**FLIGHT TO THE FINISH**

**Written by Ed Valentine**

**Produced by Sarah Wall, Devon Cody**

**Story editing by Meghan McCarthy**

**Supervising direction by Jayson Thiessen**

**Co-directed by Jim Miller**

**Transcribed by Alan Back (**[**ajback@yahoo.com**](mailto:ajback@yahoo.com)**)**

Prologue

(*Opening shot: fade in to the exterior of the Ponyville schoolhouse during the day. Zoom in slowly and dissolve to the classroom, with Cheerilee standing at the front to address her students. The blackboard behind her depicts several trios of stick-figure ponies; one member of each group holds a flag.*)

**Cheerilee:** Today, we have two special guests with a very special announcement. Everypony, welcome the head of the Equestria Games, Ms. Harshwhinny!

(*The door is heard opening; pan quickly to it, where the inspector who got run ragged in “Games Ponies Play” has just entered. Same outfit, same mane, same dour expression, same everything. Except for the sound of the door closing, the room remains dead silent as she walks over to Cheerilee, who quickly backs out of her way. Ms. Harshwhinny—Ms. H for short—addresses the foals with the same chronically dissatisfied tone she used against the Ponyville contingent when they tried to win the Games for the Crystal Empire.*)

**Ms. H:** Thank you. Now, I’m sure you all know about the Equestria Games, where ponies from all over the land compete for glory in various athletic pursuits?

(*Cut to the Cutie Mark Crusaders at their desks on the end of this; a slightly puzzled glance passes among the trio.*)

**Ms. H:** Well… (*chuckling dryly, smiling*) …now you littlest ones will have the chance to compete for a weighty responsibility of your very own.

**Rainbow Dash:** (*from o.s., distant*) Oh, come on! (*Her eyes pop.*) Tell ’em the fun part!

(*Here comes the daredevil, flying in through an open window at the back of the room and doing a midair somersault to elicit awed murmurs from the foals. She lands next to Ms. H and drinks in their adulation; the earth pony is not amused.*)

**Rainbow:** That’s right! (*hovering, buzzing wings*) All you gotta do is show Ms. Harshwhinny the coolest, most spectacular, most rockin’ routine— (*landing*) —and you’re going to the Games! So who’s gonna be the lucky ponies?

(*Pan quickly to Diamond Tiara at her desk.*)

**Diamond:** It’s gotta be me! (*To another filly.*)

**Filly:** Maybe it’s me! (*To the Crusaders.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*to Apple Bloom, Sweetie Belle*) Maybe it’s us!

**Snips, Snails:** (*from o.s.*) Maybe it’s us!

(*All three pairs of eyes turn toward their voices; cut to the two colts. Snips is standing on his hind legs atop his desk, holding his front hooves up for Snails to balance two of his own hooves on them—one front, one rear. The strain soon proves too much for the blue-green colt, and he topples backward off his desk. The two end up sprawled in the aisle, Snails on top of Snips, and soon find themselves on the receiving end of a lot of dirty looks. Long pause.*)

**Snips:** Hey! It could happen!

(*His buddy stitches on a placating grin that utterly fails to win over any students. Fade to black.*)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(*Opening shot: fade in to the exterior of the schoolhouse and zoom in slowly.*)

**Rainbow:** (*from inside*) So, the winning team gets to carry the Ponyville flag at the Equestria Games!

(*Cut to her and Ms. H inside; she hovers energetically, the camera following her upward.*)

**Rainbow:** Oh, you are gonna love this!

**Ms. H:** (*now o.s., sternly*) Ms. Dash! (*Rainbow drops back down to the floor alongside her.*) Will you please curb your over-enthusiastic outbursts? (*crossing to blackboard*) Now, then, let me be clear on the rules. (*pointing to it*) You ponies will form teams.

(*Close-up of the chalked threesome she has indicated.*)

**Ms. H:** (*from o.s.*) Each team will create their own flag-carrying routine. Everypony will be judged on grace, style, and originality.

(*The camera pans quickly to a different spot on the board as she lists each criterion and points it out. “Grace”: a soaring pegasus filly. “Style”: a better-than-average rendition of Rarity’s head. “Originality”: an earth pony filly juggling lobsters while balancing on one hind leg atop a beach ball. The next cut frames her now at the other end of the board.*)

**Ms. H:** There’s a most complicated scoring system— (*reaching upward*) —which I will elaborate upon now. (*She pulls down the end of a roll-up chart.*) Firstly—

(*Rainbow rockets into her face, causing her to let go so that the chart snaps back up.*)

**Rainbow:** Ah, get to the nitty-gritty later. Tell ’em the important stuff, like who’s the coach!

(*She drops o.s., then reappears an instant later wearing a baseball cap and a whistle on a lanyard around her neck. A blast on this goes directly into Ms. H’s increasingly fed-up face. Rainbow will wear these two items until further notice.*)

**Rainbow:** That’s right! Me! And you know why I’m qualified to coach you?

(*Cut to the wondering Crusaders on the second half of this line, then back to her.*)

**Rainbow:** Guess who carried the Cloudsdale flag in the Games when *she* was a little filly. (*hovering above class*) Me! I’ll never forget it. I burst into the stadium, spreading my wings, the flag flapping in the breeze.

(*Cut to Scootaloo, her eyes growing wider as she hangs on every word of the tale, and zoom in slowly.*)

**Rainbow:** (*from o.s.*) I did tricks with that flag, the likes of which nopony saw before—

(*A blink, and each pupil shows a reflection of a waving pennant that displays the silhouettes of two rearing mares, with a pink heart between them.*)

**Rainbow:** (*from o.s.*) —and nopony’s seen since!

(*Cut back to Rainbow, who has procured this particular item and is whirling it about herself with great gusto. Before she can put an eye out, a foreleg clad in a purple blazer sleeve reaches up to grab the pole and yank both it and her back down to earth. Rainbow ends up on the floor, and Ms. H throws the pennant down.*)

**Ms. H:** (*levelly*) Professionalism, Ms. Dash, I must insist. If you want to keep your job as coach of these ponies, you must maintain a professional attitude and keep your emotions in check! (*She leans hard into the frightened flyer’s face.*) Am I making myself absolutely, one hundred percent crystal clear?

