

MY LITTLE PONY: FRIENDSHIP IS MAGIC
"A Quick Buck"
FOURTH DRAFT
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By

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FADE IN:

ACT ONE

INT. FURLONG FAIR - NIGHT

We see TWILIGHT, RAINBOW DASH, APPLEJACK, PINKIE PIE and FLUTTERSHY taking in the sights of your typical old-timey small town carnival, situated on Ponyville's fairgrounds. The five girls are chatting it up and having a good time.

TWILIGHT

Back home I never missed a single year of the Furlong Fair. I wonder if they do anything different when they bring the fair to Ponyville.

RAINBOW DASH

It better not be like the Cloudsdale fair: they only have baby rides. I mean, come on! What's the point of getting strapped into something if it can't even kill you?

FLUTTERSHY

They had a nice Ferris wheel, though. Well, at least until its levitation spell wore off.

Fluttershy whimpers, lost in an unpleasant memory.

TWILIGHT

Well, I'm sure having you all here will make it seem like a whole new experience.

Twilight pauses for a moment before making a quick head-count.

TWILIGHT

Where's Rarity?

APPLEJACK

(hesitant)

Oh, well, she decided-

PINKIE PIE

-She said she didn't want to
(imitating Rarity's voice)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

PINKIE PIE (cont'd)
"Take part in any brutish games or
soil her palette with starchy
carnival slop,"
(back to normal voice)
so she went on the Ferris Wheel.

FLUTTERSHY
F-Ferris wheel?

Fluttershy cowers. Applejack gives Pinkie Pie a look of disapproval, like she said something she shouldn't have.

PINKIE PIE
What? You're the element of
honesty: you should be beating me
to the punch when it comes to this
kind of stuff.

TWILIGHT
Well, I just hope she's enjoying
herself.

INT. FERRIS WHEEL PASSENGER CAR - NIGHT

We see DERPY HOOVES sitting at one end of the two-seat car, her face starting to turn green. The camera pans over to RARITY, who's pressed against the opposite wall of the car, looking for a way out.

RARITY
Is there a dashing pegasus out
there who can rescue a young lady?
(beat)
Ok, a *presentable* pegasus? Any
pegasus? A flying pig? I'll take
anything!

Derpy Hooves' nausea gets worse.

RARITY
Oh, what I wouldn't give for
another flight spell-

EXT. FERRIS WHEEL - NIGHT (CONTINUOUS)

We hear the sound of throwing up, followed by a huge SCREAM.

CUE OPENING

INT. FURLONG FAIR - NIGHT

The camera pans to show retro, wood-paneled carnival games and stands on one end of the grounds and food carts on the other end. Applejack and Pinkie Pie are checking out the eats. They happen upon a GREASE JOCKEY with a stand set up.

GREASE JOCKEY

Two bits and I'll fry up anything
you like.

PINKIE PIE

Ooh, Applejack! Quick, give me one
of your apples!

APPLEJACK

Oh, I see. Just 'cause my name,
occupation and cutie mark all have
to do with apples, you *figure* that
I'm always carrying apples around
with me, is that it?

Pinkie Pie, ignoring what Applejack is saying, reaches under her hat and pulls out an apple.

PINKIE PIE

How's this?

APPLEJACK

Now wait just a minute-

GREASE JOCKEY

-That'll do. Two bits, please.

Pinkie Pie reaches around in her mane. She pulls out two coins stuck to a huge, brown wad.

PINKIE PIE

Ooh, that's where all that caramel
went! Hey, can you fry this too?

GREASE JOCKEY

You got two more bits?

Pinkie Pie rummages around her mane a bit more. We hear all kinds of junk jingling around and we see GUMMY's head poke out before diving back in.

PINKIE PIE

(forlorn)

No.

(perking up again)

Ooh, I know!

(CONTINUED)

Pinkie Pie sticks the apple inside of the caramel wad and hands it to the Grease Jockey along with the two bits. He plunges the apple into the sizzling fryer. Pinkie Pie looks utterly pleased with herself; Applejack looks annoyed.

A moment later, the Jockey pulls out a fried apple on a stick. Pinkie Pie immediately grabs the scalding apple and takes a bite.

APPLEJACK

How's it taste?

PINKIE PIE

(cheerfully, mouth full of steam)

I can't taste anything!

(swallows)

But my taste buds definitely felt something tasty before they were scalded off my tongue!

Applejack takes the apple and blows on it for a bit before taking a bite.

APPLEJACK

(apprehensive)

I'm sure my great aunt Toffee's gonna be spinnin' in her stable when I say this, but this is the best caramel apple I've ever had!

AJ pulls a curly, pink strand of hair out of her mouth.

APPLEJACK (CONT'D)

Follicles aside, a'course.

PINKIE PIE

(slightly downtrodden)

It's too bad that was the only one.

(suddenly perky and flippant)

Oh well.

APPLEJACK

That don't have to be the case: we could make more. I got the apples, you got the caramel.

GREASE JOCKEY

And I've got the fryer!

The Grease Jockey pulls Pinkie Pie and Applejack close to himself, buddy-buddy-like.

(CONTINUED)

APPLEJACK

Well, actually, my kin's got their own fryer.

PINKIE PIE

And so do Mr. and Mrs. Cake.

