



Rainbow Dash's Double Dare



by G.M. Berrow



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Chapter 1

It's almost midnight in Ponyville, and more than two hundred ponies are crowded outside the bookshop. They are waiting for the most epic adventure ever to be released: *Daring Do and the Volcano of Destiny!*

"Omigosh!" says Rainbow Dash. "I need that book right now!"

"It's almost time!" shouts Plot Twist, who owns the bookshop.

"Dashie!" Pinkie Pie chirps. "Are you going to burst into a rainbow firework of joy about the new Daring Do book?!"

Rainbow Dash nods. "I just *have* to know what happens next with Dr. Caballeron!"

Pinkie smiles. "You'll know soon! We're just putting the finishing touches on our Ahuizotl's temple. We built it completely from books!" Her eyes sparkle. Pinkie never passes up the opportunity to plan a party, from welcome parties to birthday parties and now to book release parties!

The crowd cheers, and it triggers something inside Rainbow Dash. Hundreds of ponies watching? One minute left? That's more than enough time to make a grand entrance! She'll be the first to get the book, *and* she'll do it with style!

"Hey, Daring Do fans! Watch *this!*" Rainbow Dash shouts.

She bolts into the air, beating her wings as hard as she can, and completes a perfect triple barrel roll. Several ponies gasp as she swoops down close to the shop. At the very last second, the door opens!

"Incoming!" Rainbow Dash hollers as she flies into the

shop.

Bang! Boom! Crash! When the dust settles, all that is left of the grand tower of Ahuizotl's temple is a big, messy pile of books with Rainbow Dash lying in the middle.

"Oh no!" Plot Twist cries. "My display is ruined!"

Rainbow Dash reddens as she stands up. "Whoops, sorry about that."

Then she snatches up a book, drops her bits on the counter, and takes off. She flies home to Cloudsdale to read through the night.





Chapter 2

The next day, Rainbow Dash is so excited to talk about the new Daring Do book. She finds Twilight Sparkle at Ponyville Park.

“Hey, Twilight,” says Rainbow Dash. “Let’s talk about how totally awesome the book is. Especially the part where —”

“*Spoiler alert!*” Twilight sings. “*La, la, la!*” She holds her hooves over her ears.



“What! You’re not finished yet?” Rainbow Dash sighs. “How am I supposed to talk about the coolest parts of the story if I’m the only pony who finished reading it?”

“Sorry, Rainbow Dash,” Twilight says, opening her book and settling in for a reading session.

Rainbow Dash takes off into the sky. She kicks a cloud in frustration. It disappears with a *poof*.

Fluttershy sees Rainbow Dash’s frustration as she leads a group of ducklings to the pond.

“Is something wrong with Rainbow Dash?” Fluttershy asks Twilight.

“She wants to talk about the new Daring Do book, but she’s the only pony who has finished reading it,” explains Twilight.

“I’ve just started,” says Fluttershy. “But I had to put it down to take care of my daily duckling duties.”

“If I had it my way, we would read all the time!” Twilight sighs. “Then, we’d have meetings to discuss what we’d learned and exchange ideas.”

“Well, why don’t you do that?” asks Fluttershy. “It sounds like fun!”

“Fluttershy, that’s it!” Twilight says. “Let’s have a Daring Do book club!”

Rainbow Dash flies down so fast that Fluttershy and Twilight don’t even see her coming. “Now *that’s* what I’m talking about!” she cheers.



Chapter 3

Book club night has arrived! One by one, ponies trot into the Golden Oak Library, clutching their copies of the book and chattering excitedly. They are all ready to talk about *Daring Do and the Volcano of Destiny*.

The book-lined walls of the lovely hollowed-out tree set the mood nicely.

Rainbow Dash sits right at the front. This is going to be awesome.

"Daring Do is such an exciting hero! I just love her!" says Berry Punch.

"This is the best book yet!" says Plot Twist.

Sweetie Drops nods in agreement.

Rainbow Dash grins. She can't wait to impress everypony with her thoughts about the book.

"Find a seat and we'll get started!" Twilight Sparkle calls. She is as excited as Rainbow Dash is to spend a whole evening talking about books.

Soon all the ponies are sitting in a semicircle.