(*Only after she backs up with an incensed huff does Rainbow dare to get her legs under her.*)

**Rainbow:** Yes, Ms. Harshwhinny. You know, Professionalism is my middle name. Rainbow Professionalism Dash.

**Ms. H:** Hmph! Well, in three days’ time, *Ms. Dash* will accompany anypony competing to the Crystal Empire— (*Cut to a slow pan across the students; she continues o.s.*) —where you will demonstrate your routines for me and the other judges— (*Back to her.*) —who will judge you *very professionally*.

(*These last two words are delivered with a sidewise one-eyed squint in Rainbow’s direction. Zoom out quickly to frame the coach, who clears her throat.*)

**Rainbow:** Yes. Quite, quite correct. (*hovering/whirling to face class, with energy*) In the meantime, get ready to train, and train hard! (*Land; zoom in slowly.*) Because I know this opening ceremony is the single most important thing— (*Cut to Scootaloo, whose smile broadens as she continues o.s.*) —that will ever happen in your young lives!

(*Back to the blue aerialist.*)

**Rainbow:** But I know you’re up for the challenge, and so am I! (*starting a backflip; the schoolroom door is now open*) Woo-h—

(*Finding herself on the receiving end of a glare icy enough to freeze a geyser solid, she stops herself in midair and carefully sets herself down upright. Her composure back in place, she clears her throat again.*)

**Rainbow:** Meet me after school tomorrow at fifteen hundred hours— (*Cut to the Crusaders; she continues o.s.*) —sharp. And show me your flag-carrying skills.

(*The three fillies trade a round of uncertain glances; back to the two guests. Rainbow gets ready to sprint out.*)

**Rainbow:** I am outta here. (*Stop short under Ms. H’s scowl.*) Professionally. (*trotting purposefully out the door*) See how professionally?

(*The veteran just rolls her eyes with a groan that might best be translated as, “How did I get stuck working with this clown?”*)

**Ms. H:** Ponies, the most important thing is this. (*Slow pan across the class; she continues o.s.*) Your routine needs to show what your town means to you. So, do Ponyville proud. (*Back to her.*) Work hard, be bold…wow me. (*walking out*) That is all.

(*The school bell rings—electric, not the one in the schoolhouse tower—and the camera cuts to the front walk as the doors burst open and students barrel out. Zoom in on the front step; the Crusaders gather here.*)

**Scootaloo:** So what do you say we come up with the perfect routine and win this thing? (*Close-up of her and Bloom.*)

**Bloom:** I’d say that’s rootin’ tootin’ terrific!

**Sweetie:** (*from o.s.*) But there’s one problem. (*Cut to her.*) I bet everypony in class is planning to compete. (*All three again.*)

**Scootaloo:** Listen. *Somepony* in our class is gonna carry that flag, so it might as well be us. (*stomping for emphasis*) Crusaders, are you in or are you in? (*rearing up*) ’Cause I’m in! (*She gallops off.*)

**Bloom:** Me too! (*Ditto.*)

(*It takes Sweetie a moment to break out of her happy reverie and hurry after them.*)

**Sweetie:** Me three! (*All slow to a walk.*)

**Scootaloo:** All right. The winning routine needs to show what’s important about Ponyville, right?

**Bloom, Sweetie:** Right!

**Scootaloo:** So, what’s special about Ponyville?

(*All stop; cut to her perspective of Bloom’s smiling face.*)

**Scootaloo:** It’s… (*Pan to Sweetie.*) …it’s…

(*Zoom in to an extreme close-up of the young unicorn’s horn, then cut back to the pegasus, who eyes her own wings wonderingly. An idea storms through her mind with enough force to start the two appendages buzzing furiously and get her hovering.*)

**Scootaloo:** I’ve got it! (*She touches down.*) It’s a place where different kinds of ponies live together as friends.

**Bloom:** Earth ponies like me!

**Sweetie:** Unicorns like me!

**Scootaloo:** And pegasi like me! So somehow we gotta figure out a way to show that in our act.

**Sweetie:** We’re gonna need a plan.

**Bloom:** And a lotta hard work.

**Scootaloo:** And a whole bunch of practice. But take it from me. We may just be little ponies, but we have hearts as strong as horses!

***Mandolin/acoustic guitar/bass melody backed with military drum figures***

***Lively 4 (G flat major)***

(*Ground level. The orange hooves march forward, yellow and white ones falling in to either side, and the camera tilts up to three determined young faces.*)

**Crusaders:** We’re the toughest little ponies in town

(*They shift positions, circling around one another.*)

Got the moves, got the mojo, no harder-working ponies around

We are a trio, work as a team

(*Tilt up into the sky and stop on the sun.*)

We’ll be the first ponies out on the flag-waving scene

***Drum accents for four bars before next verse, then flute in***

(*Dissolve to a ridge that overlooks Ponyville from a distance; the fillies gallop onto it. Zoom in slowly, then cut to them racing through Sweet Apple Acres at sunset, visible as silhouettes.*)

**Crusaders:** We get going when the going gets tough

(*Daytime; they haul mightily on a rope passing through all three sets of teeth. Its other end is in the mouth of the over-muscled Bulk Biceps, who stoically holds his ground.*)

