**Seeing the Pattern 8 – Pinkie Pie**

Twilight was the first to shriek, and they all backed away until they fell over themselves in shock. Pinkamina stood there, very much alive, smoldering with white steam rising from her shoulders. She looked at herself, then patted herself out quickly. “P-Pinkie Pie!” Twilight said, leaning forward and screwing up her eyes like she might be a mirage.

“Pinkamina.” said the pink mare, looking around a bit. “Everyone’s gone. Good.” She turned and leaned over the hem of the window Rainbow Dash had shattered tackling Lickity Split. “Hmm.” While her awestruck friends watched, she pushed the door of the ice cream parlor open and went in. Lickity Split lay on his back, staring at the ceiling with a shocked expression. She leaned over him. “Still alive?” she said. His eyes locked with hers and he gave a squeaking sound as his hooves flailed to right himself.

“Pinkamina! You’re alive! But how?!” he threw his hooves around her neck, crushing her to himself with a happy whinny. Rainbow Dash, Twilight Sparkle, Applejack, and Rarity stealthily leaned in so they could see. “I saw Princess Luna execute you there in front of everyone!” Vanilla wafted over her.

“You still smell like a mare.” The pink pony complained. Pinkamina extended her neck with a harrumphing sound, face affixed in a frown. “Luna came to execute Pinkie Pie. She did.”

“But you’re not dead!” He said, running his chin up and down her neck with tearful affection. “Y-you’re right here! I’ve got you right here and you’re alive!”

“I’m not Pinkie Pie.” She said at last. He stopped.

“You’re not? Who are you then?” Lickity Split chuckled confusedly, leaning back so he could see her face.

“Pinkamina Diane Pie.” She recited.

“Who’s that?”

“Me.” She said simply. When she saw the group of mares come in, she nodded to herself. Now was the time to explain things, because it had all come to an end. Officially, she was dead. And without Pinkie Pie to provide events with the Pinkie Sense, perhaps her days of divining the fate of others were over too. Everyone gave her a confused look. Heaving a deep sigh and knowing the story would be quite long, she explained.

The Sonic Rainboom had scrambled her brain, giving birth to an alternate personality that called itself ‘Pinkie Pie’. After a time, it took over entirely and Pinkamina became the alternate. It was her body, but then when Pinkie Pie earned her cutie mark while she was in control of the pink mare it became her own body. At first she went years without waking sometimes, always startled to see the face in the mirror. Prisoner in her own body. Then at last when adulthood was settled in, she awoke nightly and was able to more or less function again. Reading Pinkie Pie’s diary every night and hosting a frugal night life had plenty of benefits. Moving to Ponyville, she’d embraced the Pinkie Sense as a way of telling the future and the fate of others with the ‘doozies’. After that had gone out of hand, well… you know the rest.

Everypony stared at her. “So you’re the real Pinkie? And our friend, the one we knew…?” Rainbow Dash ventured softly, horrified.

“A figment of my own mind. I’m the real me, not her. She’s gone now. Luna killed her.” That terrible, cold smile returned, chilling the bones of all that looked upon it.

“How did you survive, though? Luna was pretty brutal with you!” Twilight needed to know.

“I don’t know a lot about magic.” Pinkamina said with a scowl. “But I think intent is part of it. Luna’s execution spell was targeting Pinkie Pie, and so it hit Pinkie Pie, so to speak. With any luck she won’t be back ever again.” Her grin grew as the horrified expressions intensified.

“So you’ll be like this all the time?” Lickity Split was stroking her stringy mane with a hoof, but he meant more than he said. “She destroyed some alternate part of you, and this is the real you?”

“Something like that.” Pinkamina said, leaning into him casually now. “Listen, everyone.” She cleared her throat, standing upright after a few moments. “I’ve told you everything you need to know. I’m tired. I was murdered today, technically. I think I deserve some food, a bath, and a warm bed.” Without bothering with subtlety, she took Lickity Split’s ear in her teeth and pulled him along. He cried out a little, looking at the others for help. They were too stunned to move. She backed into the stallion’s private living space behind the shop, pulled him in with her, then shut the door and locked it. There was a long silence.

