

**CONFOUND THESE PONY NAMES,
THEY SEND ME TO HOSPITAL**

by GeodesicDragon

Like you do every day, you find yourself waking up to yet another morning in Equestria; this time without the interference of that bloated ball of fiery orange mess in the sky. It would appear that Celestia has finally grown bored with trying to play 'pin the sunlight on the eye' every day, and found something else to do.

This pleases you, but what pleases you more is the fact that your bed feels a lot more comfortable than usual; you could lie here all day. Alas, you remember that you've got stuff to do that can't wait. So, with a weary sigh, you get out of bed and stretch your arms.

As soon as you do, though, you catch a glimpse of not only the white gown you are wearing, but also the bandages on your head. The former are only just big enough to help you maintain your dignity (implying that you even had any to begin with), while the latter has a large patch of dried blood on it.

"What the..." you decide to get back into bed; might as well be comfortable while you think. "How did this happen?"

The door to your room opens and one of the nurses, a brown unicorn mare, walks in. You've never seen her before, but you'd be damned if you didn't think she was cute. She approaches your bed, looks you over, then tuts and shakes her head.

"Well good morning, Anonymous," she says. "My name is Nurse Haywick. Now, could you possibly tell me what happened?"

"Morning, Nurse." you shrug. "Honestly? I don't know what happened; maybe if you told me how I got here, it might help."

Haywick consults her notes. "Somepony brought you just after ten o' clock last night," she replies. "She told us that the two of you were talking when you suddenly vomited and fell out of your chair, banging your head on the table as you did so."

You think for a moment, and then your eyes widen. "Oh, hell, I know what happened now," you mutter. "It was like this..."

The Previous Evening

From your table, you have a good view of the others; several of which have been crammed into the small space that makes up the main room of the Ponyville Civic Centre. At each table sits either a nervous or calm-looking stallion, many of whom have come down from Canterlot. The nervous ones keep stealing glances at the many mares standing nearby, while the calm ones have a cocky grin on their faces. A large banner hangs across one wall, bearing the words 'SPEED DATING EVENING' in what looks like the Equestrian equivalent of Comic Sans MS.

"Okay, everypony, listen up!" shouts the voice of Ivory Scroll; Ponyville's mayor, as well as the last pony you'd expect to be hosting this sort of thing. "Here's how this is going to work: you stallions – and man – will stay where you are, while the mares work their way around and talk to each of you. You only have five minutes per couple, so make them count. Each of you should have some score sheets and a pencil which you can use to fill them in. At the end of the evening, you will turn over your sheets, at which point we will try and find a suitable match for you. Does everypony understand?" She looks around the room, smiling as she gets a lot of nods in return. "Okay, ladies. Ready, set... go!"

The mares immediately make a beeline for the nearest table and start talking to the stallion sitting at it. One of them, a unicorn with a cutie mark depicting an abacus, ends up at yours. She sits down and gives you a small smile, which you return.

"Good evening, miss," you say. "My name is Anonymous, although you can call me 'Anon' for short if you'd prefer."

The mare giggles. "It's nice to meet you, Anon," she replies. "My name is Tally Whacker, and I'm an accountant who works—"

She is cut off by you laughing out loud. "I'm sorry, but did you say your name is 'Tally Whacker?'" you ask, to which she nods. "Oh, man, that must suck. I bet you got teased a lot in school, right?"

"Wait, 'teased?'" Tally gives you a confused look. "Now why on Equestria would anypony want to tease me about my name?"

"You don't need to bottle it up," you say reassuringly. "I know how it feels to be teased, Tally; my nickname at school was 'Wet Blanket,' because I was such a wuss."

Tally snorts. "My uncle was 'Wet Blanket,'" she replies. "And I'll have you know that he served in the Royal Guard for thirty years."

You sigh. "Seriously?" you ask. "Are you seriously telling me that nopony ever teased you for being named after a certain part of the male anatomy, most commonly used for reproduction?"

Tally gasps. "What?!" her face turns red. "How dare you insult me in such a perverted manner, you... you scoundrel!"

"Wait, 'perverted?'" you scratch your head. "I don't see how that—"

You are interrupted by the Mayor ringing the bell. "Change tables!"

Tally Whacker can't get up and go fast enough, immediately running over to the next available stallion. Chalking what just happened down to coincidence, you await your next visitor. Soon enough, you are joined by a pegasus whose cutie mark is a shovel and compass combination. She looks you up and down, then grins.

"Ooh, exotic," she purrs. "I like you already, handsome."

You grin back. "Steady, tiger," you say. "We need to get acquainted first. My name is Anonymous, and I'm the only one of my kind in Equestria. Now, am I right in thinking that – based on your cutie mark – you are an archaeologist by trade?"

The pegasus nods. "Almost," she replies. "I'm actually a treasure seeker; I go out, dig things up, and either sell them to museums or keep them for myself. For I... am Glory Hole, and I am the—"

"Holy crap, another one?!" you interrupt again. "Did your parents name you after the method of conception or something? How the hell do you drag a bum moniker like that through life?"

"A bum wha'?" Glory shakes her head. "What are you on about?"

You smirk. "Are you really telling me that you've never even heard of your namesake before?" Glory nods, and you sigh. "All right then, allow me to school you a little bit."

You start explaining to her what you meant; she gets up and walks away before you're even half-way done, leaving you to deal with the fact that a roomful of ponies are staring at you.