We know our very best is just never enough

(*Inside the main barn at Sweet Apple Acres. Bloom and Scootaloo take turns bucking a heavy bag, which swings back toward Bloom and knocks her to her haunches. Her bow sags a bit over her sweating face.*)

We’re kinda short, but so what? We don’t get defeated

(*Sweetie brings over a bucket of water; Bloom eyes it, then declines the offer, bow perking up.)*

We could take a little break, but we don’t need it

(*Cut to a background whose vertical stripes, in two shades of light blue, stretch down across the floor. All three sets of hooves step up, one by one.*)

***Mandolin/flute/guitar out; strings in***

**Crusaders:** We’ve got hearts as strong as horses

(*Zoom out; each lighter stripe bears a bright pink heart and the shadow of a flag on a pole, and their shadows combine to form that of a full-grown stallion.*)

We’ve got hearts as strong as horses

(*Now they march against a rotating sunburst backdrop in the same two blue shades, with a pink heart at the center.*)

We’ve got hearts as strong as horses

We’ve got hearts, hearts strong as horses

***Mandolin/guitar in, with drum accents for four bars before next verse***

(*Cut to a profile close-up of the top of a flight of steps; Scootaloo struggles to drag herself up, then walks off once she gains the peak. The next shot is an extreme close-up of Bloom, her teeth clamped around a wooden bar that she is straining mightily to lift. A longer shot puts her outside the Sweet Apple Acres barn; the bar has an apple impaled on each end. Scootaloo and Sweetie are on hand, and once each chomps down most of the apple nearest her, the yellow filly can easily lift the impromptu barbell.*)

**Crusaders:** When we put our minds together, we can achieve

(*Close-up of Scootaloo against the heart/sunburst backdrop; Bloom and Sweetie pop up behind her.*)

We’re the Cutie Mark Crusaders, and you should believe

(*Now Sweetie and then Bloom advance past a line of waving heart-marked pennants on poles.*)

We’ve got determination to represent the nation

(*Scootaloo zooms up on her scooter, wearing crash helmet, foreleg knee pads, and goggles.*)

For the win

(*Off she goes; cut to the steps as she reaches the top with less difficulty than before. She is not wearing her safety gear.*)

**Crusaders:** We’ve got hearts as strong as horses

(*Outside the barn; in close-up, Bloom holds Scootaloo’s hind legs down as the latter hauls her upper body into view, doing sit-ups.*)

We’ve got hearts as strong as horses

(*Zoom out; Sweetie stands behind Scootaloo, pushing on her back to help her do the exercises.*)

We’ve got hearts as strong as horses

(*Now Scootaloo easily climbs the steps and jumps up past the top one; cut to behind her as she turns to look over Ponyville in the near distance.*)

And we’re playing to win as we gallop to glory

(*Longer profile; the flight she has been working out on only contains three steps, and her two cohorts eye her with puzzlement as she celebrates.*)

We can conquer any challenge we’re in

(*Another tug-of-war against Bulk, who panics at the approach of an unassuming butterfly and peels out, dropping his end of the rope. The fillies tumble to the grass, realize what has just happened, and have a good laugh.*)

We’ve got hearts, hearts strong as horses

(*All three march against the heart/sunburst backdrop.*)

***Drum accents in***

Hearts strong as horses

(*It dissolves quickly to a path through Sweet Apple Acres at sunset, and they trot determinedly around a corner and toward the horizon.*)

***Song ends with a four-beat drum cadence followed by a stinger***

(*Silhouetted against the sinking sun, the three leap into the air on the final note. Freeze frame and cut to a head-on view of them—the sky now showing the blue of day. The sound of hooves slowly clopping together brings them around to the fact that they have no visible means of support, shocking them greatly.*)

**Crusaders:** Whoooaaa!

(*Down they go, dropping o.s. and generating a camera-shaking thud and a triple grunt on impact. The clopping is coming from Diamond and Silver Spoon, who have taken up haunch-sitting positions on the path to deliver their mocking applause. They stand up after a few more claps and close in.*)

**Diamond:** If *that’s* the best you’ve got, we’re going to win for sure. (*They circle around the Crusaders.*)

**Silver:** *We* already have the most divine routine planned.

**Diamond:** It’s absolutely sure to crush everyone else— (*viciously, banging front hooves together*) —and I mean crush!

**Scootaloo:** (*singing, badly out of tune*) But we’re winners!

And we have hearts—

(*The two bullies move leisurely past them.*)

**Silver:** Sure. But you know what you *don’t* have?

(*Close-up of Sweetie’s unmarked haunch; a pink hoof and a gray one point at it.*)

**Diamond, Silver:** (*from o.s.*) Your cutie marks! (*Cut to the pair.*) Blank flanks, blank flanks, blank flanks!

(*Back to the Crusaders on the last repetition; mild vexation all around, and a weary eye roll on Sweetie’s part.*)

**Bloom:** What does that have to do with flag carryin’?

**Silver:** Having cutie-mark-less ponies represent Ponyville would be unthinkable.

**Diamond:** And we, of course, already have our cutie marks.

(*On the end of this, cut to a close-up of the two haunches being thumped together.*)

**Diamond:** So we know who’s gonna be in the winners’ circle. (*Scootaloo whisks over to point-blank range.*)

**Scootaloo:** Listen, you two! Cutie marks or no cutie marks, you’ll see! (*She backs up.*) The Crusaders are gonna carry that flag at the Games! (*They do a three-way high five.*)

**Silver:** May the best ponies win! (*Scootaloo and Diamond face each other down again.*)

**Scootaloo:** Game on!

(*Bloom and Sweetie fall in beside her to stare daggers at Silver. Zoom out from the five glowering/smirking faces and snap to black.*)

Act Two

(*Opening shot: fade in to a stage set up on the schoolhouse lawn and zoom in slowly. Rainbow stands in front of it, while Cheerilee and a few of her students are off to one side at the rear.*)

**Rainbow:** Show me what you got, Cutie Mark Crusaders— (*hovering, crossing forelegs*) —and make it good. (*Scootaloo looks out from behind the curtain.*)

**Scootaloo:** Don’t worry! We will!

(*She ducks away again. Pan from the stage and past Rainbow on the next line. Diamond and Silver are hunkered down behind a hedge at the fence bordering the lawn to do a little surveillance.*)

**Sweetie:** (*from behind curtain*) Now, this is just a little something we threw together. It’s not perfect yet, not even close.

