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MY LITTLE PONY IV

"Daring Don't"

Episode 404

Outline by

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TEASER**1) EXT. PONYVILLE – AFTERNOON**

RAINBOW DASH, uncharacteristically, sits under a tree reading a book, completely absorbed. As she eagerly flips a page, FLUTTERSHY walks up and calls her name. Startled, Dash shoots straight up and gets caught in the branches overhead. Dash admonishes Fluttershy for creeping up on her like that. Fluttershy apologizes, though she can't help observing that her scaring Dash must be a first.

Dash: "Couldn't you see I was reading?" Fluttershy sees the book is the latest installment in the Daring Do series: "But haven't you read that one like three times already?" Dash says she'd read the new one if she didn't have to wait another four months for it to come out. The wait is driving her nuts!

Some birdies nearby chirp, reminding Fluttershy to stay on task: she tells Dash that the birdies were expecting the clouds to be cleared this morning and they're tired of flying around and getting dewy, and Fluttershy was wondering if Dash is too busy maybe Fluttershy could clear the clouds for her... but, annoyed at the prospect of someone else doing her job, Dash says she'll take care of it.

Dash shoots into the sky and, to make the same old same old more interesting, she begins to imagine that she's Daring Do on an amazing adventure. WE SEE THE JOB DONE THROUGH HER FANTASY, with Dash attired like Daring Do, "battling" the clouds that morph into menacing Aztec-style dogs. As the scene escalates and her bravado increases, Dash-as-Daring-Do sees an Ahuizotl and flies straight at it... realizing only too late that the "monster" is actually a mountainside, into which she collides, flattens against, and slides down comically: oof.

ACT ONE**2) EXT. PONYVILLE – DASH'S MAILBOX - NEXT MORNING**

Rainbow Dash sits by her mailbox. PINKIE PIE happens by, and Dash explains she's waiting for a reply to a letter she sent a long time ago, and she really, really hopes it comes today. Pinkie Pie tries to be encouraging that today's the day, but Dash asks how Pinkie can be so sure. Pinkie isn't sure how she's sure, but then her tail starts to twitch – it's a sign!

3) EXT. PONYVILLE – VARIOUS – MOMENTS LATER

Pinkie Pie darts all over town, gathering up the others – TWILIGHT, RARITY, APPLEJACK and SPIKE – with the exciting news that Dash's big letter is about to arrive. When asked what letter it is, Pinkie has no idea, but her enthusiasm is undimmed: "Isn't it exciting!"

4) EXT. PONYVILLE – DASH'S MAILBOX – MOMENTS LATER

Dash is somewhat embarrassed now that all her friends are here, but Pinkie assures her that her tail twitched so that must be a good sign. Spike: "But wait – doesn't your tail twitching

something bad's about to happen?" Pinkie: "Oh... right... I forgot. DUCK!!!!" Everypony ducks... and just then the mail carrier slowly passes by without putting one solitary item in Dash's mailbox. Dash is crushed.

Responding to Twilight's inquiry, Dash explains that she sent a letter to A. K. Yearling, the famous author of the Daring Do series, asking if there was anything she could do to help her finish the next installment a little faster... maybe be her assistant or something, do errands for her, clean her place, whatever. Dash worries that maybe there was something uncool in her letter or something that turned off her idol.

Pinkie, again to be reassuring, tells her that it was probably nothing like that. Probably the letter just never got to her, just got lost or fell out of the mail carrier's bag, or got thrown out because somebody dropped a sandwich or something, and will just never get to its destination in a million years, that's all. Dash wonders if maybe Pinkie's right and Dash should rewrite the letter so she can fly it to the Author's home herself.

Twilight immediately tries to dissuade Dash of this, saying she really shouldn't be encroaching on the Author's privacy. Dash, knowing that Twilight loves the Daring Do series almost as much as she does: "You DO want the next book to come out as quickly as possible, don't you?" Twilight considers this... and then says maybe it's okay as long as she comes with Dash to make sure she doesn't get star-struck and disruptive... but now all the other ponies don't want to miss out and insist on coming, too. CUT TO:

5) EXT. EQUESTRIA – WOODED AREA – LATER THAT DAY

All the ponies accompany Dash on her journey to the Author's house, as eager to meet her as Dash is. Twilight rolls her eyes... clearly this is NOT what she had in mind.

Rarity and Pinkie Pie especially feed off each other's excitement about maybe meeting the Author and become her new "besties." But Dash retorts that when you meet famous people you gotta play it cool, they don't like it when you get too excited to... [THEN, SEEING HER HOUSE] "Oh oh! There it is! Her house! Where she actually lives!!!"

Then Twilight, looking closer: "And it's been broken into." As they approach, it's clear that no one is home and the place is completely trashed. The ponies gasp.

ACT TWO

6) EXT. A.K.YEARLING'S HOUSE – MOMENTS LATER

Still outside and unsure what to do, the ponies begin fretfully speculating about what could possibly explain this: everything from excessively dark scenarios to "maybe she just forgot to close the doors when she left to get groceries and she's sloppy." They even hear a TWIG SNAP, which amplifies their paranoia. But Dash says nothing – her eyes are fixed on the book that's been left open on a table and is visible through the open door. It must be the manuscript of the series' next installment!

