”

Love Tap pointed to the opposite side of the room, Dash turning her head to see a bouncing pony butt, trapped in a thick diaper like the one Rainbow had been placed in. Instead of cloud prints, Twilight’s padding sported a single giant sun. Twilight’s other half was engrossed in a wooden chest, Épingle to the side and picking up pieces of clothing as the alicorn flung them about. The pink-coated mare waved at Rainbow and Love Tap before a striped shirt was thrown over her face.

“Hey, Twilight!” Rainbow called, waving her hoof. She frowned when she got no response. “Twilight?”

“I’ve seen this before. Our fair princess has entered extreme playtime mode.” Love Tap smirked Rainbow’s way and continued, “Once she sets her mind to some activity or toy, there’s no getting her out of it until she’s done.”

“Naw, that’s just how Twilight normally is.” Rainbow smirked back at her caretaker and shrugged. “You should have seen Twilight when she was trying to *literally* figure out the difference between apples and oranges. Fruit juice everywhere. At least there was no way anypony would get scurvy.”

Love Tap broke out into snorting laughter. “Oh dear, that sounds hilariously dreadful.”

“You get used to it after a while.” Rainbow turned back to see Twilight had delved diaper-deep into the chest, bottom sticking out like a mock-imitation of a shark swimming through water. “Huh. That’s weird.”

“What is?” Love Tap asked.

“Twilight’s doing what she always does, but different. It’s weird.”

“Is that bad?”

Rainbow tapped her chin as she thought. “Nah. Just weird.” Shrugging again, Dash sighed and said, “Well, if Twilight’s stuck in... whatever she’s doing over there with your boss, I guess we won’t be doing stuff together for a while.”

“Give her a bit, I’m sure she’ll want to play with you soon enough.” Love Tap swept her leg towards the dozens of toys and amusements available to Rainbow. “We’ve got plenty of other things to do in the meantime.”

“Maybe.” Dash tilted her head and looked around, trying to pick something out. On the one hoof, a lot of this junk did look like fun. That was probably the hoof holding Love Tap’s, Dash thought with a chuckle. On the other hoof, she had been expecting Twilight to be with her through this. The idea of doing any of this less-than-adult stuff without a friend gave Dash a queasy feeling. Not fear, of course, since Rainbow Dash wasn’t afraid of anything. “I dunno, nothing really jumps out at me.”

Love Tap hummed as she looked over the many toys. “Anything from your childhood you might like to get reacquainted with? I’ll bet my husband’s mustache that we’ve got anything you could remember.”

For what felt like the dozenth time, Rainbow said, “Huh,” this time accompanied with furrowed brows.

“Something wrong?”

“I didn’t have a lot of toys growing up.” Dash frowned. Not a sad or frustrated frown, but a confused one.

“Oh? Not a lot of bits growing up?”

“No, I just never asked for any. Never wanted the ones I saw other colts and fillies playing with.”

Love Tap’s eyes widened, head tilted as if she’d been told she had a second head. “You mean you’ve never played with any toy *ever*?”

“There were a few. I think my dad bought me a model Wonderbolt blimp once. That thing was pretty cool, it even shot plastic missiles!” A memory surfaced in Dash’s head of finding targets to shoot, most of them being breakable and dinnerware. “That one didn’t stick around for long,” Rainbow added, eyes darting about.

“Hmm, that makes this a little tricky, I must admit.” Love Tap glanced back at the shelves, then back at Dash, then repeated the motion a few times. “Most ponies have some sort of preference.”

Rainbow shrugged, wondering if she should feel bad about not being like other ponies that came through here. “I was too busy trying to be the fastest pony in Equestria. Who has time for toys?” Even as the words left her, Dash couldn’t help but feel some sort of longing well up in her chest. By no means did she regret all the time spent racing and practicing her moves, but she couldn’t help to think back when she’d wished she’d read a few more books over the course of her life.

“Fastest, eh?” The elder mare smiled, eyes set in a way that reminded Rainbow of nearly every time Applejack was about to challenge her to a competition. “In that case, I believe I have the perfect toy for you.”

“Really?” Rainbow allowed herself to be led to a beanbag chair, where Love Tap flopped onto her back and motioned for Rainbow to sit in her lap. Hesitating a moment, Dash wondered if Twilight would sit in another pony’s lap and concluded that she probably would, so she did the same. Sitting with a diaper under her rear was awkward enough, the sensation of having so much fluff under her confusing her brain. A whole new uneasy sensation filled her stomach as Love Tap wrapped all of her legs around Dash, making the pegasus feel smaller than she really was.

“Not used to being so close to other ponies, are you?” Love Tap asked.

Dash shifted around, trying to find a comfy way to sit. “How can you tell?”

“Body language. You’re a very active pony, I can feel it. Your muscles are tensing up like you could jump up at any minute.”

“Didn’t know I was that easy to read.”

Love Tap snickered. “Your wings give you away before anything else, Dashie. But we have to sit like this if I’m going to teach you how to play the games that got me those super reflexes.”

“Oh yeah, you said it had something to do with video games.” Dash smirked,settling down as she crossed her forelegs over her chest. “Okay, you got my attention. I’m the fastest flyer in Equestria, there’s no way you can outshine me in a battle of speed.”

“We’ll see about that, Dashie.” Love Tap pulled a hoof back and returned it with a device Rainbow hardly understood from the first glance.