**Diamond:** Let’s watch the Cutie Mark Goof-saders do their sad little routine.

**Silver:** They’re gonna be a hot mess!

(*Nasty little giggles from both snobs; back to the stage and zoom in slowly past Rainbow.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*from behind curtain, dramatically*) Since the dawn of recorded time…

(*The fabric is reeled back to expose cardboard-cutout scenery backdrops that depict grade-school renditions of an apple tree, farmland, mountains, clouds. The lighting is dim, and a platform is set up in front of the mountains. All of Scootaloo’s following lines that are marked as coming from backstage are amplified slightly.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*from backstage*) …in one town of amazing amazing-ness…

(*Bloom backs into view from stage right, a long green streamer fastened to each foreleg.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*from backstage*) …three types of ponies coexist. (*Spotlight on Bloom.*)

**Bloom:** We are earth ponies!

(*Sweetie bounds in from stage left, all the lights coming up; attached to her horn is a long violet streamer.*)

**Sweetie:** We are unicorns!

(*She jumps onto the platform; now Scootaloo straightens up into view from behind a cloud, waving a pair of long blue streamers tied to her wings.*)

**Scootaloo:** We are pegasi!

(*Down comes a new scenery flat to hide all three from view; this one depicts a rough drawing of a few Ponyville houses and apple trees under a sunny sky.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*from backstage*) And the town where friendship reigns is our home! (*Close-up of one spot; a light shines on it.*) Now welcome to the stadium… (*A paper-covered hoop is raised in yellow and white hooves.*) …the flag of the place we love best…

(*The paper rips apart as the speed-demon pegasus bursts through it from behind on her scooter, in helmet/pads and with wings going top speed. As soon as wheels touch boards, she does a tearing U-turn and zooms back across the stage. Attached to the rear end of her vehicle is a pole bearing a full-size flag with the same design as the pennant Rainbow waved during class—the Ponyville flag. A leap over the handlebars, and she is sliding into the spotlight on her hocks and raising her forelegs to either side; Bloom and Sweetie leap in and balance on these. Zoom out to frame the entire stage as the scooter rolls slowly past behind them, flag flying proudly. All three have shed their streamers in this sequence.*)

**Crusaders:** PONYVILLE FOREVER! YAAAAY!

(*Four flat containers, forming a square around them, erupt in a burst of confetti and streamers. Out on the lawn, Rainbow opens her mouth to speak but finds herself at a total loss for words; pan quickly to an equally dumbstruck Diamond and Silver. The Crusaders gallop across to their coach, Scootaloo having unloaded her helmet and pads.*)

**Scootaloo:** It’s kind of a work in progress. So, what did you think?

**Rainbow:** (*with growing fervor*) That…was…*ama—*

(*She suddenly curbs her enthusiasm and catches her bottom lip in her teeth.*)

**Rainbow:** (*thinking*) Wait. Hold on now. (*She turns her face away.*) Gotta stay calm, cool, and collected.

(*A sidelong glance from one red-violet eye leaves the Crusaders wondering if they might have just blown their chance.*)

**Rainbow:** To give a calm, clear analysis…wait. (*with great zeal, hovering*) You whipped that up together just *yesterday?!?* That is—

(*She again shifts attitudes without bothering to use the clutch and turns away from them.*)

**Rainbow:** (*thinking*) Professionalism, Dash. Keep those emotions in check.

(*Swivel back to face them once again.*)

**Rainbow:** Overall, it was kinda sorta…

(*Cut to a slow pan across three eagerly smiling fillies’ faces, then to frame all four.*)

**Rainbow:** (*hastily*) Overall, it was okay. Keep working hard. Who knows? You might have a shot. Gotta go!

(*She wastes no time taking off with a yelp, as if a horde of parasprites were trying to devour her tail.*)

**Bloom:** Do y’all think she liked it?

**Sweetie:** I’m not really sure.

**Scootaloo:** You heard her. If we keep working hard, we might have a shot! So let’s keep working. Trot to it, ponies!

(*They gallop away; pan to Diamond and Silver at the fence.*)

**Diamond:** Did you see that? I can’t believe I’m saying this—they could win!

**Silver:** But how do we stop them? We already called them blank flanks.

**Diamond:** Then we need to find a new way to get under their skin.

(*She turns her attention to the stage, where the Crusaders have begun setting up for another run-through. The light blue eyes narrow intently over the grimacing mouth; cut to Scootaloo, zooming in slowly to an extreme close-up of the orange wings.*)

**Diamond:** (*from o.s.*) Or maybe…

(*Back to her; they appear reflected in her pupils. The grimace has been replaced by a frightening smile.*)

**Diamond:** …get under their wings.

(*She squints on the end of this, the top and bottom thirds of the screen going black as if the camera lens is copying the gesture. From here, dissolve to the Crusaders checking their equipment.*)

**Diamond:** (*from o.s., sweetly*) Girls? (*She and Silver walk onto the stage.*) We just wanted to say your act is quite impressive!

