**TWILIGHT TIME**

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Prologue

(*Opening shot: fade in to the exterior of the library during the day. Zoom in slowly.*)

**Twilight Sparkle:** (*from inside*) Uh, Sweetie Belle… (*Cut to her, pacing in the reading room; pan to follow.*) …maybe we should run through the steps another few times before you try it on your own.

(*The camera movement frames the heads of the Cutie Mark Crusaders in the foreground, and an intricate diagram tacked up on the back wall. It has a few notes and sketches attached to it, and it appears to deal with the six-locked box she received from the Tree of Harmony in Part Two of “Princess Twilight Sparkle.” Cut to a head-on view of the three fillies, all sitting on their haunches.*)

**Sweetie Belle:** (*confidently, standing up*) Nope. Ready to give it a shot!

(*Cut to a close-up of a broom leaning against the wall by the front door and zoom out to frame Twilight eyeing it.*)

**Twilight:** Okay, then.

(*The young unicorn puts her mind to it and gets a spark going at the tip of her horn; in a close-up and slow zoom in, the broom becomes enveloped in a magic aura. Her first labored grunts are heard just before Apple Bloom and Scootaloo break out in beaming smiles. Soon the entire end of her horn is glowing, not just the tip.*)

**Sweetie:** (*grunting, with effort*) Can’t…seem…to…

(*A long, pained groan through locked teeth as she stands up to full height and tilts her head farther and farther back. The sound of crackling vertebrae comes through loud and clear, but all she gets for it is a weak little telekinetic nudge that causes the broom to fall forward. The end of its handle clatters against the floor, and she grunts in frustration and pain as the other two cross to her.*)

**Sweetie:** (*rubbing her neck*) I think I threw my neck out.

**Scootaloo:** Aw, you’re okay.

**Bloom:** A little more magic practice, and liftin’ brooms’ll be a cinch.

**Sweetie:** I doubt it. That thing weighs a ton. (*Close-up of the door; it opens and Spike looks in.*)

**Spike:** Hey, has anypony seen my— (*He looks down.*) —oh.

(*Zoom out; his attention has been caught by the fallen broom.*)

**Spike:** There it is.

(*Whistling gaily, he picks it up and gives it a deft one-handed twirl before putting it to use on the floor. Sweetie dejectedly plunks her haunches down.*)

**Sweetie:** Hmph. I’ll never get my cutie mark for this. (*Zoom out to frame Twilight watching the Crusaders.*)

**Twilight:** Maybe not. But I’m happy to keep helping you learn just for the fun of it as long as you like.

(*The broom head makes its way to an assortment of vehicle parts scattered elsewhere on the floor.*)

**Spike:** Hey! (*Overhead shot.*) Who’s gonna clean up this mess? (*Ground level; Scootaloo steps over to him.*)

**Scootaloo:** This is no mess. These are the carefully arranged pieces of a unicycle I took apart and will be putting back together, as soon as Twilight shows me how.

(*During this line, the view shifts to a close-up of the single wheel, which she pushes forward, and then back to her. She finishes with a big squeaky grin and shining eyes, both aimed at the winged unicorn.*)

**Twilight:** Scootaloo, I already told you I won’t show you how, but I’ll help you find the instructions so you can figure it out yourself. (*The big grin turns into a loud groan.*)

**Scootaloo:** I hate research! (*She stands up and clumps toward the bookshelves.*)

**Twilight:** To your left, third shelf from the bottom. You’ll find it in no time.

**Bloom:** Thanks so much for helpin’ us all learn these new skills, Twilight. (*Scootaloo climbs the ladder toward the topmost shelves to pull a book.*)

**Twilight:** Always glad to pass on my love of learning for learning’s sake.

(*In close-up, the little earth pony steps past a row of glassware set up in holders on the floor and filled with bubbling liquids. At the end of the line is a dispenser whose spout is positioned directly above a seedling plant in a pot.*)

**Bloom:** Only I’m afraid I’ll never get the hang of this potion-makin’. (*She stops by the pot; zoom out to show Twilight now alongside.*)

**Twilight:** Did you follow the magic plant-growing formula I gave you?

**Bloom:** Well, uh… (*nudging pot*) …more or less.

(*She grimaces nervously, but gets an understanding smile.*)

**Twilight:** Well, let’s try it out on this apple seedling and see how we do.

(*Cut to a close-up of it on the end of this, then zoom out. Bloom voices an uneasy moan.*)

**Bloom:** I hope this works…

(*One yellow hoof pulls down a lever mounted on the side of the dispenser, and a bright yellow-green drop starts to ooze slowly from the spout. It elongates with maddening slowness as all three Crusaders watch, having gathered around the pot, and finally detaches itself to drop free. The liquid splashes down on the droopy little plant; instantly a burst of greenish-brown fumes erupts to fill the screen. The haze clears to give a close-up of a mightily coughing Twilight; she is most surprised to see the plant slowly straighten up, leaves and all, and start coughing on its own. The hearty hacking brings smiles to all equine faces except Bloom’s, and her two fellow travelers get a good laugh out of the mishap to boot.*)

**Bloom:** Layin’ it on a little thick there, aren’t we, pal?

(*It finally falls silent and lets its head loll on the end of the stem. Fade to black.*)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(*Opening shot: fade in to a patch of sky above the schoolhouse roof. Sweetie stands up into view on her hind legs, tosses a ball into the air, and strikes it with a front hoof as if serving a volleyball. A longer shot frames a game of four square in progress, with the Crusaders and Pipsqueak, or Pip, in the quadrants of the court.*)

**Diamond Tiara:** (*from o.s.*) Yoo-hoo! (*Cut to her and Silver Spoon walking across the grass.*) Gather ’round! It’s time!