Dash took the tiny machine and turned it over a few times. At first she thought it looked like a super compact television. On the left side of the screen, sticking out of the plastic casing, was a button in the shape of a plus sign. To the right were two buttons, marked ‘A’ and ‘B’. “What’s this?” Rainbow asked.

“This is a portable gaming device. I know Ponyville is a little humble when it comes to the technology department, but I can’t believe you’ve never seen a Game Colt before.” Love Tap brought her hoof around Dash and to a switch in the side of the device. The screen instantly lit up as a *ding~* filtered through the speakers.

After the name *Game Colt Advance* flashed across the screen, the picture changed to a much livelier setting. What looked like a Wonderbolt flew from left-to-right as the world around him moved across the screen. Occasionally, pillars of clouds would show up with only a small gap between them for the Wonderbolt to flap through. At the top of the screen, in a stylized font that made Dash think of wind blowing across her body at high speeds, were the words *Flappy Bolt*. The only other things on the screen were the words ‘start’ and ‘options’, with an arrow pointing at ‘start’.

“What is this?” Dash asked as she pressed the plus shaped button, specifically the bottommost notch. The arrow moved down to ‘options’. “Did I do that?”

Love Tap couldn’t hold back her laugh as she pushed up on the plus-shaped-pad, moving the arrow back to ‘start’. “This really is your first time playing a video game, isn’t it?”

“Don’t laugh at me!” Dash blew a gust of air out her nose, furrowing her brow a she looked at the lettered buttons. “I played those arcade machines once. A long time ago. When I was seven.” Pointing at the ‘A’ and ‘B’ buttons, she asked, “These are the *do stuff* switches, and the thing on the left makes ‘em move, right?”

“Depends on the game. There are lots and lots to play with and we don’t want to overwhelm that little noggin’ of yours.” Love Tap tapped Dash’s skull. “I figured we’d start with a simple one. Only uses one button. Press A to flap.”

“That’s it?” Rainbow scoffed and placed her hoof on the button, as instructed. “This looks way too—” she began, right before her Bolt fell to the ground with a *krrzzt!* sound. “—easy?”

With a snort, Love Tap brought a hood to her lips as she same *Game Over* pass over the screen. “I said it was simple, I didn’t say it was easy.”

“I wasn’t ready.” Grunting, Dash pressed A again to restart. Having learned from her first attempt, Dash pressed the button again once the game started properly. The Wonderbolt flapped its wings and ascended a ways before starting to plummet. Before it could crash into the ground again, Dash quickly pressed A again to go back up. “Ha, see? Rainbow Dash can do anything.”

Love Tap smirked as she patted Dash’s head. “You’re certainly doing better than my youngest did on his first try. It took him several minutes to figure out that the only thing you could do to keep yourself up in *Flappy Bolt* is to flap. But now, Dashie, can you handle the first cloud barrier?”

Just like on the opening menu, two clouds came from the right side with a gap for the WOnderbolt to pass through. “Ha, is this supposed to be hard?” Dash pressed the *flap* button a few times, trying to aline the tiny pegasus with the hole and–

*Krrzzt!*

Rainbow blinked as she watched her Wonderbolt fall down. “What?”

Again, Love Tap laughed. “So ends the valiant flight of Rainbow Dash, who flew with the Wonderbolts for no more than eight seconds.”

“Okay, okay, point made. This is hard.” Leaning back into Love Tap, Dash sighed and pressed ‘start’ again and flapped her bolt up and down. “Why does this Wonderbolt weigh as much as a boulder, anyway?”

“That’s just how the game is made. The whole point is to work with the limitations.” Love Tap brought her hoof to place over Dash’s. “Would you like some help to get the timing right?”

“Err, just until I get the hang of it.” Rainbow’s cheeks turned red as she felt the older mare’s leg wrap around her own, pressing more of their skin together. “Is this normal for ponies here?”

Love Tap raised a brow. “What, exactly?”

“This whole... touching thing,” Rainbow said as she wiggled her elbow.

“There does tend to be a lot of hugs in this sort of situation.” To prove her point, Love Tap wrapped her other leg around Rainbow’s chest. “If this bothers you, we can stop. Nothing says you have to get a hug.”

“... I don’t *think* it bugs me.” Rainbow adjusted herself again, sinking into the beanbag chair and giving Love Tap enough leeway to rest her chin on top of Dash’s. “I’m just not used to *cuddling.* Rainbow Dash doesn’t cuddle very often.”

“Well, then, why don’t you make–”

“Yeah, yeah, make the most of it now.” Dash rolled her eyes. “I’ll take all the hugs you have. You ain’t got nothing on Pinkie Pie’s tackle attacks.”

Love Tap gave her charge a gentle squeeze. “Nopony can hug as well as she can. Now, ready to try flapping your ‘bolt again?”

“No way am I letting this thing beat me!” Dash pressed start once more, Love Tap pressing with her to make the Wonderbolt flap its wings. The first few seconds of empty screen passed by with them keeping the Bolt in the air, then the first cloud wall popped into existence.

Love Tap kept Dash’s hoof off the button to let the Wonderbolt fall a ways, then pushed it at *just* the right moment to let it pass through. The game *ba-dinged* when the Bolt made it across.

“Ha, got it!” Prismatic tail flicking, Dash pressed the button a few times to get the Bolt back up.

“One point already, not bad,” Love Tap teased. “With some more practice, you might be able to be able to beat my high score.”

The game system *ba-dinged* again as the Wonderbolt made it through another set of clouds. “Oh yeah? And what’s your record?”

“Five-hundred and eighty-two.”