GREASE JOCKEY

Oh, I see how it is. Forget I said anything, then.

(aside to himself)

Just forget all about ol' Jock'.

A single tear slides down his face as a sad jingle plays. We move over to the other end of the stands, where Rainbow Dash and Fluttershy are checking out the games.

Fluttershy is up to bat at a 'knock over the bottles' game. She picks up the ball with her mouth, but drops it on the counter.

FLUTTERSHY

Your turn.

RAINBOW DASH

No, it's still your turn.

FLUTTERSHY

Oh, do I get to throw it twice?

Fluttershy picks up the ball again and does a wind-up, only to throw it no further than when she dropped it.

FLUTTERSHY

Now is it your turn?

Rainbow Dash face-palms.

TWILIGHT (O.S.)

Hey Dash, take a look at this!

Rainbow Dash walks over to where Twilight is.

We cut to Twilight and Rainbow Dash checking out a pair of Skee Ball machines.

TWILIGHT

This was always my favorite game as a filly.

(modest)

I guess you could say that I'm quite the pro at it.

(CONTINUED)

RAINBOW DASH

Hey, you're talking to the pro of
pros here. Check this out!

Rainbow Dash grabs three Skee balls and juggles them before throwing the first: a curve ball that flies perfectly into the center hole of the board. She bounces the second ball off the ground and then kicks into the center hole.

She dribbles the final ball on her head before headbutting it in the opposite direction of the board. We see the ball ricochet off of everything nearby. The ball plows clean through a TEN GALLON HAT along the way; it ricochets off another wall, knocking down the bottles that Fluttershy was trying to hit.

The ball finally makes its way back to the board. It circles around the center hole. Drum roll. The last ball ends up slipping and rolling into the hole just beneath the center. Twilight smirks at Rainbow Dash.

RAINBOW DASH

Oh, like you can do better.

TWILIGHT

Gladly.

We see Twilight line up her three balls at the bottom of the board. She carefully makes sure that they're all in a neat row, then carefully plans the potential angle of trajectory. Rainbow Dash pouts with impatience.

Twilight readies her horn, then hits the three balls like a pool cue. The three balls all roll in unison into the center hole. Tickets pour out of the machine.

RAINBOW DASH

Yeah, well, my way looked cooler.

TWILIGHT

It's not a competition,
Dash. Well, maybe the game part
was, but not the looking cool part.

RAINBOW DASH

Hey, winning's only the second best
thing in life. First is pleasing
your fans, i.e. don't be boring!

WILD SLIDE, a pale pegasus wearing the impaled ten gallon hat from earlier, walks up to Dash and Twilight. He's middle-aged and sounds uneducated, yet still seems endowed with a strength and wisdom of sorts; a living legend.

(CONTINUED)

WILD SLIDE

Now there's a sense of sportsmanship I can get behind.

TWILIGHT

Oh, thank you, sir.

WILD SLIDE

I was talking about your friend, actually.

RAINBOW DASH

See, this guy knows what I'm talking about.

WILD SLIDE

Say, you're that filly from Cloudsdale, ain't ya? The one who pulled off the sonic rainboom and saved my boys' flanks at that 'Best Young Flyer' competition?

TWILIGHT

Your 'boys'?

Rainbow Dash looks completely dumbfounded.

TWILIGHT

Uh, Dash? Hell-o?

RAINBOW DASH

Y-y-you're... y-you're-

WILD SLIDE

Oh, where are my manners? Name's Torque Tailslide. Maybe y'all've heard'a me?

TWILIGHT

Sorry, the name doesn't ring a bell.

RAINBOW DASH

Are you kidding?! He's The Wild Slide! - the old manager of the Wonderbolts! He's the one who single-hoofedly brought the team into its golden age; before then they were only *mostly* awesome!

WILD SLIDE

(aside to Twilight)

Ain't it great when other ponies do your PR work for ya?

(CONTINUED)

(clears throat)
That's right, but that was a
lifetime ago. The Wonderbolts are
big colts now: they don't need ol'
Torque to take care of
'em. Nowadays I just run the
amateur circuit: gotta give the
younger crowd a chance, you
follow? Once this fair moves on,
I'm gonna be hosting Equestrian
Gladiators right where I'm
standing; maybe y'all have heard of
it?

Rainbow Dash covers Twilight's mouth before she can answer.

RAINBOW DASH
Of course we have!

WILD SLIDE
It's been a nice enough
gig. Ponyville's a bit lacking
when it comes to competitors,
though. It'd be nice to have
somepony who can wow the
audience. I imagine that wouldn't
be too hard for a talented young
lady such as yourself?

Rainbow Dash is speechless.

TWILIGHT
(dryly)
Oh, trust me, she won't mind.

WILD SLIDE
Wonderful. Just remember to bring
protective gear.

TWILIGHT
Protective gear?

WILD SLIDE
Strictly a precaution, little
lady. Last year we had a little
incident involving a certain
pegasus, who shall remain nameless.

Wild Slide looks past Twilight. The camera zooms in on
Derpy Hooves, who's holding a towel as Rarity is rinsing her
hair at a drinking fountain.

(CONTINUED)

Derpy immediately turns her head in Slide's direction and her eyes slowly un-cross themselves so she can stare back at him. She raises one of her wings and waves it at him. He turns away and shudders as Twilight is trying to figure out what he was looking at.