Dash feels sorely tempted to take a peek. Twilight admonishes her for being so selfish at a time like this, but Dash manages to get Twilight's curiosity piqued as well. Soon, irresistibly, the ponies – even honest Applejack – can't help drifting into the house to get one teeny-teeny-tiny peek.

7) INT. A.K.YEARLING'S HOUSE – MOMENTS LATER

As they step hesitantly across the threshold, the ponies notice Daring-Do-style paraphernalia on the walls – a whip, a pith helmet, etc. – which they speculate must be there to help the writer with inspiration. Then, no sooner does Dash take her first peek at the book, with the other ponies peering over her shoulder – does THE AUTHOR appear in the doorway with her groceries, demanding to know what's going on. Applejack immediately rats Dash out, hanging the idea to peek at the manuscript completely on her. Strangely, the Author seems unconcerned about this, practically ignoring Dash's efforts to explain while rummaging through her own belongings, searching for something. Then, just as the author pulls out a GOBLET and heaves a SIGH OF RELIEF...

... A HALF-DOZEN HENCHPONIES COME STORMING INTO THE HOUSE to corner the author in hopes of seizing the goblet from her (while our ponies look on, mouths agape). The author snaps into action. Grabbing a WHIP from off the wall, she uses it to snag her PITH HELMET from across the room and pull it all the way back to drop perfectly onto her head. Then, as she uses VARIOUS OTHER OBJECTS FROM THE WALL to ENGAGE THE HENCHPONIES IN BATTLE, the Author's secret becomes abundantly clear: A.K.Yearling and Daring Do are one-in-the-same! Dash for a moment considers jumping in to help, but hesitates... and in that moment the goblet is grabbed from Daring Do. The Henchponies escape with it, and Daring Do gives chase.

Rainbow Dash starts to follow, but Twilight stops Dash, insisting that Dash refrain from getting further involved, at which point Rainbow Dash – based on her intimate knowledge of the Daring Do novels published so far – begins breaking down in amazing detail what she infers is happening: the Ketzwocl tribe, seeking to dominate the Tenoctchican Basin, needs the Ancient Amulet of Cruztallian to render their sacred Zaratrichal Fortress impregnable.

But, Twilight retorts (knowing the novels as well as Dash), the Amulet of Cruztallian was destroyed in the second novel, Daring Do and the Clash of the Firestorm. Yes, Dash agrees, but in the fourth book, Daring Do and the Galacian Tunnel, the amulet's magical Sapphire of Doom was recovered and encrusted into the Sacred Goblet of Trustavian for safekeeping.

Twilight flips: "You mean THAT was the Sacred Goblet of Trustavian?!?" Dash nods, she's almost sure of it. Twilight's flipping out. (Yes, they are completely and totally geeking out right now.) As Twilight tries bringing the other less-well-versed ponies up to speed, she turns to discover to her dismay that Dash is gone. Twilight exclaims they must stop Dash before she gets herself hurt.

8) EXT. SKY OVERHEAD – A SHORT WHILE LATER

Dash has taken to the skies, peering as best she can through the tree canopy below for some sign of either Daring Do or the Henchponies. Glimpsing Daring Do below, Dash quickly ducks into a nearby section of forest to plan her next move. She begins nervously rehearsing to

herself how she'll first approach Daring Do: "Hi, I'm such a big fan, and I'm here to help you out with your – no." She tries again: "Danger lurks, Daring Do, and I, Rainbow Dash, shall – no." She keeps trying alternatives, but can't quite find anything satisfactory. Then, suddenly –

Dash is attacked! Dash fights her assailant blindly and valiantly, until she realized who it is – it's Daring Do! Daring Do, recognizing Dash from earlier, backs off. She explains that she heard noises and had to assume it was a Hostile until she could verify otherwise. Dash eagerly responds that she already knows that's one of Daring Do's policies – any fan knows that!

Daring Do begins making her way off, when Dash asks if she can help Daring Do on her adventure. Daring Do asks if Dash knows her other policy. Dash sheepishly responds that she does – Daring Do always works alone. But Dash also knows that the if the henchponies get the goblet into the fortress, having a helper who flies will come in handy to keep them from placing the goblet atop the towering Altar of Invincibility.

Daring Do reluctantly agrees to bend her policy this once, but only for that purpose. Otherwise, Dash is to stay out of her way. Dash can barely contain her excitement.

9) EXT. ELSEWHERE IN THE WOODS – SAME TIME

Twilight leads some of the other ponies as Applejack does her best to track Daring Do. Twilight is painfully worried about Dash... and Daring Do... because she knows from the previous books that if Henchponies get the goblet into the fortress, if they are able to place the goblet atop the Altar of Invincibility, there will be no known way to breach the walls and their domination of the basin will be all but assured. So stopping the Henchponies before they get the goblet inside is essential... because if Daring Do follows it inside even she herself may never find her way out... much less Rainbow Dash!