“What the hay just happened?!” Applejack shouted at the ceiling.

“I… think Pinkie Pie is still dead. That mare is the original Pinkie Pie, ‘Pinkamina.’” Twilight pieced together everything they’d been told while they turned to leave the wrecked ice cream parlor. Finding Fluttershy still passed out on the sidewalk, they got her onto Applejack’s back and carried her away with them.

“What’re we gonna do, Twilight?” Rainbow Dash asked.

“I don’t know.” Twilight said softly. “This is just so complicated…” she hung her head, sighing in frustration. “It’s her body, but Pinkie was our friend, and now she’s dead because of a lie she told she thought was the truth. Lickity’s caught in the middle, the Princesses were here to kill her and basically did…” The lavender unicorn could feel a migraine coming on, and moaned softly. “Let’s… let’s just get together again tomorrow morning and figure out what to do.”

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“You’re hurt.” Pinkamina said with a sour face. Guiding Lickity Split by his ear to the sofa, she set him upon it. Finding a first aid kit in his hall closet, she carted it over in her teeth. The pink mare leaned over him, sighing at the bits of glass sticking out of his fur and the light bruising on his face.

Lickity looked up at her with soft eyes as she fished out a pair of tweezers and set to work on him. The lights were dim, and if it had been any other night it would have been quite romantic. With a petri dish next to her on the coffee table, Pinkamina began to take the bits of glass out of him on at a time. Most of them hadn’t broken the skin, but if they were left in his fur they might eventually. Each bit of glass she found fell with a little clink in the petri dish. “Thank you.” He whispered softly after a long time.

“Turn, ‘ay on your ‘ack.” She said around a mouthful of tweezers. He obeyed her, his hooves folding a bit as he laid out on the couch. Lickity winced a little, showing her where larger pieces of glass had lodged themselves in his fur. There was a drop or two of blood here and there, but nothing much worse than a deep papercut. Clink. Clink-clink. Pinkamina worked slowly and carefully, steady with her tool as not to harm him. “’Hut ‘appened aft’ah she blashsted meh?” she asked, cocking her head to clink another piece of glass into the petri dish.

Wincing when she pulled a little hair with a piece of glass, he told her of the scuffle with Rainbow Dash and how they wept over Pinkie’s body after she’d been killed. Pinkamina rolled her eyes. “I was sure you were gone…” he whispered, soft in the eyes and putting a hoof out to press against her cheek. She stopped moving, her angry face not drawing away but not leaning into his touch either. He let his hoof fall, and she leaned to get the next bit of glass. The curtain of her mane hid her expression from him.

“Mmm.” She said neutrally. Clink.

“Listen, I’m not mad or anything. Pinkie Pie thought I’d taken advantage of her, and you had no idea what was going on when you awoke again. You— ow!” he yelped when she pulled another tweezer-full of hair extracting another bit of glass. She looked at him sideways, mischief in her eyes. She had such odd ways of showing her affection. You just had to pay attention, it seemed. Clink. “You did that on purpose.” He sulked.

Her horrible smile greeted him from under her brow, and he chuckled at her. Pinkamina leaned, quietly kissing his belly. Lickity did his best not to squirm pleasureably. The feeling vanished when she found a large piece of glass on his inner thigh and took a few private hairs with it. He squealed just a little, trying to curl up and away from her. “Don’t be a foal.” She scolded softly. Clink. “Almost done.” He lay still when she started running her hooves all over him. She found only one or two more bits, then nodded at him. “There.” She said.