WILD SLIDE

(regaining composure)

Uh, anywho, the competition starts in two days. Hope to see y'all there. Oh, and one more thing-

Wild Slide huddles in close to Rainbow Dash and walks her away from Twilight

WILD SLIDE

(whispering)

Don't tell nopony, but I've been fixin' to unveil a secret little project of mine, and if you're half as good as everypony says, then you'd be perfect to help me out.

RAINBOW DASH

(spazzing out)

You? Want me? The colt who put the 'Wonder' in the Wonderbolts wants ME? I mean, I know it's not like I'm *joining* the Wonderbolts or anything, but still! Of course!

WILD SLIDE

Well, you are right about one thing, Missy. What I'm cookin' up is gonna be big, but not 'Wonderbolts' big...

(quietly in Dash's ear)

...it'll be better.

RAINBOW DASH

(tiny squeak)

Better?

Slide shushes her and nods.

WILD SLIDE

Well, I'm sure you've got a lot to think about. Just be sure to stick around after the competition.

(tipping his hat)

Ladies.

Exit Wild Slide. Twilight catches up with Rainbow Dash.

(CONTINUED)

TWILIGHT

Well, he seemed nice. So what was that last thing he said?

Rainbow Dash faints.

INT. SABINO'S SPORTS - THE NEXT MORNING

We bleed into Dash's head pressed against a glass case in a sports shop. She's looking at a mannequin wearing a fancy athletic outfit like what the Wonderbolts wear: sleek and form-fitting, but also with protection for the head and knees. It was made just for her. She lets out a sigh. Next to her is Twilight, carrying an old football helmet.

RAINBOW DASH

Something bigger than the Wonderbolts. If anypony else told me that, I'd tell *them* to take a hike, like those lame Shadowbolts.
(mesmerized)

But when 'The Slide' says it, it's like... finding out there's a number bigger than a million.

TWILIGHT

There is: it's called a million-and-one.

RAINBOW DASH

(trailing off)
A million-and-one... sounds great.

TWILIGHT

Looks like that's almost how much that getup costs.

RAINBOW DASH

(back to reality)
Hey, what's with the headpiece?

TWILIGHT

(holding up helmet)
Oh, this is what I got with the tickets I won from the fair.

RAINBOW DASH

(jesting)
What, they didn't have any books?

(CONTINUED)

TWILIGHT
(genuine disappointment)
No, they didn't.
(beat)
Anyway, I figured maybe you'd want
this.

Twilight offers the helmet to Dash, who pushes it back.

RAINBOW DASH
Thanks, but I'm gonna need the
latest gear to win. It's all about
speed; that thing's too bulky.
(making poses)
Gotta be sleek, gotta be smooth.

TWILIGHT
Ok, Speedy, I'll just see what the
clerk will give me for it, then.

RAINBOW DASH
Don't let him bull rush you: that
thing's worth ten bits easy.

TWILIGHT
Thanks, I'll keep that in mind.

RAINBOW DASH
You need the extra cash or
something?

TWILIGHT
Oh no; I receive a generous stipend
from the Princess for my
research. I just don't want this
thing taking up space, that's all.

RAINBOW DASH
Wait, hold the phone; you get *paid*
to hang out with friends and write
letters about it?

TWILIGHT
I guess I hadn't thought of it that
way before, but yeah, I suppose
so. Of course, I also help out
with the library. What do you do?

RAINBOW DASH
I move the clouds, remember?

(CONTINUED)

TWILIGHT

Year-round? All by yourself?

RAINBOW DASH

(bragging)

The Mayor pays me top dollar to keep the skies clear, and doing it solo means nopony else takes a cut of the pie. Don't you worry about me: this pony is gettin' *paid*.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - MORNING

Dissolve into Rainbow Dash in the MAYOR's office.

RAINBOW DASH

What?!

MAYOR

I'm sorry, you must not have gotten the memo. Your services won't be needed today, or this week.

RAINBOW DASH

Wha-Why not?

MAYOR

Well, a certain delivery pegasus, who shall remain nameless, misplaced the latest shipment of dust and dew for Cloudsdale's cloud factory. You know what that means: clear skies for the rest of the week. Sorry to rain on your parade, but at least it won't be raining on anypony else's. If that'll be all then, well, one of us has to get back to work. Enjoy your week off-

The Mayor pushes Dash out and slams the door shut. Beat. She opens it again.

MAYOR

-without pay, of course.

The Mayor shuts the door again. Dash looks incredulous.

FADE TO BLACK.

ACT TWO

EXT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - DAY

RAINBOW DASH (O.S.)
Mayor! Mayor! Come quick, you
gotta see this!

The Mayor pokes her head out of the window. The camera pans up to Rainbow Dash wrestling with Fluttershy, who's in a crappy storm cloud costume. Dash gets her in a headlock.

RAINBOW DASH
This big storm cloud showed
up! Don't worry, I'll save
Ponyville!

FLUTTERSHY
(timidly)
Not on my watch. Grrrr.

The Mayor's window slams shut.

FLUTTERSHY
(to Dash)
Did it work?

RAINBOW DASH
What do you think?