*Krrzzt!*

Rainbow Dash frowned as deep a frown as she ever had. “Are you serious? *Five-hundred* of these in a row?”

“And eighty-two.” Love Tap blushed as she added, “Like I said, I play games *a bit* too often.”

“Okay. It. Is. *On.*” Dash furrowed her brow, stuck her tongue out the side of her mouth, and concentrated as hard as she ever had.

The Game Colt saw a lot of use in the hour the pair played with it. Dash furiously mashed the only button that did anything in the surprisingly difficult game. It wasn’t long until Rainbow could flap her bolt on her own and Love Tap was able to pull back and simply cheer her on, or taunt her. Many times did her Wonderbolt hit the clouds and fall to the ground (which seemed silly since any pegasus could buck a cloud to pieces, though Dash was too busy with beating Love Tap’s high score to care), but that didn’t stop Dash.

Each crash came with a little more experience. Her reflexes were put to the test, her mind and body struggling to work in tandem. Other challenges were presented one after another as she got farther each time, clouds that moved up and down, tighter gaps, even thunderclouds shooting across the screen. The score got higher with each failure, and Rainbow’s excitement reached a new height in a similar fashion.

Dash’s concentration was so great and intense, and Love Tap so fascinated with Dash’s quick improvements keeping control over the awkward pretend-pegasus, they didn’t notice a bouncy purple alicorn jump over to where she sat. Nor did Rainbow Dash notice that said excited alicorn had a whistle in her mouth. So when Twilight Sparkle blew into the metal object and a *tooooooot!* blasted into Rainbow’s and Love Tap’s ears, both ponies jolted back as though a manticore had roared right next to them. This ended with the two of them falling into a pony-pile, eyes spinning in their heads as they came back to the real world.

“Halt, criminal scum!” Twilight declared as she gave a salute. “You’re both under arrest!”

Once the earth stopped spinning, Rainbow shook her head and looked up from under Love Tap to behold what had become of her royal companion. Dressed in a button-down shirt and a cap with a golden shield on the front, Twilight looked like a police officer. The diaper around her haunches took away most of the authority she might have exuded, though.

“Ugh, Twilight, you messed up my streak!” Rainbow said as she tried to push Love Tap off her back. “I was getting close to beating the record!”

“Dashie, you were only up to three-hundred, no way would you have gotten there on that run.” Love Tap patted the top of Dash’s head and then the seat of her diaper before standing up and giving Twilight a once over. “What’s the charge, Officer Sparkle?”

“I would’a had it in a few more goes...” Dash grumbled as she stood back up.

Twilight reached into her front pocket and pulled out a golden badge that was clearly made of plastic. “As junior member of the D.P.F constabulary, I am under complete jurisdiction to arrest you for unlawful infractions concerning excessive exuberation!”

“Okay, Twilight, I know I’ve gotten better with the thesaurus, but when you say so many words so fast, it’s like I’m talking to Pinkie.” A shiver ran down Dash’s back. “And I don’t want to think about what Pinkie would do if she had your smarts. Forget party canon, there’d be party nukes all over Equestria!”

Love Tap snickered as she saw Épingle trot up to them in a similar getup to Twilight, a few articles of clothing in her grip. “I do believe we’re under arrest for being too cute, Dashie.”

“*Too cute?* said Dash, incredulous as could be while she looked back and forth between Twilight and Love Tap. “She’s joking, right? You’re joking? Rainbow Dash does *not* do cute.”

“You sure looked adorable to me~” Twilight sing-songed as she tickled under Rainbow’s chin. “Seriously, Dash, I wish I had a camera. You looked *just* like a foal, sitting in your mommy’s lap in your great big diaper diaper and pwaying your widdle game~”

Rainbow huffed, though her cheeks burned regardless. That did sound pretty foalish, and that was what she’d been doing. Before the argument could continue, though, a shirt was thrown in her face. “Hey!”

“Oui, you were very cute, and the only one allowed to be cute here is my Tinkle Twinkle!” Épingle declared, patting Twilight’s padding right on the giant sun-print. “So prepare yourselves, you despicable finds!”

“Fiends, Nounou.”

“That, too!”

Pulling the offending clothing from her face, Dash noticed it was a black-and-white striped long sleeve shirt. Wadded up in it was a hat beanie and a mask that would only cover her eyes. Rainbow looked up at the other ponies for an explanation, noticing that Love Tap had already sat down to slip a striped shirt of her own over her head.

“Cops and robbers?” Rainbow asked.

“Cops and robbers!” Twilight declared, blowing into her whistle again. “Once we get you, you’re going straight to jail, Miss Cloud Bottom!”

Dash snorted as she tried to hold her giggle back. “*That’s* my bad guy name, Twilight? Fine, if we’re going to do that, you can be Officer Sunbutt.”

Blowing a raspberry, Twilight turned around. Whether she was presenting the sun on her diaper on purpose was impossible to tell. “That’s Constable Sunbutt to you, ruffian.”

“Pardon me, Contables,” Love Tap said as she tied her mask around her head. “Far be it from me to assume how the law works around here, but may we have a few minutes to prepare for harsh punishment you’ll no doubt inflict on my partner’s cushy tushy?”

“Hey, I’m not gonna let them beat us!” Dash shouted as she stomped her hoof. Much like Twilight’s own foalish attire had done, the crinkling of Rainbow’s diaper took away any threatening authority she might have had.

Épingle giggled and took Twilight’s hoof, nuzzling her charge. “Do not worry, Junior Twinkle, Nounou will keep you safe from any villain that tries to get that adorable tush-tush.”