(*On the end of this, cut here and there to other foals who start to murmur among themselves and gravitate toward the two snobs.*)

**Diamond:** As you all know, I had promised to put on an amazing, first-time-ever, acrobatic display for you all today! (*Cheers.*) I know. It’s so exciting. (*Her face falls.*) But I’m tired. (*Big pathetic pout.*)

**Foals:** Awww…

**Diamond:** (*smiling smugly*) *But* I did not wish to disappoint you all—

(*Zoom out slightly. A very old earth pony stallion is hobbling across the lawn to her. Medium blue-violet coat, bushy white eyebrows, curly white mane/tail that have mostly fallen out, dark blue eyes, dark gray vest over a short-sleeved white shirt, floppy blue-green ascot/bow tie, cutie mark of a feather duster.*)

**Diamond:** —so I brought my butler Randolph to do them for me.

(*Forcing himself upright with a pronounced creaking of joints, Randolph tenses himself and backflips into a front-hoof stand, from which he springs away to land on all fours. A leap carries him through a midair twirl and brings him down for another perfect four-point landing, but the moment’s dignity is destroyed when Diamond slides across to hip-check him out of the way. Pan quickly from her to the now-supine, now-dizzy butler, who promptly gets stampeded past by a knot of cheering students that gather around his boss and her friend.*)

**Silver:** That was amazing, Diamond Tiara!

**Diamond:** I know. I don’t know *how* I do it.

(*At the edge of the four square court, a worried Sweetie steps over to a staring Scootaloo and a disbelieving Bloom.*)

**Bloom:** I can’t believe she gets so much attention without even really doin’ anything!

**Scootaloo:** She’s using somepony else to build herself up, and without even putting in the effort to learn her own skills like we do!

**Sweetie:** Hey. Come to think of it… (*Zoom in slowly; she starts to get an idea.*) …if we get really good at the stuff Twilight’s teaching us, *we* could be the big shots around here for a change. (*rubbing chin thoughtfully*) Hmmm…

(*Wavering dissolve to the lawn, with Scootaloo as the center of attention. The unicycle parts from the prologue are laid out on the grass before her; zoom in slightly.*)

**Scootaloo:** Check *this* out!

(*Her hooves become a blur for a moment, which ends with the machine fully built. Cut to Bloom, sitting on her haunches and wearing a lab coat and goggles; a few flasks and test tubes are set up nearby, as is a flowerpot full of dirt, and she holds up one vessel.*)

**Bloom:** And check *this* out!

(*The mixture is poured into the pot, which hops a short distance away and sprouts an apple that grows to the size of a small house. It rises clear of the ground on a tree trunk, leaving her seated at its base, and the foals talk excitedly among themselves.*)

**Sweetie:** And check *this* out!

(*With no strain at all, she gets her magic wrapped securely around Diamond and hoists her off the grass, turning her around and about and eliciting a cry of surprise.*)

**Diamond:** Hey! (*spinning in place*) Put me down!

(*A round of laughter from the audience. Close-up of Sweetie; she giggles to herself, and a WD frames the same shot of her in the present.*)

**Diamond:** (*thumping her head with a hoof*) Hey! Can’t you hear me? (*Sweetie snaps to.*)

**Sweetie:** Huh? Huh? Wha—? What?

**Diamond:** I was asking if your sister Rarity will be taking you to Manehattan anytime soon.

**Silver:** Because if she is, maybe you can meet up with us while we hang out with a bunch of famous celebrities. (*Close-up of Scootaloo.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*buzzing wings, hovering briefly off ground*) Cool! (*Pan to Bloom.*)

**Bloom:** (*sarcastically*) Wow, that’s… (*The words sink in; she shifts gears.*) …pretty nice of you guys.

**Sweetie:** (*glumly, backing into view next to her*) Actually, my sister hasn’t offered to take me to Manehattan anytime soon. (*Diamond and Silver trade a mocking look.*)

**Diamond:** Yeah, we figured.

**Diamond, Silver:** Bump, bump, sugar lump rump!

(*Accompanied by their routine from “Call of the Cutie,” with the following changes. On the first “bump,” Silver taps her front right hoof against Diamond’s front left one, and they each stand on the matching hind leg. On ‘sugar lump,” Silver’s left hock and Diamond’s right one touch. The nasty giggles that follow it set Sweetie’s mental gears grinding and a snarl going in her throat.*)

**Sweetie:** Oh, yeah? Well…I don’t have to go all the way to Manehattan to hang out with the famous and super-cool ponies! Me and my friends hang out with Princess Twilight all the time!