FLUTTERSHY
Um... oh, I'm no good at
these. Can you give me a hint?

Rainbow Dash drops Fluttershy.

INT. SUGAR CUBE CORNER - DAY

Applejack and Pinkie Pie are hard at work making fried caramel apples. The two are a well-oiled assembly line. Enter Rainbow Dash.

RAINBOW DASH
Hey guys. What's up?

PINKIE PIE
Oh, we're making-

RAINBOW DASH
(feigning aloofness)
-yeah yeah, that's great. Say,
I've got some time to kill, and I
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RAINBOW DASH (cont'd)
was wondering if there was any
heavy lifting that needs to get
done around here.

APPLEJACK
Well, we could always use another
taste tester.

Applejack pulls an apple out of the fryer.

RAINBOW DASH
That's it? Why don't you taste
it? You've got taste buds.

PINKIE PIE
Not anymore!

Pinkie Pie sticks out her tongue, which is wrapped in a
tourniquet. Pinkie Pie looks at Applejack, who also sticks
out her tongue: it's wrapped in a tourniquet as well.

RAINBOW DASH
(flat)
Really?

APPLEJACK
It's just so tempting to eat em' in
a jiffy.

RAINBOW DASH
Well, a bit's a bit, I guess. Hit
me with your best shot!

Applejack offers Rainbow Dash the apple, but pulls it away
as she's about to take a bite.

APPLEJACK
Hold on, y'all gotta let it cool.

RAINBOW DASH
(beat)
Ok, it's cooled off.

Dash keeps trying to bite and Jack keeps taking it away.

APPLEJACK
Wait,
(Dash bites)
wait.
(Dash bites)
Dangit Dash, hold yer-hold yer...
oh, whatever the expression
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

APPLEJACK (cont'd)
is. Just let it sit for two
seconds!

Rainbow Dash waits for exactly two seconds. Chomp. She savors it for a moment before her cheeks turn red and she spits it out.

APPLEJACK
I warned ya.

RAINBOW DASH
Yeah, yeah. It was alright, when
it wasn't burning my mouth, anyway.

PINKIE PIE
(to Applejack)
That's what I've been telling you!

RAINBOW DASH
Now can I just take my pay and go?

APPLEJACK
Pay? You didn't say nothin' about
no pay.

PINKIE PIE
I guess we could pay you with a
free apple.

Rainbow Dash lets out a pained sigh before reluctantly taking the apple.

RAINBOW DASH
(sarcastically)
Great, this'll really help me out
on Equestrian Gladiators.

PINKIE PIE
Ooh, I love that show! I've never
heard of it before, but if you're
in it then it must be good!

APPLEJACK
Say, you don't think you could put
in a good word for us at the
concessions office, could ya?

RAINBOW DASH
What?! I'm not the one who's
supposed to be helping you with
your crippling money problems,
you're supposed to helping me-

(CONTINUED)

AJ and Pinkie Pie give Dash a puzzled look.

RAINBOW DASH
(backpedaling)
-I mean, uh, I'll see what I can
do. Gotta go!

Rainbow Dash flies out of the bakery.

APPLEJACK
Well that was plum odd.

PINKIE PIE
You know what they say: in every
group of friends there's always a
crazy one. I guess it's Dash.

Applejack gives Pinkie Pie a very annoyed look.

PINKIE PIE
(concerned)
It's kind of sad, really. Most of
the time *they* don't even know it.

APPLEJACK
(sighing)
You've no idea.

INT. CAROUSEL BOUTIQUE - DAY

We see Rainbow Dash slumped over a table of fabric, bored to tears. Rarity is at her sewing machine, in the middle of a lecture: she's just finished threading the machine.

RARITY
...you pull both the threads until
they're taut, then you're all set.

RAINBOW DASH
And that's all it takes to sew?

RARITY
Oh my heavens, no! That's just how
you thread the machine. We haven't
even gotten started on sewing yet!

RAINBOW DASH
(groaning)
Well, at least now I know why that
stupid suit costs so much!

Rainbow Dash kicks over some fabric. We pan over to SPIKE, who was apparently also listening to Rarity's lecture.

(CONTINUED)

SPIKE

Well, I guess some of us just aren't *manly* enough to get in touch with our feminine side. How's this?

Spike holds up a frilly embroidery of Rarity set within a pink heart. Rarity takes a close look at it.

RARITY

(warming up)

Hmmm... I think someone's ready to start using the glitter!

Spike squeals with giddy delight as Rarity hands him a jar of glitter. Rainbow Dash leaves in a huff.

INT. ZECORA'S HOUSE - DAY

There's a knock on ZECORA's door and a tired Rainbow Dash at her door.

RAINBOW DASH

(exhausted)

Plea-please, tell me you've got work that needs to be done. Something quick.

Rainbow Dash collapses on ZECORA's front porch.

RAINBOW DASH

(momentarily reviving)

Oh, and something that pays good.

ZECORA

Well then, my friend, you are in luck. You've found the right place to make a quick buck. In Ponyville, you must journey to the store. Food and supplies I'll need, and maybe something more. I'm planning a trip to my homeland in all due time, so please, make haste before I flub my next rhyme.

RAINBOW DASH

That's perfect! Just tell me what you need.

Zecora walks over to her table, which has an orange skin laying about.

