**THE TICKET MASTER**

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Notes: All lines marked with one asterisk (\*) are spoken as a voice over.

“WD” = wavering dissolve.

Prologue

(*Opening shot: fade in to Twilight Sparkle and Applejack in the Sweet Apple Acres orchards. It is daytime. Each has full baskets of apples on her back; Spike rides atop Twilight’s as she catches up to Applejack and they begin to walk together.*)

**Spike:** (*inspecting/tossing away apples*) No…nope… (*He continues to do so under the following.*)

**Applejack:** Thank you kindly, Twilight, for helpin’ me out. (*jostling her own baskets slightly*) I bet Big Macintosh I could get all these Golden Delicious in the barn by lunchtime. (*close-up; giddily*) If I win, he’s gonna walk down Stirrup Street in one o’ Granny’s girdles! (*Laugh; pan to Twilight.*)

**Twilight:** No problem at all, Applejack. I’m glad the goal is lunchtime. All this hard work is making me hungry. (*Spike’s next apple bounces off her head.*)

**Spike:** I know, right?

(*Annoyed glare from her, met by his sheepish grin.*)

**Twilight:** Puh-lease, Spike. You’ve been lounging on my back all morning while we worked.

**Spike:** Exactly! You two are taking so long, I missed snack time.

(*Close-up of Twilight’s gut, which begins to rumble; zoom out as she gives him a nervous look and giggle.*)

**Twilight:** I guess we better get some food.

**Spike:** (*still checking apples*) Nope…worm… (*finding a bright red one*) Aha!

**Twilight:** (*licking her chops*) Oh, Spike! That looks delicious!

(*He abruptly yanks it away; a chomp, a spatter of juice in her face, and he has disposed of it in one bite.*)

**Twilight:** (*angrily*) Spike! (*He swallows.*)

**Spike:** What?

(*He suddenly makes as if to vomit, but instead lets off a belch of green fire that materializes into a scroll. It floats down to the trio.*)

**Twilight:** It’s a letter from Princess Celestia! (*Spike takes it, clears his throat, and unrolls it.*)

**Spike:** (*reading*) “Hear ye, hear ye. Her Grand Royal Highness, Princess Celestia of Equestria, is pleased to announce the Grand Galloping Gala, to be held in the magnificent capital city of Canterlot on the twenty-first day of…”

(*As he reads, tilt up to frame said capital city, high on its mountainside in the distance. Back to him, now skimming ahead.*)

**Spike:** …yadda-yadda-yadda… “cordially extends an invitation to Twilight Sparkle plus one guest.”

(*The news takes a moment to sink into both equine brains; zoom in as the faces in front of them brighten. Double gasp.*)

**Twilight, Applejack:** The Grand Galloping Gala!

(*Snap to black.*)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(*Opening shot: fade in to the two ponies, now jumping in place with excitement.*)

**Twilight, Applejack:** The Grand Galloping Gala!

(*Spike, meanwhile, is having none of it. As they carry on, he makes a disgusted face and sticks a finger toward his open mouth as if to make himself vomit. The real gag reflex kicks in again; this time; his flaming belch resolves into a pair of gold tickets that float down toward him.*)

**Spike:** Look! (*Cut to Twilight; he holds them up and continues o.s.*) Two tickets!

**Twilight:** (*as he pulls them back*) Wow, great! I’ve never been to the Gala. Have you, Spike?

**Spike:** No, and I plan to keep it that way. I don’t want any of that girly frilly frou-frou nonsense.

**Twilight:** Aw, come on, Spike. A dance would be nice.

**Applejack:** Nice? It’s a heap good more than just nice! I’d love to go. Land sakes!

(*The view undergoes a wavering dissolve to a long line of ponies stretching across the grounds of the royal palace. Pan toward the head of it as Applejack continues; they are passing a concession stand she has set up and are buying her wares in abundance.*)

**\* Applejack:** If I had an apple stand set up, ponies’d be chawin’ our tasty vittles ’til the cows came home!

(*One customer takes a basket of apples and tosses several coins onto the counter, which are quickly scooped up.*)

**\* Applejack:** Do you have any idea how much business I could drum up for Sweet Apple Acres? (*She carries the money in her teeth and drops it into a full box.*) Why, with all that money, we could do a heap of fixin’ up ’round here.

(*Dissolve to the family barn, whose roof is in rather worse shape than when it was first seen in “Mare in the Moon.”*)

**\* Applejack:** We could replace that saggy ol’ roof!

(*Evidently she is exaggerating the state of things a bit. A flash, and it has been put right. Dissolve to Big Macintosh, another Apple family member, straining to pull a rusty plow in a field.*)

**\* Applejack:** And Big Macintosh could replace that saggy ol’ plow!

(*A flash, and it becomes a gleaming new farm implement. The next dissolve frames Granny Smith near the barn. She is up on her hind legs, with slippers on those hooves and an adult walker gripped in the front two, and is looking somewhat disheveled. For her, getting around on two legs is as slow a business as it is on four.*)

**\* Applejack:** And Granny Smith could replace that saggy ol’ hip!

(*A flash, and her appearance has improved considerably; she throws the walker aside and bucks happily in all directions. WD back to Applejack, in close-up.*)

**Applejack:** Why, I’d give my left hind leg to go to that Gala.

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) Oh! (*Zoom out as she moves closer.*) Well, in that case, would you like to—

**Rainbow Dash:** (*from o.s. overhead*) WHOA!!

(*The two have just enough time for one scared look up before she plummets to the ground, throwing dust and apples everywhere. When the view clears, all three ponies have wound up in a heap, with Spike looking on.*)

**Rainbow:** Are we talking about the Grand Galloping Gala?

**Applejack:** Rainbow Dash! (*She stands up.*) You told me you were too busy to help me harvest apples! (*Zoom out to frame Rainbow, also up.*) What were you busy doin’? Spyin’?