(*Stomping a front hoof on the grass at the last word, she walks off with her nose in the air; the other two fall in behind her. Only Bloom catches a brief glimpse of the wide-eyed stares that their nemeses are sending after them; the two pairs of blue eyes turn uncertainly to each other, then forward again, showing their owners’ utter confusion at having been one-upped. Diamond finally speaks after a moment.*)

**Diamond:** (*hurrying after Crusaders*) Did you say “Princess Twilight”? (*She catches up.*) You hang out with her all the time, for real? (*Silver is now behind her; close-up of Bloom.*)

**Bloom:** More like just once a week. (*Pan to Scootaloo.*)

**Scootaloo:** She helps us learn cool new stuff to do— (*pointedly*) —that we actually do *ourselves!*

(*Pan quickly back to the lawn, where Randolph has balanced on one hoof atop a ball and is juggling bean bags for the other foals’ amusement. Diamond stitches on a big appeasing smile.*)

**Diamond:** You *must* bring me along next time you go! (*Silver zips up alongside her.*)

**Silver:** Bring *us* along.

**Diamond:** I mean, we used to see her around town all the time and I thought, “Whatever.”

**Silver:** Me too. I thought that.

**Diamond:** But now she’s a princess, which makes her totally awesome! (*Close-up of Silver.*)

**Silver:** Plus, she has wings. (*Pan to Diamond.*)

**Diamond:** And she’s an alicorn! So can I— (*Silver sidles up again.*)

**Silver:** —we—

**Diamond:** —go? (*All stop.*)

**Bloom:** I don’t think we should—

**Sweetie:** Will you two excuse us for a moment?

(*She sprints o.s., then reaches back into view to yank the yellow filly after her. Sweetie gallops to follow them. Cut to within the huddle they have formed.*)

**Sweetie:** We should totally say yes. This is a golden opportunity!

**Bloom:** Are you kiddin’? I don’t want them laughin’ at us while I’m mixin’ potions and accidentally sendin’ plants into chokin’ fits.

**Sweetie:** But don’t you get it? They’ll have to learn something too!

(*Outside the huddle, with Diamond and Silver a short distance away. The Crusaders glance toward the pair, who smile and wave placatingly; cut to within the huddle again.*)

**Scootaloo:** And they won’t be able to laugh at us when they’re so busy trying to learn stuff of their own.

**Bloom:** (*smiling*) I must admit, it’s kinda fun to see them workin’ hard to get on our good side for a change.

(*She breaks out in a hopeful grin, which Scootaloo matches. Dissolve to the observatory platform at the top of the library’s boughs and tilt down to ground level as the sound of approaching hooves asserts itself. Here, the Crusaders, Diamond, and Silver are on their way to the front door.*)

**Diamond:** (*excitedly*) Oh, my gosh. A princess lives in there— (*Cut to her and Silver.*) —and I’m about to go inside and see her! (*They stop.*) I can’t even tell you how excited I am.

**Silver:** (*jumping in place*) I can’t either!

(*Up ahead in close-up, the trio have also stopped. Scootaloo’s grimace of mild distaste at this display turns into a smile as she steps forward and reaches o.s. to knock at the door.*)

**Sweetie:** (*to Diamond, Silver*) Now remember. Twilight takes this time out with us so we can learn stuff. (*Door opens; Twilight stands inside.*)

**Twilight:** Hey there, guys. Come on in.

**Diamond, Silver:** (*squealing, galloping to her*) The Princess Twilight! (*Both start jumping in place.*)

**Diamond:** Oh, it’s really her!

**Silver:** Oh, my gosh, I don’t believe it!

(*This sudden outpouring has left the Princess in question very, very puzzled.*)

**Twilight:** (*to the Crusaders*) Oh! And, uh…you brought guests. (*The two fillies stop jumping.*) Great.

**Diamond:** Princess Twilight, it is such a thrill and honor to be here. You have no idea. (*A thought hits her.*) Oh, my gosh! (*gesturing toward Twilight’s tail*) Who dyes your tail? (*Twilight eyes it, confusedly.*)

**Silver:** I *so* have to get that done. (*Close-up of Twilight.*)

**Twilight:** Actually, it’s not dyed. I’ve always—

**Diamond:** (*from o.s., gasping*) Are those books in there? (*Cut to frame all three.*) What a bold design choice!

**Silver:** (*as both enter library*) You should *so* do that, Di.

**Diamond:** I know, right?

(*The Crusaders are close behind the pair, but Twilight stops them at the doorstep.*)

**Twilight:** Listen. I’m all for helping as many ponies as I can, but maybe we should keep these weekly visits just between us, hmm?

(*Their three-part grin is followed by a cut to just inside the entrance; she leads them in.*)

**Twilight:** Okay. Which one of you wants to practice first? (*All three fillies stop short, seized by a burst of anxiety.*)

**Sweetie:** (*pointing ahead*) Shouldn’t they go first?

(*Their instructor glances across the reading room and spots Diamond and Silver gaping rapturously at the display of literature, then turns back to the Crusaders.*)

**Twilight:** No, silly. I set up Twilight Time especially for you. Apple Bloom, go ahead. (*She floats up a potted seedling.*) Let’s see how your plant potions are coming.