(CONTINUED)

ZECORA
Just a moment, I need to throw out
this old orange. Now, what I need
you to buy is...

A look of horror awakens on Zecora's face.

ZECORA
Oh no...

RAINBOW DASH
What? What's the hold up?

ZECORA
(retracing her words)
'...throw out this old
orange. Now, what I need you to
buy...' is some *porridge*? No...

Zecora becomes flustered and curses in her native tongue.

RAINBOW DASH
What's the big deal? Can't you
just, you know, *not* rhyme for once?

Zecora gives Dash a dirty look, like she just blasphemed.

EXT. ZECORA'S HOUSE - DAY

Cue Dash being kicked out of Zecora's house; the door slams.

RAINBOW DASH
UUUUGGGGGHHHH!!!! Great. Just
great. That only leaves...

INT. PONYVILLE LIBRARY - EVENING

RAINBOW DASH
...Twilight.

TWILIGHT (O.S.)
Oh, hey Dash.

We see Rainbow Dash in the main foyer of the Ponyville
library. Twilight descends from her loft to greet her.

TWILIGHT
What brings you here?

(CONTINUED)

RAINBOW DASH

Oh, I...

(looks around)

...uh...just wanted to hang out?

TWILIGHT

Well isn't this a nice surprise?

(jestingly)

Sure you don't want to see who can
lift the most books or do the most
laps around the room?

Twilight chuckles at her own joke before stiffening up.

TWILIGHT

(formally)

But in all seriousness, that would
be against the rules, so please
don't do that.

RAINBOW DASH

Yeah, sure thing, so anyway-

Twilight covers Rainbow Dash's mouth and sternly shushes her.

TWILIGHT

Tut, tut, tut. No talking during
Library hours. Let's chat up in my
room.

(trying to sound cool)

Up there, anything goes.

Twilight and Rainbow Dash head upstairs.

RAINBOW DASH

(muttering)

This is hopeless...

Twilight shushes Rainbow Dash again.

INT. TWILIGHT'S ROOM - EVENING

Twilight quickly sets up a table spread with two cups of tea
in a very procedural and efficient manner. They sit down.

TWILIGHT

So, tomorrow's the big day.

RAINBOW DASH

It is?

(CONTINUED)

TWILIGHT
(between sips of tea)
Equestrian Gladiators, remember?

RAINBOW DASH
O-oh, yeah. You're gonna be there,
right? The Dash never disappoints
her fans.

TWILIGHT
Of course I will, "The" Dash. I
still owe you for the helmet: it
fetched a pretty haypenny.

RAINBOW DASH
Really?

Dash chugs her cup like a shot glass and swishes the tea
around in her mouth.

TWILIGHT
Yeah. I was worried the clerk
wouldn't take it: some thoughtless
pony's signature was on the back of
it, but I guess he didn't see it.

Rainbow Dash does a spit take upward, but with her quick
reflexes manages to catch every drop in her cup.

TWILIGHT
I never knew I was such a shrewd
business-mare. Well, the shop's
stuck with it now. This pony
doesn't take returns - besides
books, of course.

Dash looks like she's about to explode in frustration, but
keeps it together.

RAINBOW DASH
(passive-aggressively)
Oh, good for you.

TWILIGHT
Thanks again for letting me keep it
in the first place. You know, this
was the first year anypony's ever
given me a run for my money at
Skeeball.

RAINBOW DASH
It was nothing. Just make sure you
don't let those skills go to waste.

(CONTINUED)

TWILIGHT

I can always count on you to keep
me on my hooves, eh Dash?

They both share a chuckle. The doorbell rings.

TWILIGHT

Ah, a customer. Back in a jiffy.

RAINBOW DASH

I'll clean up.

Exit Twilight. Dash pulls the tablecloth cleanly out from under the tea set. She folds it quickly and finds a cupboard to shove it in.

Inside the cupboard she finds a SACK from Sabino's Sports filled with MONEY, presumably from Twilight's sale. Dash examines the sack: she's tempted to take it, but backs off.

RAINBOW DASH

(to herself)

Come on, Rainbow, there's gotta be
another way.

She ponders the situation a bit.

RAINBOW DASH (CONT.)

Then again, Twilight was going to
give me the helmet anyway, and this
cash is worth just as much. It's
the transitive property at work!

She picks up the sack, then recoils.

RAINBOW DASH

No, no, can't let the math foal
you. Focus, Rainbow, focus. Keep
your eyes on the prize...

She gazes at the money longingly before looking away.

RAINBOW DASH

Not *that* prize, you dolt!

(beat; rationalizing)

Hey, wait. I'm gonna win back all
of the money that I spend anyway,
so really I'm only borrowing it!

Dash bunches up the table cloth to make it look like a similar bag, which she replaces the sack with. She closes the drawer and hides the real sack behind her wings.

INT. PONYVILLE LIBRARY - SECONDS LATER

Twilight is busy getting a hefty book for Zecora. Rainbow Dash, coming down the stairs, tries to sneak past them.

TWILIGHT
Huh, I didn't know they even made
rhyming dictionaries. Well, here
you go Zecora.

Zecora takes the book and gives another dirty look to Rainbow Dash on her way out.

TWILIGHT
(to Rainbow Dash)
Oh, there you are.