**Rainbow:** (*dismissively*) No, I was busy…

(*Quick tilt up to a tree in which a pillow and blanket have been placed.*)

**Rainbow:** (*from o.s.*) …napping. (*Ground level; she hovers upside down near Twilight.*) And I just *happened* to hear that you have an extra ticket?

**Twilight:** (*uneasily*) Yeah, but—

**Rainbow:** (*backing off, doing a loop*) YES! This is so awesome! The Wonderbolts perform at the Grand Galloping Gala every year. I can see it now.

(*WD: a crowd at the palace, looking skyward. Three pegasi streak past as she continues, leaving gray thundercloud trails and lightning sparks in their wake.*)

**\* Rainbow:** Everyone would be watching the sky, their eyes riveted on the Wonderbolts. But then… (*Something slashes across the three trails.*) …in would fly…

(*The streak of her tail marks her arrival; she does a sharp U-turn, knocking a cloud apart, then stops.*)

**\* Rainbow:** …Rainbow Dash!

(*Gasp from the crowd; the three Wonderbolts are speechless. In close-up, they are two mares and a stallion, all wearing goggles and blue/yellow full-body jumpsuits decorated with lightning bolts on each hoof. The stallion has a dark blue mane/tail, while one mare shows yellow and the other bright orange. Each jumpsuit has a winged lightning bolt where a cutie mark would normally go, and the garments leave manes/tails/wings/ears/snouts exposed.*)

**\* Rainbow:** I would draw their attention with my Super Speed Strut. Then I would mesmerize ’em with my Fantastic Filly Flash. And for my grand finale, the Buccaneer Blaze!

(*For the first of these moves, she flies so low that she can touch the ground with her hooves, making it appear as if she is trotting normally. Cheers from the crowd. The second move finds her swooping into a nose dive straight toward them, only to pull out of it just above their heads. Finally, she gains speed before the camera cuts to ground level and a sudden blast of brilliant light washes over the audience. More cheering; the Wonderbolts’ mouths drop open.*)

**\* Rainbow:** The ponies would go wild! (*She descends to ground level before the trio.*) The Wonderbolts would insist that my signature moves be incorporated into their routine.

(*She shakes hooves with the stallion on the end of this. Close-up of her broadly grinning face.*)

**\* Rainbow:** And then…

(*A dissolve, and she is suited up as a member of the team. Zoom out to show her flying in formation, with a rainbow-striped contrail instead of the clouds and lightning left by the others.*)

**\* Rainbow:** …welcome me as their newest member.

(*One last pass for the crowd, and the view does a WD back to her.*)

**Rainbow:** Don’t you see, Twilight? (*hovering*) This could be my one chance to show ’em my stuff! You gotta take me!

**Applejack:** (*pulling her back, tail in teeth*) Hold on just one pony-pickin’ minute here! (*Spit it out.*) I asked for that ticket first.

**Rainbow:** So? That doesn’t mean you own it.

**Applejack:** Oh, yeah? Well, I challenge you to a hoof-rassle. Winner gets the ticket.

(*At a nearby stump, they lock left forelegs and go to it—the pony equivalent of arm-wrestling. The contest remains deadlocked for a few seconds before Twilight pops up and shoves them apart.*)

**Twilight:** Girls! These are *my* tickets. *I’ll* decide who gets it, thank you very much. (*Pan to the other two as she continues.*) Whoever has the best reason to go should get the ticket, don’t you think?

(*Each speaker moves forward in turn.*)

**Applejack:** Drummin’ up business for the farm?

**Rainbow:** A chance to audition for the Wonderbolts?

**Applejack:** Money to fix Granny’s hip!

**Rainbow:** Living the dream!

(*Back to Twilight, who starts to realize what she has gotten herself into.*)

**Twilight:** Oh, my. Those are all pretty good reasons, aren’t they?

(*Her empty stomach speaks up again.*)

**Twilight:** (*laughing nervously*) Listen to that. I am starving. (*backing off*) I don’t know about you, but I can’t make important decisions on an empty stomach. (*as Spike hops on her back*) So I’ll, uh, think about it over lunch and get back to you two. Okay?

(*She heads off as she finishes, leaving two dejected ponies in her wake.*)

**Applejack, Rainbow:** Okay.

(*They trade a furious glare and resume their hoof-wrestling match. Wipe to a street in Ponyville, where Twilight is taking her time with a stroll.*)

**Spike:** So who are you gonna give the ticket to, Twilight?

**Twilight:** I don’t know, Spike, but I *really* can’t think straight when I’m hungry.

(*They pass a door surrounded by architectural details that would be right at home on a life-sized gingerbread house, including a candy-striped column on either side and iced-gingerbread fences by the flowerbeds.*)

**Twilight:** So where should we eat?

(*The top half of the front door bursts open and Pinkie Pie rockets out through it for an impressive flying tackle. Dust clouds clear to reveal one supine unicorn and one prone earth pony, mixed up with an unconscious baby dragon as the two gold tickets flutter to the ground. They land on Pinkie’s nose, startling her awake with a scream.*)

**Pinkie:** (*zipping back and forth*) Bats! Bats on my face! Heeeelp!

(*She calms down enough to get a look at the “bats.”*)

**Pinkie:** Wait! (*Close-up of the tickets; she continues o.s.*) These aren’t…

(*Back to her, eyes now filled with stars as more whirl behind her.*)

**Pinkie:** …tickets to the Grand Galloping Gala?!?

(*WD to her, zipping about on the confetti-and-streamer-strewn palace grounds.*)

**\* Pinkie:** It’s the most amazing, incredible, tremendous, super-fun, wonderful, terrifically humongous party in all of Equestria! I’ve always, always, *always* wanted to go!

