**OVER A BARREL**

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Prologue

(*Opening shot: fade in to a stretch of railroad tracks running through a sun-baked desert landscape during the day. A train, pulled by a team of ponies, rumbles across the screen, and a close-up of the locomotive picks out its wheels, steam whistle, and motive power. This last takes the form of four earth pony stallions, all wearing striped engineer’s caps and red bandanas around their necks. The focus shifts to the caboose; through its closed window, a silhouette can be seen reading. Zoom in slowly to the sound of its voice, whose tone suggests a bedtime story.*)

**Applejack:** And that’s when the yellow birdie thought to himself, “Hmm. My favorite little tree isn’t such a little tree anymore.”

(*Inside, she is reading the story to something large and brown, tucked into a bed under an apple-patterned blanket.*)

**Applejack:** So she sang her song big and strong, and they all lived in that great big tree happily ever after. The end.

(*She puts the book away and tugs the blanket up a bit farther. Pan to the caboose door, where a most indignant Rarity is standing.*)

**Rarity:** Applejack! Were you reading a bedtime story to—

(*The next cut, to Applejack’s end of the car, frames the bed and its occupant fully. The former is hung with curtains that can be closed to block the light; the latter is…*)

**Rarity:** (*from o.s.*) —an apple tree?

**Applejack:** Heh… (*Back to Rarity; she continues o.s.*) …uh… (*To her; Rarity approaches.*) …well, you know, bein’ replanted in a whole new place is very upsettin’ for a tree. (*fluffing its leaves*) And Bloomberg here is one of my favorites.

**Rarity:** No fair, Applejack! You’ve got a luxurious private sleeper car for a tree, while I am crowded and cramped in the same car with all the other ponies!

(*Back to Applejack on the end of this; next Rarity gets in close.*)

**Rarity:** (*whining*) How am I supposed to get my beauty sleep?

**Applejack:** But Bloomberg’s the whole reason we’re makin’ this trip. He needs his rest so we can give him as a gift to my relatives in Appleloosa.

**Rarity:** Hmph! You talk about it as if it’s your baby or something.

**Applejack:** (*needled*) Who you callin’ a baby? Bloomberg’s no baby!

(*In a flurry of hoofsteps, she turns to the bed and snuggles with the dense foliage.*)

**Applejack:** (*baby talk*) Don’t wet wittle Wawity make you all saddy-waddy. Bloomberg’s a big and strong apple tree. Yes he is.

(*Back to the prissy unicorn, whose expression suggests that she might like to throw Applejack from the train.*)

**Applejack:** (*from o.s.*) A-coochie-coochie-coo-coo-coo. (*Cut to frame all three.*)

**Rarity:** It’s wittle Rarity who’s all saddy-waddy.

(*She heads for the door with a frustrated grunt, but Applejack pays no mind whatever. Fade to black.*)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(*Opening shot: fade in to the train still speeding across the desert. It is now nighttime, and the sound of laughter and conversation can be heard from within. Dissolve to the interior of a sleeping car; at the far end, Twilight Sparkle, Fluttershy, Pinkie Pie, and Rainbow Dash have taken two pairs of bunk-style berths. In the foreground, the end of a purple tail in curlers hangs into view, marking Rarity’s upper berth, and a large lump is visible under the blankets in the one beneath her. Zoom in on her tail and cut to her, trying—and failing—to get to sleep with all this hubbub.*)

**Rarity:** (*covering ears, jamming pillow over head*) For crying out loud in the morning!

(*Tilt down to the lower berth; Spike sticks his head out from under the blankets with a groan. The four ponies fall silent when he speaks.*)

**Spike:** Do you guys mind? I was up early fire-roasting those snacks you’re all eating, and I’m pooped!

(*A camera shift during this line frames a box of popcorn that Rainbow has been snacking on.*)

**Rainbow:** Uh, speaking of, some of these popcorn kernels didn’t get popped.

**Spike:** Okay, fine.

(*Back to the blue pegasus; her eyes pop and she ducks down, barely avoiding his blast of green fire. It burns the popcorn to a cinder, leaving a single intact kernel that pops after a moment and ricochets off her face.*)

**Spike:** Good night! (*He stuffs himself back under covers.*)

**Twilight:** Uh…maybe it’s time we all got a little shut-eye. We’ve got a big day ahead of us tomorrow.

(*Pan to Spike’s berth as she puts out the light, darkening the entire car. He is snoring to beat five bands.*)

**Fluttershy, Pinkie, Rainbow:** (*from o.s.*) Awwww…

(*The next eight lines are delivered in whispers.*)

**Rainbow:** (*from o.s.*) Pssst! Pinkie Pie! You asleep yet?

**Pinkie:** (*from o.s.*) No. Are you asleep yet? (*Rainbow sits up, holding a lit candle.*)

**Rainbow:** If I was sleeping, how could I have asked you if you were asleep? (*Pinkie sits up.*)

**Pinkie:** Oh, yeah. (*Giggle.*)

**Rainbow:** When we get to Appleloosa, you think we’ll have to carry that heavy tree all the way from the train to the orchard?

