**SIMPLE WAYS**

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Prologue

(*Opening shot: fade in to a long shot of the town square during the day, with a considerable crowd gathered outside the town hall. Rainbow Dash flies down toward the gathering; cut to one bridge over the nearby stream, where her five friends are on the way in as she swoops to them.*)

**Rainbow:** Wow! I can’t believe how many ponies showed up!

(*During this line, the camera pans/zooms out to put them o.s. and frame the growing throng.*)

**Pinkie Pie:** (*from o.s.*) I can! I mean—

(*Overhead shot of the square; the group is at the back of the audience, and a lectern and a table with three chairs are set up in front of the steps. Mayor Mare walks toward the former, and three elderly citizens—one of whom is Granny Smith—are on the steps. Tilt slowly toward these four.*)

**Pinkie:** —finding out who the Ponyville Days pony of ceremonies is, is a pretty big deal!

(*Close-up of Mayor Mare, then pan to the table where the trio have taken their seats.*)

**Twilight Sparkle:** (*from o.s.*) I didn’t know Granny Smith was on the selection committee. (*Cut to her and Fluttershy on the end of this, then zoom out to frame Applejack alongside.*)

**Applejack:** Of course she is.

(*Head-on view of Mayor Mare and the three-pony committee. As Applejack continues, zoom in on Granny’s end of the table; a filly walks up, holding the string of a balloon in her teeth, and gets a pat on the head.*)

**Applejack:** (*from o.s.*) Ponyville Days celebrates the founding of Ponyville, and she was right there. (*Back to the group, now in the front row; Bulk Biceps stands nearby.*)

**Pinkie:** (*rapid fire; zoom in on her/Rarity as she speaks*) I’m glad the committee didn’t automatically pick me so everypony gets a chance to see how great being me actually is. Even though the festival is basically a party and the pony of ceremonies gets to organize the whole thing, so it would totally make sense if they did pick me.

(*By the time she finally stops, both Applejack and Rarity are shooting her dirty looks. A zoom out reveals that the feeling is shared by all the ponies in her immediate vicinity.*)

**Bulk:** Shhh!

(*There comes the sound of a microphone being tapped, then a brief whine of feedback.*)

**Mayor Mare:** (*from o.s.*) Citizens of Ponyville! (*Cut to her.*) This year’s applicants were all exceptional—

(*Cut to a pan through a group of them: clown; medieval knights; Derpy Hooves; a science nerd wearing a helmet sporting a model solar system, magnifying glass, and microscope; and a cadet from the Wonderbolts Academy.*)

**Mayor Mare:** (*from o.s.*) —but there can only be one Ponyville Days pony of ceremonies. (*Back to her.*) And that pony is…

(*At her glance toward the committee, the camera focus shifts to them. A brief round of whispers and nods is followed by the biggest gasp Pinkie has ever sucked in over the course of the series. She pulls in so much air, in fact, that her entire head inflates to ludicrous size and floats up like a balloon, taking the rest of her with it. Back to the lectern; Granny totters up, a note in her mouth, and sets it in position for Mayor Mare to read. The blue eyes behind the half-moon glasses pop in surprise, but this quickly gives way to a smile.*)

**Mayor Mare:** …Rarity!

(*Cut to a long shot of her among the crowd and zoom in quickly to their cheers.*)

**Applejack:** Hoo-wee! (*now o.s.*) All right, Rarity! (*She clasps hooves with Carrot Top.*)

**Rainbow:** (*from o.s.*) Yeah!

(*Whoop/laugh; now Amethyst Star gives Rarity a bouquet of roses, and the camera zooms out to frame Twilight crossing to her.*)

**Twilight:** Congratulations, Rarity. Do you know what you’re gonna do?

(*The unicorn’s blue eyes glance shrewdly toward the sound of something being wheeled in—a large and detailed scale model of the town pushed by a sweaty, grunting Spike, with red banners strung from the town hall roof. Cut to ground level within the assembly, the camera pointing up toward these as she and Twilight lean into view over them.*)

**Rarity:** (*innocently*) Oh, I might have a few ideas.

(*There is the faintest hint of smugness in the smile she gives Twilight, who returns a humoring one of her own. Fade to black.*)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(*Opening shot: fade in to the exterior of the Carousel Boutique. Zoom in slowly and dissolve to the ground-floor showroom, where a short runway has been set up. An easel and phonograph stand at its far end, in front of a closed curtain, and Rarity’s friends are gathered at the near one. Pinkie hops excitedly in place for a few moments, then freezes with only her front hooves in contact with the floor. Her head has returned to its normal dimensions.*)

**Pinkie:** (*jittering hooves madly*) I’m so excited for the festival, I can hardly stand up straight!

(*And she promptly topples forward, smacking her face into the floor and earning a disgusted eye roll from Rainbow.*)

**Twilight:** Me too. I’m glad Rarity was picked. I know she’ll add a touch of elegance to the whole thing.

**Applejack:** Prob’ly more than a touch.

(*The lights in the showroom come down, and the footlights placed along the runway’s end flick on as Pinkie stands up. Spike steps out from behind the curtain, sporting a dark blue-gray blazer, white shirt, and polka-dotted bow tie, and cranks up the phonograph. Clearing his throat and straightening his tie, he turns to face the audience; a subdued classical waltz begins and an overhead spotlight picks him out, now standing by the easel. He brings out a set of note cards and glances at them occasionally while speaking.*)

**Spike:** This year’s Ponyville Days Festival, designed by Rarity, will feature various high-class events such as…

(*The blank cover page is flipped backward to expose a charcoal sketch of a well-dressed earth pony stallion and mare sampling drinks. A pyramid of glasses and a punchbowl are laid out behind them. Close-up of the picture.*)

**Spike:** (*from o.s.*) …a silent cider auction and tasting.

**Other mares:** (*from o.s.*) Ooooh…

(*Page turn; here is a sketch of couples dancing near a fountain next to the town hall, beneath strings of hanging lights.*)