**Sweetie:** Wait. What?

**Bloom:** Um…thanks? (*The bullies cross past Scootaloo.*)

**Silver:** Oh, but of course. As a matter of fact, we think you’re very brave.

**Scootaloo:** Brave? Why? (*Cut to the pair, stopped at the far end.*)

**Diamond:** Isn’t it obvious? (*High five with Silver.*) It is to us. In fact, it’s obvious to everypony. You’re showing all three types of Ponyville ponies, yet *you* have a pegasus pony—

**Diamond, Silver:** —who can’t even fly!

(*On Diamond’s “you,” the camera zooms out slightly to put said pegasus pony in the fore, glaring at them. Irritation shifts to insecurity in less time than it takes to say” harsh your buzz”; cut to Bloom and Sweetie.*)

**Bloom:** What in tarnation does that have to do with anything?

**Silver:** (*from o.s.*) I’d say not being able to fly has everything to do with everything, doesn’t it?

(*Back to Scootaloo on the end of this; the two rich fillies step smugly past her as she anxiously flaps a bit.*)

**Diamond:** I mean, a pegasus pony at your age? You should’ve been flying long ago. (*Zoom in on Scootaloo; suddenly angry.*)

**Scootaloo:** So what if my wings can’t get me off the ground?

**Diamond:** Your career as a flag carrier isn’t getting off the ground either. (*The two pass Scootaloo again.*)

**Silver:** Ms. Harshwhinny will never pick a pegasus pony who *can’t fly* to represent Ponyville in front of all of Equestria. (*Accompanied by a flick at the orange wings on “can’t fly.”*)

**Sweetie:** Ms. Harshwhinny never said anything about that!

**Silver:** (*walking past with Diamond*) I would’ve thought that was obvious.

**Diamond:** Well, have fun practicing anyway—even if your routine will never—how shall I say?— (*Cut to a thunderstruck Scootaloo; she continues o.s.*) —*take off!*

(*The ears and violet eyes both drop despondently toward the stage; cut to Bloom and Sweetie.*)

**Sweetie:** Don’t listen to them, Scootaloo. (*They look off toward her.*) Scootaloo?

(*Cut to just behind the flightless filly, now watching a couple of her classmates doing loop-the-loops under Rainbow’s supervision.*)

**Sweetie:** (*from o.s.*) You okay?

(*Scootaloo tries a few test flaps, then shifts to all business.*)

**Scootaloo:** This routine isn’t working how it is. We’ve gotta rethink my part in the whole thing.

**Sweetie:** *What?*

**Bloom:** Why?

**Scootaloo:** If we want to win, I’m gonna have to fly!

**Sweetie:** Is that even possible?

**Bloom:** And by tomorrow?

**Scootaloo:** (*crossing to them*) Maybe I can fly if I work twice as hard! (*She flaps madly and hovers just off the stage.*) See?

(*But only for a moment; down she goes with a thud and grunt. Close-up of her face.*)

**Scootaloo:** Maybe three times as hard.

**Bloom:** (*from o.s.*) Golly. I don’t know, Scootaloo. (*Back to the others.*) I don’t think that’s the problem. (*Scootaloo stands up.*)

**Scootaloo:** Well, I know this for sure. Flying is the only way we’re gonna win. (*galloping past, jumping off edge*) So it’s back to practice! (*Sound of wings beating furiously.*)

**Sweetie:** (*to Bloom*) Is this a good idea?

**Scootaloo:** (*now o.s.*) Whoooaaa!

(*What follows is another thud, this one vigorous enough to shake the camera, and a grunt from her hard landing. Bloom and Sweetie wince; cut to Scootaloo, tumbled on the grass.*)

**Scootaloo:** I’ll just work four times as hard! (*Tilt up to the others.*)

**Bloom:** (*to Sweetie*) Probably not.

(*Dissolve to an expanse of twilit sky and hills, and pan/tilt down to the stage in time with Scootaloo’s frustrated sigh. The Crusaders have cleared away all the props except for the hoop, which has been stripped of its paper; Bloom wears her green hoof streamers, while the violet one for Sweetie’s horn lies next to her.*)

**Scootaloo:** Guys, guys, guys! Try it again!

**Bloom:** (*yawning*) But we’ve been rehearsin’ all the livelong day. We’re gettin’ tired.

**Scootaloo:** Fine. We’ll skip to my big impressive flying entrance.

(*She turns away during this line, the camera panning to frame Bloom and Sweetie; they trade a very skeptical glance.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*demonstrating moves*) So you’ve done the do-si-do to the left, then to the right— (*Bloom and Sweetie again, picking up the hoop; she continues o.s.*) —and then there’s the hoop. (*Back to her, leaping toward it.*) Then I come in…

(*Even with her wings going like mad, she cannot sustain enough altitude to carry her all the way and ends up thumping onto her belly as she reaches the hoop. Bloom and Sweetie let it drop.*)

**Scootaloo:** Not quite what I had in mind. (*She stands up.*) We’ll just… (*Groan.*) …try that part again. (*Straining, she hovers clear of the stage and o.s.*)

**Bloom:** (*to Sweetie*) I liked our routine the way it was.

**Sweetie:** Me too. But all she cares about now is flying.

**Scootaloo:** (*from o.s.*) Don’t worry! (*jumping/hovering across stage*) I’ll be flying high tomorrow on our final run-through for Rainbow Dash. I’m gonna get this, you’ll see.

(*She finally makes it all the way past them and o.s.; a thud and tremor come back, and Bloom shoots an unconvinced look to Sweetie. Dissolve to Rainbow in front of the stage the following day, facing the closed curtain.*)

**Rainbow:** Okay, Cutie Mark Crusaders! This is your final run before you show it at the stadium tomorrow. (*hovering wildly*) I know you’re gonna absolutely, positively—

(*She cuts herself off just as on the previous day and descends to the grass in a more controlled manner.*)

**Rainbow:** —have a lot of fun! (*Forced chuckle.*) Okay, go!

(*At the sound of her whistle, the camera cuts to just behind her and zooms in on the stage as the curtain opens. The scenery is slightly different from the Crusaders’ original presentation, in that the clouds are rearranged and the platform in front of the mountains has been removed.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*from o.s.*) Ponyville!

