**Seeing the Pattern part 3 –** Bon-Bon

Pinkamina awoke in a puddle of her own drool. The later afternoon sun warmed her wonderfully where she sat on a stool by a counter. Anger flared up inside her and she slowly lifted her head, wiping her mouth. Pinkie Pie had gone to sleep in the middle of the day, now their sleeping pattern would be thrown off! Snarling wordlessly, she peered around with sharp, hawkish eyes. Sugar Cube Corner’s kitchen greeted her. There were thirteen minutes left on the timer next to her, and all of their massive ovens were occupied. A brief check foretold the ten thousandth batch of cupcakes and other confections. The thought of the tiny pastries turned Pinkamina’s stomach, and she rolled her eyes. Snorting hot air from her muzzle, she snapped the last oven shut and moved to the next room. “Miss Cake.” She said with an even tone.

The lack of enthusiasm drew a cautious response from the dumpy mare. “Yes, Pinkie?”

Pinkamina put on a halfway-pleasant face. “I… need to have the rest of the afternoon off. I’m—” Sick? No, she lived in the basement and she wanted to go out. Running errands? For whom, other than Sugar Cube Corner? “S—seeing somepony today.” She said with a bucket of lying acid dribbled on top.

Miss Cake stared at Pinkie. “You are?” The straight-maned mare looked so odd with her face in such an odd, contorted expression of effort. To be quite honest she looked constipated. The elder mare cocked her head, and Pinkamina’s half-smile slowly turned stony and darker. It was a mean face. “Er, sure Pinkie Pie. You’ve not asked for a personal day in a long time. I’m sure we can do well without you for the afternoon.” She smiled awkwardly. Pinkamina started for the door in a straight line, holding her nose up just a little. Her dull pink coat looked-- strange. When had she started fixing her mane that way? It looked like sickly seaweed, at the whim of gravity.

Mr. Cake almost ran over Pinkie Pie when he came in the door with a stack of boxes on his back. “Whoop! Sorry there, Pinkie!” he said, scooting to try and make room for her. Holding the door like a gentlecolt, he frowned when she walked past him without a single word. “Huh, wonder if something’s wrong.” He said to her back. Pinkamina rounded on him with a black expression. Mr. Cake startled a little, and there was a dark silence between them. He gulped, lowering himself a little and walking backward into Sugar Cube Corner. When the door jingled shut behind him, he shuddered. “Must be her time of the month or something.” He speculated, turning around just in time to run into his frowny-faced wife. He gulped again. Mr. Cake spent that night on the couch for his comment.

Pinkamina wasn’t used to the daytime anymore. There were many ponies going about their daily lives, paying her no heed. It was claustrophobic. She was used to having the streets mostly to herself. Casting her gaze around, she tried to make a plan. Maybe she should go running and exhaust Pinkie Pie, so she would sleep at the proper hours this night. Then the stutter in her schedule would be ironed out.

“Hey Pinkie!” Twilight Sparkle, weighed down on both sides of her body with bulging saddlebags. “I’m headed to Zecora’s place to help with her new hut decorations. Wanna come with me?” she cocked her head, knowing the Pinkie Pie would instantly agree and insist on throwing a brand-new-house-hooray party. The zebra’s hut had been rebuilt over the past couple of weeks thanks to the love and support of half of Ponyville. They loved their strange, foreign friend very much and insisted on rebuilding her new place right where the old one was (with some fire safety equipment on hoof, of course). There was an awkward silence between the pink mare and the lavender one.

“No.” said Pinkamina in an even voice that made Twilight’s ears turn back a little. The last thing Pinkamina needed to do was go back to the scene of one of her disaster aversions. If Zecora got even a short look at her mane like this, she might put two and two together. “Tell her I said hello, though.” There was no love or joy in the sentence, similar to that of Rainbow Dash’s reading-aloud voice. Strained and awkward.