“Welcome!” Twilight says happily. “I’m so glad you’re all here to celebrate books, especially the Daring Do series!”

Rainbow Dash is the most excited book clubber of all. “Let’s cut straight to discussing the action sequences,” she says. “Can you believe Daring Do hitched a ride on the back of that Dragon?”

Wild Fire raises her hoof. “Um, excuse me?”

“Yeah?” Rainbow Dash replies, trying not to be annoyed. She doesn’t like being interrupted.

Wild Fire flips through her copy of the book. “I like Daring Do as much as the next pony, but there is no way a pony could ever really do all those daring things in real life!”

A couple of other ponies agree.

“What?! Are you guys kidding me?!” Rainbow Dash cries. “Of course all the stuff she does could be real! Daring Do is the bravest pony ever!”

“I guess I’d just have to see it to believe it,” Wild Fire says.

“Well, maybe you can,” Rainbow Dash says.

“Oh yeah?” replies Wild Fire. “And just how would that

happen?"

Rainbow Dash puts her hooves on her hips. "I dare you to dare me to do anything Daring Do could do!"

Wild Fire narrows her eyes. "I double dare you!"

To Rainbow Dash, a dare is unbreakable. But a *double* dare? Well, that's a whole other crate of apples.



Chapter 4

The next day, there's a stir in the Ponyville town square. The Cutie Mark Crusaders have made a giant scoreboard that lists all the dares everypony could think of.

"Thanks for coming!" Rainbow Dash shouts to the gathered crowd. "I'm pretty pumped for you all to see me do some awesome stuff!"

Even though she hasn't read any of the dares yet, Rainbow Dash has no doubt that each one will have a check mark next to it soon. She is fearless—just like her hero, Daring Do!

Pinkie Pie clears her throat and proclaims, "The amazing *Daaaaaring* Dash will now take on all these *incredibly* difficult challenges to prove that Daring Do's adventures are all possible!"

The crowd cheers.

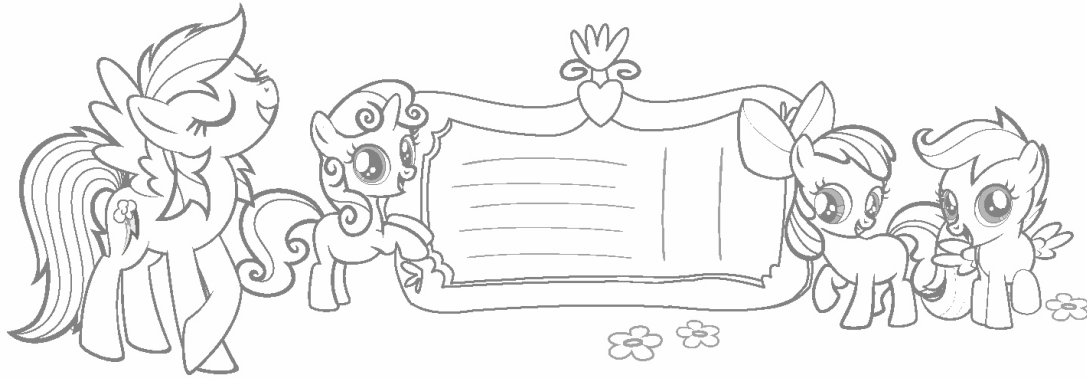
"Daring Dash's first dare is"—Pinkie pauses for effect—"to cross the Ghastly Gorge..."

Rainbow Dash rolls her eyes. That's hardly a challenge.

"... on a tightrope"—Pinkie Pie continues—"over the lair of the quarray eels... *without* using her wings!"

"All right!" Rainbow Dash shouts. "To the Gorge!" She shoots off into the blue sky, leading the way.

The crowd follows, trotting below.



Twilight Sparkle, Rarity, Applejack, and Fluttershy trail at the back of the herd.

"We all already know how brave Rainbow Dash is, but sometimes she takes it a little too far," Twilight says to her friends.

"Don't you fret!" says Applejack, trotting alongside Twilight. "She'll do a coupla dares and it'll all be over in two shakes of a filly's tail."

Rainbow Dash twirls through the air at the front of the crowd. "Ghastly Gorge, watch out!"

