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MY LITTLE PONY III

Episode 308

"Wonderbolt Academy"

Outline by

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Outline: September 22, 2011

Notes Due: September 26, 2011

TEASER

RAINBOW DASH, surrounded by PINKIE PIE, TWILIGHT, RARITY, and FLUTTERSHY, is awaiting a delivery. She's applied to attend the brand new Wonderbolt Academy in Cloudsdale (think Space Camp for aspiring Wonderbolts) and she is supposed to get her acceptance or rejection letter today.

When the letter arrives, Rainbow Dash rips it open. Her friends react as she hangs her head. "Didn't get in," she informs them. Her friends rally around her trying to raise her spirits. Rainbow Dash suddenly smiles a big smile "Gotcha!" she says with a grin.

Rainbow Dash can't believe her friends fell for her rejection act. "I'm the best flyer around, of course I'm gonna get into the Wonderbolt Academy!" she reminds them. A relieved Pinkie Pie embraces Rainbow Dash. For a really long time. It starts to get awkward. Rainbow Dash tries to escape her embrace, but Pinkie Pie won't let go. "I'm just sooooo happy for you!" Pinkie Pie proclaims.

Act I

All of the ponies have gathered together to help Rainbow Dash pack and it's a good thing they came because Rainbow Dash is too excited to get anything into her suitcase. Rainbow Dash can't wait to get to the Academy. "I wouldn't be surprised if they made me a Wonderbolt after the first day!" she says.

Twilight gently reminds her that it is a training Academy and that there's probably still some things that Rainbow Dash needs to work on before becoming a Wonderbolt. Rainbow Dash says, "I guess so, but it's pretty obvious that I'm already Wonderbolt material." She shows off some of her best moves for emphasis.

The ponies all encourage her as she departs for camp. Pinkie Pie runs after her, yelling "Don't forget to write! Don't forget to write!"

Soon Rainbow Dash arrives at the Wonderbolt Academy in Cloudsdale. It looks like a typical sleepaway summer camp with cabins, a mess hall and a huge training area, simply called "THE FLYING FIELD."

Rainbow Dash drops off her suitcase on her bunk. Inside the cabin, other cadets are bragging about what good flyers they are. Rainbow Dash joins in, confident that she is just as good a flyer as they are. Only one pony, LIGHTENING DUST, doesn't join in the bragging session. When pressed to talk about herself, Lightning Dust just comments that she'd rather show, than tell. Rainbow Dash takes note of her coolly confident fellow cadet. (NOTE: To avoid getting into Gilda the Gryphon territory, Lightning Dust will never be portrayed as mean-spirited or cruel. She's the likeable, increasingly reckless Tom Cruise of this story, not the Val Kilmer.)

Suddenly, a bell sounds and all the ponies rush to line up with the other cadets on

the field. SPITFIRE, the head Wonderbolt Captain, scans the cadets like a drill sergeant. He is disgusted by what he sees and starts to tear the new recruits down. Most of the cadets are pretty intimidated... but not Rainbow Dash. Despite being berated by one of her Wonderbolt idols, she remains confident and unfazed. As does one other cadet -- Lightning Dust.

Spitfire informs the cadets that how well the ponies perform in their first round of training exercises will determine which ponies will become lead ponies and which ponies will be “wingponies” for the rest of the time at camp.

Spitfire impresses upon them that both lead ponies and wingponies are important roles in a team, but almost all of the cadets, including Rainbow Dash and Lightning Dust want to be lead ponies.

Spitfire continues to try to intimidate the cadets, yelling “I bet you all think you can fly, think you’re pretty special, don’t you? Well, you’re nothing but a bunch of losers! Now give me five hundred laps!” Everypony takes off. WIPE TO:

Lap 499. There are very few ponies left in the air. Most of them have collapsed on the ground from fatigue. Some are barely sputtering along. All of them are complaining. All except two. Rainbow Dash and Lightning Dust both hold steady as they finish the last lap, side by side.

Rainbow Dash and Lightning Dust eye each other with mutual respect and a fast new friendship is born. The dinner bell rings and Lightning Dust asks Rainbow Dash if she wants to grab some food. Rainbow Dash answers, “Definitely.”

Back in Ponyville, Pinkie Pie is waiting at the mailbox for a letter from Rainbow Dash. AppleJack reminds her that she hasn’t even been gone 24 hours yet, but Pinkie Pie doesn’t care. She is going to wait right there so she can read the letter the moment it arrives! She opens her mailbox and looks for a letter. Then she closes it. A second later she opens it. Then she closes it. Then quickly opens it again.

The next morning at the Academy, Spitfire puts the cadets through their training paces with a Wonderbolts version of “chicken.” He explains the game – everypony will pair up, then fly straight toward the sky tower as fast as they can. The object of the game is to get as close as you can to the tower before pulling away.