**Pinkie:** What tree? You mean Bloomberg?

**Rainbow:** (*sarcastically*) No. Fluttershy.

**Pinkie:** Fluttershy’s not a tree, silly.

(*Rainbow looks at her askance, finding it hard to believe that she could have missed the snark; now Twilight sits up by the candle. She speaks at normal volume, while the other two keep their voices down.*)

**Twilight:** What’s going on?

**Pinkie:** Rainbow Dash thinks Fluttershy’s a tree.

**Rainbow:** I do not think she’s a tree! I was just—

**Twilight:** Did you *say* she was a tree?

**Rainbow:** No—well, yes—but—not exactly—

**Twilight:** You know she’s not a tree, right?

**Pinkie:** She’s not a tree, Dashie. (*Fluttershy sits up.*)

**Fluttershy:** I’d like to be a tree. (*Spike sits up, in silhouette.*)

**Spike:** Oh, for Pete’s sake!

(*Grabbing his pillow, he jumps out of his berth; stomping little footsteps and a door creak and slam mark his exit from the sleeping car.*)

**Twilight:** Well, *that* was kinda huffy.

**Fluttershy:** (*smiling*) Huffy the magic dragon!

(*The two laugh over the pun, with Pinkie and Rainbow joining in until Rarity’s silhouette sits up.*)

**Rarity:** (*with growing rancor*) Would you all be quiet, NOW!!

(*On this last word, enough of the candle’s glare hits her to pick out the curlers in her mane, the mud mask on her face, and the cucumber slices on her eyes. The half-shadows combine with these details to make one strange and frightening visage, which prompts the other four ponies to yell in fear and blow out the candle, blacking out the screen.*)

(*Snap to a very dimly lit patch of floor. A shaft of light slashes diagonally across the view; tilt up to frame its source—Spike, standing at an open doorway with his pillow.*)

**Spike:** (*whispering*) Bloomberg?

(*He is in the caboose, then, and shuts the door and eases toward the bed in which the tree rests.*)

**Spike:** (*whispering*) Bloomberg!

(*Tossing his pillow up next to the branches, he tucks himself in on a free patch of mattress.*)

**Spike:** (*normal volume*) Sorry, but I tend to snore a bit. Good night.

(*Zoom out from the bed as he settles in with a comfortable sigh, then dissolve to the next morning’s sunrise over the desert. As the sky quickly brightens into morning, the train rumbles past the camera and starts to shake noticeably; cut to Rainbow asleep in her berth. The vibrations throw her to the floor, waking up the other four ponies in the sleeping car; cut to just outside a window as the five gather for a look. Rarity has done away with her beauty accessories. Their collective gasp is accompanied by a zoom out to frame a herd of buffalo charging alongside the train; some of them have Indian-style feathers tucked behind their ears.*)

**Twilight:** A buffalo stampede!

(*Inside again, with assorted murmurings from the group, then cut to a close-up of a few buffalo.*)

**Rarity:** (*from o.s.*) I just *love* their accessories. (*Cut to her and tilt up to Twilight, worried.*)

**Twilight:** They’re getting awfully close to the train.

(*And to its four-horsepower pulling team, as seen briefly in an overhead shot. The lead stallion is first to notice the herd, and first to get rammed from the side; next they hit the sleeping car to bounce its five screaming occupants off the floor and walls.*)

**Rarity:** (*among others’ screams*) I want to…speak to the…mana—

(*Another hit cuts her off mid-rant and bounces them again. In the caboose, though, Spike is sleeping like a baby—dragon, that is—and does not even stir as the entire bed starts to slide back and forth across the tilting floor. Out in front, the lead stallion gets bumped again but hits back this time, knocking his assailant silly for a moment. Inside, Pinkie leaps to a window.*)

**Pinkie:** Ooh, looky! (*Outside it; the others gather.*) Now they’re doing tricks!

(*Zoom out; one buffalo jumps onto the back of another, and a female calf, marked by a feathered headband and a lighter brown tuft of hair above it, races up. A couple of agile leaps put her on top of the double-decker rushers and at the level of the train cars’ roofs. This is Little Strongheart.*)

**Pinkie:** Ooh, ooh, ooh! Now do a backflip!

(*Strongheart jumps onto the nearest roof; inside, the ponies are startled by an impact above their heads—she has landed on their car.*)

**Pinkie:** Or just jump? (*Follow the racing hoofbeats away from the group.*)

**Rainbow:** (*from o.s.*) Hmm. (*Back to her.*) Something tells me this isn’t a circus act.

(*She gets moving. Up on the roof, Strongheart charges from car to car, barely breaking stride at the gaps, before Rainbow plants herself in the way.*)

**Rainbow:** Hey there! (*Strongheart gasps.*) Where you headed in such a hurry?

(*The young buffalo narrows her eyes and gallops on; Rainbow jumps straight up to dodge, then settles back and flies after her. A moment later the two are neck and neck.*)

**Rainbow:** Wow. You’re pretty quick for someone so…bulky. No offense.

(*She zips ahead, prompting a small gasp from Strongheart, and plants herself a few cars ahead.*)

**Rainbow:** I just want to know— (*Strongheart swerves around her.*) —hey!

(*She puts herself in the calf’s path again, this time with a rather shorter temper.*)

**Rainbow:** I’m talking to you!

(*Strongheart launches herself to an impossible height, does a handful of midair somersaults, and comes down behind Rainbow to continue her sprint.*)

**Rainbow:** Whoa!

(*She gives free rein to her wings and closes the distance as Strongheart reaches the gap between the next-to-last car and the caboose and dives into it. However, the young speedster races past.*)