(*The two stuck-up jerks put their heads into view and shoot malicious little smiles past her shoulder from behind. Bloom, meanwhile, looks ready to bug out of the joint; glancing to her partners and finding no help at all, she steels herself and steps forward.*)

(*Dissolve to the Crusaders plodding through a stretch of meadow, with spirits sunk into their hooves.*)

**Bloom:** (*to Sweetie*) I can’t believe I let you talk us into bringin’ guests yesterday.

**Scootaloo:** I didn’t hear them laugh at us once, Apple Bloom.

**Bloom:** ’Cause they laughed on the inside.

**Sweetie:** Don’t worry. We won’t make that same mistake again. (*All stop, eyes popping wide.*)

**Bloom:** Aw, great.

(*Cut to just behind her, the camera aimed at a sizable group of their fellow students topping a rise—with Diamond and Silver leading the pack.*)

**Bloom:** Look who’s showed up to make fun of us.

**Scootaloo:** So much for learning skills to be big shots. (*Longer shot; the two groups are outside the schoolhouse.*)

**Diamond:** Hey, guess what? I told everyone about your special Twilight Time!

**Sweetie:** (*wincing*) Oh, no, here it comes. (*Close-up of Diamond and Silver.*)

**Diamond:** And they all want in! (*Zoom out to frame the newcomers.*)

**Foals:** (*chanting*) Twilight Time! Twilight Time! (*slowly closing in*) Twilight Time! Twilight Time!

(*The chant continues under the following.*)

**Diamond:** (*crossing to Crusaders*) Thanks to me, you three are now the hottest thing around. (*Pause.*) You’re welcome. (*Head-on view of the trio, zooming in on Sweetie’s face.*)

**Sweetie:** (*fearfully*) Uh-oh.

(*Snap to black.*)

Act Two

(*Opening shot: fade in to a long shot of the gathering, zooming in slowly.*)

**Foals:** (*chanting*) Twilight Time! Twilight Time! (*Close-up of the Crusaders; the chant continues.*)

**Sweetie:** Wow. All these ponies really want to meet Twilight that badly? (*Chant stops; Pip pops up at the front of the crowd.*)

**Pip:** We love you, Cutie Mark Crusaders!

(*The lively cheers from the rest of the bunch get the three fillies looking confusedly around themselves.*)

**Diamond:** Now, now, everypony. Demanding time with the Princess as an unruly mob simply won’t do. (*She whisks over to the Crusaders.*) Might I suggest you get organized through us… (*close-up; foreleg around Scootaloo’s shoulders*) …the Cutie Mark Crusaders’ nearest and dearest friends?

(*Zoom out slightly; Silver now stands next to her, holding a clipboard.*)

**Silver:** (*gesturing*) Everypony get in line! (*Cut to a stampede of cheering foals; she continues o.s.*) No pushing, no pushing!

(*They slow to a walk and fall in as instructed, and Scootaloo turns toward her friends with visible trepidation.*)

**Bloom:** (*sighing heavily*) What a mess.

**Sweetie:** (*smiling*) Of awesome! Don’t you see? (*Close-up.*) We’re really and truly and certifiably the biggest of the big shots in school right now! (*Grin; zoom out slightly to frame Scootaloo.*)

**Scootaloo:** Huh?

**Sweetie:** They all think we’re the greatest— (*Cut to a slow pan along the line; she continues o.s.*) —because we’re their ticket to get time with Ponyville’s newest and biggest celebrity! (*Back to the Crusaders; she jumps gleefully in place.*) Princess Twilight!

**Bloom:** We just said, like, two seconds ago that invitin’ two ponies to Twilight Time was a big mistake! (*Close-up of Sweetie; she continues o.s.*) And now we’re supposed to bring the whole class? (*The young unicorn smiles knowingly on the end of this.*)

**Sweetie:** Relax. (*Zoom out to frame all three.*) I got this.

(*Her air of self-confidence is a total mystery to the others. A fast-food sandwich stuffed with hay or grass drifts past in extreme close-up; behind its trailing edge, the view wipes to the exterior of a diner-style restaurant toward which they are now walking. Its thatched roof is topped by a sign displaying a sandwich and a cup of soda. They stop outside the door.*)

**Bloom:** I don’t like this, Sweetie Belle. (*Cut to Sweetie.*)

**Sweetie:** You said not to invite them to Twilight Time, and I didn’t. So what’s the problem? (*To Bloom and Scootaloo.*)

**Scootaloo:** This feels like a trick. (*Back to Sweetie.*)

**Sweetie:** What’s tricky about inviting Twilight out for a meal, thanking her for all the nice things she’s done for us? Seems like the least we can do for the Princess.

(*Zoom out to frame an adjoining hedge, over which an overexcited Pip is peeking.*)

**Pip:** Did someone say “Princess”?

(*A couple of other heads emerge from behind the shrubbery and the building corner, as well as Diamond and Silver. The latter no longer has her clipboard, the former shoves Pip down out of sight, and they and the others quickly duck away. Sweetie shoots a funny look at the interruption, while Bloom and Scootaloo toss perplexed glances at each other. Cut to a close-up of the hedge’s top edge; Sweetie pops up to peek over, her jaw falling open, and the camera zooms out. She is on the restaurant’s side, staring down at all her hunched classmates, and the gape turns into an annoyed grimace.*)

**Sweetie:** When I told you when you could come eyeball the Princess at one of her favorite hangouts, I said only two or three of you, tops!