***Light calliope melody, brisk 3 (G major)***

(*Now she hops against a background of assorted sweets, hearts, and balloons, in addition to the confetti and streamers.*)

**\* Pinkie:** Oh, the Grand Galloping Gala is the best place for me

Oh, the Grand Galloping Gala is the best place for me

Hip hip hooray, it’s the best place for me

For Pinkie

(*spoken*) With decorations like streamers and fairy light and pinwheels and piñatas and pincushions! With goodies like sugar cubes and sugar canes and sundaes and sunbeams and sarsaparilla! And I get to play my favoritest of favorite fantabulous games, like Pin the Tail on the Pony!

(*During the spoken interlude, she takes in more of the scenery and swings a club in her teeth to shatter a piñata, then hops over to a table loaded with the snacks she has named. The sunbeams are represented by a sun-shaped piñata hanging over the table. Finally she plays the game, blindfolded and trying to pin a paper tail to the right spot on a pony drawing. When she pulls the blindfold down, she is surprised to find her own tail stuck to the wall and the paper one attached to her rump. This little mishap corrects itself in the next shot.*)

(*As the singing resumes, Pinkie sees her distorted reflection in a funhouse mirror—which stays put and waves when she gallops off—then leaps into a photo booth to get several crazy pictures taken. Her next stop, with a clown filling helium balloons, gets her a big enough bunch tied to her midsection to float her up among the shower of treats and party favors.*)

**\* Pinkie:** Oh, the Grand Galloping Gala is the best place for me

Oh, the Grand Galloping Gala is the best place for me

’Cause it’s the most gala-rific, superly terrific gala ever

In the whole galaxy

Whee!

***Song ends***

(*WD back to the street; Pinkie hops around a properly befuddled Twilight.*)

**Pinkie:** Oh, thank you, Twilight! It’s the most wonderful-est gift ever!

(*The two pairs of eyes and up a fraction of an inch apart when she stops, but Twilight soon backs off a bit. As she speaks, cut to the tickets, which Spike gathers up.*)

**Twilight:** Um, actually…

(*A sharp gasp from o.s. startles him; zoom out to show Rarity looking over his shoulder.*)

**Rarity:** Are these what I think they are?

**Twilight:** Uh…

**Pinkie:** (*jumping in place*) Yes, yes, yes! Twilight’s taking me to the Grand Galloping Gala in Canterlot!

**Rarity:** (*gasping softly*) The Gala? I design ensembles for the Gala every year, but I’ve never had the opportunity to attend. Oh, the society, the culture, the glamour! (*toying with her mane*) It’s where I truly belong, and where I’m destined to meet…*him!*

**Pinkie:** Him! (*Puzzled looks from her and Twilight.*) Who?

**Rarity:** (*dreamily*) Him.

(*WD to a broad violet curtain/sash strung between two marble columns on the palace grounds. The view is ringed with white, marking it even more clearly as a fantasy than the three preceding sequences, and the action occurs in a series of dissolves from one freeze-frame to the next. The cloth lifts to expose Rarity; other party-goers turn toward her, surprised.*)

**\* Rarity:** I would stroll through the Gala, and everyone would wonder, “Who *is* that mysterious mare?”

(*Ground-level view of her hooves, shifting up to expose the rest of her; now she wears an ornate, gold-colored dress with roses at the neckline. She tosses her head coquettishly.*)

**\* Rarity:** They would never guess that I was just a simple pony from little old Ponyville.

(*The throne room: Celestia’s seat of power rests atop a three-level dais, with fountains set in the lowest level on either side and spilling into recessed pools in the floor. The red carpet leading up the center is flanked by planters filled with flowers, and two stoic white pegasus stallions in gold armor are on sentry duty as the majestic mare stands on the topmost level. Tapestries and stained-glass windows line the violet walls, which lighten in hue toward the floor. Rarity approaches the throne and kneels, and Celestia moves aside to expose a white unicorn stallion behind her. He wears black tuxedo lapels with a boutonniere and a blue bow tie over his light gray dress shirt front, his mane and tail are dark blond, and his cutie mark is an eight-point compass rose. This individual looks every bit the future ruler of Equestria. When he tosses his head and opens his eyes, they are seen to be the palest blue.*)

**\* Rarity:** Why, I would cause such a sensation that I would be invited for an audience with Princess Celestia herself. And the Princess would be so taken with the style and elegance that she would introduce me to *him*, her nephew.

(*Her eyes pop as he flashes a dazzling smile. They touch horns and foreheads, then share a dance on a ballroom floor that has been cleared for them as Celestia and the party-goers watch. Next he kneels before her, revealing a diamond ring on his horn; once she recovers from the shock of seeing it, her eyes pop even wider as she reacts ecstatically.*)

**\* Rarity:** The most handsome, eligible unicorn stallion in Canterlot! Our eyes would meet, our hearts would melt, our courtship would be magnificent. He would ask for my hoof in marriage, and of course I would say *YES!!*

(*A chapel altar, where the groom waits before a packed house. The guests turn toward the door, where Rarity enters in a gold-trimmed white gown whose train stretches nearly half the entire length of the aisle. She has added flowers to her mane. The two touch horns again when she reaches the altar.*)

**\* Rarity:** We would have a royal wedding befitting a princess, which is… (*giggle*) …what I would become upon marrying *him!* The stallion of my dreams.

(*WD to Rarity and Twilight in the street.*)

**Rarity:** Twilight! I simply cannot believe you would invite Pinkie Pie so she can… (*disdainfully*) …party… (*normal tone*) …and prevent me from meeting my true love! How could you? (*turning away*) Hmph!