**Rainbow:** I’ve got you now, you—

(*A railroad crossbuck sign gets her instead when she slams face first into it. Strongheart glances briefly down the track at her before ducking in behind the caboose, and Rainbow slides down the signpost to the sand with a groan. The peg securing the coupling is yanked out, allowing the caboose to roll free as the buffalo jumps up to the roof. At her whistle, the rest of the herd peels away from their assault on the train and reverses direction to push the caboose backwards. At the end of the car it was hooked to, the four passengers gather at the door; Applejack now joins them with a shocked gasp.*)

**Applejack:** They’ve got Bloomberg! (*Spike plasters himself against the caboose window.*)

**Spike:** (*muffled by glass*) HEEEEELP!!

**Twilight:** And Spike!

(*The hijacked car barrels past the sign Rainbow hit; she gets up with a woozy groan, rubbing her head.*)

**Spike:** (*fading out*) HEEEEELP!!

**Rainbow:** Dragon-napping Spike…I’ll show her! (*Twinge.*) Ow!

(*She rubs her head again. Snap to black.*)

Act Two

(*Opening shot: fade in to an empty street in a Wild West-style town. A railroad depot stands at the end of it, with apple-decorated signs on the walls and above the door—this must surely be Appleloosa. The train pulls in and stops, and Twilight, Applejack, Fluttershy, and Rarity scramble out onto the platform only to stop short. Directly in front of them, and grinning into their faces, is a light yellow-brown earth pony stallion whose mane and tail show two darker shades of this same color. His eyes are bright yellow-green, and he wears a brown cowboy hat and vest. This is Braeburn, whose friendly voice carries a Western twang. His movements on the next line expose a large red apple as his cutie mark. Every time he says “Appleloosa,” he rears up with a neigh and holds out the first syllable.*)

**Braeburn:** Hey there. Welcome to Appleloosa!

**Applejack:** Braeburn, listen. We—

**Braeburn:** Cousin Applejack, mind your manners. You have yet to introduce me to your compadres. Shame on you!

**Applejack:** Braeburn, listen. Somethin’ terrible’s happened.

**Braeburn:** Terrible is right. Your train is a full seven minutes late. That’s seven minutes less for you to delight in the pleasures and wonders of Appleloosa!

(*Zoom out down the street, which is now filled with earth ponies going about their business. Every Appleloosa resident will be of this same type. On the platform, Braeburn bulldozes the four new arrivals away and down to ground level; during the next line, cut to a long shot of them in the street.*)

**Braeburn:** Boggles the mind we settler ponies built all this in just the past year, don’t it? And as you can see, we have all of the finest comforts.

(*Quick pan to a stagecoach being pulled along a street.*)

**Braeburn:** (*from o.s.*) Like horse-drawn carriages.

**Puller:** (*stopping, toward window*) Okay, you pull now. (*A second pony looks out.*)

**Passenger:** Aw, we just switched!

(*Now Braeburn leads the tour to another part of the street and points.*)

**Braeburn:** And those there are horse-drawn, horse-drawn carriages.

(*The repetition sorts itself out on the next pan, which stops on three ponies who are sketching the passing stagecoach with pencils in their mouths. That is, a drawing done by a horse, depicting a carriage pulled by another one.*)

**Applejack:** Listen, Braeburn, I—

(*Another bulldoze; cut to a building’s sign that shows a salt shaker and tilt down to street level on the next line.*)

**Braeburn:** (*from o.s.*) And here’s our local waterin’ hole… (*He pushes them into view.*) …the Salt Block! (*A pony is flung out through the batwing doors.*)

**Bartender:** (*from inside*) That’s enough salt for you!

(*The grizzled old stallion gets up to his hind legs, losing his hat, and stumbles back and forth.*)

**Customer:** (*woozily*) Can’t I at least get a glass of water?

(*He keels over; pan to the properly dressed bartender stallion at the doors, who backs up into the place to resume his job. Another good shove by Braeburn puts the four in front of the sheriff’s office, where the law pony lounges against a post. Khaki stallion, brown mane/tail, black mustache, red bandana around neck, blue eyes, dark gray hat, silver star both as his cutie mark and pinned to his blue vest.*)

**Braeburn:** Over there’s the office of Sheriff Silverstar. (*Push again; ponies dance merrily in a clearing.*) And here’s where we have our Wild West dances. (*Again; another group dances sedately.*) And here’s where we have our *Mild* West dances.

**Applejack:** But, Braeburn, we—

(*No time for any more words as he plows the foursome onto a ridge.*)

**Braeburn:** And here’s the most wonderful sight in all of Appleloosa!

(*Zoom out on the last word to frame acres upon acres of apple trees, all loaded with fruit, then cut to a pan from the group’s perspective.*)

**Braeburn:** Our apple orchard. (*Back to Applejack.*)

**Applejack:** (*impatiently*) Braeburn! (*Close-up of him.*)

**Braeburn:** First harvest should be any day now.

**Applejack:** Braebu— (*Even closer.*)

**Braeburn:** Good thing, too.

**Applejack:** Brae— (*Extreme close-up of his mouth.*)

**Braeburn:** ’Cause we need that grub to live on.

**Applejack:** *BRAEBURN!!* (*Normal shot of him.*)

**Braeburn:** Uh…yes, cuz?

**Applejack:** You have a very nice town and all, but we have a *huge* problem. Some of our friends are missin’!

**Fluttershy:** A stampede of buffalo!

**Rarity:** They took Spike!

**Twilight:** Rainbow Dash went after them!

**Fluttershy:** And we can’t find Pinkie Pie!

**Applejack:** And we had an apple tree with us for your orchard, but they took that too!

(*This sequence of bad news has thrown her cousin for such a loop that one eye shrinks to a point while the other dilates beyond all measure. It takes him a moment to get his vision sorted out.*)

**Braeburn:** Did you say “buffalo”? (*He sighs heavily and turns away.*) Them buffalo! They want us settler ponies to take every single tree you see here off this land. They sure as hay don’t want any new ones added in.