**Spike:** (*from o.s.*) A Ponyville gala in Town Square.

**Other mares:** (*from o.s.*) Ahhhh…

(*Page turn: this sketch presents several mares walking a runway and showing off their classy outfits for a densely packed crowd.*)

**Spike:** (*from o.s.*) And, of course, a Ponyville fashion show.

**Other five:** (*from o.s.*) Ooooh… (*Cut to him.*)

**Spike:** This year’s Ponyville Days Festival pony of ceremonies creates shimmering *couture* of her own designs.

(*Pan to the spotlit curtain on the end of this; it opens to reveal Rarity, clad in an ornate light blue gown whose sash is liberally studded with gemstones. The necklace barely visible behind a ruffled neckline, and the rings in her ears and on her horn, are similarly accented.*)

**Rarity:** (*dramatically, stepping along runway*) And the theme is… (*emphasizing every word*) “Small-Town Chic”! (*Demure, winning smile; the record ends.*)

**Twilight:** Wow, Rarity! You really have put a lot of effort into this.

**Applejack:** I’ll say.

**Fluttershy:** Oh, I think it’s going to be magical.

**Rarity:** (*flustered; voice catches*) Do you really think so? (*Pinkie bounces up to runway height.*)

**Pinkie:** Are you kidding? I can’t wait! (*Down again; now Rarity smiles, reassured.*)

**Rarity:** Oh, that’s such a relief.

(*Spike wheels a set of steps up to the edge.*)

**Rarity:** But of course, I couldn’t possibly do it all on my own. (*The room lights come up; she descends and crosses the floor, suddenly panicked.*) The festival is in three days!

**Rainbow:** Pinkie Pie and I can hang lights and decorations in the town square.

**Applejack:** And I can get Sweet Apple Acres all ready for the cider tastin’. (*Rarity turns back to them with a gasp and smile.*)

**Rarity:** Oh, that’s just perfect! And now, Twilight, if you and Fluttershy wouldn’t mind helping with the fashion show…

**Twilight:** Of course!

**Fluttershy:** I’d be honored.

**Rarity:** (*turning away from them*) …I can focus on the thing I’m worried about most of all.

**Other mares:** What? (*She wheels back once more.*)

**Rarity:** (*with mounting fervor*) Creating a Ponyville Days Festival fantastic enough to impress… (*Deep breath.*) …Trenderhoof!

(*A pan across the rest of the bunch points up their total lack of recognition at this name. Stop on Applejack and Fluttershy trading a look as if to say, “Okay, which one of us has to bite the bullet here?” The blond mare takes the risk by speaking up first.*)

**Applejack:** Uh, who’s Trenderhoof?

**Rarity:** (*offended*) What?! (*trotting across floor*) How can you not know who Trenderhoof is?

(*Cut to an expanse of purple curtain. As she continues, it rises under her control to show the group on the other side and the camera shifts to frame the fitting room it had blocked off: The back wall is plastered with assorted pictures and silhouettes of a brown, blue-eyed unicorn stallion with a two-tone blond mane. He wears a green sweater with orange trim at cuffs and collar, as well as white-framed “hipster” eyeglasses and a small patch of beard stubble on his chin. The hearts that adorn some of the silhouettes, and the items strewn about the table under the pictures—including a lock of mane hair and the tablecloth with his picture and a couple of heart-headed arrows pointing at it—tell just how infatuated she is with this stallion. A few other items, such as ticket stubs and a badge on a lanyard, are stuck on the wall among the pictures.*)

**Rarity:** Trenderhoof is only *the* most amazing, handsomest travel writer to have ever traveled or written! (*Gasp; cut to a slow rove across the display. She continues o.s.*) Before Las Pegasus became an Equestria travel destination, *he* wrote about it. Before the culinary revolution in Trottingham, *he* discovered it! (*Another gasp; back to her and Twilight. She levitates a poster over into her grip.*) He knows what’s going to be hot even before it’s tepid!

(*Cradling the sheet, she makes a tiny funny giddy noise in the back of her throat and turns it into a giggle.*)

**Twilight:** (*nudging her, teasingly*) Sounds like somepony has a little bit of a crush. (*Rarity floats the poster away.*)

**Rarity:** Oh, Twilight… (*She falls back and is caught by the latter.*) …“crush” doesn’t even begin to describe it. (*Stand up; pinch Twilight’s cheeks.*) He’s practically divine. (*twirling in place*) I can’t believe he’s coming!

(*Now on the edge of a hyperventilation fit, she pulls a different picture off the wall and gazes at it while laughing and muttering inarticulately. Pan from her to frame five perplexed mares, who let their eyes tell each other just how strange they all think this is, and one smiling baby dragon who is either oblivious or cares not a whit.*)

(*Dissolve to a stretch of railroad tracks and pan to follow a train as it rolls up to the Ponyville station. Twilight and Rarity are waiting on the platform, but are soon lost from sight behind the clouds of steam that billow out as the train comes to a stop. The view soon clears thanks to a paper fan being magically waved by Rarity, who has shed her entire formal ensemble.*)

**Rarity:** Thank you ever so much for joining me, Twilight. (*putting fan away*) I don’t think I could have met Trenderhoof on my own.

**Twilight:** It’s no problem, but you shouldn’t be nervous about meeting him.

(*Within seconds, the passengers are streaming out onto the platform around them. Rarity’s eyes flit from one to another as if she has just downed three gallons of high-octane espresso.*)

**Rarity:** Is that him? Do you see him? Twilight? Is he there?

(*Cut to their perspective of the new arrivals, one of whom is Hayseed Turniptruck.*)

**Twilight:** Uhhh… (*Quick pan to another group.*) …I’m not sure. (*Back to the pair, Rarity about to freak out completely.*)

**Rarity:** You don’t suppose he’s decided not to come? Twilight, I don’t see him! What if he doesn’t arrive? (*She hunches down, front hooves to head.*) The whole festival will be a disaster! (*Zoom out slightly; others are now watching, and she sits up.*) TWILIGHT, WHERE IS HE?!?