“Uh, well okay then.” Twilight said carefully, eyeing Pinkamina with a raised brow. With that, the purple unicorn turned and started down the street again, towards Zecora’s. She’d be so delighted to get all the wonderful books she’d picked out! The library had multiple copies of some things and she could donate them for Zecora’s new home effort.

Pinkamina jeered, watching her go. Brainless lavender librarian. “Hey Pinkie Pie!” Lickity Split had appeared behind her and to her right. She jumped, choking on her own spit with dilated pupils. Hunching a little, she turned her head and glared murderously at him. “Wh-sorry I didn’t mean to startle you.” He said, leaning back and lifting a hoof in case he needed to run very suddenly. “I just uhm… uhm…” his face turned a little pink, and he smiled awkwardly. She stared at him. “Saw you there and wanted to say hello.”

“Hello.” Said Pinkamina carefully, trying to ignore the waft of vanilla on the breeze. Stallions had no business smelling that good. Pfft. Her straight mane flapped in the breeze a little.

“I love what you’ve done with your mane.” Lickity Split tried again, trying to smile but rapidly failing under Pinkamina’s glare. “It looks like silky pink taffy!” he complimented brightly.

“I hate taffy.” said Pinkamina frownily before turning and cantering away. His face fell.

“Ouch.” Said a mare from a picnic table nearby, smiling sympathetically.

Lickity Split ignored her, trying not to think of the taffy-flavored ice cream sample in his saddle bag. The one he’d brought for Pinkie Pie. He’d made it himself, thinking of her. A little red in the face and defeated, he let his head hang. Sighing, he turned and walked away, kicking a little stone on the sidewalk. It was some time later before it occurred to him that Pinkie Pie worked in a bakery. Of course she wouldn’t be eager for more sweets while out on the street. Stupid!

About an hour later, Pinkamina was at a resturaunt, still thinking on what to do with the blasted day. She got several orders of fries, salted them down, and then put a big blob of ketchup on her plate. It was ironic because fries were made with salt, she’d put salt on them, and there was salt in the ketchup. Anything to get the eternal taste of sugar out of her mouth, even if only for a few minutes. She sat there chewing idly and staring at nothing with an unpleasant scowl on her face.

The darker half of Pinkie Pie knew she didn’t wake unless a disaster was near. But why had she awakened in the middle of the day? Yes, her other half had fallen asleep on the job, but not every nap or sleep cycle conjured her into consciousness. There had to be a reason. There was always a reason. A pattern to follow. She suddenly rolled her eyes. Well of course. It meant there was a disaster that was going to happen in the day time. Not all disasters were so close to midnight, like the last few. She allowed herself a rather dangerous smile, and a waiter that happened to be looking her way saw it and shuddered. Stuffing another hoof-full of fries in her mouth she rose, leaving her payment on the table and cantering away with renewed gusto.

She passed by shops as she cantered forward, feeling a little better. She had purpose now. Pinkamina passed Couches and Quills, Armchairs and Kitchen Knives, even Boutique Magnifique. She didn’t really need anything, but it was ideal to scan the town for potential disasters. She couldn’t go back to Sugar Cube Corner, she’d just left.

All of her evidence couldn’t be examined. The scent of vanilla distracted her while she tried to remember it all. There was a reaction when Pinkie had been fishing in a utensils drawer at Sugar Cube Corner. A knife maybe? Then there was… something… at the candy shop? Pinkie Pie had stopped to get Sweetie Bell a little box of candies for acing a big test at school one day, after she’d struggled and studied so hard. Something about the candies… Pinkamina let out an exasperated groan, scrubbing at her mane in frustration, just as Rarity came around the corner and almost ran into her. “Oh! Sorry darling!” she said with an apologetic smile.

“S’okay.” Said Pinkamina dismissively.

“I was just on my way to—” Rarity started to explain, but Pinkamina had already walked past her and around the corner. “Well then!” she huffed, turning her nose up. “Somepony’s having a bad day!”