(*Cut to some distance behind Spike, at ground level, and zoom in quickly. The camera motion makes it appear to be hopping, and the reason for this becomes clear when a small white male rabbit zips out and snatches the tickets out of Spike’s hand. He does a quick U-turn.*)

**Spike:** (*from o.s.*) Hey!

(*The rabbit scampers up a long pink tail, along a yellow back, and stops on top of Fluttershy’s head to hold the tickets before her eyes. She gasps at the sight.*)

**Fluttershy:** Angel, these are perfect. (*Back to Twilight, Pinkie—jumping in place—and Rarity.*)

**Twilight:** Uh, listen, guys. I haven’t decided who to give the extra ticket to.

**Pinkie** (*irritated*), **Rarity** (*eagerly*)**:** You haven’t?!?

**Fluttershy:** (*from o.s.*) Um…excuse me.

(*They look behind themselves and find Fluttershy and Angel, the rabbit, close by; the latter is back on the ground and holds the tickets.*)

**Fluttershy:** Twilight, I would just like to ask…I mean, if it would be all right…if you haven’t given it to someone else…

**Rarity:** (*disbelieving*) You? *You* want to go to the Gala?

**Fluttershy:** Oh…no. (*Angel kicks her leg; she thinks again.*) I—I mean, yes…or, actually, kind of. You see…

(*WD to her in a lush garden on the palace grounds. She flies along a path lined by flowering shrubs and trees loaded with birdhouses.*)

**\* Fluttershy:** …it’s not so much the Grand Galloping Gala, as it is the wondrous private gated garden that surrounds the dance. The flowers are said to be the most beautiful and fragrant in all of Equestria.

(*She stops at a flower and buries her face in it to inhale its scent, then flies to another clump of trees.*)

**\* Fluttershy:** For the night of the Gala, and that night alone, will they all be in bloom. And that’s just the flora! Don’t get me started on the fauna.

(*A swarm of butterflies zips past; behind them, the view wipes to show her looking happily at the following birds as she names them. The first three jays she names land on her head, the two birds after them on her back.*)

**\* Fluttershy:** There’s loons and toucans and bitterns, oh my! Hummingbirds that can really hum, and buzzards that can really buzz! White-bluejays, and redjays and greenjays, pinkjays and pink flamingos!

(*This last scares the others away and lets off a squawk before the view undergoes a WD back to the street. Fluttershy has gathered Angel into her front hooves and is hovering just in front of Twilight.*)

**Twilight:** Gee, Fluttershy, it sounds…beautiful?

**Rainbow:** (*from o.s.*) Wait just a minute! (*Quick pan to her, perched on a roof.*)

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) Rainbow Dash! (*Back to her.*) Were you following me? (*Rainbow lands.*)

**Rainbow:** No—I mean, yes—I mean, maybe—look, it doesn’t matter! I couldn’t risk a goody-four-shoes like you giving that ticket away to just anybody. (*Zoom out; Applejack walks up.*)

**Applejack:** Wait just another minute!

**Twilight:** Applejack! Were you following me too?

**Applejack:** No, I was followin’… (*pointing at Rainbow*) …*this* one, to make sure she didn’t try any funny business! Still tryin’ to take my ticket.

**Rainbow:** (*floating off ground*) *Your* ticket?! (*Pinkie approaches.*)

**Pinkie:** But Twilight’s taking *me!*

(*Twilight finds herself on the wrong end of a quintuple verbal fusillade when Fluttershy and Rarity join in on the argument. Zoom in slowly on the hapless unicorn as she huddles under the onslaught, then snap to black.*)

Act Two

(*Opening shot: fade in to Twilight against a pink background, in the bottom center portion of the screen. The remaining area is quickly tiled in with squares that contain the faces of the other five ponies, who are still directing their abuse her way. She endures for several seconds, then loses her grip.*)

**Twilight:** QUIET!!

(*The Ponyville street backdrop restores itself, and the five tiles slide away to frame the whole group again. Everyone clams up except for Pinkie.*)

**Pinkie:** And then I said, “Oatmeal? Are you craz—”

(*She finally cuts herself off when Twilight glares at her.*)

**Pinkie:** Oh.

**Twilight:** Girls, there’s no use in arguing.

**Rarity:** But, Twili— (*Twilight throws out a foreleg to back her off.*)

**Twilight:** This is my decision, and I’m gonna make it on my own. And I certainly can’t think straight with all this noise!

(*Her still-empty gut voices its own dissatisfaction.*)

**Twilight:** Not to mention hunger. Now go on! Shoo!

(*The others disperse with much reluctant grumbling.*)

**Twilight:** (*calling after them*) And don’t worry! I’ll figure this out! (*softly, to herself*) Somehow.

(*Wipe to the exterior of a thatched-roof building with several giant, flat-topped mushroom tables out front and signs at the door and walk showing clover blossoms. The tables have piles of hay for seats. The presence of a very properly-dressed, off-white earth pony stallion at one table marks this establishment as a café or restaurant, which is doing a brisk business. Navy blue mane and tail, white dinner-jacket lapels and shirt front, red bow tie, pencil-thin mustache, white spats. Twilight and Spike are seated at a table farther back; he reads a menu while she slumps over the tabletop. Zoom in on them.*)

**Twilight:** (*wearily*) Ah, Spike… (*Close-up; a vase of flowers stands between them.*) …what am I gonna do? (*levitating a flower*) All five of my best friends have really good reasons to go to the Gala. (*pulling one petal at a time*) Applejack…or Rainbow Dash…

(*Close-up of the falling petals; more soon join them.*)

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) Pinkie Pie or Fluttershy, Rarity… (*Zoom out to frame her.*) …oh, who should go with me?