(*Cut to an overhead shot of the platform, showing that every stallion, mare, and foal on it has begun to stare directly at the incipient meltdown. There is no sound following her outburst except the singing tone of escaping steam from the engine; after a very long and uncomfortable pause, Rarity clears her throat.*)

**Rarity:** Sorry. (*Cut to her and Twilight.*)

**Twilight:** Rarity, you have to get a hold of yourself. I mean, you haven’t even met him yet.

(*Ground level, at the platform’s edge. Four long brown legs step out, the front two covered by orange-trimmed sweater sleeves marked with argyle patches up near the shoulders, and the camera zooms out to frame Trenderhoof from the neck down. He is tall and slender, with an argyle-pattern cutie mark and a comb in his sweater pocket, and his tail is cut short. A tilt up brings his head into view; with his face turned back toward the train, he opens his eyes and aims a smiling sidewise glance toward the station. While Twilight looks straight toward him, Rarity snaps her head up and lets her eyes constrict almost to points for a moment. They dilate again and her mouth falls slightly open as hearts rise and burst in the air around her, the ambient light dimming itself. Cut to Trenderhoof, who flashes a toothy grin as the same effects play out around him and the camera zooms in slightly, then back to the pair. Reality has reasserted itself in the surroundings at this point, and Rarity pulls in a few bushels of air and dives to huddle behind Twilight, clutching at the violet legs.*)

**Twilight:** What’s wrong?

**Rarity:** (*whispering, excitedly*) Shhh! It’s him, it’s him, it’s him, is it…him, it’s him…him, it’s him, he’s here, he’s here! (*She pulls Twilight’s tail down to cover her head on the end of this.*)

**Twilight:** Well, go up and talk to him!

**Rarity:** (*grabbing more tightly, barely choking out the words*) I can’t!

(*The Princess throws her a hard glare and kick-starts her horn. Cut to Trenderhoof, who now has his comb in his teeth and is returning it to his pocket; Rarity is magically shoved across to him, her hooves squealing on the planks. Once the spell dies out, she lets out a very nervous giggle and rubs one foreleg against the other.*)

**Rarity:** Um, hi— (*catching herself, clearing her throat*) —hello, Mr. Trenderhoof. I am Rarity, and I have been chosen as pony of ceremonies for the Ponyville Days Festival.

(*She giggles and blushes a bit. Trenderhoof’s voice carries overtones of the upper-crust “Long Island Lockjaw” accent, as well as a trace of effeminate character.*)

**Trenderhoof:** Please, call me Trend.

(*The blush is joined by a very twitchy eye, and both of these give way to a fainting spell that drops her like a ton of bricks. Twilight, who has seen the whole thing up close and in full detail, puts a disbelieving hoof to her face.*)

(*Wipe to the town square. As various residents go about their business, Rarity leads Trenderhoof past the town hall.*)

**Rarity:** And over here will be the climax of the festival—the Ponyville Days gala. Music! Dancing! (*Chuckle.*) And, of course, a locally sourced menu of delicious treats.

**Trenderhoof:** Reminds me of the “Spring Fling Meets Manehattan” wedding I wrote about in *Gallop and Prance*.

**Rarity:** Exactly! I-I can’t even describe how much your work has influenced me.

(*Wipe to the pair topping a rise well outside the village proper. Just ahead of them is Sweet Apple Acres.*)

**Rarity:** And finally, Sweet Apple Acres. (*They stop.*) Ponyville’s core… (*laughing*) …so to speak—where our quaint little hamlet began. (*Pan slowly away from them across the fields.*)

**Trenderhoof:** Oh, breathtaking!

(*The movement puts him o.s. on the end of this. From here, cut to the two unicorns walking across the homestead.*)

**Trenderhoof:** I’ve heard about it, of course. But to see it in *vérité*…to stand on the soil of a working farm! (*Close-up; he hunches down to study the dirt he has scratched up.*) You can really feel the authenticity.

**Rarity:** (*from o.s.*) Oh, yes, uh… (*To her.*) …they—they really do grow apples here. **Trenderhoof:** (*stepping toward her*) Thank you, Rarity. (*touching her shoulder*) Thank you for bringing me here. This farm is truly something special. (*She sighs; both look toward the main barn.*)

**Rarity:** I had planned to transform it into an elegant country inn for the festival… (*They turn their eyes warmly to each other.*) …but now I see just how special it is *au naturel*.

**Trenderhoof:** *Au naturel* indeed.

(*Cut to his mental picture of the unicorn mare, rendered in soft focus and ringed with white. A faint blush comes over her alluringly smiling face as hearts pop around her and the camera zooms in slowly to an extreme close-up. From here, the view cuts to a close-up of Trenderhoof, with normal lighting and focus. He wears a gentle smile of his own, leaning in slightly, but starts with an abrupt grimace of surprise and a sound not far off from a donkey’s bray. His perspective: he looks past Rarity as normal light comes up, the pupils of her eyes briefly going heart-shaped, and his eyes stop on Applejack eyeing a loaded apple tree some distance back. She has set a few empty tubs around its base and is wearing quite a few splotches of dirt all over herself.*)

**Trenderhoof:** Who…is… (*Head-on view.*) …*that?*

(*Rarity turns her head just in time to see the farmer buck the tree, bringing down enough fruit to fill up the tubs. She wipes her forehead with one dirty hoof, and now the blue eyes behind the hipster glasses pop very wide; hearts burst around his slack-jawed expression, which rings itself in white and goes into soft focus. Cut to his perspective again; Rarity moves to block his view of Applejack, but his focus stays on the background.*)

**Rarity:** Who? Applejack?

(*Trenderhoof eases her aside just before Applejack bucks the tree again; back to his stunned countenance, then cut to a soft-focus shot of the earth pony. In slow motion, apples tumble down around her and she whips her head from side to side to throw off sweat. She ends with the ponytail of her mane draped fetchingly over one shoulder and a come-hither look in the green eyes. Back to the two unicorns, both seen normally; the clearing of the mare’s throat does nothing to snap the smitten stallion out of his reverie.*)