"It looks like she's having fun," says Fluttershy. "I just hope she's careful."



Chapter 5

It has been a busy day for Rainbow Dash and everypony who has been following her daring escapades.

Pinkie Pie turns to the scoreboard. “First, Daring Dash walked a tightrope across quarray eel dwellings at Ghastly Gorge. Then, she went inside the scary abandoned barn filled with bats.”

“I wasn’t scared for a single second!” Rainbow Dash brags.

“Then she swam in the Froggy Bottom Bogg, gave Rarity’s kitty cat a bath, knocked on Cranky Doodle Donkey’s door during his bridge game, performed a Sonic Rainboom through an obstacle course, and now she’s about to eat the hottest chili peppers in all Equestria!”

Rainbow Dash nods contentedly and then freezes. “Wait—did you say something about chili peppers?” Rainbow Dash hates hot peppers more than *anything*. And there is only one pony who knows that secret: Applejack!

“She sure did,” says Applejack. “One lil’ bite will make fire shoot straight outta yer ears.”

“Get the fire peppers!” shouts Pinkie Pie.

“But... but...” Rainbow Dash says. “I don’t like...”

Twilight Sparkle looks hopeful. If Rainbow Dash doesn’t want to eat the peppers... maybe that means the dares are finally over!

Rainbow Dash scans her audience. She can’t be defeated by some tiny, itty-bitty hot peppers!

Rainbow Dash clears her throat. “Um, what I meant was”—she stands a little taller—“I don’t like... how long you’re taking to get those peppers!”

"Are you sure?" Applejack asks.

"Go, Rainbow Dash!" Sweetie Drops chants. It isn't long before the whole crowd is cheering her on.

When Rainbow Dash bites into a pepper, weird things happen. First, she feels as if her mouth is on fire. Then she's certain she sees Daring Do herself in the crowd. Then Rainbow Dash coughs, and multicolored flames burst out of her mouth!



Applejack brings Rainbow Dash water and cider to cool her tongue. "All right, now. Drink up, sugarcube!"

"Ugh, that pepper was brutal!" Rainbow Dash groans.

Twilight gives Rainbow Dash a stern look. "Your daring ways are starting to put you in danger!"

But Rainbow Dash just grins. "Well, I am Rainbow '*Danger*' Dash! Now I must go greet my fans."

Twilight sighs. "I think I liked this whole Daring Do thing better when it was just about reading books."



Chapter 6

The next morning, Rainbow Dash can hardly believe it. She's proved that she's the bravest pony ever. Everypony is calling her Daring Dash—and she's unstoppable!

"Great job, me!" she says.

Word of Daring Dash's amazing feats has spread across Ponyville. There are twice as many fans in the Ponyville town square today as there were the day before.

"Are you all excited?!" Pinkie Pie shouts to the herd.

Just then a ray of sunlight pierces through the crowd. It shines on none other than the mystical zebra, Zecora! Her gold necklaces shimmer, and her hoop earrings and bangles shine and sparkle.



Everypony gasps.

She begins. "I've come to summon the pony who has proved to be the bravest—"

"In that case, I think you're looking for me." Rainbow Dash points to herself with pride.

"—for only she can be the one to save us!" Zecora looks worried. "A token that provides us protection was stolen for another's collection. The precious relic is of a golden hue and resembles the hook of a horse's shoe."

Twilight Sparkle gasps. "Not the Half-Gilded Horseshoe?!"

"Huh?" Applejack cocks her head to the side.

"The Half-Gilded Horseshoe is a key to the Spirit Circle," Twilight explains.

"Much of the legend is a mystery, and most regard it as ancient history," says Zecora. "The ghosts will be free when key meets lock. If you want to save Ponyville, fly fast—don't

walk!”

If there’s one thing Rainbow Dash knows, it’s flying fast.
“I’ll do it!” she says with purpose.

Finally, Daring Dash has her own adventure to star in.



Chapter 7

Rainbow Dash's friends help her prepare for her quest to recover the Half-Gilded Horseshoe.

Twilight has been trying to share her vast knowledge on the Half-Gilded Horseshoe and the Spirit Circle with an impatient Rainbow Dash.