Pinkamina stepped into the alleyway, then behind some trashcans. A tall shadow followed her, and she pressed herself into the darkness. The scent of vanilla became stronger and she POUNCED on none other than Lickity Split!” Why’re you following me?!” she demanded with a great scowl.

“C-cuz I like you!” the stallion blurted, red-faced and trying to look determined. It was that half-angry-very-embarrassed look that some stallions got when they’d been fed up with something and were nervously confronting their fear. Pinkamina knew such faces. After feeling sorry for himself for a bit, Lickity Split had figured that the best thing to do was to just out and confess. Skip all the drama of beating around the bush. “I like you! Please date me!” it was the most forced, forward, blunt thing Pinkamina had ever heard in her life. She stared at him for a long moment, trying to figure out if he was being serious.

The hard-hearted pony threw her head back in a cruel, resounding laugh that scared a few small animals out the alley. She shoved him roughly away with a snort. “I don’t think so.” She cocked her head at him and scowled, recalling a line from a book Twilight Sparkle had once shown her (trying to impart romance novels upon the pink mare to get her into reading too. Rainbow had been successful, why not Pinkie Pie?). She recited from the book that had been pressed under her nose one day. “My heart falls asleep at the end of the day.” There was a long silence and the two of them stared at each other. A phantom breeze pressed her mane to one side, then gravity tugged it back down.

“What…?” Lickity Split said from where he was propped oddly against the wall.

“I’m not the dating sort.” She said with an angry frown, stalking past him. “Stop following me, or I’ll buck you into next Tuesday.” Pinkamina promised pain. He winced, looking embarrassed and following after her. “I SAID~!”

“It’s a dead end alley!” he defended quickly when she coiled up to hit him in the face. Lickity Split leaned backwards a little while she checked over his shoulder suspiciously. Wall. She glared at him with lidded eyes. Her hoof SNAPPED up, between his eyes and not quite touching his nose. She walked backwards slowly out the alley. Lickity Split did not move, only looked at her pathetically. She snorted, huffing her mane out of her eyes and then turning the corner to be away from him.

He stood there, rejected and sad, confidence blown.

Pinkamina started down the street, rolling her eyes. Trying to get the scent of vanilla out of her nose, she stopped briefly in a scented candle store. She bought a candle that was supposed to smell like sea salt breeze. Sticking her nose into it, she whiffed a few times. Close enough, she decided. Paying for it, she came out with it in her saddlebags. The impulse buy made her feel a little better, and she stopped when she saw how dark the horizon was for mid-day. There was a nasty-looking storm coming. She could see the bare specks of weather pegasi flying furiously back and forth to coax the great thing along.

“Hey Pinkie Pie!” Rainbow Dash descended from on high. “You better batton down the hatches, we’ve got a doozy set up for today! Its gonna be a huge windstorm to make up for the last two that got back-logged!”

The blue mare suddenly whinnied, rearing hard when Pinkamina’s body exploded into spasmic twitches. “Hey! HEY! Are you having a seizure!?” Rainbow Dash called, leaning over her. “Somepony help!” Pinkamina’s body convulsed powerfully, and she gave an audible whimper. “She’s freakin’ out!” The pink mare’s legs all bicycle’d helplessly, and then her attack stopped as suddenly as it had begun. She stood up at last, flustered and a little shaken. Ponies had gathered around, staring in concern.

“I-I-I’m fine!” she said with a little more force than needed. “It was just… the Pinkie Sense!” she said after a slight hesitation.

“What’s gonna happen, Pinkie?” Rainbow Dash said with big eyes.

“Uhh… lot of water!” Pinkamina said quickly. The crowd deflated.

“Oh, Pinkie! We know that! Sheesh!” Rainbow Dash shook her head and, once sure her friend was okay, took to the skies. “I’ll see you later!” she called over her shoulder, leaving a rainbow streak in the air behind herself.