“There’s no way they’ll get the drop on us!” Twilight said, following up with a giggle. A blush spread across her cheeks as she waved at Rainbow. “Thanks for playing, Dash. It means a lot to me.”

Rainbow blinked, wondering when she’d agreed to such an activity as this. Clearly she had, since she’d already pulled the shirt onto her body and flattening it so it fit neatly over her diaper’s waistband. “Huh.”

Love Tap tucked her mane into her beanie while she turned to look at Dash. “What is it?”

“I just kinda... went into this, didn’t I?” Dash replied, looking down at her attire, from the criminal-like shirt to the absorbent garment clinging around her waist.

“Nothing I’d complain about.” Trotting over, Love Tap picked up the mask beside Dash. “Want some help putting this on, my little thief?”

Rainbow shrugged, though leaned back to let her caretaker tie the cloth around her eyes. “We haven’t been in here for long, but this all feels so... normal.”

“A lot of ponies wear diapers on a regular basis,” Love Tap said as she pulled the strip into a knot behind Dash’s head. “You’d be surprised just how normal this actually is.”

“Not the diaper thing. Though that’s still kinda weird.” A crinkle came from Dash as she poked some of the clouds on her diaper. “We were just playing a game in your lap like a mom and kid would, right? But it wasn’t all that different from hanging out with any of my friends. And now look, Twilight runs over, pulls me into a playtime, and now we’re playing dressup like it’s no big deal. It *isn’t* a big deal. I feel like it should be, though.”

Love Tap pulled a cap over Dash’s head as she spoke. “Maybe you’re just a big kid at heart and you didn’t know it. Or maybe being a cuddly foal isn’t all that different from being a grownup, when you get right down to it.”

“Dash has always been a little bratty,” Twilight added, smirking Dash’s way. “Maybe you’re just a big foal calling out for attention.”

“Hey, I’m *not* a foal. That’s something Rainbow Dash will never be.” Rainbow huffed and turned around to face Twilight, shooting the other mare in a diaper a stink eye.

Épingle offered a soft smile. “Nounou hasn’t seen you playing for long, Miss Dash, but perhaps you aren’t a big pony, either. Maybe you’re a filly that didn’t grow up all the way.”

Under normal circumstances, Dash might have fought the notion in some way. Even though everything felt right, this wasn’t a regular day by any stretch Rainbow’s imagination. “Racing has been my dream since I was a little. That’s all I think about, you know.”

“Sounds like your fillyhood dream carried some of your fillyhood with it.” Love Tap moved behind Rainbow Dash and gave the thoughtful pegasus a pat on her rump. “You’re still a big pony too, you know. Liking to play silly games and cuddling other ponies doesn’t make you any less of a grownup.”

Rainbow turned around and poked her hoof into Love Tap’s chest. “Of course not! Rainbow Dash makes anything awesome, even dressing up like a foal! Now how about we get ready to be the most awesome set of burglars this dumb spa had ever seen?” Hoof raised, Dash grinned at the other mare.

“Dumb, huh?” Épingle said, giving Dash’s generous padding a poke. “This *dumb spa* seems to be giving you quite a good time, my little big pony. I hope you aren’t calling the pride and joy of my work stupid.”

Considering what a colorful pony Rainbow Dash was, even the slightest drain of color from her face was a sight to behold, as it had now. “Whoa, hold on, I didn’t mean this place was dumb. I was saying that... uhh...”

“Just like a little kid,” Love Tap said, pulling Dash into a hug. “Open mouth, insert hoof.”

Rainbow kicked at the ground, trying to look like she wasn’t enjoying the close contact from a pony she’d only met today. “Guess you ponies just bring it out of me. You do your job pretty well.”

“It’s what we’re here for, Miss Cloud Bottom,” Love Tap said as she pulled away and stretched. “Shall I be your accomplice, the Lovely Bottle Butt, as we take the playroom for our own?”

Snorting as Love Tap shook her rear, Rainbow nodded and said, “Sure, that’s perfect. Those goofy constables think we’re too cute? Just wait until we pull off the crime of the century!” Dash tapped her chin. “Uhh, whatever that would be.”

“Whatever it is, we’re gonna catch you!” Twilight lifted her whistle back to her lips and blew. “You’d better start running, because there’s no escape once the D.P.F. is on your tail!”

“What’s the D.P.F., anyway?” Dash said, right before Twilight tackled Dash to the ground in the cuddliest form of police brutality anypony had ever seen.

“The Diaper Pony Force, administering forceful hugs and nuzzles whenever a pony is being naughty,” Twilight said, demonstrating the later part of her duty as she rubbed her cheek against Dash’s. “Come quietly, Dashie, or else we’ll have to use extreme snuggles!”

Dash considered pointing out that she was in a diaper, same as Twilight, but decided there wasn’t any point in mentioning what was plain for all to see. Extending her wings, Rainbow brushed their tips against Twilight’s sides. “You’ll never take us alive, you puny purple padded pony!”

“A-A-Alliteration!” Twilight squeaked through her laughter. “I-Impressive, Dashie!”

Love Tap took this moment to pry Twilight off Dash, letting the pegasus crawl away. Though Dash managed to escape, Love Tap wasn’t so lucky and found herself tackled by Épingle and pinned to the ground. “Dashie, save yourself, I’m not worth it!”

“Ha! I’ve seen enough action movies to know that ain’t gonna happen.” And Rainbow dived into the pony pile to pull and tickle the police-dressed ponies away from her caretaker.