**Rarity:** Why are you staring at her like that?

**Trenderhoof:** (*walking slowly past her*) I’ve seen a lot in my travels, but I’ve never beheld such beauty!

(*Soft-focus close-up of Applejack, holding up a bitten apple and wiping juice from her mouth.*)

**Trenderhoof:** (*from o.s., dreamily*) Applejack… (*Back to him and Rarity.*) …the pony of my dreams.

(*Zoom in slowly past him to the thunderstruck white mare, whose eyes and ears droop in unfathomable disappointment, then snap to black.*)

Act Two

(*Opening shot: fade in to the exterior of the Carousel Boutique. Zoom in slowly.*)

**Spike:** (*from inside*) Rarity?

(*Cut to him, looking for her as he crosses the showroom. He has done away with his formal duds from the earlier presentation and is carrying an ornate cup.*)

**Spike:** Rarity! Hello?

(*The sound of muffled sobbing freezes him where he stands. Turning toward one of the fitting rooms, he notices a dribble of water that has oozed out across the floor from underneath its curtains. His feet splash in the wetness, and when he pulls the curtain aside, he finds Rarity collapsed at her Trenderhoof shrine and bawling her eyes out. The crying jag is, in fact, so severe that streaks of mascara have run down her cheeks.*)

**Spike:** I brought my cider-tasting cup. (*holding it up*) Are you ready to go try the samples?

(*She flings her forelegs wide, knocking it away to bounce across the floor.*)

**Rarity:** (*sobbing*) What’s the point? (*Zoom in slowly.*)

**Spike:** Rarity, what’s wrong?

**Rarity:** (*small voice*) Nothing.

**Spike:** Is it something I said?

**Rarity:** (*even smaller voice*) He doesn’t like me.

**Spike:** What?

**Rarity:** He doesn’t like me.

**Spike:** Rarity, I-I can’t hear what you— (*She rises to her hind legs.*)

**Rarity:** (*full voice, grabbing his shoulders*) He doesn’t like me because he has a crush on Applejack, even though I’ve had a crush on him ever since the beginning of time, and it’s *not fair!*

(*These last two words come with enough force to throw him to the floor; it takes him a moment to sit up.*)

**Spike:** Trenderhoof doesn’t like you? (*Stand.*) That’s ridiculous! (*She has sunk to her belly, facing him.*)

**Rarity:** Oh, Spike… (*turning back to the shrine*) …how could you ever know what it’s like to be… (*unrolling a poster*) …totally obsessed with a pony… (*Sob.*) …only to find out they’re obsessed with some… (*Sob.*) …pony else?

(*The little dragon casts a quizzical glance aside—“what am I, chopped liver?”*)

**Rarity:** (*turning to him*) I mean, what could Applejack possibly have that I don’t?

(*He just shrugs and gives her a noncommittal “beats me” grunt. When the camera next focuses on Rarity, the runny mascara is gone and she has stopped crying. Zoom in slowly.*)

**Rarity:** (*rubbing her chin*) Hmmm…

(*Dissolve to a close-up of Applejack walking down a street, cleaned up from her chores and with two full baskets of apples slung on her back. Trenderhoof quickly drops in behind, but his intrusion begins to irritate her.*)

**Trenderhoof:** You know, I have such respect for the work ethic of earth ponies. (*She bites it back and forces a smile.*)

**Applejack:** Uh, gee, thanks. Granny Smith always said, “Pick an apple a day and keep trouble away.”

**Trenderhoof:** How many varieties of apples do you think there are?

**Applejack:** Uh, on the farm or in all of Equestria? (*He floats one out of her baskets.*) ’Cause—

**Trenderhoof:** I once had an apple so rare, they thought it was extinct. (*They stop.*) I ate four of them.

(*One chomp, and the fruit is gone—except for the spatters of pulp, juice, and seeds that hit the ground and her face. Applejack aims a hairy eyeball back at him and wipes herself clean.*)

**Applejack:** (*dryly*) Is that a fact? (*He leans in close.*)

**Trenderhoof:** That’s my thing. I-I take the mundane, the simple, the unappreciated, and I make it relatable.

(*As he speaks, the camera cuts to his perspective and pans to follow his gesturing hoof around the area. “Mundane”: point out an elderly mare using a walker to take a stroll. “Simple”: Bon Bon and a filly. “Unappreciated”: Derpy Hooves in conversation with a stallion. All react with surprise and/or mild irritation at their sobriquets. Cut back to a close-up of Trenderhoof as he finishes; on the next line, pan slightly to show Applejack heading away from him down the street.*)

**Applejack:** Well, I hope you can relate to Ponyville. (*He inserts himself in her path, walking backward.*)

**Trenderhoof:** Me too. But enough about me. I want to know about you. What do apples mean to…Applejack?

**Applejack:** Look. (*Both stop.*) I’m glad you’re interested in Ponyville and all, but I’m kinda busy with my chores. And if I can’t get ’em done, there won’t be a Ponyville Days Festival for you to write about.

