The switch: Applejack and Rainbow Dash

Applejack quickly found a strategically placed building in the center of the main path leading to the control point. After building a dispenser and setting up a sentry and teleporter, there was little else to do but wait for the mission to start. Sighing she mumbled to herself,

“Well ahem not doing anypony any good just standing around, ah might as well see how Rainbow and the others are doing.”

With that she teleported back over near the supply point for the BLU team to check up on everyone.

Rainbow Dash circled the perimeter of the base eager for the start of the oncoming action. She was just about to start swing at the fence blocking her path to the RED team when Applejack appeared out of the teleporter.

“Well howdy Dash, how’s it going?”

Dash struggled to keep her increasing temper out of her voice

“I CAN’T take all this waiting around while the other team builds a stronger defense force.”

“Well sugar cube, that’s just how these battles are set up, sides, if it was set up like that, we would have less of a chance to set up a good fightin force if we were defending against them.”

Dash groaned with frustration,

“I know that but I still want to attack now!”, hitting the fence angrily for emphases.

“Come on Dash, it will start soon enough, and if you keep hitting that fence you will be too tuckered out to help when it does start.”

After a pause she continued,

“Now how about you come along with me and-”

At that moment the siren rang signaling that the mission had started. Dash immediately perked up at this and turned to Applejack.

“Sorry AJ but I got to go and check out how they set stuff up for the others.”

Applejack gave her an understanding, if disappointed nod.

“That’s…fine Rainbow, yawl go on and do what you do best and ah will be here if ya need anything.”

Rainbow Dash looked over to her friend with concern.

“AJ is something-”

Whatever she was going to say was lost as she let out a pained scream. A bullet had shot into her foreleg and another one was lodged in her wing. She soon blacked out as a shocked Applejack rushed over to her. Scooping her up onto her back, she whispered franticly more for herself than Dash,

“N-n-now don’t you worry none, ah will just get you over to meh applespencer and it’ll fix you right up…”

Rainbow Dash only let out a weak moan as they rushed back to AJ’s small base. She gasped as the medical scanner on the applespencer registered a heavy dose of poison from the snipers bullets, but sighed with relief as the applespencer slowly mended Dash’s wounds and began to purge the poison from her body. Applejack held her close trying to give her some comfort as she healed. Rainbow Dash opened her eyes and leaned close to Applejacks ear and in a delusional voice whispered

“H-hey AJ, why do I always have to get hurt like this for you to hold me?”

Applejack blushed and looked away mumbling to herself about how she could if Dash wouldn’t get hurt so often, all the while still fixated on her dying friend. Dash laughed and started to get up.

“Well thanks and all, but I have to-”

Applejack firmly pushed her back down.

“Oh no you don’t, you’re going to stay right here until ah am certain that yer ready to go back out there again.”

Dash looked at her friend with a confused expression.

“But who is going to scout for us? We can’t just charge in there and hope for the best…”

Applejack considered this and with a determined look, took off Rainbow Dash’s headset and put it on her own head.

“Well, I reckon ah will.”

Now Rainbow Dash looked back at her friend with equal determination.

“Come on, we both know that I am way faster than you-”

She cut her off.

“In the air you are, but ah recall that ah could keep with you just fine on the ground at the Running of the Leaves, and now should be no different.”

Dash couldn’t keep the frustration out of her voice,

“Yea, well even if that was true, which it’s not, who would take care of your sentry and stuff when you’re gone?”

AJ turned to her with a sparkle in her eye.

“Well ah was thinkin you could sugarcube.”

Dash’s eyes widened.

“What, Applejack, in case you haven’t noticed, I don’t know anything about mechanics or stuff like that, there is a reason I choose to take Scout’s job you know.”

Shaking her head, Applejack collected the various items from the still weakened and poisoned Dash. After equipping Dash with the standard engineer gear and going over the basics of what everything did, she nuzzled Dash’s check affectionately and reminded her,

“Remember, all you have to do is whack whatever is damaged a couple a times with the wrench and the repair matrix of the applespencer and the matrix of the wrench will do the rest.”