(*She is lowered into view on the central cloud from which she emerged in the first run-through, blue wing streamers waving to full length. Bloom and Sweetie trudge in from stage right and left, respectively, their respective streamers dragging across the boards.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*with a slight, fatigued sigh*) Home of the…um… (*She stops her wings; streamers go limp.*)

**Bloom, Sweetie:** (*softly, prompting her*) Friendship!

**Scootaloo:** Uh, friendship! Right. (*Others cross to stage left.*) Uh, there are four—no.

(*Close-up of the dispirited unicorn, followed closely by the earth pony.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*from o.s.*) Three kinds of ponies. (*Bloom yawns.*)

**Sweetie:** (*whispering ,prodding her*) Left! Left! (*Both cross back.*)

**Bloom:** I’m sorry! I’m just tired! (*They stop at center stage.*) And then I dip, and then we turn, and—

(*Punctuated respectively by a lean forward that causes the fluffy red tail to whip up and smack Sweetie in the face, then a pivot that causes the two heads to knock together. Cut to a disbelieving Rainbow.*)

**Bloom:** (*from o.s.*) Sorry!

(*The hoop for the grand finale—now covered over with fresh paper—is lifted into position, but not without considerable effort by both fillies. The sheet bulges from behind but does not break, and they drop the hoop to reveal Scootaloo hovering behind it, having totally failed her big flying entrance. She has shed her wing streamers.*)

**Scootaloo:** Ta-da!

(*Down she goes on her belly, heaving for breath. Cut to Rainbow.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*from o.s.*) So? What’d you think?

**Rainbow:** (*scratching her head*) That’s…you know…good and all. (*Nervous chuckle.*)

(*Back to the stage, where Scootaloo has moved to the front while her friends slump sullenly in the background.*)

**Rainbow:** (*from o.s.*) I just thought, maybe possibly you might want to go back to, say…

(*Back to her on the end of this line.*)

**Rainbow:** …the first version of the act, which was, I don’t know, what’s the word…better? (*The stage again; Scootaloo’s mood deflates as she continues o.s.*) Just do the routine as it was. (*Her again.*) Don’t mess with success, right?

(*She gets down to business.*)

**Rainbow:** Seriously. (*Hover off the ground.*) Now I need to… (*flying to two fillies nearby*) …go coach these other ponies. (*following them o.s.*) And don’t forget, we’ve gotta catch the early train for the Crystal Empire. (*Cut to a downcast Scootaloo; she continues o.s.*) See you in the morning!

(*Low spirits turn into panic as the camera zooms out to frame all three Crusaders; Bloom and Sweetie discard their streamers.*)

**Scootaloo:** What are we gonna do? We’re competing tomorrow and I still can’t fly! (*getting an idea*) Unless…

**Sweetie:** I’m just too tired. (*She sits on her haunches.*) I can’t keep going!

**Bloom:** Me too. (*Cut to her and Scootaloo; sudden burst of anger.*) I’m tired, I’m hungry, and now I hate this routine! (*pointing*) It feels like it’s all about you now!

**Sweetie:** (*from o.s.*) She’s right. (*Cut to her, standing again.*) It’s like you don’t even need us anymore.

**Scootaloo:** Of course I need you! Without you two, who’s gonna hold up the hoop?

**Bloom:** (*groaning disgustedly*) You don’t listen to yourself! (*walking off; soft sigh*) Forget it! (*now o.s.*) I’m goin’ home to get some sleep!

**Scootaloo:** (*to Sweetie, accusingly*) So, are you gonna leave me too?

**Sweetie:** (*walking past her*) We’ve gotta catch the early train to the Crystal Empire. I better get some rest. See you in the morning, Scootaloo.

(*The now-solitary pegasus aims a withering glare back at her wings and starts flapping.*)

**Scootaloo:** Come on, Scootaloo! Do it for Ponyville! Just gotta try twenty times as hard!

(*She gets a few inches off the planks. Clock wipe to her, now noticeably fatigued.*)

**Scootaloo:** Thirty…times…as hard!

(*Another try, another hover, followed by a hard landing. Clock wipe to her under the full moon and night sky, wings cranking away but with only one side of her body lifted clear.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*even more tired*) Just…a little…harder!

(*And down she goes on her other side. Another clock wipe, and morning has come in time with yet another try that ends in a wipeout on the wood. Scootaloo sighs heavily, noticing a butterfly that flits lazily past.*)

**Scootaloo:** I can’t fly. (*sighing again*) I just… (*Face down on the stage.*) …can’t.

(*Dissolve to a train idling at the Ponyville station.*)

**Conductor:** (*from behind it*) Crystal Empire! All aboard!

(*Cut to the platform; he and the passengers, including Snips/Snails and Diamond/Silver, haul their luggage toward the waiting car doors. Bloom and Sweetie gallop frantically into view and start looking all around, even climbing on top of foals and gear.*)

**Sweetie:** Scootaloo?…Where is she?

**Bloom:** She’d better get here soon. This here train is ’bout to leave!

**Scootaloo:** (*from o.s., listlessly*) Here I am. (*Cut to her on the platform; the others cross to her.*)

**Bloom:** We were scared you were gonna miss the train.

**Scootaloo:** I…I’m not going.

**Bloom, Sweetie:** *What?!?*

**Scootaloo:** I’m the weak link. (*flapping wings*) If I go and fall, flop, or do anything but fly, I’m gonna blow it for you two.

**Sweetie:** I can’t believe you’re quitting on us!

**Scootaloo:** (*anger flaring*) But you’re better off without me!

**Sweetie:** But that’s not true, Scootaloo!

**Bloom:** (*bitterly*) You know what, Sweetie Belle? Forget it! If she’s gonna quit, we don’t want her—and we don’t need her!