Just then, Fluttershy arrives in a panic. She was flying overhead and found Dash, but then Dash was attacked... by Daring Do!! The bewildered ponies can't believe their ears. What is going on??? They pick up the pace in search of their friend.

10) EXT. FORTRESS – LATER

Daring Do, with Rainbow Dash in tow, have tracked the Henchponies but haven't yet found the right opportunity to strike. Unfortunately, they're out of time... the entrance to the fortress is in sight. The time to strike is now. Daring Do leaps forward into a clearing to take the Henchponies on single-hoofed-ly. A BATTLE ROYALE ensues. Daring Do holds her own against the numerous forces arrayed against her, as Rainbow Dash sits aside fighting her urge to get involved out of respect for her hero's demand that she only help if they get the goblet into the fortress, and to otherwise stay out of the way.

But, as she continues to watch the battle go on, suddenly Daring Do seems to be in genuine peril and Dash can stand it no more – she jumps into the fray. And Rainbow Dash does some amazing stuff... even Daring Do seems impressed, almost in spite of herself. They fight side-by-side, and even in the heat of battle Rainbow Dash can't help getting giddy ("I'm fighting with Daring Do! Somebody pinch me!").

But then, unexpectedly and unintentionally, Daring Do and Dash accidentally collide, and Dash to her horror realizes that she's *literally* in Daring Do's way... and this leads to Daring Do's capture! As Daring Do gets dragged into the fortress as a prisoner, she scornfully rues aloud her decision to bend her rule and work with another. Dash is miserable... she's ruined things for Daring Do. She makes a move to help again, but Daring Do yells for her not to bother... she's done enough harm already. Dash can't believe what she's done.

ACT THREE

11) EXT. NEARBY IN THE WOODS – A LITTLE LATER

The other ponies continue on their search, calling out Rainbow Dash's name... and then, to their great relief, they stumble upon a depressed Rainbow Dash sitting by a brook staring into the water, barely acknowledging the arrival of her friends. The other ponies realize that, even though Dash seems unharmed, something's terribly wrong – but Dash doesn't want to talk about it.

Pinkie Pie keeps making absurd and ridiculous guesses at what Dash might be upset about, until Dash gets exasperated enough to fill them in. Twilight and the others try to make her feel better, urging her to accept that she did all she could... but they all must assume Daring Do knows what she's daring-doing and respect her wishes.

But then Dash realizes that she's won't be able to stand it if Daring Do doesn't come out of the fortress okay. Even if Daring Do hates her for it, Dash knows she won't be able to live with herself unless she does all she can to help. At that, Dash takes off for the fortress and Twilight is unable to stop her. With great reluctance, Twilight realizes she feels the same way about Dash as Dash does about Daring Do – she too must do all she can to help. All the other ponies feel the same way... they all go into the fortress together to try to catch up with Dash and keep her safe.

12) INT. THE FORTRESS – VARIOUS - A SHORT WHILE LATER

Dash flies WEAVING THROUGH THE FORTRESS' MANY CHAMBERS (which should feel like an Aztec version of the Death Star, and Dash's weaving through could be reminiscent of Luke Skywalker's climactic mission at the end of the original Star Wars). She finally finds Daring Do, securely captured and (so far) unable to escape.

Daring Do yells at Rainbow Dash to go away, insisting (despite appearances) that she's totally got this. Dash allows her to think what she likes, for she has more important business to attend to than to worry about Daring Do's opinion of her. Namely: 1) ensuring Daring Do's safety, and 2) retrieving the goblet before it's too late.

Elsewhere, the ponies continue to search for the Dash and to elude dangers of their own, but so far, the maze-like construction of the fortress has them disoriented and confused.

Dash, against all odds, does amazing work to free Daring Do (even though Daring Do insists she would have freed herself anyway). Then Dash flies along with Daring Do to help her stop the goblet from being placed atop the Altar of Invincibility (ignoring Daring Do's stubborn insistence that Dash leave it to her). They succeed in this, and are about to escape with the goblet, but then Daring Do confides that if they place the goblet in a certain spot, the fortress will be magically destroyed.

The way to escape is open, but Dash grabs the goblet and rushes back for that spot. Daring Do can't keep up. Dash gets there, and is about to succeed, but is foiled at the last possible moment. It appears that the villains will regain the goblet and all will be lost... but then the other ponies find Dash and create the crucial final distraction for Dash to succeed.

They all escape just in time as the FORTRESS WALLS COME CRUMBLING TO THE GROUND. Daring Do acknowledges that it can be good to have helpful friends after all... in certain situations... occasionally... maybe. Dash smiles, that's good enough for her.

13) EXT. PONYVILLE – MONTAGE - A COUPLE MONTHS LATER

Dash sits by her mailbox. The mail carrier arrives with a package, which Dash grabs out of his hands – the newest installment in the Daring Do series has finally arrived! We see A MONTAGE OF DISSOLVES of all the ponies, each alone, each reading their brand new copy of the book... and in their various voices we hear that Daring Do now – for the first time – has a sidekick character accompanying her on her latest adventure... a character clearly based on Rainbow Dash. Dash briefly takes in this realization with deep satisfaction... then keeps on reading... unable to wait to see what happens next.

FADE OUT.

END.