"What can I say?" you shrug. "She couldn't handle the truth."

This seems to placate them somewhat, and they go back to their conversations. It's not long before the bell rings, and you are joined by an Earth Pony. She parks herself in the seat opposite you and, before you even have a chance to introduce yourself, starts talking.

"Hi there!" she chirps. "I already know who you are, Anonymous, because my cousin Pinkie told me about you. Well she's actually more like my fourth cousin twice removed, or something, but who cares about a silly little detail like that?"

"Details are boring," you reply. "So, what's your name?"

The mare leans forward and grins. "Guess."

You smirk. "Oh, so it's like that, is it?" you take a drink of water and crack your knuckles. "Since you said Pinkie was your cousin, I'm assuming your last name will be 'Pie.' So, with that in mind, I'll start listing a bunch of random names. When I get the right one, tell me and I'll stop. Do you get what I'm saying?"

"Go for it," she says. "But you'll never guess."

"Try me." you take a deep breath, because it's on. "Apple, Banoffee, Bean, Blackberry, Black Bottom, Blueberry, Bob Andy, Boysenberry, Bridie, Buko, Bumbleberry, Butter, Buttermilk, Cantaloupe, Caramel, Cheese, Cherry, Chess, Chestnut, Cookie Cake, Cumberland, Curry, Derby, Fish, Flapper... fuckin' Fried?"

The mare has been shaking her head ever since you started your list; you sigh and throw your arms up in defeat.

"Told you!" she says in a sing-song voice. "Do you give up?"

"Yes!" you snap. "Please, for the love of all that is sacred, tell me!"

"Iiiiiiiiiiiiiittts... Cream!" she says giddily. "Cream Pie!"

You blink a few times as you try to process what she just said. When it finally registers, you nearly fall over laughing.

"Oh my God!" you cackle. "This night just keeps getting weirder!" You look around the room and raise your voice. "All right, everypony, where are the cameras? Come on, don't be shy!"

Cream looks at you with worry. "Um, Anon, are you all right?"

"I'm better than all right!" you reply. "I'm being Punk'd! Come on, you can drop the act, 'Cream,' I know you're in on this."

Cream slowly pushes her chair back and stands up. "I think I heard the five-minute bell," she says. "I'm just gonna... you're too weird, even for me; given who my cousin is, that's saying a lot."

She walks away – just as the bell goes – while you cover your mouth with your hands and scream silently.

"That's it," another mare says. "Just let it all out."

You look up to find a unicorn looking at you. She seems normal, but given all that you've gone through so far, you're not exactly getting your hopes up. Putting on a smile, you gesture to the empty seat.

"I'm sorry," you say. "I've just... it's not been my night."

The mare chuckles as she sits down. "Don't worry about it," she replies. "You're not the only one getting stuck with weirdos." She leans forwards and lowers her voice. "The last guy I was talking to, before I came to you, seemed to have a major jelly fetish." This gets a laugh out of you, and the mare nods. "You know, you don't look so bad when you're smiling."

"Thanks." you pick up your pencil and a scoresheet. "So, why don't you tell me a bit about yourself... I'm sorry, what's your name?"

"It's Blue," she replies. "Nice to meet you, Anon. There's not much to tell, really; I'm a baker from Trottingham, I've just got out of a pretty bad relationship, and I'm looking to start again. I heard about this event from a friend, and decided to give it a try."

You nod. "Well, perhaps we can help each other, hmm? What hobbies and interests have you got? Personally, I like going to the movies, taking long walks at night, reading and... well, baking." Blue raises an eyebrow. "No, really. I'm not *good* at it, but I try."

"Well, perhaps I can teach you a thing or two," Blue says. "I think you and I would make a good team." She stands with her forelegs on the table, sweeping one across the room. "Anonymous and Blue Waffle, working to create the greatest treats in Equestria!"

"Yeah!" you exclaim, only for the joy you feel to be replaced with something else entirely. *Did she say 'Blue Waffle?'*

Oh, God, she did! Brain, I'm begging you, don't give me a mental—

"Anon, are you— gah!" Blue screams as you bring up your dinner, and then your world goes dark.

"I'm pretty sure you know the rest."

"That was an... interesting story, Anonymous," Haywick says. "But I really don't see why her name warrants *that* kind of reaction."

"Trust me, Nurse," you reply. "It is *not* the sort of thing you want to know anything about. Just... just forget about it, okay?"

Haywick tries to think of a reply, but ultimately shrugs. "As you wish, Anonymous." she stands up. "Now, Doctor Stable said he wants us to keep you in for a while longer; we need to be certain that you aren't concussed. The lunch trolley will be along shortly so, until then, I will leave you to get some rest."

"Much appreciated, Nurse." you nod. "Thanks for listening."

Haywick walks towards the door. "It's my job, Anonymous," she replies. "It's not just medicines and bandages you know." As she gets to the door, she puts her notepad back in the pocket of her white coat. "Oh, I almost forgot." She pulls something else out. "The Mayor asked me to pass this on to you; despite what happened to you, the speed dating still went ahead." She levitates a sheet of paper over. "These are your results."

You take the paper from her. "Thanks."

"You're welcome." Haywick opens the door. "Get some rest."

With that, she leaves the room while you look at the paper she gave you and unfold it, reading the contents carefully.

"Well, that hardly comes as a surprise." You look up. "After all, she *was* the only mare I actually bothered to score." You sigh. "Still, I think I'd better stock up on nausea meds..."