**Diamond, Silver, Foals:** Oops. (*A few weak giggles.*)

**Scootaloo:** She’s coming! (*Sweetie looks back up the way, then over the hedge again.*)

**Sweetie:** Okay, but stay out of sight.

**Diamond:** (*smiling nastily*) As you wish, Sweetie Belle.

**Sweetie:** (*missing the tone, smiling smugly*) Yes. As I wish.

(*She ducks away. Wipe to the busy interior of the restaurant; the three fillies are seated at a table and staring off to one side with absolute bewilderment, their food sitting forgotten before them. The sound of vigorous chomping from o.s. is accompanied by bits of food tumbling across in front of them, and a cut to the other half of the table reveals the source. Here sits Twilight, ketchup smeared liberally across both cheeks and munching greedily into two conveniently placed sandwiches at once. Two others, an order of horseshoe-shaped fries, and a soda are ranged around her as well.*)

**Twilight:** (*mouth full*) I didn’t realize how hungry I was. I’m so glad you asked me to join you here today. (*Swallow; float up a sandwich.*) I’m so honored!

(*The mess on her face is quickly wiped away with the food, which she proceeds to gulp down in one massive bite.*)

**Sweetie:** (*puzzled*) You are?

**Twilight:** When you first asked me to help you develop new skills, I thought, “Working with young students so devoted to the joy of learning purely for its own sake? What could be better?” (*levitating several fries*) You all remind me of myself when I was your age.

(*She proceeds to dispose of the one closest to her mouth; meanwhile, Scootaloo and Sweetie have managed to get strained little smiles in place. Only Bloom’s face still betrays her utter puzzlement and borderline revulsion at this display of gastronomic stupidity. Long, uncomfortable pause.*)

**Sweetie:** Yes! Well, we feel the same way.

**Bloom:** (*forcing a smile*) That’s why we invited you here.

**Scootaloo:** Uh, because of our love of learning!

(*Three young faces put on big ingratiating grins. Cut to the Princess, who has both a sandwich and her soda gripped in her magic and takes a pull at the straw.*)

**Pinkie Pie:** (*from o.s.*) Twilight!

(*Twilight somehow manages not to spew her mouthful over half of the room. Sure enough, here comes Pinkie with a tray of her own, on a holder around her neck; she stops next to the Crusaders.*)

**Pinkie:** Haven’t seen you here in like— (*Dismissive sigh.*) —forever and a half.

(*The rest of the school foals put their heads up into view outside the window to watch, but Twilight sees none of them because her attention is fixed on Pinkie.*)

**Twilight:** (*floating sandwich up*) I know. I’ve been so busy, I forgot how delicious everything is here.

**Pinkie:** (*cocking head 90 degrees to one side*) Totally! (*She snaps it up again and points.*) Hey! What’s going on out there?

(*All three fillies start in surprise, and the onlookers dive out of sight just before Twilight takes a look around herself.*)

**Pinkie:** Eh, never mind, they’re gone. (*Twilight turns away; they pop up again.*) They’re back! (*Look around; they hit the deck.*) Never mind, they’re gone.

(*She trots away, singing cheerfully to herself, and the Crusaders slap on too-casual smiles and grins. As Twilight chows into her meal, the foals resume their observation through the glass—even more of them than before, several now holding cameras. A close-up of the oblivious violet face and a slow pan from one side to the other pick out the whole eager crowd and all the shutters clicking merrily away. Across the table from her, Scootaloo goes into a string of smiling/grinning poses, one of which involves a foreleg thrown around Sweetie’s shoulders to pull her a bit closer.*)

**Bloom:** (*softly, through her teeth*) Knock it off! (*She and Sweetie plaster on grins.*)

**Twilight:** (*turning toward windows*) What in the world is going on out—

(*The query dies away as her face contorts itself in queasy bemusement; cut to her perspective of one window. She pulls in a soft gasp as the foals drop out of sight; back to her. Squinting carefully, she trots o.s. toward the spot.*)

**Bloom:** (*to Scootaloo*) What was all *this?* (*She imitates one of Scootaloo’s faces.*) And *this?* (*Another.*)

**Scootaloo:** I couldn’t help it! When I don’t smile in a picture, I look sad.

**Sweetie:** (*moaning, dropping head to table edge*) We’re gonna look sad, all right.

(*Cut to just outside the front entrance. Twilight emerges, the doors swinging shut behind her, and gasps in shock. A long shot of the building front frames the crowd of foals directly in front of her, as well as a few others camped out on the roof. The camera cuts to a very slow pan across the silent, staring youngsters, then back to the Princess on the receiving end. She stands with a big grin firmly in place and takes a second or two before speaking.*)

**Twilight:** (*hesitantly*) Uh, can I help you?

(*The gaping mouths break out in a cacophony of ecstatic squeals, and dust flies as the small hooves thunder over to her. In short order they have surrounded her and sent her into a borderline panic; the arrival of Diamond and Silver does not help matters a bit.*)

**Diamond:** (*foreleg around Twilight’s neck*) Get my picture with her! (*Pip pops up in front of Silver.*)

**Pip:** Me first!

**Silver:** (*shoving him aside*) Hey, get out of the shot!

(*Cut to just outside one window; the Crusaders are inside, staring glumly out at the hubbub. Their voices are slightly muffled by the glass.*)

**Sweetie:** This is bad.

**Scootaloo:** Twilight’s gonna be so ticked at us!

**Bloom:** I told you this was a terrible idea.

(*Out front, the foals are holding up a surfeit of papers.*)

**Twilight:** You seriously all want my autograph? (*She smiles and levitates a quill.*) Okay. (*levitating/signing pages*) I’ll sign just a couple more for you— (*Door opens; Crusaders sneak out.*) —but then I really must get back to my little friends.