**Fluttershy:** But why?

**Braeburn:** Beats me. (*Slow pan seen from the ridge as he continues, putting him o.s.*) We put a lot of hard work into this land— (*now in view*) —so we could feed our town, our families, our foals. And now they’re sayin’ all these trees have to go? ’Tain’t fair.

(*A look of great concern passes between Twilight and Applejack. Wipe to a stretch of desert land, nowhere near Appleloosa, and pan to a scatter of boulders. Rainbow peeks up from behind one, then ducks away and tiptoes to one nearer the camera. After another furtive look, she dives to an even closer one and comes up again.*)

**Rainbow:** (*hushed*) Oh, I can’t wait to get my hooves on that little buffalo!

(*The spot on her head that flared up at the end of Act One gives an encore, causing her face to screw up and the rest of her to hunker down.*)

**Rainbow:** (*full volume, rubbing head*) Ow! (*hushed, tiptoeing away*) Nobody tricks Rainbow Dash and gets away with it.

(*She comes nose to nose with Pinkie, who is doing the exact same thing.*)

**Pinkie:** Boo!

(*The daredevil flyer is so badly spooked that she cries out and falls on her back. She keeps her voice down throughout the following, but Pinkie does not.*)

**Rainbow:** Pinkie Pie!

**Pinkie:** Aw, you caught me. Looks like I tricked you and didn’t get away with it either. You’re *good!* (*Rainbow claps a hoof to her mouth.*)

**Rainbow:** Shhh! What do you think you’re doing? You gotta get outta here! (*She backs off.*)

**Pinkie:** I do?

**Rainbow:** You’re gonna blow my cover!

**Pinkie:** I am? (*Rainbow returns to full volume.*)

**Rainbow:** I’m trying to save Spike!

**Pinkie:** Oh my gosh! So am I! (*Close-up of the pair.*)

**Rainbow:** And the more of us there are out here— (*Dust flies; rumbling of hooves.*) —the more chances of us getting…

(*She looks up fearfully to the sound of a bellow; zoom out to show the two ponies ringed in by far too many members of the buffalo herd.*)

**Rainbow:** …caught. (*Cut to Pinkie; she continues o.s.*) Run, Pinkie. (*standing up into view*) I’ll hold ’em off. Save yourself!

(*The bovine behemoths snort out steam and begin to rush in.*)

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

(*They do so and back off to either side, creating a dust-choked aisle in which his silhouette becomes visible. As Pinkie and Rainbow stare dumbfounded, the haze clears to reveal him quite unharmed and very much at ease.*)

**Spike:** Dash, Pinkie! ’Sup? (*Cut to them; he continues o.s.*) Hey, no worries, I know those guys. (*Back to him; he is addressing a buffalo.*) They’re cool.

**Buffalo:** (*surfer-dude accent*) If you say so, Spike. (*hoof/fist-bumping him*) Catch you later, bro.

(*He and his buddies stampede away, leaving a properly bewildered pegasus and earth pony in their wake. Dissolve to the moon hanging low in a starry night sky and tilt down to a long shot of some herd members eating and milling among a clutch of tepees. A dissolve and zoom frames Pinkie, Rainbow, and Spike sitting around a campfire, the first two on their haunches.*)

**Spike:** Seems they took me by mistake. They feel awful about it too, poor guys. Fortunately, they totally respect dragons—

(*He snaps his fingers. Cut to the two ponies, each of whom is given a bowl of something brown, mushy, and unappetizing-looking on the next line—the same food eaten by the buffalo.*)

**Spike:** (*from o.s.*) —so they treat *me* like an honored guest. (*Rainbow sniffs, sticks out her tongue, and pushes it away.*) Still don’t like ponies much, though, but you’re with me, so it’s cool. (*She stands up.*)

**Rainbow:** Huh. Well, I still don’t trust ’em. I say we turn tail and bail while we still—

(*The camera zooms out slightly to frame Pinkie, who has buried her face in her own bowl and is gobbling the stuff down. She lifts her splattered face out as Rainbow regards her incredulously.*)

**Pinkie:** Before we finish eating? Are you loco in the coco?

(*Strongheart brings a bowl of something decidedly more solid over to Spike.*)

**Pinkie:** Can I please have more of that mushy stuff, whatever it was? (*Cut to Strongheart.*)

**Strongheart:** Certainly! (*Zoom out to frame Spike.*) And Mr. Spike, you like gemstones, yes?

**Spike:** (*eagerly*) Turquoise! (*He downs the bowlful in one gulp.*) This here’s Little Strongheart. And these are my friends— (*Cut/pan to each in turn; he continues o.s.*) —Pinkie Pie and Rainbow Dash.

(*The former smiles and waves; the latter gives an annoyed huff over her shoulder, then starts in surprise.*)

**Rainbow:** *You!*

**Strongheart:** (*just as surprised*) You!

**Rainbow:** That’s it! (*trotting away*) We are outta here!

(*Pinkie can do nothing but tack a sheepish grin onto her newly clean face before Rainbow leans back to get a mouthful of tail hairs and drag her off. The young buffalo intercepts them.*)

**Strongheart:** Wait! (*Rainbow lets go.*) Please accept my apologies for what happened on the train. We didn’t mean for anyone to be hurt.