(*Yet another grumble from down south; her face falls, and she sticks out her tongue to round up the petals and eat them. A male, French-accented voice catches her by surprise.*)

**Male voice:** Have you made your decision?

(*A longer shot reveals that the speaker is the waiter, Horte Cuisine.*)

**Twilight:** I CAN’T DECIDE!! (*The other diners stare at her.*)

**Spike:** (*pointing to menu*) Twilight, he just wants to take your order.

**Twilight:** (*sheepishly*) Oh. I would love a daffodil and daisy sandwich.

(*Horte’s cutie mark—a covered serving dish—and gray-brown eyes can now be seen.*)

**Spike:** Do you have any rubies? (*Funny look from Horte.*) No? (*tossing menu over shoulder*) Okay. I’ll have the hay fries—extra crispy. (*Horte leaves them.*)

**Twilight:** What do you think, Spike?

**Spike:** I think we have to try another restaurant. I mean, I like grass just fine, but would it hurt anybody to offer some gemstones?

**Twilight:** I mean, about the Gala and the ticket and who I should take!

**Spike:** Oh. You’re still on that? (*Twilight leans angrily over the table, knocking the vase away.*)

**Twilight:** Spike, listen! (*settling back down*) How do I choose? And when I do choose, will the other four be mad at me?

(*Her image recedes into the bottom center as the background fades to pale blue.*)

**Twilight:** I mean, I could give up my ticket and give away two, but that would still leave three disappointed ponies. What if I—

(*During this line, the following visuals appear. One, a single ticket pops into view, then disappears and is replaced by two. These wink out in turn, and the faces of Pinkie, Rainbow, and Rarity appear from left to right. The first two are merely sad, while the third is crying her eyes out. Finally, all three vanish and the café background restores itself just in time for her sandwich to be set before her.*)

**Horte:** (*from o.s.*) Ah, your food. (*Camera shift; he has also served Spike, who is digging in.*)

**Twilight:** Oh, thank you. This looks *so* good. (*as he leaves*) I’m sure everything will be much clearer once I eat.

(*She levitates the sandwich toward her mouth, but a small stampede past the table gets her attention first.*)

**Horte:** (*from o.s.*) Um, madame? (*Cut to him, just inside the front door.*) Are you going to eat your food in the rain?

**Twilight:** It’s not raining.

(*Zoom out quickly to show that her table now sits in a spot of tranquil clear sky at the heart of an instant thunderstorm.*)

**Twilight:** (*looking up*) What’s going on?

(*Tilt up quickly to the clouds; Rainbow cheerfully pokes her head through a hole in them.*)

**Rainbow:** Hi there, best friend forever I’ve ever ever had! Enjoying the sunny weather?

**Twilight:** (*suspiciously*) Rainbow Dash, what are you doing?

**Rainbow:** (*innocently*) What do you mean? I just saw the smartest, most generous pony about to get rained on— (*Back to Twilight, not impressed; she continues o.s.*) —so I thought I’d kick a hole in the clouds to keep her dry so she could dine in peace. That’s all. (*Long shot of the two.*)

**Twilight:** Rainbow, you’re not trying to get extra consideration for the extra ticket by doing me extra-special favors— (*Close-up.*) —are you?

(*The camera now shifts to frame Rainbow, her head illuminated by the sun behind her as if she were wearing a halo.*)

**Rainbow:** Me? No, no, no, of course not.

**Twilight:** Uh-huh.

**Rainbow:** Seriously, I’d do it for anypony.

(*Or not, judging from the customers bolting for cover from the downpour. Rainbow swallows hard and manages a nervous little laugh at having been caught out.*)

**Rainbow:** Uh…

**Twilight:** (*firmly*) Rainbow, I am not comfortable accepting unwanted favors. (*Back to Rainbow; she continues o.s.*) So I’d appreciate it if you’d close up that rain cloud right now. (*Groan from Rainbow.*)

**Rainbow:** Fine!

(*She zips the hole closed, sealing herself off from view.*)

**Twilight:** That’s better.

(*The sandwich levitates up toward her mouth again—but before she can take a bite, the rain turns both it and her mane into a waterlogged shambles. One ear droops and she growls to herself as the camera pans to Spike, who stifles a laugh until Rarity arrives on the scene. The white unicorn has donned a saddle with an ornate umbrella attached to keep herself dry.*)

**Rarity:** Twilight! It’s raining.

**Twilight:** (*deadpan*) No. Really?

**Rarity:** (*yanking her away*) Come with me before you catch a cold!

(*Wipe to the exterior of the Carousel Boutique, then cut to Twilight in the ground-floor showroom. She shakes herself dry, then looks over her shoulder and gives an uneasy little laugh.*)

**Twilight:** Oops.

(*A pan in that direction reveals the reason: she has thoroughly drenched Rarity, whose mane and tail have gone limp. The latter has done away with the umbrella saddle.*)

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) Sorry.

**Rarity:** (*forcing a smile*) Oh, no. It’s quite all right. (*Back to Twilight; she slides up to nuzzle her shoulder on the following.*) After all, we are…the best of friends, are we not?

(*Her coiffure has dried out in this shot. Now she takes Twilight’s forelegs in her front hooves.*)

**Rarity:** And you know what the best of friends do. (*She backs up.*)

**Twilight:** Uh… (*Zoom out; Spike is behind her.*)

**Rarity:** (*singsong*) Makeover!

(*In a blink, she has zipped a privacy screen in front of all three. Dust puffs up from behind it as the camera shakes to the sound of Rarity’s high-speed overhauling.*)

**Twilight:** (*from behind screen*) Oof!…Rarity!…Ow!…This really isn’t fixing it…I mean, thank you, but… (*strained*) …oh, that’s too tight!