Rarity is updating an old Daring Do costume of Rainbow Dash's. She is adding in utility pockets so that Rainbow Dash can pack everything she needs for her quest.

"You know," Applejack says, "we can be ready to go with you in a jiffy—just say the word."

The other ponies nod.

"Thanks, guys," Rainbow Dash replies. "But if I'm going to keep my image as the fastest and bravest, I can't have other ponies slowing me down. It's nothing personal."

"In that case, I better keep telling you about my research on the Spirit Circle," Twilight says.

"Sure," Rainbow Dash says. "How can I find the entrance to the Spirit Circle again?"



Twilight sighs. “It’s by the Dual Stronghold—whatever that is—and is only visible once every five seasons... on the seventh day of the third week of the year... which is tomorrow,” Twilight says slowly. “Whoever took the Half-Gilded Horseshoe will probably be there, waiting for the entrance to appear.”

“Well, I’ll be ready with the Daring Do move from book four—the ol’ switch ‘n’ fly. This is going to be totally easy!” Rainbow Dash says.

“But, Rainbow Dash, don’t forget the most important part,” warns Twilight. “If the entrance opens, the spirits will get out!”

“Yeah, yeah,” Rainbow Dash replies. She’s already thinking about her homecoming party.



Chapter 8

The six ponies and Zecora all stand at the clearing that leads to the Everfree Forest.

“You *sure* you don’t want company?” asks Applejack.

“For the last time, no,” Rainbow Dash answers. “Being the bravest means you don’t need help.”

Zecora bows her head. “It is time, Rainbow Dash, and I hope you are ready. May your wing beats be strong and your hoof beats be steady.”

“Don’t you worry, Zecora,” says Rainbow Dash. “I’ll have the Half-Gilded Horseshoe back in no time. No ghosts will haunt Ponyville if Daring Dash has anything to say about it.”

Rainbow Dash twists into an action pose: right arm up to the sky, wings spread out. Zecora looks slightly reassured.

Rainbow Dash takes a deep breath and gulps. “Well, see ya later.”

“Wait!” shouts Twilight Sparkle. “We haven’t shown you your tools yet.”

“My what?” asks Rainbow Dash, growing impatient.

In each pocket of her outfit there is a gift: a piece of rope from Applejack, a mini teddy bear from Fluttershy, some cupcakes from Pinkie Pie, a pair of horseshoes from Rarity, and a Sapphire Stone bookmark from Twilight. Rainbow Dash isn’t sure how any of these things are going to help her, but it *is* a nice gesture.

“There’s always room for cupcakes!” Pinkie squeals.

“Thanks,” says Rainbow Dash. She stuffs the presents back into her pockets. “Now I’m off for real!” She flaps her wings and soars away.



When Rainbow Dash is out of sight, Twilight turns to the other ponies. “Are you all ready to go?”

“Yes!” Applejack, Fluttershy, Rarity, and Pinkie Pie say together.

Zecora bows to them. The five ponies trot into the dangerous forest.



Chapter 9

In the Everfree Forest, exotic birds cry out. It sounds as if they are saying, *Do not enter!* But Rainbow Dash ignores them. She's on a mission to save Ponyville.

"I can totally do this," she says. "I'm Daring Dash!"

Suddenly, the sound of deep laughter echoes through the trees. It sends shivers up Rainbow Dash's spine.

She knows she needs a plan if she is going to find the entrance to the Spirit Circle before the thief does.

"Where did I put that map of Equestria?" she wonders, stopping to look through her pockets.

There is a low gurgling noise, followed by a loud *SNAP!*

Rainbow Dash turns to see a Colossa-gator!

It has shiny, scaly green skin and red eyes. It is like a normal alligator, except much bigger and stronger.

Rainbow Dash flies up into the air, but the trees hang too low. She can't get high enough to be safe from the gator!

Rainbow Dash reaches into her pockets and flings the first thing she can find at the gator: one of Pinkie's green cupcakes. She chucks the baked dessert right into the gator's open mouth.

It swallows the cupcake, burps, and slinks away.

Rainbow Dash can't believe her eyes. "Pinkie Pie, you're a genius!" she shouts.

Rainbow Dash continues on her quest, throwing cupcakes at oncoming gators. Soon she escapes them with only one green cupcake to spare. Shrugging her shoulders, Rainbow Dash eats it.