**Scootaloo:** Fine! (*She turns her face away.*)

**Bloom:** Fine! (*Ditto.*)

**Sweetie:** (*wearily, averting eyes*) Fine. (*Train whistle sounds.*)

**Conductor:** (*from o.s.*) All aboard!

(*This is the pair’s cue to clump across the platform, leaving Scootaloo alone once again. Her indignation melts into uncertainty and regret as the sound of the engine’s chuffing drifts across to her, and the camera zooms out as it picks up speed. She is by herself on the platform, nursing her doubts and fears as the view fades to black.*)

Act Three

(*Opening shot: fade in to the interior of the train’s rearmost car. Bloom and Sweetie gaze glumly out the window at its end, forelegs propped on the sill, and climb down to look at each other after a moment as the camera zooms out. Other fillies have taken most of the seats, but this is no concern for Rainbow, who flies eagerly over to the pair.*)

**Rainbow:** How’s my favorite routine going today? Oh, I just can’t keep it in. I want you to win so bad! (*imitating timpani, facing left and right*) Then Scootaloo does that… (*Backflip, imitating rush of wind.*) …through the hoop!

(*Her goofy grin is met by two downcast expressions.*)

**Bloom:** Well, there ain’t gonna be a Scootaloo.

**Sweetie:** She’s staying home.

**Rainbow:** (*flabbergasted*) She’s *what?!?*

**Bloom:** She got it in her head that the only way to represent Ponyville was by flyin’ in our routine. When she couldn’t do it, she told us that…she was quittin’.

**Rainbow:** And then you tried to stop her from doing that, right? (*She swivels her head to face each speaker in turn.*)

**Sweetie:** Well, actually, we kinda told her…

**Bloom:** …uh, that we didn’t want a quitter.

**Rainbow:** (*hoof to face*) Hang on. *Are you nuts?!?* You’re a team! And a team *never* leaves a friend behind.

(*Bloom and Sweetie ponder these words, contrition clearly stenciled on both faces, and Rainbow rockets across the car to an emergency-stop pull cord. Nip in teeth and yank, ringing a bell; cut to a long shot of the train as it screeches to a halt fairly close to the middle of nowhere. The car door bursts open so Rainbow can fly out.*)

**Rainbow:** Come on! (*The two fillies jump to the ground; Diamond and Silver look on from the next car.*)

**Diamond:** (*taunting*) Sorry you can’t make it! (*as the train starts again*) We’ll take a picture for you from the winners’ circle!

(*Cut to a justifiably disgruntled Bloom and Sweetie; their nemeses’ laughter drifts toward them.*)

**Sweetie:** I do *not* like them one bit. (*Zoom out slightly; Rainbow hovers behind them, looking back along the tracks.*)

**Rainbow:** Put on some speed, girls!

(*Two wings and eight hooves start tearing it up toward home sweet home. Cut to a room in which Scootaloo lunges up to rip a couple of posters off the walls. Each is marked with a trio of horseshoes—gold, silver, bronze—similar to the Olympic rings, signifying it as a piece of Games artwork; the first shows three rearing gold/silver/bronze pony silhouettes atop a medalists’ podium marked with a laurel wreath, while the other depicts a gold pegasus flying high over the planet. They are rolled up and stuffed into a trash can—and her trusty scooter rattles in after them. Scootaloo sits on her haunches in this room—her bedroom, judging from the furniture visible behind her—and lets tears collect in her eyes until one spills down her cheek. The creak of the o.s. door startles her out of this deep blue funk.*)

**Rainbow:** (*from o.s., supremely ticked off*) *Throwing away your scooter?!?*

(*Zoom out. The older pegasus hovers at the partially opened door as the younger one gapes back at her.*)

**Scootaloo:** Rainbow Dash? (*She flies in.*)

**Rainbow:** Yep. But not just me.

(*A light kick opens the door the rest of the way, revealing Bloom and Sweetie behind it; they stitch on big grins, causing Scootaloo to instinctively smile in return. Just as quickly, though, she squelches it in favor of a scowl and turns away.*)

**Scootaloo:** I don’t want to see them. And what are they doing here, anyway? They’re supposed to be on the train.

**Bloom:** (*stepping into room*) We’re not goin’.

**Sweetie:** (*ditto*) Not without you, Scootaloo.

(*A few more tears start to gather in Scootaloo’s eyes as Rainbow hunkers down close to her.*)

**Rainbow:** What’s gotten into you, Scootaloo?

**Scootaloo:** (*voice breaking*) I didn’t want to ruin their chance to win just because I couldn’t fly.

**Rainbow:** And who said you had to? (*Scootaloo turns to her.*)

**Scootaloo:** But flying’s what pegasus ponies are supposed to do. You flew when you carried the flag in the Games.

**Rainbow:** But that was me. You’re you. And it just doesn’t matter if you can fly or not. (*Cut to Scootaloo; she continues o.s.*) Your routine was amazing ’cause it represented exactly what makes Ponyville special. (*Cut to frame both; Bloom and Sweetie cross to them.*) You *do* still know what that is, right?

**Sweetie:** Friendship.

**Bloom:** Three kinds of ponies livin’ together as friends, just like us. Earth ponies…

**Sweetie:** …unicorns…

**Scootaloo:** (*smiling*) …and pegasi. (*A sudden worry hits her.*) But, Rainbow Dash…what if… (*tearing up*) …what if my wings never grow? (*flapping them slowly; a few tears fall*) What if I never fly?

(*Rainbow lands next to her.*)

**Rainbow:** Listen, Scootaloo. Maybe you’ll fly someday, or maybe you won’t. (*gently tapping Scootaloo’s cheek*) You’re all kinds of awesome anyway. (*knowingly, hovering just off ground to give her a noogie*) Who’s the toughest little pony in town?