**Rainbow:** Yeah, right. (*She turns away; Strongheart cuts her off again.*)

**Strongheart:** We only wanted the tree. The settler ponies have overtaken the land and have planted an orchard all over it! Because of their thoughtlessness— (*Cut to Rainbow, with Pinkie coming up alongside; she continues o.s.*) —we can no longer run over our traditional stampeding grounds.

**Pinkie, Rainbow:** Huh?

**Spike:** (*to Strongheart*) I think it’s time they met Chief Thunderhooves.

(*Strongheart gives a little start as Rainbow looks daggers across the way. Dissolve to the three visitors standing by the fire, at the center of a ring of buffalo. Strongheart, across from them, is next to one clad in a large feathered headdress, who speaks in a deep and pompous voice. This is Chief Thunderhooves.*)

**Chief:** We have a long and winding stampeding trail that we have run upon for many generations. My father stampeded upon these grounds, and his father before him, and his father before him, and his father before him, and his father before him, and—

(*During this line, the camera shifts to frame the tableau from various angles as follows. His perspective of the three; a head-on view and tilt up from ground level; his perspective again: a few buffalo dozing off and trying to stay awake; a letterbox view that frames an extreme close-up of his eyes. They widen at the start of the next line; cut to a fullscreen view of him and Strongheart.*)

**Strongheart:** I think they get the idea, Chief.

**Chief:** Hmph. It is a sacred tradition to run the path every year. (*Cut to the three during this last, then back to him.*) But this year, these… (*with great contempt*) …settler ponies, these… (*snorting steam*) …Appleloosans…

(*More steam chuffs out of the great black nostrils, but a touch from Strongheart calms him somewhat.*)

**Strongheart:** They planted apple trees all over it without asking our permission.

**Pinkie:** Well, that’s not very nice. Right, Rainbow Dash? (*Rainbow turns away, crosses her forelegs, and sits on her haunches.*)

**Rainbow:** Hmph!

**Strongheart:** The ponies refuse to move their trees, so we are stuck here, and it is not fair!

**Spike:** See, Rainbow Dash? They had a good reason to—

(*Her abrupt vertical takeoff stops him cold. A moment later she makes a perfect four-point landing to face the two buffalo; gasps from them and the herd.*)

**Rainbow:** (*stomping*) I’ll say they had a good reason! (*looping, hovering near Chief*) Come on! We have some apple-picking Appleloosans to talk to!

(*Pinkie, Spike, and the herd are shocked but happy to find that she has come around to their side this quickly. Wipe to a long shot of Appleloosa the next morning, seen from the overlooking ridge, and pan to bring Braeburn and the other four ponies into view. Twilight, Fluttershy, and Braeburn have their saddlebags on; Applejack, the only one without, adjusts Rarity’s with an energetic pull on the strap.*)

**Rarity:** Ow! Ooh! (*Grunt.*) Gently, please!

**Applejack:** Sorry, Rarity, but our friends are out there and we have to be ready for a long hike into buffalo territory if we’re gonna save ’em.

(*During the second half of this, cut to a shot of said sun-baked territory and zoom out to frame her eyeing it.*)

**Applejack:** (*rearing, now with her own bags*) Let’s go!

(*All five gallop off, but get no more than a few hundred yards before coming across Pinkie, Rainbow, and Spike. Twenty hooves screech to a halt and five throats gasp.*)

**Pinkie:** Hi, guys! (*Fluttershy tackles her.*)

**Fluttershy:** Pinkie! We’re so glad you’re safe!

(*Twilight, Applejack, and Rarity express similar sentiments.*)

**Twilight:** How did you escape from the buffalo?

**Pinkie:** We didn’t.

(*Zoom in between her and Rainbow to focus on a background rock. Strongheart leaps out from behind this and nervously paws the ground as the o.s. ponies gasp.*)

**Rainbow:** (*from o.s.*) We promised the buffalo a chance to talk.

**Applejack:** Oh, yeah? ’Bout what? (*Rainbow and the calf are now side by side.*)

**Rainbow:** (*throwing foreleg over Strongheart’s shoulders*) We brought our new pal Little Strongheart here to explain to the Appleloosans why they should move the apple trees off buffalo land.

(*As she finishes, she pushes the young calf over for a face-to-face with Braeburn.*)

**Braeburn:** That information will be quite help—

**Applejack:** (*shoving Braeburn even closer*) That’s weird, ’cause my cousin Braeburn here wants to explain to the buffalo why they should let the apple trees stay.

**Strongheart:** That would be a useful thing to—

**Rainbow:** The land is theirs! (*She flies over.*) You planted the trees not knowing that. Honest mistake. Now you just gotta move ’em, that’s all.

**Braeburn:** Well, heh—

**Applejack:** They busted their rumps here! And now they’re supposed to bust their rumps again just ’cause some buffalo won’t stampede someplace else?