She keeps searching for the Dual Stronghold. But all she finds are old castle ruins. Rainbow Dash wishes that Twilight Sparkle were there. Twilight would definitely know where to find the entrance. Rainbow Dash sighs. It's too late now. She continues trotting deeper into the unknown.



Chapter 10

Soon Rainbow Dash spies strange glowing red smoke swirling through the forest. Hoping it will lead her closer to the Spirit Circle, she follows it. It leads her to a clearing covered with soft white sand.

The red smoke hovers over the sand before disappearing into the woods.

Rainbow Dash leaps into the air, beating her wings. She is halfway across the sandy clearing when she feels herself falling! It's as if her wings are frozen.

Woompf! Rainbow Dash lands in the soft sand. She reaches out her right hoof to pull herself up. But every step pulls her deeper into the sinking sand.

"It can't be!" Rainbow Dash says in a panic. "Quicksand!"

She tries to spread her wings, but they are still frozen by some sort of magic.

Rainbow Dash knows if she doesn't act fast, the sand will swallow her up completely.

She looks around. A low, sturdy bush sits at the edge of the sandpit about ten trots away. If she had something to reach it with, she could pull herself to safety. But what?

"Applejack's rope!" Rainbow Dash yells. "Of course!"

She reaches into her pockets and grabs the rope. She swings it around in a circle and tosses the rope toward the shrub. It bounces off and falls to the dirt.

"No!" Rainbow Dash shouts, now waist-deep in sand. Lassoing is harder than it looks. She makes a mental note to compliment Applejack on her lasso skills when she gets home.

If she gets home!

Thinking about her friends, Rainbow Dash pulls the lasso in and gives it another shot. This time, the loop hooks around the bush. Rainbow Dash pulls herself slowly toward the solid dirt. She's never been happier to have her hooves firmly on the ground.



Chapter 11

After trotting through the forest for what seems like forever, Rainbow Dash realizes she's lost. And she misses her friends.

Rainbow Dash riffles through her pockets. She cuddles Fluttershy's teddy bear tightly. She pulls out the Sapphire Stone bookmark that Twilight Sparkle gave her and stares at it. This gift doesn't make any sense.

"I wish I were at the Dual Stronghold right now!" Rainbow Dash sighs.

Suddenly, there is a blinding white light. When she opens her eyes, Rainbow Dash finds herself in front of a large, crumbling stone building. Twilight Sparkle's bookmark has magically transported her to the Castle of the Two Sisters!

"This *must* be it!" Rainbow Dash shouts. "So *that's* what Dual Stronghold means. *Dual* means *two*, and *stronghold* is just a fancy word for *castle*."

"Daring Dash has finally arrived!" a deep voice bellows from within a red smoky mist. "I wasn't sure if you had survived."

"Show yourself, you... coward!" Rainbow Dash squeaks.

"Prepare yourself to be amazed!" the voice cackles. The red smoke parts, and out steps a massive Zebra. "For you are graced by the presence of Braze!"

He has blood-red eyes and an earring made of orange-and-yellow feathers. His stripes are red, orange, and yellow and look like the flames of a raging fire.

"I'm not afraid of you, Braze!" Rainbow Dash says boldly. But she's not telling the truth.

Blaze makes a sweeping motion with his hoof to reveal

Twilight Sparkle, Applejack, Fluttershy, Rarity, and Pinkie Pie all tied together with a magical red fire-rope.

Rainbow Dash gasps. "What are you ponies doing here?!"

"We're sorry, RD," Applejack says. "But we just wanted to make sure you were safe!"



Rainbow Dash reaches for the fiery rope to untie her friends, but it burns her hoof.

Braze laughs cruelly. "Do you think I'd make it that easy? Come here, Daring Dash, this choice will be breezy!"

Then Rainbow Dash sees it: the entrance to the Spirit Circle! She remembers Twilight telling her that the entrance is visible once every five seasons, on the seventh day of the third week of the year. Twilight was right about today being that day! The entrance is a large stone door covered in ancient pony carvings. But Braze can't get in.

In the middle of the door is a large U-shaped slot. The slot must be made for the Half-Gilded Horseshoe, the key that could unleash scary spirits into Ponyville.