(*Ground level. The screen is whisked away to expose Twilight’s hooves, and the camera tilts up slowly to her new finery: a blue-green saddle trimmed in blue, with yellow tassels where the stirrups would normally hang, and a blue collar/necklace trimmed with a strand of rainbow-colored beads. The recipient of this outfit eyes it with great trepidation.*)

**Rarity:** (*from o.s.*) There! Oh, you’re simply *darling!*

**Twilight:** Uh… (*smiling*) …yeah, it is kinda pretty, isn’t it?

(*Quick pan to Spike, who makes as if to heave his guts at the sight; Rarity pops over to him next, jostling him so that he briefly shoves his whole hand down his throat.*)

**Rarity:** And *you!* Oh, Spike, I have a dandy little outfit for the dashing gent.

(*He tries to make a break for it as she whips the screen out again, but too late; she drags him back and the dust flies again.*)

**Spike:** (*from behind screen*) Ow…oh…hey…oh…watch it…whoa!

(*When the screen slides back this time, the camera tilts up from ground level to show him decked out in a blue ensemble with a light green cummerbund that would fit right in for Ponyville’s next production of Little Lord Fauntleroy. A curly blond wig covers his head spines. Seeing the end result, he tries to cover himself.*)

**Twilight:** (*from o.s,*) Oh, Spike… (*Camera shift to frame all three; Rarity plunks a broad plumed hat on his head.*)

**Rarity:** Now you just need a hat.

**Spike:** Bleah! I told you, I don’t want any part of this girly Gala gunk. See you back at the library.

(*He bails out fast enough to leave the new clothing floating to the ground. Rarity forces a laugh, then dismisses him with a wave of her hoof.*)

**Rarity:** Oh, who needs him anyway? (*She pulls a mirror up, showing Twilight’s reflection, and backs o.s.*) This is all about you— (*Twilight admires herself.*) —and how fabulous you’ll look at the Grand Galloping Gala.

**Twilight:** (*snapping back*) Wait. The Grand—

(*Big gasp from the o.s. designer; cut to her, approaching a pony mannequin in an identical saddle/collar rig.*)

**Rarity:** And oh, my goodness, what a coincidence. I happen to have an ensemble of my own that matches yours to a T. (*The mirror; her reflection throws a hoof around Twilight’s shoulders.*) We would be the belles of the ball, you and I. Everyone would be clamoring for our attention. (*getting carried away; zoom in as she gets Twilight in a headlock*) All eyes would be on us, and then everyone would finally know. The most beautiful, most talented, most sophisticated pony in all of Equestria… (*Extreme close-up of her eyes, which open to show stars.*) …is Rarity the unicorn!

(*Longer shot of the pair. She has let go of Twilight, who has wound up in a rather annoyed half-crouch, and realizes that her fantasy has gone just a bit overboard.*)

**Rarity:** (*laughing nervously, patting Twilight’s head*) And Twilight Sparkle, of course.

**Twilight:** (*straightening up*) I see what’s going on. (*Rarity backs up.*) You’re just buttering me up so I give you the extra ticket.

(*Close-up of the worried white unicorn.*)

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) Well, it’s not gonna work! (*Rarity ducks as the saddle is thrown at her.*) You’re going to have to wait for my decision just like everyone else!

(*On the end of this, the beads land on her horn. Back to Twilight, on her way out the door.*)

**Twilight:** Now, if you’ll excuse me, I’ve been trying all day just to get some lunch! (*Applejack pokes her head in.*)

**Applejack:** Did somepony say lunch?

(*The famished unicorn is unceremoniously yanked out the door to land flat on the grass. The thunderstorm that ruined her lunch has stopped. When she gets upright again, her jaw drops. Cut to her perspective of the reason: a cart piled high with all manner of apple treats, even more food than was brought out during the Apple family brunch two episodes earlier. Tilt slowly up to the top of the mass.*)

**Twilight:** You’ve got to be kidding me! (*Applejack starts pointing out the items.*)

**Applejack:** I got apple pie, apple fritters, apple tarts…

(*Cut to the dumbstruck Twilight, whose irises and pupils grow to nearly fill her eye sockets as if her empty stomach were in control of them now.*)

**Applejack:** (*from o.s.*) …apple dumplin’s, apple crisp, apple crumblers, aaand… (*holding up a slice of dessert on a plate*) …apple brown betty!

(*Cut to both ponies; Applejack has the last item balanced on her head.*)

**Applejack:** Uh, the dessert, not my auntie. What do you say there, best friend? (*Stomach growl; zoom in on Twilight.*) Is that a yes?

(*Eyebrows lower resolutely over the purple irises for a tense moment.*)

**Twilight:** No! *No!* (*Applejack recoils, the plate falling off her head.*) I don’t know who I’m giving the ticket to, and all these favors aren’t making it any easier to decide. In fact, I’m less sure now than I was this morning! (*She gallops off with a loud, frustrated groan.*)

**Applejack:** So that’s a maybe?

(*Snap to black.*)

Act Three

(*Opening shot: fade in to the exterior of the library. Twilight walks into view toward the front door with another groan.*)

**Twilight:** I never thought being showered with favors would be so aggravating!

(*Her perspective of the door, which opens under her magic to reveal Fluttershy and several of her animal friends cleaning up the place. The yellow pegasus vocalizes the first phrases of the original My Little Pony jingle/theme as she flits from shelf to shelf. Back to Twilight, who voices a disheartened little gasp.*)

**Twilight:** Fluttershy, not you too!

**Fluttershy:** Oh…well, hello, Twilight. I hope you don’t mind, but we’re all doing a little spring cleaning for you.

**Twilight:** (*dryly*) It’s summer.

**Fluttershy:** Oh…well, better late than never, right? (*Blush; ingratiating smile.*) It was Angel’s idea.

(*The white bunny has donned a chef’s hat and is tossing a salad with a happy squeak and wave.*)

**Twilight:** You’re not doing this for the ticket, are you?

**Fluttershy:** (*descending to floor*) Oh, no. I’m doing this because you’re my very best friend. Right, Angel?

(*Cut to Angel, who gives her a disgusted look.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*from o.s.*) Oh. (*Back to her.*) Yes. We *are* just doing this for the ticket.