Rainbow Dash, still slightly overwhelmed, muttered

“How in the hay do you expect me to remember all of that?”

Applejack smiled and gestured over to a small radio in the corner.

“You can use that if you forget something… now ah suppose you should give me a How to be a good Scout guide or something…” she murmured looking away.

“Aw that’s easy, you just run in, see what’s what, maybe cause some chaos and then get out of there.”

Applejack blinked, “That’s it? Ah was sure there was more to it than that.”

Dash smiled and waved her hoof at the radio, “I guess if you need any tips being a scout, just radio me, and who knows, I might be better at your job then you are.”

AJ chuckled at this and with a sigh stared for the entry way.

“Well sugar cube, ahem off to go buck that sniper into next winter wrap up, ah will see you soon…” Applejack trailed off as a thought came to her head.

“Oh and Dashie, don’t even **think** about trying to multitask as a scout while ahem gone.”

Dash shrugged and said “Don’t worry I’m not going anywhere till this poison stops making my blood boil.”

A wave of pained guilt crashed over Applejack as she realized she could not help her friend any further or make what she was going through more bearable.

“Now Dash ah mean it, you try ANYTHING; ah will get Fluttershy to use the ***Stare*** on you.”

Dash rolled her eyes, “Yea right, she is way too busy healing Big Mac and Pinkie Pie on the front lines right now to-”

She stopped as Applejack collided with her in a hug. AJ leaned close.

“Please just promise me you will be careful, ah don’t know what ah would do if you got hurt again…”

Tears started to form in AJ’s eyes. Dash’s own eyes started to water and she returned the hug,

“I will, I promise now go on and get that Intel for the rest of the team,” she whispered encouragingly. Applejack nodded and with a deep breath, sprinted out the doorway into the battle beyond.

Rainbow Dash had expected that the seemingly complex building would be too hard for her to fix without assistance from Applejack via radio. However, it appeared that Applejack was right. All it needs are a few good whacks from her wrench and it repairs itself. Swiftly forming a pattern in a routine of constant mending, she became a blur of restoration, much to the late RED Demoman’s frustration.

“Let’s see Applejack beat this”

Dash whispered as she waited for all of the approaching RED members to fall from the sentry’s hail of bullets. Just as Dash stated to smile and get cocky, she got an instant message that warned her a Spy was sapping the sentry! She saw a figure next to her sentry and gave it a hard whack on the head. The RED Spy’s carcass was now limp against the turret. Only after she had moved the body and dragged it away into a ditch did she notice the pictures. One was of Applejack’s family, cheerfully laughing and enjoying one of their famous reunions. The other picture was of Applejack and herself. It was when she had “immortalized” her with the honor of taking a picture with the “famous” pegasus. She felt tears in her eyes as she clearly saw the annoyed frown on the earth pony’s face. Suddenly, she had a deeper, darker fear arise from her heart that was more horrifying than the threat of dying from the poison.

“What if Applejack still views me like that even now…”

No she thought, if that was true, AJ would never have helped her out in the shooting range. She certainly would not have… Trying to focus on the immediate threat, she realized that Applejack had not said what to do in this situation, and rather than try and disarm the thing by herself, she would much rather have AJ walking her through it. She then sent out a call to AJ’s headset, praying to Celestia that she was safe enough to help her with this…

Applejack darted forward out of the building, weaving though obstacles and enemies alike. She soon found her target. The RED sniper was scowling as he tried to no avail to take out the sentry that was preventing his team from easy access to the BLU control point.

“You bloody pony, a round in your head will get you out of my hair...”

The Sniper mumbled as he aimed for Dash’s head and began to zoom in. Applejack infuriated by this ran up and hit him over the head with her bat. Screaming at him in outrage,

“Why…why would you shoot her in the leg and wing, and even poison her instead of giving her a clean painless death? I thought you Snipers were supposed to be polite and professional.”

Grimacing with pain he slowly got up.

“Because that rainbow colored wanker has been nothing but trouble for us from the start. It was the only way I could keep her out of the way so we could stop you from getting to the bloody check point.”