**Rarity:** (*from o.s.*) Well, that will never do!

(*The green eyes bug out at the interruption, while the blue ones behind the lenses stay firmly fixed on her. Zoom out at ground level to between Rarity’s forelegs, which sport fancy white boots with pink trim and accents. A straw basket hangs into view above them.*)

**Applejack:** (*suppressing a laugh*) Rarity, what are you wearin’?

(*A head-on shot of the white unicorn answers that one in full detail. Boots on all four hooves; a broad-brimmed straw sun hat with a pink band and studded with plenty of gems; a lacy pink apron/shirt front similarly decorated; the basket, lined with lace, hung on a strap around her neck.*)

**Rarity:** What? This old thing? (*Back to Applejack and Trenderhoof; hearts drift up from his head as he keeps staring at her.*)

**Applejack:** Aren’t you too busy plannin’ the festival to keep makin’ new outfits for it? (*Zoom out slightly; Rarity crosses to them.*)

**Rarity:** I am, but the thought of hauling apples inspired me. And I just couldn’t stop myself!

**Applejack:** (*grimacing*) Really?

**Rarity:** If there’s one thing I love, it’s hauling apples.

(*These words, and a bit of playing with her mane, do nothing whatever to distract Trenderhoof’s attention but do rub Applejack exactly the wrong way. The befuddled stallion moves closer to her.*)

**Trenderhoof:** I’m growing fond of it myself.

(*She shoots him a dirty look, the camera zooming in to a close-up of her face.*)

**Applejack:** (*under her breath*) Maybe you two should try it sometime. (*Longer shot, framing all three.*)

**Trenderhoof:** I’m feeling a tad inspired.

(*Striking a pose, he begins to address himself toward Rarity, to her growing delight.*)

Without farm life, there’d be such disparity.

These thoughts I think with great clarity.

Apples high to the sky,

She’s the one of my eye.

(*leaning to Rarity, caressing her chin; zoom in slowly*)

That fruit-hauling pony named…

(*A quick swivel, and he has transferred the touch to…*)

…Applejack!

(*The mare whose name would have finished the rhyme lets her jaw drop fully open in total shock, a most unladylike bray issuing from her throat. A heart drifts upward from her head and breaks in two, the pieces evaporating in the air, and the camera zooms in as she works her way from disbelief to a venomous glare at her new rival.*)

(*Dissolve to a close-up of Spike standing in one of the fields.*)

**Spike:** Rarity…

(*Zoom out. A plow stands nearby, with Rarity examining the ropes tied to its hitches.*)

**Spike:** …why do you want to plow a field?

**Rarity:** (*dropping ropes, circling behind plow*) Is it me, or could this use a splash of color… (*uneasily*) …and maybe a wash?

**Spike:** Don’t we need to check on the gala decorations?

**Rarity:** (*nudging him away*) Yes, yes, of course. But Trend obviously has a thing for farm life. If I can’t convince him that I’m just as much of a farmhoof as Applejack, I’ll never get him interested in the festival.

**Spike:** (*not buying it*) The festival. Right. (*She lifts his chin.*)

**Rarity:** And I do appreciate your help ever so much. (*hugging him*) I couldn’t do a thing without you, Spikey-poo.

(*As she turns o.s., his mood improves considerably thanks to her flattery.*)

**Spike:** Well, that’s what friends are for. (*A bit of clattering under his words.*)

**Rarity:** (*from o.s.*) Right.

(*She is now sitting on top of the plow and holding the free rope-ends.*)

**Rarity:** So…

(*Snapping them as if they were reins—and thus irrevocably confirming the impression that she has no idea whatsoever how to use a plow—she throws her weight forward as if trying to spur a horse.*)

**Rarity:** Come on… (*Grunt; another snap.*) …farm…thing!

(*She heaves a dejected sigh and, in close-up, slumps over and wipes sweat from her forehead.*)

**Rarity:** (*sighing again, petulantly*) How does Applejack do it?

**Applejack:** (*from o.s.*) Well, it would help if the harness was on right!

(*Her head snaps up and swivels toward the voice; zoom out to show Applejack and Trenderhoof crossing the field to her and Spike.*)

**Applejack:** What are you doin’?

**Rarity:** I am simply lending a hoof with the chores… (*smiling, to Trenderhoof*) …which I love doing ever so much. (*Cut to the new arrivals; Applejack cocks a brow at this.*)

**Applejack:** (*walking o.s. toward her*) Well, if you’re still interested *after* the festival, I can teach you all about it.

(*Longer shot of the area. She has donned a hitching collar similar to the one used by Big Macintosh and tied the ropes to its pegs.*)

**Applejack:** But right now, I need to get the plowin’ done, if you don’t mind.

(*She begins to gallop on the end of this, and as soon as the ropes go taut, they drag the plow away to start cutting a furrow in the soil. Rarity is flung clear and caught by Trenderhoof so that only her rear half hits the ground.*)

**Rarity:** (*come-hither mode*) Not at all.

(*His eyes pop to the size of poker chips, and he unceremoniously drops her in favor of staring after Applejack along with the goggling Spike. A little whimper from the now-prostrate mare.*)

**Spike:** She makes it look so easy. (*Applejack swiftly plows row after row.*)

**Trenderhoof:** I know. Isn’t she fantastic?

(*Rarity cringes mightily under the brim of her sun hat. Dissolve to the base of a tree; a grunt from the o.s. Applejack is followed by her rear hooves swinging up to connect with the wood, and the camera tilts up quickly to the branches. They are heavy with apples, which begin to vibrate in response to the hit, and a cut back to the base shows them raining down into the tubs now laid out around it. Zoom out; Applejack stands proudly over them, but Trenderhoof’s ardent clapping distracts her and Rarity is no help when she walks up. Applejack is no longer hitched up and does not wear the collar.*)

**Rarity:** I really don’t see what the fuss is all about.

(*Spotting a second tree nearby, she crosses to it in close-up and gingerly thumps her front hooves against its bark.*)

**Applejack:** (*from os.*) Now, Rarity— (*Cut to her, stepping up next to Trenderhoof.*) —you be careful. If you don’t get the buckin’ just right— (*Back to the irked Rarity; she continues o.s.*) —you could sprain a hoof.

**Rarity:** I am perfectly familiar with the applebucking process, thank you very much. But while you seem to rely on raw power, I believe a certain amount of style is required. (*She slides over to the bemused Trenderhoof with a smile.*) It’s really more of a dance, if you ask me.