Pinkamina clutched her chest when the crowd had disappated. A Pinkie Sense event had happened to HER! That had never happened before! She didn’t know what to do! She had to write it down. No. She couldn’t go back to Sugar Cube Corner until the afternoon was over. She tried to memorize instead. Her body had gone spastic when… Rainbow had mentioned the storm? Or when she’d seen it in the distance. “Doozy…” she mumbled, then her face lit up. “Doozy! Rainbow Dash said doozy!” The key word had invoked some reaction in the Pinkie Sense and… set Pinkamina off? It didn’t make any sense. Pinkamina had never experienced the Pinkie Sense for herself. She cocked her head in thought. Why didn’t she know what the twitching had meant? Pinkie Pie always knew exactly what each item was pertaining too. She thought hard. Nothing came to mind. She growled, stomping down the street.

“Pinkie, are you okay?” Lickity had reappeared, for he’d not gone far when he’d seen the whole thing. “I’m sorry to bother you again but… that was kind’a scary!” he said.

“No, no I’m not!” she said over her shoulder at him, glaring a firestorm that made him lean back and lift a hoof defensively. The wind-storm was starting. The signs hanging outside the shops flapped back and forth in the wind. “And you need to stop following me!” she exploded, pressing her face into his. He retreated backward, terrified of her wrath very suddenly. For a pony that was known to defy logic, mood, and even gravity, she was stubbornly angry and directed at him. It made him very squirmy. Who knew what she was capable of! Backing up and trying not to rear or whinny in fear, Lickity Split retreated. “Didn’t I tell you plainly enough!?” she roared, pressing him back and back past shop after shop, yelling at him angrily. Ponies stopped to stare. “I’m under ENOUGH stress right now and I don’t need some vanilla-smelling, treat-making, sugar-slopping--!”

CHING!

There was a blood-curdling scream, and both ponies looked across the street. Bon-Bon lay strewn unconscious on the sidewalk, pale as a sheet. Directly in front of her was the knife from the Armchairs and Knives shop sign. The knife had been metallic and quite real (“The sign’s gotta be real, or its false advertising! Sharpen it too!” the manager had said years ago). The massive utensil had buried itself deep into the sidewalk. Lyra stood there, eyes wide and pupils dilated. Then she screamed too, throwing herself over Bon-Bon and trying to shake her awake with tears in her lidded eyes. Bon-Bon was passed out, but otherwise unharmed.

“Oh my Celestia!” Lickity Split gasped. “That could’ve taken her head off!” he pointed with a hoof. “The wind blew it off the sign, wow!”

Lyra suddenly waved at the pair from across the street. “Thank you! Thank you!” she cried as tears leapt from her face because of the wind. “If we hadn’t stopped to stare at your fighting, Bon-Bon would be--!” She lost her head entirely and flung herself upon her limp marefriend, weeping. (Bon-Bon would wake hours later with a tear-streaked pelt and tons of kisses upon her face. Much lovemaking would be had that night.)

Pinkamina stared with wide eyes. A death had been prevented. A sudden smile split her face. For some reason it terrified Lickity Split far more than her shouting and dark frowns. The pieces fell into place before her eyes. Something had arranged for Lickity to bother her today, since she’d not had access to all her Pinkie Sense evidence. He’d been the instrument of kharma and a preventer of fate! She looked across the street as Lyra struggled to get the unconscious Bon-Bon onto her back. Still very upset, she’d turned around and was making her way for their apartment home.

The wind was really picking up. Uncomfortably so. Lickity looked into the sky with a grim expression. “Could be a tornado or something on the way.” He said. “The weather pegasi have been giving warnings for a few days now.” Pinkamina wouldn’t have heard any, she’d not been awake in a few weeks. Suddenly a brick pitched itself out of nearby building and exploded into pieces at her hooves. She whinnied ferally, rearing up with a panicked expression. “WHOA!” Lickity said, for suddenly somepony had turned on the wind. Their manes flapped like flags. “C’mon! We haft’a get inside!” He rudely grabbed Pinkamina by the shoulder, steering her down the street. They arrived at the ice cream parlor, and the stallion struggled to get the glass door shut. Bolting it, he looked out briefly. Everypony was running, panicking, taking shelter. “This way!” he took her further as the wind howled and shrieked outside, picking up anything that was not nailed down and making off with it. Bricks, tree-limbs, dog houses, even things as large as pumpkins right out of pony gardens. Pinkamina gave a shriek when a large stone exploded through a window, blasting its way into one of the ice cream freezers like a comet of death. Lickity pitched himself over her like a turtle shell and he shimmied with her to his private residence in the back of the shop. “This way, this way!” he shouted over the aching groans the building was threatening them with. “The closet is aligned with the bathroom, it’s safest!” he opened it and stuffed Pinkamina inside, then crowded in with her while slamming it shut.