Their game of cops and robbers continued like that for a while, ponies tackling each other, saving their comrade one way or another, and plenty of hugs (most of them given to Dash rather than given by). As the foal fight continued, weapons such as balloon swords, boxing gloves made out of pillows, and plastic guns that fired suction cup darts were brought to bear. Thrown around as much as plush bears were quips of ‘Your butt makes the perfect target!’ and ‘Don’t come any closer or I’ll snuggle you!’.

Dash, in theme with the ‘robber’ portion of their dress up game, made it a point to pilfer anything she could get her hooves on. Even if it wasn’t technically stealing, since everything in the playroom was free to pick up and play with, but that didn’t stop Rainbow from daring Twilight and Épingle to stop her while Love Tap held the other two in a bear hug.

Alas, the great heist of Miss Cloud Bottom across the playroom came to an abrupt end as Dash received her comeuppance at the hooves of Constable Sunbutt and a few well aimed shots. Rainbow had taken to testing her thievery skills with supplies rather than toys, taking diapers and supplies from cupboards to toss into her treasure pile. As she placed her goods down and prepared to leap back, she noticed a pair of ponies having a showdown in the middle of the room.

Épingle and Love tap stared each other down, dart guns at the ready. Whereas the older caretaker was biting her lip, hoof unsteady, Love Tap was smiling and kept her toy aimed straight.

“Go ahead, boss,” Love Tap said. “You know there’s no chance. I always win at darts on bar night.”

“Whoa, hold on. You guys go to bars?” Dash said.

Love Tap turned her head back to Rainbow and replied, “Only on Saturdays. The girls and I have a little get together and swap stories about how our adorable charges.”

Dash sent the image of a gentle mare like Épingle going for anything harder than a glass of lemonade out of her mind. Something about her, or even Love Tap, going for something strong seemed off. *They are just regular ponies, after all...* Rainbow thought to herself, before shouting, “Watch out!”

A dart zipped by Love Tap’s ear as she tilted her head and retaliated with a shot of her own. Épingle’s hat flew off, the gun in her hoof dropping as she fell onto her rump and raised her hooves up.

“We surrender!” she shouted.

“Of course you do.” Love Tap stuck her tongue out and turned around again.

“Ahh, yeah, we totally won!” Rainbow declared, patting her loot with a smug grin. “Law and order doesn’t win today!”

“That’s what you think!”

*Ka-plunk!*

“Huh, wha?” Rainbow turned around to see Twilight holstering her gun on her diaper’s waistband. “What’d you do?”

“Told you your butt made the perfect target,” Twilight teased.

Dash bent her body to look back at her diaper and, much to her chagrin, found that she’d been struck. A rubber dart had stuck itself to the seat of her padding, to which Rainbow grumbled. “Aww, man, I almost made it, too.”

“You win some, you lose some.” Twilight bent herself down like a cat preparing to pounce on a lone canary. “For your crimes against the nursery, you’re going straight to jail.”

“Let me guess, the playpen, right?” Dash said as she pulled the dart off. Once again she was tackled to the ground and given a powerful hug.

“The D.P.F. carries their jail with them, criminal scum.” The snuggle became snugger still as Twilight squeezed her friend tighter. “No way am I letting you escape.”

“Oh no, the mushy stuff is gonna kill me,” Rainbow droned, pawing at the ground. “Love Tap, aren’t you supposed to be my partner? Save me from her, she’s going to hug me to death!”

Love Tap laughed as she watched the padded pair tussle about, pulling her hat off. “Sorry, I think I’m done with the criminal life. Too much fighting, not enough cuddles. If you’d like me to join in the hug fest, I can help with that~”

“Bah, Bottle Butt’s betrayed me! Is this the end of Cloud Bottom?” Rainbow squealed as she brought a hoof to her forehead, reminiscent of another friend of Dash’s who had a flare for the dramatic. “Has she pilfered her last padding?”

Twilight snickered and extended her wings to lower them to Dash’s side. “Sunbutt thinks so, and she’s the kind of filly to hold a grudge. Tickle attack!”

“Gaaah, g-g-get those away from me!”

The pair rolled around, their caretakers watching with bemused smiles as the one padded pony tickled another. At some point, Twilight managed to pin Dash to the ground, sitting on Dash’s stomach with one of the pegasus’s legs in her grasp.

Love Tap raised a brow when she saw Dash’s eyes widen, a gasp escaping her throat.

“You won’t escape me while dry, Rainbow Dash,” Twilight said as she brought a hoof to Dash’s own and began to rub.

“N-No, wait, stop!” Dash squealed as she shoved against Twilight’s back in a vain attempt to push her off. “Please, d-don’t tickle that! Please!”

“What’s that? Tickle harder?” Twilight replied as she quickened the hoof-rub. “If you say so~”

Twilight’s tickle-torture came to an abrupt halt as a *tooooooot!* sounded throughout the room, aimed right into her ear. Blinking, she turned her head to see Love Tap wearing the police cap Épingle had been wearing, another whistle between her lips.

“Under service of the M.F., Mommy Force, I hereby order you to cease and desist,” Love Tap said.

Much to Twilight’s clear surprise, Love Tap wore an expression of serious business. “Did... I do something wrong?”

Épingle trotted over and took Twilight’s hoof. “Non, my dear, but the game is over. Why don’t we go to some coloring, oui? It’s almost snack time, and I made peanut butter cookies.”