(*Humming quietly to herself, she executes a few steps to approach the tree, turns to face away from it, and kicks one rear hoof onto the wood. A single apple shivers on its branch, and the camera cuts to a close-up of the basket around her neck as it drops neatly in. Zoom out to frame one very self-satisfied mare.*)

**Rarity:** *Et voilà*! (*Trenderhoof stares openmouthed; Applejack is unimpressed.*)

**Applejack:** Well, your way is definitely long on style.

**Rarity:** Thank you.

**Applejack:** (*walking past, followed by Trenderhoof*) Now if you’ll all excuse me, I have some more chores to do.

(*His grinning pursuit is cut off sharply when she whirls to stare him down.*)

**Applejack:** *Inside!*

(*Off she goes to a chicken coop, hunching down to cram herself through the small entrance used by the poultry. The hatch drops shut behind her to the sound of surprised squawking from inside; zoom out quickly to frame the whole of the building, then cut back to a dispirited Rarity.*)

**Trenderhoof:** (*from o.s.*) Rarity… (*Her head snaps up with an eager smile; zoom out to frame him.*) …can I ask you something?

**Rarity:** Oh, why, Trend, you can ask me anything.

**Trenderhoof:** (*nervously*) I’ve been meaning to ask for a while, and frankly I’m sort of embarrassed.

(*He voices the faintest bit of a chuckle and smiles broadly; cut to Rarity and zoom in slowly.*)

**Trenderhoof:** (*from o.s.*) Rarity… (*Her smile widens a bit.*) …do you think… (*Zoom out quickly; the next words hit her like a poleaxe.*) …Applejack would be my date for the festival?

(*Sheer surprise turns into brain-melting fury in a flash, and she leans hard into his face.*)

**Rarity:** Why don’t you go ask her yourself?!? (*She turns away.*) Hmph!

(*The style-conscious stallion is left to stare mutely after her. Dissolve to the chicken coop in which Applejack sequestered herself; the hatch is slid up from inside, and she puts her head out for a wary look around the yard. Trenderhoof is at a distance, thumping a front hoof against a tree and bringing down exactly one apple that ends up speared on his horn. She plasters herself behind another tree, careful to stay out of his line of sight, and slinks across an open patch of ground to take cover behind some bushes. Trenderhoof, meanwhile, pulls the apple off his horn and bites into it. Applejack gallops for the barn; cut to inside its main door as she eases it open and slips inside. A moment later, she has slammed the door shut and leaned her back against it, letting out a relieved sigh.*)

**Applejack:** Well, *that* was close.

**Rarity:** (*from o.s.*) If you’ve come to apologize—

(*Cut to her, also inside the barn and without her apple basket; behind her, Macintosh is loading a cart with equipment.*)

**Rarity:** —there’s really no need. (*She turns away; cut to Applejack and zoom out to frame both.*)

**Applejack:** What are you talkin’ about? (*Rarity holds up a foreleg to stop her.*)

**Rarity:** Let’s dispense with the charade, shall we?

**Applejack:** Listen. I know you really want Trend to like you.

**Rarity:** And he does. (*She leans into Applejack’s face.*) Despite *somepony’s* best efforts! (*Turn away; hitch herself to the cart on the next line.*)

**Applejack:** I swear, I don’t know why he’s payin’ so much attention to me. (*Macintosh adds a pitchfork to the load.*) And I don’t know *anypony* who’s that interested in farmin’—not even me!

**Rarity:** (*hauling cart out*) Well, maybe it’s time Trend met a *real* country pony.

**Applejack:** Shouldn’t you be workin’ on the festival instead of comin’ up with new ways to impress Trend? (*Close-up of Rarity on the end of this; she stops.*)

**Rarity:** (*acidly*) Oh, I’m sure you’d love that. Well, I have a new vision for the festival…

(*She adopts an exaggerated Southern drawl that layers oddly with her normal refined speech.*)

**Rarity:** (*hauling cart out again*) …and it’s gonna be more country than the whole Apple family put together!

*\*\* Unless otherwise indicated, she will speak with this accent until further notice. \*\**

(*The two members of said family stare after her—Applejack with concern, Macintosh with total disbelief—and trade a worried look. Dissolve to the exterior of the Carousel Boutique, then cut to the showroom. The runway is still set up, but the set of steps Spike wheeled up to its end has been replaced by a hay bale. Others are set up on the floor at either end of the ill-stitched patchwork that has replaced the elegant curtain, and wisps of hay litter the floor and runway. Twilight, Fluttershy, Pinkie, and Rainbow are in here and at a loss to figure out the drastic change in decoration.*)

**Fluttershy:** Um, isn’t it a little late to be changing the theme?

(*A door is heard opening/closing under her words, and Applejack trots into the showroom.*)

**Twilight:** Applejack! What’s going on?

**Applejack:** I’m too scared to guess. (*Down go the lights; up come the foots. Zoom in slowly on the curtain.*)

**Rarity:** (*from behind curtain*) Firstly, I just want to thank you all for comin’; and second, I know y’all will all adore my new festival theme.

(*Close-up of the curtain. A spotlight flicks on to pick out Spike as he walks out from the wings, wearing a crudely woven straw hat and plucking a banjo. The rough drapery whips back to expose a most unlikely tableau: a hay-strewn expanse of bales, pigs, chickens, and farm tools, with a wagon wheel on the back wall amid a row of horseshoes. Standing at the middle of it all is Rarity, her mane/tail in an unkempt state resembling Applejack’s, but without the ties to hold them back. She has traded her frou-frou farmer ensemble for a straw hat like Spike’s, with holes cut for her horn and ears, and a set of ragged overalls.*)

**Rarity:** “Simple Ways”!

(*The looks that come over the faces of the other five suggest that their brains would be quite content to jump out of the skulls and catch a ride to the next town. Snap to black.*)

Act Three

(*Opening shot: fade in to the showroom. Rarity and Spike are now standing at the end of the runway, the baby dragon twanging a few notes on the banjo; cut to Twilight, Applejack, and Fluttershy. The earth pony spends a long second or two desperately holding back her mirth. She finally loses the battle with a hearty guffaw and ends up leaning against Fluttershy to keep from going to the floor.*)