After spitting out some of his blood he continued,

“Now then, I am going to go and kill your bloody little pony friends, starting with your precious little rainbow one over there, and if you try anything, I might just have to give her another dose of poison before I end it…”

Applejack’s eyes narrowed.

“Oh hay no; you ain’t touching one hair on her mane!”

With that she spun around bucked him in the head, causing him to fall out of the window and land limply on the ground below.

“Now ah just need to avoid the RED team and get back to-”

Suddenly her headset rang with an emergency call. She just put it through when Rainbow Dash seemed to scream in her ear,

“APPLEJACK!”

Dropping the headset with surprise, she quickly scooped it up and adjusted the volume accordantly before answering.

“Dash is something wrong?”

There was a pause and the sound of a wrench desperately beating against metal before she replied. “There was a Spy sapping the sentry, and I don’t know how to get the sapper to stop. I took out the Spy so I can’t get him to disarm it and I’m going to get overrun soon if I cannot figure this out.”

Racking her brain, Applejack relayed the tips that the Engineer had given her when dealing with spies. “Just cut the wire connecting the sapper to the sentry and get is as far away from you as possible before it explodes, you could even try tossing it at the RED team if you like.”

After a long pause, Rainbow Dash said,

“Alright it worked, and the dispenser says that all the poison is out of my system so I can have my job back now,…oh and hurry back AJ, I can see why you were getting so lonely just sitting around here…”

Applejack silently cursed herself for not checking to see if she had told Dash how to deal with a Spy in the first place. Soon she finally returned to where her friend was erratically dancing between the machines, repairing them not completely but enough to keep them standing and allow her to balance her repair time so everything could stay standing against yet another onslaught of Demo charges. Applejack fired a few rounds from her pistol in quick succession and the angry Scottish man finally fell. Applejack whistled,

“Well sugarcube, ah don’t know if ah could have stood that long against that Demoman without having to respawn and start over.”

Dash as usual soaked up the praise.

“Yea well when you’re as awesome as me, everything is just a piece of cake.”

After they had laughed a bit Rainbow Dash continued,

“But even I am not sure how long I could have lasted with that psycho poisoning Sniper on the loose…” she trailed off and looked away.

Applejack was surprised that her normally proud friend would give up a compliment stating that Applejack had actually beaten her at something so easily.

“Thanks again for doing this for me AJ, I know we could just respawn and all but I really want to see what cool reward Mann co. is going to give us if we don’t die till the next weapon shipment comes around.”

Applejack smiled warmly at her best friend.

“No problem Dashie, and remember to head back over here if you need to catch your breath or… just want to talk to me…”

The cyan Pegasus hugged her friend and said,

“Hey Applejack… about that picture on your sentry…”

Applejack froze.

“Is… is that what you really think of me, just an arrogant pony who pushes away her friends and common sense for fame?”

Tears welled up in Applejacks eyes.

“No sugarcube I don’t, you know that. The only reason that ah put it up there is to show that ah am thinking of you down here, that’s all…”

She trailed off.

“If… if you want me to take the picture down ah-”

She stopped as Rainbow Dash tackled her in a hug.

“No Applejack I am sorry, I just saw that picture and assumed the worst. And that was wrong of me and if anypony should apologize, it should be me.”

Applejack stared deeply into Rainbow Dash’s eyes.

“No you don’t need to ah just… ah… ”

She turned away. Dash saddened by the turn of events, tried to cheer her friend up.

“You know AJ, I think you handled scouting for the day, how about I just stay here and help you out, I mean if I won’t be in the way or anything…”

Applejack perked up at this but replied, “Dash you don’t have to do that, ah can deal with it and ah know how much you hate having to stay in one place all day.”

Dash just smiled.

“It’s ok really, and besides, since I am on the move so much, I get kind of lonely to, so how do you set up one of these dispenser things?”

Applejack chuckled and began to instruct her surprisingly eager friend.

After an entire day of setting up and repairing the various machines, they were finial victorious. Applejack started a camp fire out of the remains of a RED team teleporter, and neither was quite ready to return to the base for the night. They just sat together gazing up at the stars peacefully.