Rainbow Dash raises her wings and turns around in order to better hide the sack behind her back.

RAINBOW DASH
(nervous)
Oh, hey.

TWILIGHT
Are you taking off already?

RAINBOW DASH
Well, you know how it is. Gotta
get my rest for the big day.

TWILIGHT
I'll see you there, OK?

RAINBOW DASH
Yep. And remember, the Dash
doesn't disappoint!

Twilight heads upstairs and Rainbow Dash hurries out the door before sighing in relief. She looks at her ill-gotten gains and a smile spreads across her face.

FADE TO BLACK.

ACT THREE

INT. EQUESTRIAN GLADIATORS STADIUM STANDS - NIGHT

The stadium is lit like a rave, with an elaborate OBSTACLE COURSE in the middle. The crowd is packed with rowdy colts and fillies. Rarity and Fluttershy are seated together in the stands. Rarity is overdressed and brandishing a pair of opera glasses. Fluttershy is sporting face paint.

RARITY

Have you heard anything from
Twilight? If she doesn't show up
soon she'll miss the whole event.

A particularly large and unkempt colt sits down behind
Rarity, dropping popcorn all over her.

RARITY

(dry and mortified)
Her loss, I suppose.

FLUTTERSHY

(drowned out by the crowd)
She should be here soon, I hope.

INT. EQUESTRIAN GLADIATORS STADIUM OBSTACLE COURSE - NIGHT

We cut to Rainbow Dash, who's in the middle of her final trial. She's flying toward the last stretch. We hear a commentator's voice over the stadium speakers.

JOHN MANEN (O.S.)

Our challenger has conquered the
Rolling Barrel *and* the Barrel
Roll! There's only one stage left,
which is to say it's the
last. It's the one with the swing
and the slide: the Swing and Slide!

Cue audience gasp. Dash looks over at the event: it's a big chasm. There's a rope dangling near her end and a zipline that begins in the middle and leads to the finish line.

RAINBOW DASH

Pfft, that's it?

JOHN MANEN (O.S.)

Now remember, you got your rope
here and your zipline there and you
gotta use them *both* to cross;

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOHN MANEN (O.S.) (cont'd)
that's why they call it the swing
and slide. Letting go of the
zipline before the finish is most
likely - I say *most likely* going
to be a definite disqualification.

RAINBOW DASH
Whatever; still a piece of cake.

The crowd is silent. Dash grabs the rope with her teeth and swings back and forth, building momentum. She flips high into the air, maneuvering like an Olympic diver as she free falls. Feeling on top of the world, she looks into the crowd and sees her friends.

INT. EQUESTRIAN GLADIATORS STADIUM STANDS - NIGHT

From Rainbow Dash's POV, we see Rarity and Fluttershy silently cheering her on. Twilight, with frazzled hair and bags under her eyes, enters the stands and approaches them.

Rarity greets her, but is repelled by her appearance. Twilight says a few words and Rarity reacts with further shock. Twilight seems to ask them something, and they both point in Rainbow Dash's direction (i.e. the viewer). Twilight then looks in that direction as well.

INT. EQUESTRIAN GLADIATORS STADIUM OBSTACLE COURSE -
SIMULTANEOUS

Dash freaks out before remembering to reach for the zipline bars. She's caught off guard by the abrupt halt in her fall. She barely manages to keep one hoof on the bars. Out of instinct she pulls herself up and clings to the bars with all fours. Just to be safe, she even ties her tail around the handles as well.

Dash looks relieved as she starts moving down the zipline before the ride comes to a sudden halt; Dash falls. Her hooves slip off entirely and she's left dangling only by her tail. The crowd gasps. Dash looks up to see that this is no ordinary zipline: it's vertically zig-zagged! The handles are caught at the bottom of the first 'hill'.

JOHN MANEN (O.S.)
Ooh, looks like somepony forgot to
tell her about the first hurdle
there in the hurdled zipline.

INT. ANNOUNCER'S BOOTH - SIMULTANEOUS

We cut to a closeup of a glass pane with a marker doodle of a pegasus hanging upside-down. The pegasus has a giant weight hanging from its back and there's a doodle of a bunny in the corner. We see a SILVER HOOF pointing to the various components of the drawing.

JOHN MANEN (O.S.)

For you unicorns and earth ponies
out there keeping score, a pegasus
can't fly while it's
upside-down. So it's probably safe
to say that there isn't a good
chance of seeing her fly her way
out of this. Those wings are only
extra weight, I can probably
definitely conjecture, maybe. Oh,
and I also drew a bunny because,
hey, who doesn't like bunnies?

We pan out to see JOHN MANEN: a portly, silver colt wearing a headset and holding a fried caramel apple. We also see that he doodled that diagram on the inside of the announcer booth's window; he tries to rub it off to no avail.

JOHN MANEN

I'm gonna go out on a limb and say
this might be permanent marker.

INT. EQUESTRIAN GLADIATORS STADIUM OBSTACLE COURSE -
SIMULTANEOUS

Panic begins to set in for Dash. The clock is ticking. She tries to maintain her balance. She gets an idea.

JOHN MANEN (O.S.)

Wait, she's trying something,
folks! Personally, I would let go:
less stress on the tail hairs.