**Rarity:** (*from o.s., irked*) Well? (*Back to her and Spike.*) What’s so funny?

**Applejack:** Rarity, that is the silliest getup I have ever seen! (*Fluttershy manages a smile.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*laughing a bit*) It *is* a little funny. (*Back to Rarity.*)

**Rarity:** Funny?

(*A giggle from the o.s. Twilight; back to the three.*)

**Twilight:** Rarity, you aren’t serious, are you? (*That gets her a very angry glare as Rarity descends the hay bale to face her.*)

**Rarity:** (*normal tone*) Well, of course I’m serious!

(*Catching herself, she clears her throat and picks up her overdone drawl again.*)

**Rarity:** Why wouldn’t I be?

**Applejack:** Because you would never dress like that. You like fashion and high society and fancy things.

**Rarity:** (*normal tone, to drawl*) And I can like plowin’ fields and haulin’ apples just as much.

**Applejack:** But you don’t!

**Rarity:** How do you know what I like?

**Applejack:** Because I know you!

**Rarity:** (*pushing her aside, walking past*) Well, maybe you don’t know me as well as you think.

**Applejack:** And I *suppose* it’s just a coincidence that Trenderhoof seemed so interested in country life too?

(*Rarity stops short during this line, then turns back to face her.*)

**Rarity:** I don’t know what you are gettin’ at.

**Applejack:** Well, then, I guess I’ll just have to show you.

**Rarity:** (*normal tone, walking to door*) Be my guest! (*drawl, opening it*) Now, if you all will excuse me— (*exiting*) —I have a hootenanny of a festival to put on.

(*Slam; cut to the bewildered equine quintet and zoom in on Applejack as she glares daggers after the departed unicorn and snarls softly. Wipe to the exterior of the main barn at Sweet Apple Acres, zooming in slowly, then cut to Spike inside. He still wears his straw hat, but has traded his banjo for a clipboard on which he is glumly marking off items.*)

**Rarity:** (*from o.s.*) Now…

(*Cut to her on the start of the next line. A runway and ragged curtain have been set up her to mirror the boutique’s setup, and she is addressing a line of fillies gathered in front of it. Among them are Scootaloo and Sweetie Belle.*)

**Rarity:** (*normal tone*) …to be a model in the Simple Ways fashion show… (*drawl, pacing; pan to follow*) …you might think “simple” means “less is more.” (*She leans down toward Apple Bloom, at the far end.*) Well, that just ain’t so. (*close-up; warming up horn*) If you want to be real simple, more is more.

(*Here come a couple of old boots, a floppy straw hat, and a clump of flowers under her control. They are projected toward the o.s. Bloom; a quick rustling, a round of horrified stares from the other fillies, and the job is done. The hat has been crammed onto the red mane, topped by the flowers and with slits cut for her ears, the boots are on her front hooves, and she is wearing a set of ragged overalls. As soon as she has taken full stock of herself, she hunches miserably down as if trying to shrink into the hat. Zoom out to frame the entire tableau.*)

**Rarity:** Now, y’all go off and make yourselves look just like that.

(*The rest of the would-be models reluctantly head for the door; Bloom, meanwhile, has a hard time seeing where she is going due to the oversized headwear tilting over her eyes.*)

**Rarity:** (*to Spike*) Who’s our next model for the fashion show?

**Spike:** (*eyeing clipboard closely*) Um…Apple…Jewel? (*She leans in for a look.*)

**Rarity:** Who the hay is that?

(*Down go the lights, and a spot works along the runway—built of rough wooden planks—toward the curtains, which open to reveal the newcomer. It is Applejack, with her mane gathered at the top of her head and secured by a jeweled clip. Her cowboy hat is gone, and she is decked out in a dress of lacy blue-green fabric patterned with white diamonds, over a layer of translucent pink at the hem. Neither Rarity nor Spike can get any words out straight away, and they remain silent as Applejack proceeds smoothly out to the end of the runway and turns to show the threads from all angles. She doubles back toward the curtain, swinging her hips provocatively, but suddenly stops and turns her head to show off her best set of bedroom eyes. Rarity is first to find her tongue so she can voice her indignation.*)

**Rarity:** Is this some kind of joke?

(*Now Applejack starts in with a voice that is not her own, imitating Rarity’s speech in a way that fails to completely hide her drawl.*)

*\*\* She will speak with this accent until further notice. \*\**

**Applejack:** Why, Rarity, whatever would make you think I was joking? (*Close-up of Rarity.*)

**Rarity:** (*own voice*) Because you would never wear an ensemble like that! You like plowing fields and hauling apples! (*Zoom out to frame Applejack and Spike on the start of the next line.*)

**Applejack:** (*poking Rarity’s hat brim down*) And I can like fashion just as much.

**Rarity:** But you don’t!

**Applejack:** Well, maybe you do not know me as well as you think.

**Rarity:** (*drawl*) Fine! But I got a whole festival to plan, so if you’re going to start modelin’, just get on with it!

(*Applejack’s scowl turns into a smirk, and she starts into it with all the poise she can drum up.*)

**Applejack:** Life is a festival, and you should celebrate it by lookin’ just like me, because I’m a trendsettin’ fashionista.

(*A flash bulb pops, and its glare fades to reveal that the scene has changed to a close-up photo of her face. Two other shots flash up—lying on her belly and laughing, blowing a kiss over her shoulder—and the camera cuts to an incredulous Rarity.*)

**Rarity:** (*normal tone*) *You’re* a trendsetting fashionista?! Why, that is the most ridiculous thing I’ve ever— (*Stop short.*) —I mean— (*drawl*) —good for you. I, on the other hoof— (*flies buzz around her; she scratches them away*) —couldn’t care less how I look, ’long as I get the chores done.