“You think we will ever get home to Ponyville AJ?”

Applejack looked away and sighed.

“Ah hope so, Applebloom is still missing, ah hope she and the others stayed in Ponyville, ah don’t want ‘em to see this. Though, she is a bit too young to be bucking apples by herself, and with me and Big Mac here, ah don’t know how we are going to get the harvest done in time for winter…”

Not wanting her friends despair to grow, Dash whispered in her ear,

“Don’t worry, when we get back, I will come on over to the farm and help you out. With my help I bet we will get that harvest done in ten seconds flat”, and gave her a trademark smile.

“Thank you Dash, it means a lot to meh.”

Her friend just smiled and leaned in close to her. Applejack blushed slightly but leaned in to until they met in a soft kiss that lasted until they drifted off to sleep. The last thought that Applejack had was tasting the distinct flavor of skittles.

Dash awoke the next morning in a haze of disorientation to the sound of an alarm clock, which she quickly smashed in aggravation of being woken up so early. The last thing she remembered was snuggling closely to Applejack in the cool night. Was it all just a dream then? She wondered. Suddenly she realized that there was something covering her face. It was Applejack’s hat! What was it doing on her and more importantly, where was Applejack? She wasn’t in bed with her so maybe she just carried her back to the base and went off to her bed? Annoyed that Applejack hadn’t just stayed with her that night, she set off to find her friend. On her way to Applejack’s room, she ran into Scout.

“Hey Dash good morning, how are you do-”

He blinked when he saw Applejack’s trademark hat on her head and smirked.

“Well, well, well Dashie it seems you have been scouting out more than just the RED base huh?”

Dash gave him a look and he quickly got a hint and scampered off. Sighing she continued on her way to Applejack’s room. At that moment she collided with Rarity who had been carrying a large assortment of fabrics which scattered everywhere.

“Oh watch where you’re going you-”

She then realized it was Dash and began to apologize when she noticed Applejack’s hat on her friend’s head. Here we go again, Dash thought to herself. Rarity let out an exaggerated gasp and proclaimed,

“Dash darling, whatever are you doing with that…that thing on your head, it totally clashes with your mane and is a crime to all of fashion.”

Rainbow Dash looked surprised. She was about to answer when Rarity cut her off.

“Honestly Dash, I expected as much from Applejack, but surely you know that it’s not even the right season for something of such a brutishly *plain* color, I shall not allow you to embarrass yourself further and demand you take that off and find a hat with more elegance and-”

Dash cut her off, “Rarity, this isn’t even my hat, it is Applejack’s and I was just returning it to her.”

Now Rarity looked confused.

“But why would you have her hat so early in the morning, is this one of your pranks?”

Dash blushed and not wanting to answer the awkward question nodded quickly and ran past her saying

“No-I mean yea that’s it you caught me, don’t tell AJ bye,” and ducked into Applejack’s room.

A still confused Rarity huffed in annoyance.

“Well I never…” and collected her things and continued on her way to her own room.

Applejack had just gotten up when Rainbow Dash seemed to all but throw herself into the room, falling on top of her.

“Oh you got me meh hat, thank you kindly Dash.”

Applejack said with a yawn nuzzling her affectionately.

“I…but you…why did I have your hat on my face this morning?”

Applejack blinked in surprise,

“Don’t you remember sugarcube?”

Dash just shook her head.

“Well you looked so peaceful when you were asleep that ah didn’t want to wake you up, and ah gave you meh hat so the sun wouldn’t wake you up when ah carried you back into your room at dawn.”

Dash blushed at the thought of being carried all the way to her room after spending the whole day and most of the night together with Applejack. Hopefully the others will not jump to conclusions or anything she thought, at least not to soon...

“So umm… do you want to do the same thing again today?”

Applejack smiled at her friend.

“Sure thing just let me grab meh things and we can head out there.”

With that the two friends left the building and headed out to start the seemingly never ending battle that suddenly didn’t seem as terrible now that they had each other...