Spitfire blows the whistle and the games begin! Rainbow Dash and Lightning Dust watch as other cadets take off in pairs, flying toward the sky tower. Several of the cadets pull out way before they are anywhere near the sky tower.

Soon it is Rainbow Dash and Lightning Dust’s turn. They take off together, flying side by side as fast as they can. Together they get closer to the sky tower than any of the other cadet pairs have so far. Rainbow Dash and Lightning Dust share a smile, then Lightning Dust puts on a new burst of speed. Rainbow Dash keeps up with her until it looks as though she is going to smash right into the tower! Rainbow Dash

pulls away just a hair sooner than Lightning Dust who flies within an inch of the tower before pulling out.

Back on the ground Spitfire commends Rainbow Dash and Lightning Dust on their performance, "I never saw anypony come that close before!" he tells Lightning Dust, impressed. Then he announces that tomorrow morning he will post the pony teams, including who are the lead ponies and who are the wingponies.

The next morning all the cadets gather round the mess hall wall to see what the pony teams are. Rainbow Dash doesn't even bother to look at the wall because she is so sure that she has been chosen to be a lead pony. "Which of you lucky gals gets to be my wingpony?" Rainbow Dash asks with a cocky grin.

Rainbow Dash's smile fades as she realizes that all the other cadets are eyeing her strangely. "You might want to check the wall," advises one of the cadets. Rainbow Dash takes a look and her jaw drops. She's been made a wingpony.

Just then, Lightning Dust approaches. "They made us a team, isn't that awesome?!" Rainbow Dash is still in shock at not having been chosen to lead.

Act II

Rainbow Dash goes to talk to Spitfire in his office. She says, "Obviously there's been some kind of mistake. I shouldn't be a wingpony, I should be a leadpony with my own wingpony. I mean, besides Lightning Dust, I came closest to the tower."

"I know you did," says Spitfire, "But I just think that you and Lightning Dust will be an unstoppable team. That's why I put you together." Spitfire sees that Rainbow Dash is visibly disappointed and tells her that it was an extremely difficult decision as to which one of them would be the leader of the team. But after how well she did in the "chicken" competition, Lightning Dust proved she just had that something extra he was looking for.

As Rainbow Dash exits his office, she remembers what Twilight had said to her before she left... How there might be something Rainbow Dash could work on at the Academy. Rainbow Dash then realizes that maybe Twilight was right. Spitfire chose Lightning Dust as lead pony because she was more daring... plain and simple. Rainbow Dash decides to make the best of it. She resolves to prove that she can be just as daring as Lightning Dust.

Back in Ponyville, Pinkie Pie is still waiting for a letter from Rainbow Dash. "Why hasn't she written? What if something horrible has happened?" She lets her imagination run wild as to why she hasn't received a letter from Rainbow Dash. The other Ponyville Ponies dismiss Pinkie Pie's absurd theories as being "little over-the-top". They are pretty sure Rainbow Dash hasn't been "kidnapped by a rabid sea turtle".

Meanwhile, back at the Academy, a determined Rainbow Dash arrives on the field where Spitfire announces it's time to begin today's training session. First up is "Capture the Flag!"

Spitfire divides the ponies into teams. Spitfire blows the whistle and the game starts. Lightening Dust and Rainbow Dash zoom around, searching for their opponent's flag. Lightening Dust spots it – the other team has hidden it inside a narrow tunnel. Lightening Dust dives and swoops toward the tunnel's entrance with Rainbow Dash beside her.

Rainbow Dash doesn't think the entrance is wide enough for both of them. Lightening Dust tells her there is only one way to find out and swoops into the entrance. Motivated by her desire to be seen as being as daring as Lightening Dust, she follows Lightening Dust into the tunnel. Turns out Rainbow Dash was correct, the opening is barely wide enough for the both of them and Rainbow Dash gets her wing slightly clipped going in.

But Lightening Dust does manage to grab the flag and they exit the tunnel, victorious with the flag in her mouth. Lightening Dust gives the flag to Spitfire who declares Lightening Dust and Rainbow Dash the winners of the game.

Lightening Dust turns to Rainbow Dash, "Come on, let's take our victory lap!" "Uh, sure, just give me a second," Rainbow Dash replies, wincing from the pain in her clipped wing. "You're fine," Lightening Dust tells Rainbow Dash, nonchalantly (but not meanly) dismissing her injury. Rainbow Dash is hurting pretty badly but plays it off, "Yeah, totally."