“What about you?” Lickity Split said when she’d thrown the petri dish away. She sat on her haunches in front of the couch. “I saw you get brutalized by all that magic.” She sat still, her head hanging a little low. He only just noticed the shudder of her exhaustion. Sitting up, he scooped her up onto the couch and ran his hooves over her back. She moaned audibly, brow furrowed into her normal scowl. “Ah, there it is then…” he reared up behind her, running his hooves harder between her shoulder blades. Another moan.

She looked over her shoulder at him with a quiet expression. He laid down upon her, their warm bodies pressed together. Pinkamina heaved a sigh while his hooves wrapped about her neck. She didn’t stop him from nuzzling her mane, nor her ears. He could do that for awhile, it didn’t irk her. At least not as much as she thought it would. Just a little. Meh. The scent of vanilla wafted over her muzzle and she chuckled just a little. “You smell like a mare.” She told him, and he snickered. Nickering softly, she tilted her head so he could better get at her neck with his nibbling teeth.

Lickity Split pulled a quilt from the back of the couch, pulling it over them. “Let’s just stay right here.” He whispered, laying down atop her again. Pinkamina adjusted herself, set her chin on the arm of the sofa. She stared at the featureless wall while the stallion atop her found a comfortable position. Smirking a little, she glanced back at him. “What?”

“Not gonna take advantage of me?” she snarked.

“No…” he said slowly, his face coloring. Her tail flicked a little, jostling him. She gave a genuine giggle. He smiled embarrassedly. “Don’t tease.” He said, coming down and kissing the top of her head. She nickered, giving her curtain-like mane a toss. It whapped him in the face and he smiled a goofy, romantic stallion’s smile. Squirming, she turned over and lay on her back under him. “Pinkamina…” his face colored a little more at the sultry look she was giving him.

“Lickity Split.” She said in return, smiling her disturbing smile. She hooked her hooves around him, pulling him down atop her. “C’mere.” She whispered headily before their muzzles came slowly together.

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 Luna was watching the space between spaces. The place that souls travelled across when they separated from their bodies. No pink mare. She frowned with a dark expression. “Where are you…?” she mumbled. Now and then a blobby shape would travel across her line of sight, each one representing the soul of a departed pony. They bumbled along like cotton candy clouds, vanishing over the horizon to the great beyond. “What’s that…?” something caught the goddess’ eye. A pink little puff ball that seemed to idle in place. It wasn’t headed for the great beyond, nor was it congealing to become an evil spirit. It simply sat idle. Moving down to it, the goddess of the night took on a more defined shape on the ethereal plane to get a better look.

 The pink blob reacted, and a spectral giggling could be heard. “Oh there you are! I was sure I was all alone here that is until you came along then I was like whew at least I’m not stuck in this weird place am I dead by the way I can’t feel my hooves isn’t it so strange—”

 Definitely Pinkie Pie. Princess Luna frowned, looking her over. She didn’t look like any sort of soul she usually saw travelling the expanse towards the great beyond. She was much smaller, much weaker, and hardly had any color to her. She was mildly pink, yes, but most souls had vibrant colors. This was like… half a soul. Rather than being like a cloud, it was much more like a ball of floating cobwebs. Very weak and ill-defined. It bothered the goddess. “Why are you no moving on? You are dead.” She told her.

 “Well I don’t feel dead!” the pink soul said, flickering every time she spoke. “I just feel detached, like I’ve got more to do.” Oh great, she was a lingering soul. Souls like that became angry ghosts, and tended to haunt places. Luna could only imagine the outrageous antics that a ghost of Pinkie Pie could conjure. It made her shudder.

 “I killed you and you’ll move to the great beyond!” The goddess insisted, giving her a shove with her hoof. The ball of cobwebby soul bounced a bit, but then anchored herself to the ground again, stubborn.

 “But I don’t wanna!” she whined.