(*By this point, she and Rainbow are in each other’s faces.*)

**Rainbow:** Plant the trees somewhere else!

**Applejack:** Where? (*Quick pan to a stretch of rocks, cacti, and weeds; she continues o.s.*) It’s the only flat land around these parts! (*Back to the pair.*)

**Rainbow:** The buffalo had it first!

**Applejack:** The settler ponies need it to live!

(*Braeburn and Strongheart stand forgotten as these two launch into a shouting match, with an apprehensive Twilight averting her eyes until she has had enough.*)

**Twilight:** Look! (*They shut up; zoom out slowly.*) Both the settlers and the buffalo have good reasons to use this land. (*turning toward Fluttershy, Rarity*) There must be something we can do. (*Pinkie jumps up and hangs in midair.*)

**Pinkie:** Hey! I’ve got an idea! (*She thuds to the ground.*)

(*Dissolve to a sizable crowd of settlers, with Braeburn and five of the six ponies in the front row. Pinkie is the only one absent. Nervous murmurings abound as the camera pans to frame the Chief, Strongheart, Silverstar, and a few other buffalo next to them. A few piano chords ring out, and a long shot of the area reveals a stage as the center of attention. The piano player sits at one end of it, and Pinkie peeks out through the curtain. A long blue feather pokes out from her mane, and a close-up identifies the musician as a bowler-hatted Spike, who flips her a thumbs-up when she looks his way. She pulls her head back out of sight.*)

(*The curtain opens to expose a large, closed oyster resting on the stage. When it creaks open, Pinkie is seen lying inside, dressed as a typical Wild West saloon girl.*)

***Old-time piano melody, moderate 4 (D major*)**

**Pinkie:** We may be divided, but of you all I beg

(*The crowd seems a bit puzzled at this exhibition.*)

To remember we’re all hoofed at the end of each leg

***Music slows/stops on previous line***

(*Two mares lift her to the stage, then zip away.*)

***Music resumes, much faster tempo***

**Pinkie:** (*hopping about*)

No matter what the issue, come from wherever you please

(*zipping to a buffalo, pulling at its mouth*)

All this fighting gets you nothing but hoof-in-mouth disease

(*She lets the lip snap back and returns to the stage, popping up from the piano.*)

Arguing’s not the way, hey, come out and play

(*returning to stage*)

It’s a shiny new day, so what do you say?

(*dancing*) You gotta share, you gotta care

(*The crowd is still not exactly warming up to her performance.*)

It’s the right thing to do

You gotta share, you gotta care

And there’ll always be a way through

(*She pops up between Strongheart and Silverstar and shoves an apple into each one’s mouth.*)

**Pinkie:** Both our diets, I should mention, are completely vegetarian

(*Back on stage, four other ponies gather behind her.*)

We all eat hay and oats, why be at each other’s throat?

(*They form a kick line with her.*)

You gotta share, you gotta care

(*Close-up.*) It’s the right thing to do

And there’ll always be a way through

(*Zoom out as she holds the last note; two of the four are holding her aloft on their front hooves, while the others look on.*)

***Song ends***

(*Dead silence from the entire audience, broken only by Spike’s solitary clapping and the distant cry of an eagle. On the next line, cut briefly to Twilight, who covers her eyes with a foreleg out of embarrassment, then to the stage as Pinkie takes a bow.*)

**Spike:** All right, Pinkie Pie, that was fantastic! What a great song! (*Pan across the crowd; he continues o.s.*) You’re right on!

(*Stop on Silverstar and the Chief; they look each other full in the eye for a moment, then nod in unison.*)

**Chief:** It appears that Sheriff Silverstar and I have come to an agreement.

**Silverstar:** We have.

(*All lean in expectantly toward the pair, from onstage and off.*)

**Chief:** That was the worst performance we’ve ever seen. (*Cut to Pinkie and Spike; suddenly dejected.*)

**Silverstar:** (*from o.s., chuckling*) Absitively.

(*Back to an extreme close-up of the Chief’s face, the view narrowing to a letterbox-format shot that frames his eyes.*)

**Chief:** The time for action… (*Grunt.*) …is upon us. (*Fullscreen, menacing.*) Our stampede will start at high noon tomorrow. (*leaning into Silverstar’s face*) And if the orchard is still there, we’ll flatten it *and* the whole town!

(*A gasp from the front row; now Strongheart darts in.*)

**Strongheart:** But, Chief!

**Silverstar:** And we Appleloosans say you’d better bring your best— (*shoving Chief back*) —’cause we’ll be ready and waitin’!

**Braeburn:** But, Sheriff!

(*The two factions quickly clear out, leaving only the Ponyville seven and the Appleloosa one. Zoom in on Pinkie and Spike, still on the stage and trying to figure out how things could have gone so far off the rails.*)

**Pinkie:** Oh…that wasn’t the message of my song at all!

(*Snap to black.*)

Act Three

(*Opening shot: fade in to a stretch of Appleloosa in full emergency mode. Windows are being closed and boarded up, ponies are getting off the street, apples and other supplies are being hauled away. Pan to Twilight, Applejack, Fluttershy, and Rarity as they watch the commotion and cut to the farm pony.*)

**Applejack:** I want my kin to have what they need to live— (*Zoom out to frame the others.*) —but a storm’s a-brewin’ here, and I don’t like the look of it.