“Okay.” Twilight looked back at Rainbow before walking away. “You want some cookies, Rainbow?”

“N-No thanks.” Sitting herself up, Dash coughed into her hoof and pulled her beanie off. “I mean, maybe in a minute. I, uh, gotta... umm...”

“Dashie’s tuckered out,” Love Tap said as she trotted behind Dash and unfurled the bandana around her head. “We’re going to get her cozy, then join you for cookies and milk. That’s fine, isn’t it, princes?”

“Uh, yeah, *phew*.” Rainbow wiped her forehead. “These clothes sure make a pony hot. All that roughhousing, you know?”

Twilight nodded and tapped her chin. “Well, if you say so. Don’t wait too long, though, I might eat all the sweets before you get there. Oh, I know!” Eyes lighting up, along with her horn, Twilight levitated a simple white-colored pacifier from the nearby cabinets, which fell into her hooves. “Here,” she said, offering the soother to Dash. “You should give this a try. The best in foal relaxation tools.”

Dash took the soother and grimaced. “The only reason I’m trying this is because you’d use it. You do use these, right?”

“I’m surprised Twinkle hasn’t asked for one already,” Épingle said as she tugged on Twilight’s hoof. “She’ll have one in time for her nap, I’m sure.”

Dash nodded and placed the pacifier in her mouth, chewing at the rubber bulb. Foals suckled at these things, as far as Dash knew, so she gave that a try. “*Thuckle.* Huh. That... kind of feels good.”

Twilight snickered as she and Épingle trotted towards the crafts table, leaving a befuddled looking Dash and Love Tap to themselves.

“Want some help getting that shirt off?” Love Tap asked, pulling at Rainbow’s sleeves. “Don’t want you burning up, after all.”

“How’d ya know?” Dash replied as though she hadn’t heard the question.

Love Tap smirked. “Why, whatever do you mean?”

“Come on, dere’s no way you didn’ figure out what was about to happen.” Shifting in her diaper, Dash’s blushed for what felt like the hundredth time that day as she noticed what the pacifier was doing to her speech.

“It wasn’t all that hard, honestly.” Love Tap sat down next to Dash and tugged at the sleeves of Dash’s shirt. “You said you didn’t want your hooves touched and Twilight was doing just that. All day you’ve talked about how you aren’t a helpless foal. If I were you and I didn’t want to be helpless, I wouldn’t want to wet myself.”

Dash’s cheeks flushed as she lifted a leg to let the removal of her shirt be easier for her caretaker. “K-Kind of. No way Ah wanna wet myself and not even know it happened.” Gulping, she added, “Ah, uh, know about it now, though.”

Love Tap paused, ears twitching as she looked down at Dash’s diaper. Though muffled between several inches of puffy padding, a *hiss* could be heard if one concentrated. In addition, the cloud on Rainbow’s diaper turned grey, raindrops falling from them as they overfilled with liquid.

Through a smile, Love Tap patted the front of the diaper and said, “Good thing you were in a diaper, eh? And I bet it’s not even all that bad.”

Once the shirt was pulled away, Dash brought her hooves to the absorbent garment. As the diaper became warm and squishy, Rainbow felt her pee disappear into the thirsty material. She didn’t get to feel the sensation of sitting in her own urine for very long, instead finding her bottom almost completely dry and resting her haunches on a warm diaper.

“... Huh. Yeah, it’s not bad at all,” Dash said. “Not great, but not bad. *Thuckle.*”

“A dry diaper would feel much nicer than a wet one, I imagine,” Love Tap said as she gathered up their burglar costumes. “How about we get you changed before we get you a snack?”

“You didn’t answer mah question,” Rainbow replied, brow raised toward the elder mare. “How’d ya know I was gonna go?”

Love Tap smiled and took Dash’s hoof. “Years of practice. Like I said, I’ve had to take care of three foals, practically. I’ve taken care of many, many others.”

“So I’m jus’ another foal, huh? Seen it all before?” Much like when bathtime had ended, Rainbow felt a pang of disappointment run through her, and she didn't know why she was having the feeling in the first place. She gripped Love Tap's hoof, frowning in her confusion. Her caregiver smiled down on her.

“Quite the contrary. My youngest is loud, my oldest is too big for his britches, and my husband wouldn’t be able to find his mane if it didn’t grow out his head. Every pony I’ve taken care of has been different, and you’re no exception.” Love Tap pulled Dash into a hug, placing a kiss on the blushing pegasus’s cheeks. “The one thing that's always the same, though, is how my foals need and deserve all my care and attention, and you're no different. What kind of caretaker would I be if I didn't notice when you were unhappy? It's my job to keep my Dashie happy, smiling, and ready to be awesome.”

Dash’s lips wobbled as she tried not to smile. “Cut it out, you’re worse than my mom.”

“Then I’m doing my job right.” Love Tap stuck her tongue out and relinquished her hold over Rainbow. “Now, how about a change? I’m sure you don’t want to sit in a soggy diaper longer than necessary.”

“Ah don’, but...” Dash looked back at her behind, doubt clear across her face. “Maybe we should wait until I use it again.”

Love Tap raised a brow. “Are you sure? You could get a rash if you wait too long, you know. Those aren’t fun at all.”

Vivid memories of the wing rash she'd gotten years earlier when she'd failed to preen for a week sent a cold shiver down Rainbow's spine. "Ooh yeah, trust me. Ah know. It's ain’t that, though." Her tail flicked, thumping on the carpet. "Uh... it's just... Twilight's tickling almosh uh... made somefin else happen, too."