(*Zoom out slowly and pan slightly to follow the three escapees across the lawn. However, they have barely cleared the door before Twilight spots them.*)

**Twilight:** Oh, there you are! (*They freeze; close-up of Pip.*)

**Pip:** Wow, to think! I’ve been to the Hayburger so many times, never knowing it was the regular hangout for a princess! (*Tilt up to Twilight’s face.*)

**Twilight:** (*eyebrow cocked*) This isn’t my regular hangout. (*pointing o.s. toward Crusaders*) I’m only here to be with them.

(*Cut to the dumbfounded “them” and zoom out to put Pip in the fore.*)

**Pip:** You mean…Princess Twilight decides where it’s cool to go based on where *they* go? (*He points at the trio on “they.”*)

**Crusaders:** Huh?

**Twilight:** Thanks, guys. This was fun. (*Confused looks in reply; she lifts off.*) See you around!

(*After she has flown away, the foals gather around the Crusaders while murmuring appreciatively; the three realize that that they are starting to enjoy being movers and shakers.*)

**Pip:** I’m opening a new lemonade stand. (*Camera flash.*) Won’t you come to the grand opening? (*Nervous glances back and forth.*) I’ll give you free lemonade for a week.

(*More glances; zoom in on the Crusaders as Sweetie’s mouth curves into a calculating smile.*)

**Sweetie:** Relax. I know exactly how to handle this.

(*Dissolve to a close-up of a stretched-out length of red ribbon. A pair of golden scissors extends into view to snip it, and a long shot of the area frames a lemonade stand set up under a tree outside the village proper. All three Crusaders have a grip on the scissors, and the ribbon ends are held in the mouths of a colt and filly. The other foals present cheer with gusto, and two glasses of lemonade are lifted into view and clinked together in the foreground. Cut to a pan across the lively gathering; Pip moves through it all, a tray with pitcher and glass on his back, and stops in front of Sweetie. She sits on her haunches atop a pillow placed next to a small barrel; the empty glasses resting on both it and the ground testify to her thirst. She has donned a pair of sunglasses.*)

**Pip:** More lemonade?

**Sweetie:** Don’t mind if I do!

(*He turns to present the glass so she can nip it off the tray in her teeth, and she sets it on the barrel and starts drinking through its straw. Pip moves on, the camera panning to follow until Scootaloo comes into view; resting her haunches on a pillow of her own, she is getting a front hoof polished by a colt.*)

**Colt:** Done shining your hooves. It’s an honor to do you the favor.

(*Extreme close-up of that hoof being raised; it gleams with a high shine and throws back a reflection of the filly’s face.*)

**Scootaloo:** Whoa! So bright I can see myself!

(*Bloom’s image leans into view, her usual pink bow replaced by a Day-Glo one studded with small gemstones.*)

**Bloom:** And so can I! (*Cut to the pair; she turns to a nearby filly.*) Nice job bedazzlin’ my bow. What do I owe you?

**Filly 1:** Your gratitude is thanks enough. (*Diamond and Silver bull their way through the crowd.*)

**Diamond:** You three *must* come to my pool party. (*scowling with distaste*) It’ll be *much* cooler than this.

(*The two make a most haughty exit as all three Crusaders gather, Sweetie having shed her shades.*)

**Sweetie:** (*giddily*) Look who’s inviting who to her fancy house!

**Bloom:** I believe we have arrived, Cutie Mark Crusaders.

(*Close-up of one orange, one yellow, and one white hoof being clapped together for a three-way high five.*)

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

(*Dissolve to a stretch of placid water, which gets very suddenly disrupted when Scootaloo does a cannonball dive into it. A zoom out frame the diving board from which she has jumped; Bloom watches the performance, reclining on a duck inner-tube float and wearing her usual bow again. They are both in a swimming pool appointed with lounge chairs, and the steps of an opulent residence are visible behind them. Scootaloo surfaces to spit a mouthful of water at Bloom, prompting a laugh, and the camera pans/tilts up to show more chairs at the far end of the pool. These are occupied by Sweetie, Diamond, and Silver; the first group seen is empty, though.*)

**Sweetie:** Wow, this is nice, but…there’s no one else here. (*Bloom and Sweetie float by.*) Why is this party cooler, exactly?

**Diamond:** *Because* of all the ponies we’re keeping out.

(*She gestures off in the direction from which the two swimmers drifted in. All three Crusaders turn their eyes that way, frowning slightly; pan quickly to a set of closed wrought-iron gates. The rest of the class is on the outside looking in enviously; this sight causes Scootaloo to spit her latest mouthful of water away at full force.*)

**Sweetie:** This has been great, but… (*Bloom and Scootaloo, now out of the pool and dry, hurry past her.*) …we have to go. (*She gets out of her chair.*) It’s Twilight Time.