 Suddenly Luna saw it. She WAS half a soul! Whole souls would’ve floated away, she still had weight! “How did you do this?! Is your body still running around?!” she demanded, pulling the cloud towards herself. She scanned the half-soul more closely, and found an intact personality as well as a heart and memories. It was a complete pony, but… somehow, only half a pony at the same time. “We do not like this, brace thyself for resurrection.”

 “Ressurection? Isn’t that when you--?” The will of a goddess snatched the tiny, fragile soul up, and ripped it from the ethereal plane. She squawked in alarm as she was ripped from the warm, happy place and placed on the physical plane. They appeared in Luna’s private chambers at the palace in Canterlot. “Hey! That wasn’t very ni—eep!” Luna had blasted her with a magic so ancient nopony alive had any inkling of its existence. The threads of fate twisted. The drip of karma reversed. The alicorn willed a body to form, fresh from the ethereal void and into the shape that would suite the soul best. It was creation magic. Bone and muscle and tendon rushed over a creation that had not ever lived on its own before. White fur exploded from pores as soon as they formed, and a symbol of four red balloons ignited across its flank. A blonde mane poofed into existence with a matching golden tail. Purple eyes blink-blinked open as hooves hardened into being. A mare had been made.

 “Pinkie Pie from Ponyville, rise.” Luna commanded in a god’s voice. The pony rose on shaky limbs, looking herself over. She was as white as a ghost, and as blonde as the most beautiful wheat fields. She peered at herself from as many angles as she could. The dark princess sat on her haunches, regal and smirking at the amazing miracle she’d just performed. Only gods like herself could wield such magic and make something out of nothing, much less bring the dead back to life. “I have brought you back from the land of the dead to--!”

 “Do it again! Do it again!” Pinkie Pie bounced, springing up and down in a circle around the lunar princess. She scoffed, face-hoofing with a growl. “That was amazing! This body feels great, wow! Do it again!”

 “NO! THERE IS NO DOING IT AGAIN!” The Royal Canterlot Voice blasted the newly flesh-and-blood mare over her own hooves. She princess mentally counted to three to calm herself. When she opened her eyes again, the white Pinkie Pie was on her hooves, looking up at her with a big smile. Two inches away from Luna’s face. She flinched back despite herself, unsure of what a good idea it had been to bring back the strange mare to the land of the living.

 “Surprise! I’m alive again!” she squawked, leaping into the air and defying gravity for a few long moments. “That’s soooo what I’m gonna tell everyone when I get back since I was totally dead not sure how I died but it was totally dead there and now I’m not though I do have this new body and I--” A royal hoof shoved itself into her mouth, shutting her up. Luna could feel a migraine coming on.

 “Thy strange fate and appearance on the ethereal plane troubles us, pink one…” The princess trailed off a moment, frowning. She was no longer pink. “What should we call thou…?” she mumbled, eyeing the mare up and down. She made the mistake of lowering her hoof and uncovering the mare’s mouth.

 “Surprise!” she shouted again, leaping into the air with a blast of joyous volume. Luna jumped. “Oh my gosh you’re right I really should think of a new name I mean how lame would it be for a white pony to wander into town and go ‘hey I’m Pinkie Pie’ except I’m totally as white as flour and–” The hoof rushed back up to her mouth, shutting her up again. Luna sighed. Shut the buck up didn’t seem very princess-like to say, so she held the hoof there for the moment.

 “Perhaps we shall call you ‘Surprise’ for now.” The dark goddess mused. “For now, let us return to Ponyville. If only half of your soul went to the afterlife, the other half must still be there somewhere.” Surprised nodded in excitement, her eyes shining of at the thought of returning to Ponyville. “But be wary, Surprise, we executed you once. If you make trouble we shall do it again.” The princess of the night extended her wings, kneeling down briefly with a gesture.

 “Okie-dokie-lokie! Let’s go!” Surprise clambered up onto the goddess’ back and straddled herself, putting her hooves around her neck to hang on. “Just no loop-dee-loops okay?” she giggled. Luna groaned audibly, rolling her eyes.