(*Angel proffers the salad, Twilight’s stomach grumbling in response; her words come with enough force to blow food and chef backward.*)

**Twilight:** No, no, NO! (*heading for door, magically opening it*) Well, this was all very nice of you and Angel, but I am not accepting any extra favors until I’ve made my final decision. (*pointing out*) So I’m going to have to ask you to leave.

(*A burst of confetti and streamers comes flying in.*)

**Pinkie, Crowd:** (*from outside*) SURPRISE!!

***Cheerful melody, fast 4 (E flat major)***

(*Party noisemaker horns are blown at Twilight, and the pink goofball reaches in to yank her bodily onto the lawn. Outside, the group repeatedly tosses her upward during the following; each of her spoken lines is in midair.*)

**Pinkie:** Twilight is my bestest friend, whoopee, whoopee

**Twilight:** Pinkie…

**Pinkie:** The cutest, smartest, all-around best pony, pony

**Twilight:** Pinkie…

**Pinkie:** I bet if I throw a super-duper fun party, party

**Twilight:** Pinkie!

**Pinkie:** (*hopping around*) She’ll give her extra ticket to the Gala to me

***Song ends***

**Twilight:** *PIIINKIIIEEE!!*

(*Pinkie finally shuts up as all the spectators back off—leaving Twilight to hit the ground on her back.*)

**Pinkie:** (*innocently*) Yes, Twilight? (*She flutters her eyelashes.*)

**Twilight:** (*sitting up*) At least the other ponies *tried* to be subtle about the ticket! (*Zoom out slowly to frame all the ponies.*)

**Mare 1:** Wait. What ticket? What Gala?

**Pinkie:** Oh, you didn’t know? (*Longer shot; the crowd grows.*) Twilight has an extra ticket to the Grand Galloping Gala!

(*Close-up of the holder of said ticket, whose eyes show that she has just hit panic mode.*)

**Crowd:** (*from o.s.*) The Grand Galloping Gala?!? (*Longer shot.*)

**Various:** Have I ever told you how much I love your mane? (*Spike runs by, pulling her away.*) I’ll wash your dishes!

(*They stop short, finding their retreat blocked by a vivid pink earth pony mare with a curly, light green mane and tail. She has darker green eyes and a cutie mark of two daisies, and she holds a bunch of these flowers out to Twilight. This pony will later be identified as Daisy.*)

**Daisy:** Would you like any help with your gardening? (*Turn around; another has cut them off.*)

**Mare 2:** (*holding up carrots*) I have a cartload of extra carrots. (*The crowd closes in; shouting offers; Spike climbs on Twilight’s back.*)

**Spike:** What are we gonna do?

**Twilight:** We’re…gonna…*RUUUNNN!!*

(*On that last word, she leaps out of the crowd, with him clinging to her tail, and bugs out. As the ticket-seekers give chase, she races past the door from which Pinkie tackled her in Act One. It is attached to a building that is otherwise unremarkable except for the previously noted details and the fact that its entire roof appears to be made of iced gingerbread. A sign marked with a cupcake hangs near one window, and a water pump and trough stand at the opposite side. This is Sugarcube Corner. The massed ponies charge by, whereupon she and Spike peek out from behind Applejack’s cart of goodies. All clear until a pony in the nearest building—a flower/herb shop, judging from the flower-marked sign over the door—opens the door and sees them; then Daisy pops up from inside the cart, spooking Twilight and Spike into another escape.*)

(*As the stampede barrels across Ponyville, one of its number stumbles and falls by the wayside—Carrot Top. Light yellow earth pony mare, green eyes, curly deep orange mane/tail, cutie mark showing a bunch of carrots. The others pass a figure in a dress and bonnet, pushing a baby carriage. The exposed tail and legs give it away as Twilight, but the others pay no mind. It is now sometime in the late afternoon. After they have gone, she pokes her head out and Spike is revealed to be standing in for the “baby”—complete with bonnet and pacifier. Carrot catches sight of the pair and re-directs the mob back toward them; he and Twilight make tracks, ditching their getups, and take cover by clinging to the underside of a bridge over the stream bordering Ponyville. As the dragon wipes his brow in relief, he loses his hold and falls into the water.*)

(*Close-up of a mannequin dressed in a Santa Claus hat and matching saddle trimmed with jingle bells; zoom out to show it standing in a shop window. Twilight is next to it, dressed as a clown complete with rainbow-striped wig and rubber nose, and next to her is Spike as a bewigged hula dancer. They hold their pose as the crowd thunders past, then lose the disguises and exit the premises—a costume shop—only to find themselves cornered at last.*)

(*The ponies make their inexorable advance, eagerly shouting offers for the ticket, and Twilight’s horn flares white as she grits her teeth to the breaking point. A flash of blinding light, and she and Spike have disappeared thanks to her teleportation, leaving a crush of extremely confused would-be Gala guests. Cut to inside the library’s reading room; a second flash deposits the pair here, both dizzy and Spike singed from the trip.*)

**Spike:** Warn me next time you’re gonna do that! (*He shakes clean; Twilight comes around.*)

**Twilight:** I didn’t even know it was gonna happen! Now, quick! Lock the doors!

(*Outside, night has fallen. She blows out the lantern at one window, Spike slams the front door, and all the lights in the windows are switched off. This shot reveals a detail of the building that was not visible in previous shots: an observatory platform attached to the topmost limb. Inside, she and Spike lean wearily against each other.*)

**Twilight:** Phew.

(*The lights come on, startling them; quick pan to the reason—her five friends have gathered in a loft above the bookshelves and are waiting expectantly. Twilight screams.*)

**Twilight:** I can’t decide, I just can’t decide! It’s important to all of you and I just can’t stand to disappoint any of you, and giving me gifts and doing me favors won’t make any difference— (*Cut to the others, now chastened; she continues o.s.*) —because you’re all my friends, and I want to make you all happy— (*Back to her and Spike*.) —and I can’t! I just can’t!