Dash starts swinging back and forth with her tail, just like with the rope earlier, only this time she flaps her wings to add to her own momentum.

JOHN MANEN (O.S.)

Wait...
(Dash swings higher)
Wait!

Dash swings all the way above the handles, her tail still tied to it. No longer upside-down, she can finally fly properly now, which she gladly does.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN MANEN (O.S.)
She's got it! Yes!!

Rainbow Dash cuts loose; she flies as fast as she can while pulling the zipline handles behind her. She matches the hectic path of the line exactly, leaving a streak of fire.

She and the finish line vanish in a flaming rainboom. When the smoke clears, Dash is nowhere to be seen. In the wall past the finish line, there's a hole and a rainbow-colored tail hanging out, still tied to the handlebars. Dash pokes her head out of the rubble and the crowd cheers.

Dash looks into the stands to see Rarity and Fluttershy cheering. Twilight manages a weak smile before whispering something into Rarity's ear. With that, the three of them get up and exit the stands as everypony else is giving a standing ovation. Dash is crestfallen.

INT. EQUESTRIAN GLADIATORS STADIUM CONCESSION STANDS - NIGHT

Twilight, Rarity and Fluttershy meet up with Applejack and Pinkie Pie, who are running a fried caramel apple stand.

Dash hangs back, unsure of whether or not to approach them. One of her wings is in a sling and the rest of her is pretty banged up too. Next to her is a big trophy filled with money. Twilight, still looking frazzled, sees Dash.

TWILIGHT
There she is!

The five fillies crowd around Dash, who gets nervous. Applejack breaks the ice by patting Dash hard on the back.

APPLEJACK
From the look of you I'd say you
put on a darn good show.

RAINBOW DASH
(trying to hide the pain)
Ha, this is nothing. You should
see what I did to the course!

PINKIE PIE
Oh, did you crash a lot? I bet you
taught that mean ol' course a
lesson - with your face!

(CONTINUED)

RARITY

Pinkie Pie, don't insult the poor girl. She performed gracefully, which is an accomplishment for a pony like her.

TWILIGHT

(dryly)

Yeah, Rarity, that sounded much nicer than what Pinkie Pie said.

FLUTTERSHY

Um, what we're trying to say is, good job, Dash.

RAINBOW DASH

Wait, so you're not mad at me?

TWILIGHT

Mad? Why would we be mad?

RAINBOW DASH

Uh, I-I saw you walk out early. What was up with that?

TWILIGHT

(evasive)

Oh, that. Sorry; it wasn't because of you or anything, trust me. I'm really, really sorry that I was late too, I just...

Twilight sways a bit before Rarity helps her up.

RARITY

Oh my. We should really head back to our seats: you'll feel better.

TWILIGHT

(weary)

I guess. Sorry everypony, I'm just tired, that's all. It's been a long day. I'll tell you about it later, Dash. Congrats again.

Rarity and Fluttershy walk out with Twilight.

APPLEJACK

(sotto to Pinkie Pie)

Could ya'll watch the stand for a minute?

Applejack walks up to Rainbow Dash.

(CONTINUED)

APPLEJACK

I figure you wanna know what's going on with Twi?

RAINBOW DASH

Yeah, what's the deal?

APPLEJACK

Well...

(beat, serious)

...Twilight was robbed.

RAINBOW DASH

(apprehensive)

What? That's awful! Uh, any idea who did it?

APPLEJACK

No clue. The perp made off with darn near everything she had, too.

RAINBOW DASH

(legitimately surprised)

Wait, *everything*?

APPLEJACK

Well, all her money, anyway. She put it all in this fancy bag, see. She thought it'd be less 'conspicuous' than a piggy bank. That's Twi for ya: always trying to be clever. Poor thing.

Dash shows concern before toughing up.

RAINBOW DASH

No worries, I'll take care of it.

Rainbow Dash hands her trophy and money to AJ.

RAINBOW DASH

Give this to Twilight for me: tell her I don't want to see a *haypenny* of it paid back, got it?

APPLEJACK

(stunned)

That's mighty kind of you, Dash, mighty kind. Twi's lucky to have you for a friend.

(CONTINUED)

RAINBOW DASH
(relieved)
I'm just glad we've got this whole
thing squared away now.

APPLEJACK
Hold on now, it ain't that easy.

Cue shock from Dash.

APPLEJACK (CONT'D)
You've done more than your fair
share, don't get me wrong, but this
ain't only about the money. You
saw how Twi looked.

RAINBOW DASH
(remorseful)
Yeah, I did.

APPLEJACK
You're lucky you didn't see her
this morning. I don't think I've
ever seen a pony so scared out of
her wits, and if there's one thing
Twi's got plenty of, it's
wits. She practically tore apart
the library just trying to find her
ticket for tonight - the perp
didn't take that, at least.

RAINBOW DASH
Why would she care about *that*?

APPLEJACK
She didn't want to miss your big
day. That's Twi for ya: always
thinking about everypony
else. She's a real friend, just
like you.

This hits Dash the hardest. Applejack starts dragging the
trophy back to her stand.

APPLEJACK
Sorry to unload all that on you,
but I figured you'd want to know.

INT. EQUESTRIAN GLADIATORS STADIUM STAGE - NIGHT

Rainbow Dash is standing front and center on stage. The other contestants are far behind her, bruised and battered. Cue the entrance of Wild Slide, on mic.