"Oh?" Love Tap watched as Rainbow looked guiltily up at her, shifting around on the floor like she couldn't get comfortable. Almost like she had to— "Oh!"

"Yeah."

"Close call, huh?"

"Uh huh. An' it means a wot dat you saved me and all, but, uh..." She rubbed one leg against the other, slowly. "Ah kinda... Ah still wanna know wash ish like."

Love Tap blinked twice. "You mean...?" Dash nodded. "But, but the bath, you didn't—you don't have to do that if you don't want to. You've got a choice."

"Yoo're right, I do. *Thuckle.*" Dash put on a show of grinning as she popped the pacifier out of her mouth, but her eyes still looked doubtful. Just a bit. "Twilight's done it, right?"

"A few times." She paused for a moment, scrutinizing Rainbow. Doubt or not, she seemed to have made up her mind. "Are you sure?"

“Yes. Well, mostly...” Dash’s eyes met Love Tap’s. “It’s my choice, right? So I choose to just let go and give it a shot. Besides, I totally trust you.” Rubbing the back of her head, she added, “And I mean it, too. Your kids are lucky to have a mom as awesome as you.”

Love Tap smiled, cheeks tinted with a rosy color. “That means a lot coming from the coolest mare in town. If Rainbow Dash says I’m a cool mom, it must be true.”

“But, hey, can we... do this in private?” Dash looked over at Twilight, who was taking crayons from a box as Épingle seemed to suggest them.”

“Don’t want Twilight seeing what a big baby you are?” Love Tap said, giggling afterwards at Dash’s disgruntled stare. “I’m kidding, Dashie.”

Rainbow snorted. “It’s just weird, is all. You don’t do this kind of thing with other ponies watching.”

“But you’ll do it with me nearby. Should I be honored or insulted?” Sticking her tongue out at Dash’s playful scowl, Love Tap tugged at Dash’s leg. “So, you need to go now?”

The pegasus nodded.

“Alright, let’s get into the changing room. I imagine you won’t want to sit in the mess for too long.” Love Tap helped Dash put her pacifier back in her mouth, then led her to the crafts table where she picked up a bottle of milk somepony had placed next to a plate of cookies. “Ladies, Dashie needs to get changed. Seems the rainclouds on her butt couldn’t keep themselves from leaking.”

Snickering as she looked up from her crude drawing of a dragon, Twilight said, “Don’t worry, Rainbow, it’s all part of being a foal.”

“Ah’m *not* a foal. *Thuckcle.*” Rainbow smirked in Love Tap’s direction. “But being a little-big pony is somefin’ Rainbow Dash is okay with.”

“Be good for your Nounou,” Twilight said before going back to coloring.

“Yeah, yeah,” Dash said as Love Tap led her along.

Rainbow was led back to the room where she’d first been put into a diaper, her gait wider from the used diaper puffing outward after its first use. Back in the changing area, Love Tap helped Dash Back onto a table.

“Aren’t you going to wait to change me?” Dash asked.

“We are, don’t worry.” Love Tap rested her elbows on the table, smiling down at Dash. “I just thought you’re like to be comfortable, first.”

The pacifier was removed from Dash’s lips and the warm bottle placed into her hooves. “What’s the deal with warm milk, anyway? Wouldn’t that make it gross?”

“Never had a glass of warm milk before bed? You’re in for a treat, then.” Sliding a hoof under Dash’s head, Love Tap cradled Rainbow’s head, propping her up like she were on a pillow. Her other hoof was placed on Dash’s stomach, gently patting it. “There’s nothing as relaxing, most nannies will say. Speaking for myself, I prefer my fuzzy slippers, but that’s just me.”

Dash rolled her eyes and brought the bottle’s nipple to her lips. Drinking from a bottle wasn’t different from sucking at a pacifier, with the exception that she was getting something to drink. Much to her surprise, having milk warm was as good as drinking it cold. It tasted different, but good. Rainbow smiled even wider as she felt the milk in her stomach warm her from the inside-out, reaching from the tips of her hooves to the top of her head.

A tuneless song reached Rainbow’s ears as Love Tap began to hum. *Huh. Mom used to do that, too,* Dash thought to herself as she closed her eyes. Inhaling through her nose, Dash sighed and *thuckled* away, the tension in her body fading away as she just relaxed.

*That’s funny,* Dash thought as she felt her control slip away. *Didn’t think I’d feel so... safe. Huh. That’s nice.*

Dash’s muscles each relaxed, though she hardly noticed through everything else. Of course she *did* notice when it happened. It’s be pretty weird if she didn’t. But it was over and done with pretty fast. One moment she felt kinda full, the next moment her diaper did.

Soon the bottle was empty, and Rainbow found she was disappointed, less to her surprise then it might have been earlier. Dash plopped the nipple out of her mouth and examined the now-empty container.

“Aww, you drank it all, didn’t you? Want another?”

“Maybe later,” Dash said as love tap took the bottle away. “First I gotta... oh, wow, okay.” Snout scrunching, Dash found her diaper didn't quite sit right with her once she sat up. “That feels weird. Yuck.”

Love Tap chuckled as the hoof on Dash’s stomach moved up and pressed on Dash’s chest, laying her back down. “Nopony said it was supposed to feel good. This is usually the part where the foal cries out for somepony to change them out and into a fresh diaper.”

“Rainbow Dash doesn’t cry out for help!” Rainbow declared, right before a blush appeared on her face. “But, uhh, I can still ask you to get me out of this, right? That’s a big-little pony thing to do.”