(*She winds up in a huddle on the floor, forelegs wrapped around head, as Applejack walks up.*)

**Applejack:** Twilight, sugar, I—I didn’t mean to put so much pressure on you. And if it helps, I don’t want the ticket anymore. You can give it to somepony else. I won’t feel bad, I promise. (*Fluttershy flies down to them.*)

**Fluttershy:** Me too. I feel just awful that I made *you* feel so awful. (*Pinkie and Rarity are still in the loft.*)

**Pinkie:** And me too. It’s no fun upsetting your friends.

**Rarity:** Twilight, it was unfair of me to try to force you as I did.

**Rainbow:** (*hovering in midair*) YES! That means the ticket is mine! (*laughing, singing*) I got the ticket, I got the ticket—

(*She cuts herself off and shifts gears after getting a good look at the quartet on the reading room floor, all of whom are giving her slightly dirty looks.*)

**Rainbow:** You know, I haven’t perfected my signature moves for the Wonderbolts anyway. I don’t need that ticket either.

**Applejack:** We all got so gung-ho about goin’ to the Gala— (*Close-up of Twilight; she continues o.s.*) —that we couldn’t see how *un*-gung-ho we were makin’ you. (*Twilight smiles.*)

**All ponies but Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) We’re sorry, Twilight.

**Twilight:** Spike, take down a note.

(*Cut to him, whipping out quill and blank scroll to take her dictation, and pan to frame her standing up again.*)

**Twilight:** “Dear Princess Celestia…” (*levitating both tickets*) “I’ve learned that one of the joys of friendship is sharing your blessings.”

(*The camera follows the tickets as they float past the others, putting her o.s.*)

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) “But when there’s not enough blessings to go around, having more than your friends can make you feel pretty awful.” (*They reach Spike and float down to the scroll.*) “So, though I appreciate the invitation…” (*They tuck themselves in.*) “…I will be returning both tickets to the Grand Galloping Gala.” (*Back to her.*)

**Others:** WHAT?!?!?

**Twilight:** If my friends can’t all go— (*turning to them*) —I don’t want to go either.

**Applejack:** (*gasping softly, as Rainbow floats down*) Twilight, you don’t have to do that.

**Twilight:** Nope, I’ve made up my mind. Spike, you can send the letter now.

(*He opens the nearest window and burns the scroll to get it gone. Zoom out to frame Fluttershy in the foreground.*)

**Fluttershy:** Now you won’t get to go to the Gala either.

**Twilight:** It’s okay, girls. I couldn’t possibly enjoy myself without my best friends there with me. (*They gather around her, laughing gently.*) So I would rather not go at all.

(*For the fourth time this episode, Spike mimes shoving a finger down his throat—and for the third time, he starts trying to choke back a real heave.*)

**Applejack:** (*irritated*) Well, wallop my withers, Spike. (*crossing to him*) Isn’t that just like a boy—can’t handle the least bit of sentiment.

(*The fiery belch that finally surfaces has enough kick to throw him back o.s.; Applejack ducks so fast that it shoots between her head and her hat, which hangs in midair.*)

**Applejack:** Whoa, Nelly! (*It solidifies into…*)

**Twilight:** A letter from the Princess? (*Cut to Spike, who takes it; she continues o.s.*) That was fast. (*He opens it.*)

**Spike:** (*reading*) “My faithful student Twilight: Why didn’t you just say so in the first place?”

(*Six gold tickets pop out of the parchment; close-up of his hand, which holds them fanned out like a poker hand.*)

**Spike:** (*from o.s.*) Six tickets to the Grand Galloping Gala! (*Collective gasp cut to frame all six ponies.*)

**Twilight:** Now we can all go!

(*Jubilation; Rarity hears Twilight’s growling gut and sheepish little laugh.*)

**Rarity:** Allow us to treat you to dinner.

(*The ponies exit one by one, the tickets floating out of Spike’s hand in time due to Twilight’s magic.*)

**Rainbow:** (*from o.s.*)What a great way to apologize! (*She leaves on the end of this.*)

**Pinkie:** And to celebrate! (*now outside*) Come on, everyone! The cupcakes are on me!

(*As Applejack brings up the rear, Spike holds back the last ticket only to have it whisked out of his hand.*)

**Spike:** (*dejectedly*) How come I don’t get a ticket to the Gala?

(*He starts to retch again; cut to outside. The belch rumbles out and the green flare spills from the door and windows for a moment. Back to him, now holding an unfurled scroll.*)

**Spike:** (*reading*) “And one for you, Spike.”

(*One ticket pops up and his eyes do likewise. Outside, he runs from the library laughing but stops short at the sight of Applejack directing a knowing little smile his way. Her ticket is still floating above her head. Despite all his protestations, he genuinely wants a piece of this action.*)

**Spike:** Huh? (*walking slowly by*) I mean, gross! I have to go too?

(*After getting past and eyeing her nervously, he breaks into a laughing run and she trots after him, chuckling softly. Tilt up to frame Canterlot in the distant, starlit high altitudes, then fade to black.*)