**Twilight:** We’ve just gotta talk some sense into them before somepony gets hurt!

(*She, Fluttershy, and Rarity scatter; she is the first to address a couple of the locals.*)

**Twilight:** Listen. Maybe if you would just reconsider, we—

(*They trade a hard glance and leap in through the window behind them, pulling the shutters closed. Pan along the building’s length as other windows are secured, and stop on Fluttershy and Rarity at another pony’s front door. This one wordlessly pushes a cartload of apples inside.*)

**Rarity:** About the trees. Now if you could—

(*The immediate door slam startles her into a haunch-sitting position and leaves both Twilight and Applejack at a loss. Wipe to a stretch of apple trees in the orchard and zoom out to frame the two ponies Twilight tried to talk to, as they buck one tree to reap its fruits. Elsewhere, apples are picked up in teeth, hustled back and forth, and nipped down by the topmost mare in a column of three. The four from Ponyville watch the frenzied activity with trepidation.*)

**Twilight:** (*rushing to one*) If we could just sit down and talk, we could—

(*She gets only an angry snarl in reply as the cart he was loading is hauled away; her dismayed gasp gives way to a resolute glare.*)

**Twilight:** (*rearing*) Why won’t anybody be rational and reasonable?!

(*Dissolve to a close-up of a nail being hammered into a board, then cut to a branch being sawed. The next shot is of a team of ponies pulling a log down to rest on support trestles, forming a barricade. Pan across the street; more windows are being boarded up, and Braeburn watches impassively as the last gap in a frame is filled in. Now Applejack and company address Silverstar.*)

**Applejack:** Sheriff, if we could only—

(*He says nothing, but moves out to guide fully loaded carts of apples and flour across the hardpan street. Wipe to a close-up of dough being rolled flat and cut to an apple being sectioned, then to another spot inside this area—a building stocked with sacks of flour and baskets of apples. As the four ponies peek in worriedly, the camera zooms out and pans across to frame an apple pie production operation in top gear. Two ponies assemble the pies, while two others tend the oven; shelves and carts filled with the steaming desserts are present in abundance.*)

(*Dissolve to a gathering around a flagpole in the town square, where Silverstar and Braeburn watch a red flag being raised and the quartet look on nervously. When the standard reaches the top of the pole in close-up, the wind unfurls it to expose an apple tree emblazoned across it; hats are tossed skyward and the crowd’s cheers float up.*)

(*Wipe to a stolid buffalo on the herd’s land. It is now nighttime, and he stomps the ground and charges straight at a second for a head-on collision. Two others do likewise, trying to bulldoze each other backwards; pan quickly to a third pair at a grindstone. One sharpens his horns against the wheel, while the other pumps the foot pedal to keep it turning. Another pan frames a buffalo applying war paint, and the camera shifts to frame two more following suit as another head-on bang occurs in front of them. Spike and Strongheart watch the preparations.*)

**Spike:** Isn’t there some way to stop this?

**Strongheart:** Unless the settlers remove those trees, I do not think so.

(*She gallops off, but returns almost immediately with a bowl of turquoise chunks that he accepts with a deflated little sigh. As he starts to munch, zoom in between them to focus on a shaggy silhouette in the distance. This resolves into the Chief and Rainbow at a campfire.*)

**Rainbow:** I know you don’t want to do this.

**Chief:** But they have taken our land. What would you have me do, Rainbow Dash?

**Rainbow:** I don’t know. But it’s never too late to think of something.

**Chief:** (*painting his face*) At noon, it *will* be too late.

(*Dissolve to a long shot of Appleloosa, seen from a ridge outside of town. It is the next morning, and log barricades have been placed to block the major entry points. The growing sound of galloping hooves makes itself known, and tin short order the Chief and Strongheart have arrived on the ridge, followed by the entire buffalo herd. Down below, ponies big and small have taken their positions on the front lines, and Braeburn nervously eyes the town’s clock tower as the minute hand advances—it is now 11:59. A cart stacked with fresh apple pies is pulled past a building jammed with frightened onlookers and over to Silverstar; Rainbow and Spike, now just across the tracks from him, take in the sight. Zoom out slowly on the next line to frame Twilight, Fluttershy, and Rarity gathered with them.*)

**Rainbow:** (*to herself, tapping forehead*) Come on, think! Think, think, think, think, think, think, think!

(*The clock’s bell sounds off, drawing the group’s attention, and the minute hand snaps ahead to high noon. As the twelve strikes thrum dully in the still, silent air, the camera shifts to frame the defenders armed with pies, the five visitors, and the waiting attack force from a variety of angles. The last shot of the sequence is an extreme close-up of the Chief’s set features; Strongheart reaches into view to touch his cheek as the camera zooms out to frame her. He sighs heavily at the sight of her pleading eyes, then stares ahead with a sudden uncertainty in his own, prompting a little gasp from Rainbow and a smile from the entire group.*)

**Rainbow:** He’s not gonna do it!

(*They sigh in relief, but a moment later all ten eyes bug out at the sound of Pinkie’s singing. Pan quickly to her, still in the saloon-girl costume she used the first time, during the following. With no stage handy, she is doing her song-and-dance on a patch of the arid no-man’s land.*)

***Same old-time piano melody as before, fast 4 (D major*)**

**Pinkie:** …say?

You gotta share, you gotta care

(*The Chief reacts very, very badly and starts to growl.*)

It’s the right thing to do

You gotta share, you gotta care

**Chief:** (*over end of previous*) *CHAAAAAARRRRRRGE!!*

***Music and singing both fade out during his yell***

(*The entire herd pours over the ridge, and the performing pink pony has time for one terrified deer-in-the-headlights stare before the buffalo plow into her. She gets bounced from one massive back to another, yelling all the while, and eventually goes flying off the rear edge. The ponies at the barricades think better of it and break for cover; those logs and trestles smash to kindling under the herd’s sheer tonnage, and the flagpole is next to go.*)