They huffed and puffed in absolute darkness. The pink mare glared at blackness, listening to the howling storm outside. They flinched when another foreign object blasted into the room and shattered itself upon Lickity’s coffee table. It was by instinct that he grabbed her up, hunching over her protectively. She let him. If a pitchfork or something sharp came flying into the closet door it would kill him first and—oh, there was that scent again. Pinkamina’s eyes went just a little bit soft when her muzzle was pressed into his mint green mane. Vanilla. She shuddered just a little and he stuttered quiet apologies for mare-handling her into such a tiny space. There was a long, tense silence while they listened to the storm pitch and rage outside. “Got any chips?” Pinkamina asked.

“Wh-what?” he asked to the darkness. Their noses were almost pressed together.

“Got any chips? I’m craving salt.” She told him.

For some reason, this made Lickity burst into giggles. They shifted awkwardly, pressed together in the pipe-insulated closet. He apologized again and again, then finally shifted properly. It felt like coats all around them. Coats and boots and a few other odds and ends. “I wonder if I could… ah, there it is!” he reared up and she almost got a very awkward face full of— he came down again, something in his teeth. It was hard to see in the darkness. There were some scraping sounds, and he struck a match. They were illuminated, and stared at each other for a bit.

“Gimmie one.” Pinkamina rudely took the box, shuffling a bit. “There.” She struck one, lighting her sea salt breeze candle. The tiny closet was lit with a wavering flame. The storm crashed something against Lickity’s roof, and they both flinched again. What was going on out there, a tornado?! The pink mare reminded herself to growl at Rainbow Dash about the weather pegasi going overboard. Now she was stuck in a closet, under a powerful storm, with a stupid stallion that smelled like vanilla, in the dark. Almost in the dark. He could’ve smelled worse. Meh!

Lickity tried to give Pinkamina a little more room, but the space was quite cramped and they could not help but share some of the same space. There, by candlelight, they stared at each other for a long time. He smiled rather goofily at her, red in the cheeks. She knew that goofy look. She’d seen other stallions make it at their marefriends and very special someponies.

“Don’t.” Pinkamina said rather sternly, looking to one side with a flap of her limp mane.

“What?” he asked, perking his ears.

“Look at me like that.” She shifted a little, uncomfortably pressing her mane behind her ear.

“Why not? You’re beautifu--!” just then a four by four of wood blasted into the closet between them, kissing the stallion over the face and knocking him right out! The spray of wood chips made the mare cough. The bruise on his face was exquisite. Pinkamina stared, slack-jawed. That could’ve easily taken either of their heads off. Fate, it seemed, was not without a sense of humor. She found herself grinning. Pushing the wooden bit out of the door and out the other side, she pulled Lickity’s head to her breast with both hooves.

“Because my heart falls asleep at the end of the day. Pinkie Pie is the one you love. She’s the one you want.” She said with a somber, angry frown. She pressed her muzzle into his mane while she stroked it gently. Cramped into the tiny space, there wasn’t much else to do other than keep the candle from setting fire to his coats. Vanilla. Stupid, stupid stallion.

When Lickity Split woke the next morning he was one of many ponies at a recovery tent in the middle of town. His head was bandaged, but Pinkamina was gone. Strangely, somepony had left a half-eaten bag of potato chips next to his bed.