The next day at the training session, Spitfire announces that the pony teams will be going through an AIR OBSTACLE COURSE. Once again Lightening Dust and Rainbow Dash go first. The course is long (and much of it is out of Spitfire's sight.) This time Lightening Dust's flying puts not only Rainbow Dash in danger, but also the other cadets who just barely manage to get out of harms way.

Back on the ground Rainbow Dash goes to check on the other cadets to make sure they're okay. The other cadets are fine, but they certainly are glad that Lightening Dust is not their partner.

Rainbow Dash decides to try to talk to Lightening Dust about how close they came to hurting some of their fellow cadets. Lightening Dust dismisses Rainbow Dash's concerns. "We flew better today than we ever have and in the end...nobody really got hurt," she tells Rainbow Dash. "It's not our fault we're so much better at this than everypony else," she adds. Rainbow Dash thinks she makes a good point. "You and me are gonna make awesome Wonderbolts someday," Lightening Dust proclaims, putting her hoof up for a "hoof bump". "Yeah, we are," replies Rainbow Dash.

Back in Ponyville Pinkie Pie is still waiting for a letter from Rainbow Dash. By this

time she is practically frantic, yelling to the other ponies, “Rainbow Dash must have forgotten all about us! We need to send her a care package to remind her how much we love her!”

The ponies think Pinkie Pie is being a little overdramatic but agree that sending a care package is a great idea. Pinkie Pie goes one further, “Wait?! What if the package gets lost in the mail? We’d better deliver it to her in person!” Of course, all the ponies want to come.

Soon after, the ponies are loading a care package on board a hot air balloon before flying off. Soon the balloon arrives in Cloudsdale and lands on the training field of the Academy. Rainbow Dash is so happy to see them. Pinkie Pie demands to know why she didn’t write? Rainbow Dash tells the other ponies how busy she’s been at the Academy – she hasn’t had time to write!

Just then Spitfire arrives. It’s time to begin today’s training session. Today they will be CLOUDBUSTING in pairs. The ponies don’t want to disturb Rainbow Dash’s training so they push off.

Soon after, Lightening Dust and Rainbow Dash take to the air. Lightening Dust is really rarin’ to go today and tells Rainbow Dash that she has something special in store before they take off. Up in the air, Rainbow Dash follows Lightening Dust as she races from cloud to cloud, busting them.

Suddenly Lightening Dust starts flying in a circle...super fast. As wingpony, Rainbow Dash has to follow. Soon they are both going so fast that they create a tornado. Only they soon find they can’t control it. The tornado is headed right for....

Rainbow Dash’s friends! The Ponyville ponies realize what is about to happen, but there’s nothing they can do!

Act III

The tornado smashes into the balloon and pops it. The ponies’ basket is in free fall! If somepony doesn’t save them, the ponies will smash into the ground. Rainbow Dash sees all this and yells, “NOOO!”

The ponies are still falling. Rainbow Dash has got to act fast – she grabs rope in her teeth, flies super fast and wraps it around the sky tower. She secures it to one side of the basket before grabbing another rope in her teeth and securing the other side of the basket. The ropes go taut just in the nick of time. A second more and the ponies would have smashed.

Rainbow Dash has saved the day, but she is still angry. She marches over to Lightening Dust and confronts her saying, “You almost got my friends seriously hurt!” Lightening Dust is once again nonchalant, “What’s the big deal? They’re fine. And did you see how our tornado totally wiped out those clouds?” Rainbow Dash is

furious now. She comments that Lightening Dust doesn't know what she's doing up there in the sky. Lightening Dust replies, "The Wonderbolts seem to think I do. They did make me leader and you a wingpony, afterall."

Rainbow Dash considers this for a moment, then seeks out Spitfire. "There's being daring. And then there's just being reckless," she tells him. "If that's what you're looking for in a future Wonderbolt then you're not going to find it in me," she adds.

As she walks away, Spitfire stops her. Spitfire tells Rainbow Dash that he had no idea how reckless Lightening Dust was flying. "That's the last thing that the Wonderbolts are about," he adds.

Spitfire comments that Rainbow Dash's decision to come forward proves that she has that something extra extra that the Wonderbolts are looking for in their future members. Rainbow Dash beams. "Now get up there and give me 20!" he barks. Rainbow Dash replies, "Yes sir!" and starts her laps.

Spitfire and the other Captains have no choice but to ask Lightening Dust to leave the Academy. They cannot risk a cadet who puts everypony else in danger. As Lightening Dust leaves she still thinks her actions were "no big deal."

Camp over, Rainbow Dash returns to Ponyville where she shows off her "1st in Class" medal from the Academy. "It's not exactly a slot on the Wonderbolts," says Rainbow Dash. "But they've got their eye on me," she adds. Pinkie Pie thinks the medal is great, but there's something else she'd rather see – a letter in her mailbox from Rainbow Dash!