"The spirits will only open the room for the one who can do a huge Sonic Rainboom," chants Braze.

He tosses the Half-Gilded Horseshoe into the air to show

off. Rainbow Dash notices that when its edge grazes one of the fire-ropes, the horseshoe slightly cuts the rope. That gives her an idea.

"I will open the door to the Spirit Circle for you," Rainbow Dash says, playing along, "and then you'll let my friends go?"

Braze throws the Half-Gilded Horseshoe to Rainbow Dash. "Yes! I will disappear with my treasure, and then you can leave at your leisure," he rhymes.

The other ponies stare at Rainbow Dash. Is she really going to open the door? What about the bad spirits getting out? But Rainbow Dash gives them a wink.

Pinkie Pie seems to understand Rainbow Dash's plan. "Hey, Mr. *Braaaaaaze*?" she chirps. "Do you have any snacks? I'm *sooo* hungry!"

Braze turns around and growls.

That distraction allows just enough time for Rainbow Dash to switch the Half-Gilded Horseshoe with the regular one Rarity gave her. She slips the Half-Gilded Horseshoe into one of her pockets.

"One haunted room full of treasure coming right up!" Rainbow Dash says, sliding the regular horseshoe into the slot. Slowly, she pulls down the lever.



Chapter 12

Rainbow Dash's plan is going better than expected. "See? It doesn't work." She pushes on the lever again, but the door doesn't budge.

Braze is furious. "No! No! This cannot be! I have secured both the Pegasus and the key!"

Braze hasn't noticed the horseshoe has been switched.

Rainbow Dash flashes the precious horseshoe in her pocket to her friends.

"The Half-Gilded Horseshoe!" Twilight Sparkle exclaims.

"What?" Braze gallops over.

Past his shoulder, Rainbow Dash can see that the entrance to the Spirit Circle is starting to fade away. She just has to keep the Half-Gilded Horseshoe away from Braze until the entrance is gone. Then she can cut her friends free, and they can escape!

"I'll never give it to you, Braze! I'm the fastest Pegasus around!" Rainbow Dash shoots up into the air. "Hey, Braze! Watch this!" she hollers. She throws the Half-Gilded Horseshoe like a boomerang right at her Ponyville friends!

The horseshoe slices through the fire-rope, then doubles back to Rainbow Dash. She catches it and puts it away.

The ponies break free and cheer. "Go, Dashie!" Pinkie Pie squeals.

Braze lets out a sob as the door vanishes. Now there is just grass where it once stood.

"You may have won this time, Daring Dash, but I will be back to claim my stash!" Braze rhymes before disappearing in a burst of flames.



“And I’ll be ready for him!” Rainbow Dash proclaims. Then she smiles around at her friends. “I mean—we’ll be ready for him.”

“And so, with Braze defeated and the Half-Gilded Horseshoe secured,” Twilight cheers, “Ponyville is safe once again, thanks to Daring Dash!”

“And her amazing friends!” adds Rainbow Dash.



Chapter 13

There is a buzz of excitement in Miss Cheerilee's classroom at the Ponyville Schoolhouse. Today's visitors are local heroes Daring Dash and her friends.

"My sister, Applejack, was there when Daring Dash defeated the evil Zebra, Braze!" Apple Bloom brags.

"And so was mine!" says Rarity's little sister, Sweetie Belle.

"All right, let's calm down, my little ponies," Cheerilee says. "Let's all give a warm welcome to... Daring Dash!"

"Hey, adoring fans!" Rainbow Dash trots in, waving.

All the fillies and colts have questions for the bravest Pegasus in Ponyville. But before Rainbow Dash answers any of them, she has something important to say.

"Remember, it may seem cool to be brave and daring—and it *is* awesome—but if there's one thing I've learned, it's that..." Rainbow Dash pauses. She looks around at Rarity, Applejack, Twilight Sparkle, Pinkie Pie, and Fluttershy with a smile, and they smile right back at her. "Sometimes the bravest thing a pony can do is accept help from her friends, even when she doesn't think she needs it!"

Rainbow Dash claps her hooves together. "Now, who wants to hear about how I was wing-deep in quicksand and used a lasso to pull myself out?"



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