(*A few bits of dislodged chaff drift down around one foreleg, and she puts the hoof of the other one to her nose and crosses her eyes while braying like a donkey. A very smug Applejack steps down from the runway.*)

**Applejack:** Oh, is that so?

**Rarity:** Yes-indeedy-doodle! (*Gasp from Applejack.*)

**Applejack:** Not me.

(*Rarity glares at her; she fluffs her mane a bit, inspecting herself in a hand mirror.*)

**Applejack:** My mane needs to be perfectly coiffed at all times. (*Rarity floats her hat off, showering herself with dust from it.*)

**Rarity:** Well, *my* mane is full of dust and split ends!

(*Extreme close-up of one orange-tan hoof, polished to a high shine; the mirror has been put away.*)

**Applejack:** (*leaning over it, seeing her reflection*) My hooves are so polished, you can see your reflection in them!

**Rarity:** (*holding up a battered front hoof; zoom in on it*) My hooves are cracked and dry from working in the fields!

**Applejack:** I’m *so* fashion-forward! (*Rarity has her hat back on.*)

**Rarity:** I wear droopy drawers! (*Roses float behind Applejack.*)

**Applejack:** I smell like rosebuds!

**Rarity:** (*completely unhinged*) *I love bein’ covered in mud!*

(*She puts her money where her mouth is by hurling herself over a partition and into a mud puddle being used as a pig wallow. One glob sails across the barn and, in slow motion, splatters against the tasteful pink/blue-green fabric covering Applejack’s chest. The aspiring country pony is out of the mud in an instant, carrying plenty of it with her and returning to her normal speech.*)

**Rarity:** Goodness! Your *couture*! (*She probes the dirty spot.*) Ooh, it’s bad! (*eyeing the mud now on her hooves*) Will *somepony* bring me a towel to wipe this repulsive filth from my hooves!

(*Now Applejack drops her own fake accent and throws a foreleg across the denim-clad shoulders with a smile.*)

**Applejack:** *There’s* the Rarity I know!

**Rarity:** (*chastened*) Oh, Applejack… (*Applejack backs off.*) …I’m sorry I said all those things. You’re a true friend who probably knows me better than I know myself. I don’t know what I was thinking, wearing this ridiculous outfit.

**Applejack:** I kinda know how you feel.

**Rarity:** (*smiling*) Oh, but you were just trying to help me see how silly I was being. (*sadly*) And you were right. (*Sigh, then smile again.*) Besides, that gown looks just gorgeous on you. (*sadly*) I wish I hadn’t ruined it.

**Applejack:** Thanks! It’s nice, ain’t it?

**Rarity:** It’s magnificent! Wherever did you get it?

(*The farmer cuts her eyes nervously away for a split second, then turns them back toward her opposite number.*)

**Applejack:** Oh! It’s, uh…one of yours.

(*Under the beat-up straw hat and unruly purple mane, the blue eyes shrink to terror-stricken points as a siren goes off in Rarity’s head. She reaches down to grab Spike, shaking him hard enough to dislodge the hat from his head. He has done away with the clipboard he was holding.*)

**Rarity:** I’ll need three gallons of boiling water and one ounce of detergent, stat!

(*He is off like a shot and out the door, passing the recently arrived Trenderhoof. Seen from the neck down, he has changed out of his sweater and into a set of overalls that have seen better days. After he clears his throat, the camera zooms out to frame all of him: straw hat, but without horn/ear holes, and half-moon reading glasses instead of the fashionable ones he has sported to this point.*)

**Trenderhoof:** I’m moving to Ponyville! (*Both mares start in surprise.*) Being the most interesting pony in Equestria is exhausting. I want to leave my exotic, exciting life behind and…live on a farm!

**Applejack, Rarity:** WHAT?!?

**Applejack:** Well, that’s real nice, but I sure hope you weren’t thinkin’ of Sweet Apple Acres. (*Trenderhoof’s face falls.*)

**Trenderhoof:** Oh.

**Applejack:** Uh…look. You’re a fine pony, but…uh…well…I’m, uh— (*Rarity steps forward.*)

**Rarity:** I think what Applejack is trying to say is that there’s something unappealing about a pony who’d change themselves so much just to impress somepony else. If somepony doesn’t like you for who you are, it’s *their* loss. (*She smiles gently.*)

**Trenderhoof:** Well, this is awkward.

**Rarity:** Not at all. In fact, I think I know just how you feel.

**Applejack:** What do you think, Rarity? Is it too late to go back to “Small-Town Chic”?

**Rarity:** (*smiling determinedly*) Not if I can help it!

(*Dissolve to the charcoal sketch of the cider tasting as depicted during her Act One presentation. The page is turned aside to expose the scene playing out under the night sky.*)

**Rarity:** (*voice over, dictating*) “Organizing the Ponyville Days celebration was one of the hardest things I have ever done.”

(*Meant as an entry for the shared journal. Cut to her sketch of the dance near the town hall; it too is flipped to show this event taking place in real time. Pan toward the front entrance.*)

**Rarity:** (*voice over*) “But I learned an important lesson.”

(*Stop on Applejack and Granny in front of the steps, the former still done up fancy and having had the mud cleaned off her borrowed dress. Trenderhoof, back in his original sweater and glasses, steps up and lifts a foreleg gallantly toward the younger mare—then surprises her by extending it to the older one instead.*)

**Rarity:** (*voice over*) “Real friends will like you for who you are.”

(*Granny accepts the offer, and he leads her out into the dance.*)

**Rarity:** (*voice over*) “And changing yourself to impress them is no way to make new ones.”

(*Cut to her sketch of the fashion show, which is pulled aside to show Rarity and the Cutie Mark Crusaders walking an outdoor runway for the crowd. The three fillies are in tasteful gowns, and the mare is back in the light blue ensemble and accompanying jewelry she used for her presentation. Cameras flash here and there.*)

**Rarity:** (*voice over*) “And when you’re as fabulous as I am…”

(*She reaches the runway’s end and bows as Trenderhoof climbs up next to her. He offers her a rose; she takes it in her teeth and smiles confidently around the long stem.*)

**Rarity:** (*voice over*) “…it’s practically a crime.”

(*A twinkle of light plays across each pupil, and the view fades to black.*)