***Slow, faint drum cadence, growing slowly into a relaxed version of the Act One melody***

***(F major)***

**Sweetie:** Got the moves, got the mojo

**Bloom:** No harder-working pony around

**Scootaloo:** (*a bit reluctantly*) We are a trio

(*smiling*) Work as a team

(*They put their forelegs around each other’s shoulders.*)

**Crusaders:** We’ll be the first ponies out on the flag-waving scene

(*They split apart, their old confidence fully restored.*)

***G flat major***

**Scootaloo:** So let’s get to the Crystal Empire and let’s do the routine as it was! And let’s win this thing!

***Original style/tempo/instrumentation as in the final chorus***

(*Cut to the exterior of this house. The front door bursts open, Rainbow flying out with Scootaloo close behind on her scooter and wearing helmet/goggles/pads. Tied to the rear end are two long ropes, each held by one Crusader on a pair of skis; they also wear full safety gear and have the free ends in their teeth.*)

**Crusaders:** We’ve got hearts as strong as horses

(*The four ponies hurtle down the street and the Crusaders swerve through the spectators, scaring more than a few of them.*)

We’ve got hearts as strong as horses

(*Scootaloo starts in fear; up ahead is a board propped against a house’s roof. She throws it a scheming grin, the view briefly contracting to a horizontal strip that frames her narrowed eyes, and snaps her wings into maximum overdrive.*)

We’ve got hearts as strong as horses

(*Up the impromptu ramp she goes, catching a whole lot of air and briefly letting go of the handlebars as the Crusaders soar through the peak.*)

And we’re playing to win as we gallop to glory

(*Hit the ground, wheels still going flat out.*)

We can conquer any challenge we’re in

(*Granny Smith starts to cross the street, but stops upon seeing their approach and lifts one front hoof; in a slow-motion close-up, Scootaloo’s slaps against it for an airborne high five.*)

We’ve got hearts, hearts strong as horses

(*Normal motion resumes; the elderly mare smiles warmly after the trio, which blasts through the meadows bordering the Everfree Forest and then along the railroad tracks.*)

Hearts strong as horses

(*Now they go up and down a range of hills paralleling the tracks, not losing a bit of speed or control, and race through a field of flowers toward the camera.*)

***Song ends with a four-beat drum cadence followed by a stinger***

(*Snap to a pale yellow background just as Scootaloo’s face fills the screen, then cut to her launching herself through a hoop covered in paper of this color amid an explosion of confetti and streamers. The focus is on her, leaving the background—stadium seats packed with cheering ponies—as a multicolored blur for the moment. She touches down on the grassy surface and skids to a stop, filling the screen with dust. The view clears to show her standing proudly in front of a large Ponyville flag; here come Bloom and Sweetie from opposite sides, leaping up to balance on Scootaloo’s upraised front hooves just as they did on their first practice. The latter two no longer wear their gear.*)

**Crusaders:** PONYVILLE FOREVER! YAAAAY!

(*Cut to a slow pan across the applauding crowd, now seen in full focus, then dissolve to a lectern on a stage. It is decorated with a rearing-filly silhouette, and Ms. H steps up behind it. The crowd goes silent as she lifts herself to her hind legs and taps the lectern’s microphone, producing a bit of feedback. Cut to a slow pan along a line of young competitors, including a smugly grinning Diamond and Silver in ornate pink/white/pale yellow dresses. Snips and Snails are among them, as are the Crusaders; Scootaloo has discarded her gear as well.)*

**Ms. H:** (*from o.s., amplified*) In the Equestria Games, the Ponyville flag will be carried by… (*Back to her, smiling broadly.*) …Cutie Mark Crusaders!

(*It would be hard to say which response is louder—the crowd’s or the trio’s. Diamond and Silver take the news very badly, storming off with noses in air and sotto-voce snarls in throats. This shot picks out the pink shoes both are wearing on all four hooves. Dissolve to the stage, where the Crusaders stand in a line; Bloom and Sweetie each have a wreath of roses around their necks, and Ms. H carries one over to Scootaloo and settles it in place as Rainbow and Cheerilee look on from the side. The blue pegasus has finally put away her cap and whistle. Cut to just behind the three fillies; their ecstatic grins are cut off by Rainbow’s hovering approach and throat-clearing.*)

**Rainbow:** Look. What you three did was…acceptable.

**Ms. H:** (*from o.s.*) Acceptable? (*Eyes pop; cut to her.*) Acceptable? (*grinning hugely, freaking out*) Why, it was totally stupendously the single most amazing thing I’ve ever seen!

(*Back to Rainbow and the Crusaders, all floored by this outpouring of emotion from the staid mare; her laughter drifts across to them from o.s.*)

**Rainbow:** Contain your excitement, Ms. Harshwhinny. Remember—professionalism.

(*Ms. H straightens up and composes herself, clearing her throat.*)

**Ms. H:** (*stammering a bit*) Yes, well, I—

(*Chuckle; clear throat again; bug out, prompting a round of laughter from coach and fillies. In the midst of the levity, Scootaloo’s laughter stops as if slashed off by a knife and she glances toward her haunch; zoom in slowly on that patch of hide, but not close enough to obscure the smile that steals over her face.*)

**Scootaloo:** Do you know what this means, right?

**Bloom:** What?

**Scootaloo:** We are totally gonna get cutie marks in flag carrying! (*This poleaxes Rainbow.*)

**Bloom, Sweetie:** Yeah!

(*The full-grown daredevil flaps grumpily away, her body language broadcasting one simple thought: “Oh, no, not this again!” However, the Crusaders pay no mind and laugh some more as the view fades to black.*)