“It is if you want it to be,” Love Tap said, giving Dash’s diaper a pat. When Dash’s face scrunched up again, Love Tap snickered. “Sorry, didn’t mean to do that,” she said, stepping over to look at Dash longways, hooves digging through the drawers of the changing table. “Force of habit.”

“It’s cool, I think, but... *ech*, this is gross.”

“Don’t like messing yourself, huh?” Love Tap said, grabbing another diaper with the same prints Dash was already in.

Rainbow opened her mouth, but the words *no way* died in her throat. Falling back, Dash blinked in thought. “No, I don’t like it.”

“Oh?” Love Tap brought up a box of wipes up. “I think I hear a *but* coming up. And not the gross one I’m about to clean up.”

“Hah, hah, you’re so funny.” Though Rainbow really did laugh as Love Tap stuck her tongue out at her. “But yeah, it’s not... I don’t hate it. I don’t like it, but I don’t hate it.”

Then Love Tap undid the tapes of Dash’s soiled diaper.

“No wait, I change my mind, I hate this part.”

“Most ponies do, I find. *Pew*, at least you’re a healthy pony.” Love Tap grabbed a wipe and went to work.

The wipes were cold, but Dash found she didn’t mind so much. Working with soggy rainclouds and chilly snowstorms made the cold feel not-so-cold. “But you know, I kinda like this part.”

Love Tap smiled down at Dash as she tossed the wipes into a bin. “The part where I change you?”

“Yeah, this part’s nice. It feels like I’m... hrrm...” Dash’s brow furrowed. “I need to read that thesaurus more. It’s like I feel safe, but it’s a bunch more stuff than that. This is weird, and it’s gross, but... but that kinda makes it better. Does that make sense?”

“Honestly, a lot of the things ponies do don’t make a bunch of sense,” Love Tap said as she wrapped the used diaper up and tossed it away. “Here’s what is important, though; it makes sense to you, so it doesn’t have to make sense to anypony else. You don’t like your messy diaper, but you like the feeling of being cared for while your messy diaper is being changed. If that’s how it is, then that’s how it is.”

Rainbow Dash smiled, nodding without thinking. “Yeah, you’re right. You’re a pretty smart mom, you know that?”

Love Tap slipped the clean diaper under Dash’s bottom. “I have to be to take care of rascals like you. And am I reading too hard, or did you just back-hoofedly call me mom?”

“Pfft, no way. I can’t see you as my mom. But what was that word Twilight used? Nounou? Did I say it right?”

Love Tap nodded. “Yes, that’s the word.”

“I think I like that word for you. You’re my super cool Nounou.” Dash sat herself back up once the clean diaper was taped around her. “At least, you know, while I’m in a diaper and stuff.”

Love Tap took Dash’s hoof and helped her back down to the ground. “A super cool *Nounou*, huh? I’ll take that as a compliment from — Oh!” The elder mare paused as Rainbow’s weight pressed into her side, a nuzzle accompanying it.

“Yeah, you’re super cool,” Dash said. “I’d be super scared of this kind of thing normally. But you made it just kinda happen. Not a lotta ponies gotta be able to do that.”

Wrapping a leg around Dash’s neck, Love Tap pulled the pegasus into a hug. “Not my fault you’re such a natural foal once you’re in a diaper.”

“Hey, I am *not* a foal.” Dash said. her brow furrowed, thoughts once again passing through her head. Her smile remained, though. “I’m just a big pony with a fluffy side.” Dash pulled away and grinned. “Now come on already, I gotta try out *Flappy Bolt* again. No way am I letting you hold a high score in anything.”

“Oh, is that a challenge I hear from my big-little Dashie? I wish you the best of luck, because my even husband hasn’t beaten it, and he’s been playing *Flappy* for weeks.”

Rainbow smirked and said, “Okay, maybe it’ll take me longer than a day to do it. Guess we’ll just have to find some time to meet up and I can kick your flank to the curb.”

Snickering as Dash punched at the air, Love Tap said, “So, you want to come back and spend more time as Dashie?”

“Yeah, sure. You make being a kid pretty fun.” Dash lightly punched at Love Tap’s shoulder. “But I was also thinking we could meet up at this restaurant Rarity showed me. Grab a sandwich, play some games, maybe do something afterwards.”

Love Tap blinked as she absorbed Dash’s words. “You want to meet outside *Fontaine*?”

“Hey, I’m not just a foal, and you’re not just a nanny. We could be friends, right?” Dash pulled back and offered a hoof. “Grown mares out doing grown mare stuff like eating, games, and seeing which one of us is more awesome.”

Raising a hoof up to meet Rainbow’s, Love Tap smiled and nodded. “It would be nice to find a new opponent to thrash. How’s next Wednesday for you?”

Rainbow scoffed and put her hoof back down. “Can’t. Weather duty all day, even if I could do it all faster than lightning. How about the day after?”

“Sounds like a date.” Love Tap giggled at Rainbow’s dirty glare. “Careful, make a funny face for too long and it gets stuck that way.”

“You really are just like my mom,” Dash said as she turned around. “Come on already, Twilight’s gonna eat all those cookies if we don’t get out there.”

“Right behind you,” Love Tap said, watching as Rainbow’s padded bottom shook while the pegasus waddled back to the playroom. “I swear, if I didn’t know any better, I’d think you were one of my kids,” Love Tap said to herself, following after Dash to enjoy the rest of their day.