(*Those four hooves scramble to catch up with the other eight, but Diamond’s voice stops them in mid-clop.*)

**Diamond:** (*expectantly*) So we’re coming too, right? (*Sweetie glances back, now really scared; the other two have stopped.*)

**Sweetie:** Um…uh, actually, no. (*Dejection on the faces of Diamond and Silver.*) We didn’t have a chance to ask Twilight, so…

(*On the end of this, the spoiled pink filly comes over, now plenty sore.*)

**Diamond:** Really? (*The other members of both sides join the face-off.*) After all the favors we did for you? (*pointing o.s.*) After all the favors *they* did for you?

(*Pan quickly to the gates on the end of this. The foals on the other side of it are in a much less sunny mood than at the lemonade stand opening.*)

**Filly 2:** (*banging on gates, chanting*) Twilight Time! (*Outside; many others join the refrain and pounding.*)

**Foals:** Twilight Time! Twilight Time! Twilight Time! Twilight Time! Twilight Time! Twilight Time!

(*One colt has even started to slaver a little bit as he yells with them. Cut to the Crusaders, paralyzed with fear; Sweetie is first to get her wits about her as the chant continues under the following.*)

**Sweetie:** Okay. I know exactly how to handle this. (*Pause.*) RUUUUNNNN!!

(*They peel out at ludicrous speed. Snap to black.*)

Act Three

(*Opening shot: fade in to a long shot of the mob outside the gates. Pan slowly away from them to a stretch of the high hedges surrounding Diamond’s family mansion.*)

**Foals:** (*banging on gates, chanting*) Twilight Time! Twilight Time! Twilight Time!

(*The mantra continues from o.s. and fades away as the Crusaders clamber up and over the greenery from the pool side, one by one, gibbering all the way to the ground.*)

**Scootaloo:** We gotta beat them to Twilight’s so we can explain!

**Sweetie:** (*pointing*) This way! I know a shortcut!

(*They are a little slow on the draw, though, as the angry bunch starts to close in.*)

**Foals:** (*chanting*) Twilight Time! (*They continue under the following.*)

**Bloom:** Then we run, like the wind!

(*All three get to galloping as the hacked-off equines continue their inexorable advance. Dissolve to the exterior of the library; the Crusaders race into view and brake hard to a walk.*)

**Sweetie:** (*gasping for breath*) We…made…it…Quick!…Knock on…

(*Two irked colts on scooters roll up to block their approach to the door. Caught between them and the advancing, now-silent foals, they get a good look at Diamond and Silver when these two stride up to the front lines. All three can only watch in silent horror as one of the scooter riders raps a hoof against the door. It opens almost immediately, the camera tilting up to frame Twilight at the threshold; her welcoming smile turns into a gape of shock once she sees the size of the crowd. All the angry looks have been replaced by eager smiles, with the exception of the three at the center of it all.*)

**Sweetie:** Twilight, we can explain!

**Bloom:** We know you said we should just keep Twilight Time to us!

**Scootaloo:** We didn’t mean for so many other ponies to be here! Honest!

**Twilight:** (*smiling*) Oh, don’t be silly. I only meant that for your benefit so you could get the most out of our time together. But if you want to share your time with others, that’s fine.

**Scootaloo:** So you’re not mad?

**Twilight:** Of course not. (*Cut to inside the door; she gestures welcomingly and all start to enter.*) Come on in, everypony! Spike made nachos.

(*The baby dragon is crossing the reading room with a tray of that particular snack.*)

**Twilight:** Turns out we’ll need some more than that.

(*Two surprised reptilian green eyes flick down at the food, then toward the crowd, and Spike trudges away with a groan to pull kitchen duty again. Dissolve to a reading room now packed with foals talking and reading everywhere and pan to follow Twilight over to the center table. She jumps onto it and raises her voice to be heard over the noise.*)

**Twilight:** Before we start, we should maybe get a bit more organized? (*pointing in various directions in turn*) Ponies interested in magic, in this corner. Ponies who want to learn potions, over here. Bookworm ponies, over there.

(*The crowd quickly disperses to leave the Crusaders smiling to themselves.*)

**Bloom:** Incredible! Looks like everything’s workin’ out just fine.

**Scootaloo:** And I was so afraid Twilight would be disappointed in us.

**Sweetie:** Told you I knew exactly how to handle all this. (*Twilight walks past.*)

**Twilight:** (*addressing the room*) Thanks to all of you for taking time out to come learn new things.

**Diamond:** (*really sucking up*) Thank *you*, Princess!

**Silver:** We love you, Princess!

(*Cheers from the other foals; they gradually fall quiet at her next words.*)

**Twilight:** Okay, okay. Let’s settle down. If you want to thank anypony— (*gesturing to one side*) —thank the Cutie Mark Crusaders— (*Cut to them; she continues o.s.*) —for so generously sharing this time.

**Sweetie:** It was nothing, really. We just felt it was the right thing to do.

**Diamond:** (*irritated*) Hmph! (*aside, to Silver*) What a laugh.

**Twilight:** Let’s begin over here. (*crossing/kneeling to Pip*) And what would you like to learn, little one?

**Pip:** I want to learn how to become a Cutie Mark Crusader! (*Twilight stands up.*)

**Twilight:** And why do you want to become a Cutie Mark Crusader so badly, hmm?

**Pip:** Because then I could get all my classmates to do me favors and stuff, because I’m friends with a famous princess!