WILD SLIDE

Boy howdy, what a night. Let's give a big hoof for all of our participants, and especially our winner: Rainbow Dash.

Applause.

WILD SLIDE (CONT'D)

But now I have an announcement: It's been two years since my retirement from the world of professional flying, and tonight those two years are over!

The crowd starts to stir.

WILD SLIDE (CONT'D)

I promise that, come this time next year, Equestria will have a new team at the top of the flyers' circuit, with yours truly at the helm. And this new team will be called... the Thunderbolts!

On cue, a shroud behind Wild Slide is pulled away to reveal a team insignia: similar to the Wonderbolts logo, but more 'extreme'-looking. The crowd really begins to heat up.

WILD SLIDE

Finally, I'd like to announce my first pick for the team's upcoming tryouts. This pony's fresh out of the gate: an unknown in the big leagues, even if she did save the collective flanks of that other flyer team. Give it up for our champion!

Wild Slide motions toward Dash. The crowd roars. Dash is on the verge of fainting again.

WILD SLIDE

Of course, that's if she's up to it. Come on, let's have a word!

A mic is held up to Rainbow Dash. She's ecstatic.

(CONTINUED)

RAINBOW DASH
(raving)
Absolutely, positively, and without
question - YES!!

She sees the faces of all the ponies she knows from Ponyville in the crowd cheering her on.

RAINBOW DASH (CONT.)
Thank you, thank you all!
(feigning humility)
I don't deserve fans like you.

Her friends are all glowing. Twilight still looks like hell, but even she's glad. At first this bolsters Rainbow Dash's confidence, but she quickly turns somber.

RAINBOW DASH (CONT.)
(genuinely)
I don't deserve any of this. I...
I can't do it.

We see the crowd. The ponies that had cheered her before now seem confused, even horrified.

RAINBOW DASH (CONT.)
The only reason I even made it this far was because of my friend, Twilight Sparkle.

WILD SLIDE
(trying to save face)
Now now, no need to be modest.
(under his breath)
Come on, don't blow this for me!

RAINBOW DASH
I wouldn't be here if it weren't for her. Twilight's money paid for my entry fee and all this cool gear, only she didn't know that it did - that's because I took it.

The crowd gasps. Applejack looks angry, Rarity is shocked, Fluttershy look worried, Pinkie Pie is flabbergasted, and Twilight just looks disappointed.

RAINBOW DASH (CONT.)
(tearing up)
You'll just have to make some other pony's dream come true.

Rainbow Dash leaves the stadium in shame and the crowd begins to grow unruly. Wild Slide walks away from the mic.

(CONTINUED)

WILD SLIDE

(to himself and his staff)

That little foal snubbed
me! Nopony snubs Torque Tailslide!

(to one of his cronies)

You! Get me that other big shot
rookie: Glinda, or Gilda, or
Grizelda, or whatever her name
was! If we can't psyche out the
Wonderbrats with the pony who saved
their hides, then we'll just have
to beat em' the old-fashioned way!

EXT. EQUESTRIAN GLADIATORS STADIUM - NIGHT

Rainbow Dash is by her lonesome under the moonlight. She's
moping in silence; a ways away her friends look on.

APPLEJACK

I *knew* something was going on.

RARITY

She's already given back the
money. Hasn't she suffered enough?

APPLEJACK

This ain't about the money. Trust
can't be repaid so easily.

PINKIE PIE

(downtrodden)

And you know what they say: losing
a friend's trust is the quickest
way to lose a friend-
(choking up)
-forever.

RARITY

It isn't going to come to that, is
it?

Everyone, including Applejack, takes pause at the idea.

FLUTTERSHY

I don't know if I can stand seeing
Rainbow Dash lose the only two
things she cares about in one
night.

APPLEJACK

And what would those would be?

(CONTINUED)

FLUTTERSHY
Winning and pleasing her fans.

The ponies look at each other.

APPLEJACK
I'm guessing we're about the only
fans she still has at this point.

Twilight ponders this. She looks over at Dash: a silhouette against the moon. Twilight approaches Dash, and the two begin to have an inaudible conversation. Begin the closing narration.

TWILIGHT (V.O.)
Dear Princess Celestia: This letter
was going to be about the value of
trust and honesty when it comes to
friendship. Both of these things
are essential to have in any
friend, but today I've learned
something even more valuable.

Twilight and Dash continue to talk. Dash begins to slouch less, stand tall, and eventually act like her old self again. Twilight also seems to loosen up a bit.

TWILIGHT (CONT'D)
My friends and I are very
lucky. Every day we get paid to do
what we've always dreamed of. But
one pony among us is still trying
to make her dream come true, and
she still has a long way to go.

Rarity, Pinkie Pie, Fluttershy and AJ walk over to them.

TWILIGHT (CONT'D)
In spite of that, I still feel that
we're *both* lucky, because even when
things don't turn out how we want,
at the end of the day we still have
each other. I was afraid that I
had lost that today, but instead I
saw just how much she's willing to
give up for me. Now I feel like
the luckiest pony of all, because
Rainbow Dash is still my friend.

The mane six all start to walk home together.

FADE OUT.

ROLL CREDITS.