**Silverstar:** (*to ponies behind him*) Ready!

(*Cut to the charging bovines, then back to him and the others; all have picked up pies.*)

**Silverstar:** Aim! (*The herd again, then back to him.*) FIRE!!

(*The pies go airborne with a speed and efficiency that would have made the masters of slapstick stand up and take notice. One buffalo after another takes a hit to the face and goes sprawling to the dust; in the confusion, one mare leaps out of a second-story window, lands on a buffalo’s back, and rides him like a bucking bronco. Three other pairs of adversaries square off for a little bare-hoof boxing before a rooftop brigade launches its own offensive. At ground level, a mare behind a wall of hay bales throws a pie, then gasps and as a buffalo charges at her. The hit knocks both her and several bales flying; at the other end of the wall; another herd member thunders in but knocks himself silly on impact. These bales tumble away to reveal the hidden anvil he has just slammed into, and the two mares who set it up trade a high-five.*)

(*One buffalo gets a pie plastered across his eyes but does not go down. Unable to see where he is going, he veers off to one side and rams the ground floor of the building that houses the clock tower. Cracks race up the walls, leading to the whole spire sliding loose from the roof; a couple of ponies gasp and bail out from their apple-pie emplacement moments before the lumber and clockwork obliterate it.*)

(*Once the dust clears, the Chief leaps to a gap in the wreckage and lets off a steaming snort. The next cut reveals that he is facing the train station, where staggered hay bales have been set up; Silverstar pops up from behind one, throws a pie, and ducks. Zoom out to show the bales placed on both sides of the tracks, creating trouble for the buffalo trying to navigate the area. This does not stop the Chief from hurling himself ahead at full speed; Silverstar throws another pie, moves to a different bale, and throws again. When he ducks down here, though, he makes the uncomfortable discovery that he has run out of ammunition.*)

(*Peeking up over the bale, he lets off a panicked cry as the huge buffalo leader barrels straight through the fusillade toward him. Silverstar removes his hat and holds it over his heart, closing his eyes in preparation for the inevitable—but a pie comes sailing across from a different direction. In a series of slow-motion dissolves, the Chief leaps toward the poised sheriff as this particular dessert arcs toward him.*)

**Chief:** (*half speed*) NOOOOOO!!

(*His face and the crust meet at the exact same point in space, and he tumbles to the dirt in front of Silverstar’s bale. Normal motion resumes when a huge cloud of dust boils up, filling the screen; it clears to show the Chief lying senseless on his belly, ringed by Silverstar, the four ponies and Spike, and a number of pony and buffalo spectators. Other herd members race up and stare in total shock at the downfall of their leader, whose tongue hangs out of his mouth at full length as crust and filling dribble down his face. One buffalo begins to sob and puts a foreleg across the shoulders of the earlier rodeo rider, who removes her hat and bows her head. Even Spike cannot hold his emotions in check; he bursts into tears and grabs a properly puzzled Twilight for support.*)

(*One juicy crumb slides from the Chief’s horn and lands on his tongue, and he pulls it in and shuts his mouth. Cut to the five Ponyvillians, who stare in puzzlement, then to a letterbox extreme close-up of his eyes as they open. Fullscreen: he stands up, alive and well, and slurps as much of the mess off his face as he can while shaking himself clean.*)

**Chief:** Yum! (*Cut to the now-smiling quintet; he continues o.s.*) Hey!

(*Long shot of the entire area.*)

**Chief:** I’ve got a much better idea!

(*Dissolve to a stand of apple trees being cut down, then cut to an overhead shot of the apple orchard and tilt up toward the horizon. More trees are being chopped to create a broad path through the grove. At a whistle from Applejack, Rainbow aims a wave behind herself and gallops ahead, leading the buffalo herd along the newly cleared avenue. Steam wafts along it toward them.*)

**Chief:** (*voice over*) We will allow the apple orchard to stay in exchange for a share of its fruit…

(*Chuckle. The vibrations of their passage shake a few apples out of the branches.*)

**Chief:** (*voice over*) …those delicious apple pies!

(*Cut to a table loaded with hot pies, the source of the steam. These are passed from pony to pony and tossed up to balance on each buffalo’s head as they pass. Spike, watching them, hoists a fresh bowl of turquoise.*)

**Spike:** I’d rather eat turquoise any day of the week.

(*He does so. Cut to a long shot of a tree standing by itself on a hill in the orchard.*)

**Applejack:** (*from o.s.*) Bloomberg, this is your special day. (*Cut to her and Rainbow.*) Mama’s so proud of you.

(*Not far away stand the Chief, Strongheart, Silverstar, and Braeburn. The two pairs bow to each other, and the big and little buffalo charge off to join the orderly stampede. Strongheart peels off to wave goodbye to the two ponies as Twilight watches.*)

**Twilight:** (*voice over, dictating*) “Dear Princess Celestia…”

(*The little buffalo gallops ahead, with Applejack and Rainbow following on hooves and wings.*)

**Twilight:** (*voice over*) “Friendship is a wondrous and powerful thing.” (*Twilight watches them head toward the sunset.*) “Even the worst of enemies can become friends. You need understanding and compromise. You’ve got to share. You’ve got to care.”

(*During this last sentence, an “iris out” to black begins. Before it can finish, though, an irate Pinkie pops into view to hold the iris open and address the camera; she no longer wears her saloon-girl outfit.*)

**Pinkie:** Hey! That’s what I said!

(*She ducks back through the iris, which closes to black out the screen.*)