(*His statement has all the impact of a two-by-four upside the royal head. The purple eyes narrow slightly as they aim themselves back over Twilight’s shoulder and across the room; at the wall, Sweetie backs up ever so slightly between her two friends.*)

**Sweetie:** (*apprehensively*) Oh, boy. (*Twilight steps over to them; all three grimace in fear.*)

**Twilight:** Is this true?

**Sweetie:** (*hastily*) We wanted our time together just as a way to be with you and learn new things—really and truly!

**Twilight:** (*smugly*) Prove it.

**Sweetie:** Huh? (*Stunned little neighs from Bloom and Scootaloo at the same time.*)

**Twilight:** If it’s true, then I’m sure you’ve all been practicing your skills over the past week. Show me how much better you got.

(*A shared look of total panic among the Crusaders.*)

**Bloom:** Uh…well…uh…we…can’t.

**Scootaloo:** We kinda rushed over and forgot to bring our stuff.

**Twilight:** Hm. I see. (*She turns and begins to walk away.*)

**Sweetie:** No, wait! (*Twilight stops; she hurries out from the wall.*) Hey, everypony! You’re in luck! You came to learn, but instead you’re getting dinner and a show! (*zipping away, grabbing Bloom and Scootaloo*) Get ready, ’cause we, the Cutie Mark Crusaders, are about to lay on you the amazing skills we learned in Twilight Time!

(*Hopelessly confounded looks from her two partners in mayhem, excited murmurs from the onlookers, and a puzzled glance between Diamond and Silver. At center stage, Sweetie motions for Bloom and Scootaloo to head out in opposite directions, leaving her to stand alone.*)

**Sweetie:** Unfortunately, since we don’t have Scootaloo’s unicycle parts, she’ll take apart and put back together one of the scooters from outside.

(*Cut to Pip on the end of this; the pegasus wheels a vehicle partly into view, causing him some degree of consternation, Zoom out to frame all of her.*)

**Pip:** Hey! That’s *my* scooter!

**Scootaloo:** You got us into this mess, kid. (*pulling on handlebars*) Might want to roll with us. (*She yanks them free of the frame.*)

**Pip:** Huh?

(*The handlebars are tossed aside; cut to Bloom, crossing the floor with an apple in her mouth, and pan to follow her over to her potion-making equipment.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*from o.s.*) Apple Bloom doesn’t have her apple seedling, so she’ll just grab an apple from the kitchen.

(*She sets the apple down and points nervously to it on the end of this line. Back to Sweetie.*)

**Sweetie:** And I will begin by using my magic to lift this broom!

(*A zoom out on the end of this line frames the cleaning implement now lying on the floor before her. Scootaloo has reduced Pip’s scooter to a scatter of parts, and a most uneasy Bloom stands with apple and glassware at the ready. With every eye training itself on the three, Scootaloo gets the handlebars in her teeth and re-attaches them to the vertical front bar, Bloom dribbles a few drops into a flask from a test tube and gets a burst of purple vapor, and Sweetie trains her full focus on the broom. A few sparks sputter from the tip of her horn, and the magic starts to take hold of the item as Diamond and Silver stare in surprise and Twilight watches skeptically. More parts of the scooter are fitted together, and another reagent sends up green smoke when it is added to the potion mixture. Sweetie keeps up her fierce concentration, causing the broom to wobble a bit and then slowly float clear of the ground.*)

(*Now Scootaloo, wearing her crash helmet, pops a wheelie across the room on the fully assembled scooter and spins it 180 degrees around its front wheel.*)

**Scootaloo:** Ta-da! (*Bloom, sitting on her haunches, holds her flask of potion over the apple.*)

**Bloom:** Become a tree! (*She pours it on.*)

**Sweetie:** (*levitating broom higher*) Rise!

(*Once it reaches her eye level, though, the spell fizzles out and the thing drops back to the floor. The scooter instantly goes to pieces, dumping its rider onto her rump, and the apple proceeds to grow…and grow…and grow. Many eyes slowly widen and many hooves step cautiously backward; cut to the exterior of the library. A great blast of juice and pulp issues from every window at once, and in the reading room, the floor and every living thing standing on it is now thoroughly besmirched with fragments of the exploded fruit. Scootaloo has lost her helmet.*)

**Sweetie:** (*wiping her face*) That didn’t turn out quite how I had hoped.

**Twilight:** (*shaking off a little muck*) Looks like Twilight Time is over.

**Diamond:** (*relishing every word*) And look who’s not the Princess's entourage anymore.

**Foals:** (*mockingly*) Oooooh!

(*Cut to the unfortunate triumvirate during this, then back to Twilight and the rest of the foals.*)

**Silver:** Guess they didn’t come here to learn after all.

**Twilight:** (*icily*) Well, neither did any of you.

**Foals:** (*disappointedly, walking out*) Awwww…

(*Cut to the heartbroken Crusaders and zoom out as Twilight crosses to them. All four are somewhat cleaned up now.*)

**Sweetie:** We’re really sorry, Twilight. (*Twilight shakes off another glob; Scootaloo nudges a couple of parts.*) We made a huge mistake.

**Bloom:** And we really and truly did enjoy learning new skills with you.

**Scootaloo:** (*pushing scooter*) Guess we’ll just have to keep on doing it without you now.

(*The Princess's eyes have slightly bugged out upon noticing that the filly has completely put the vehicle back together, except for one handlebar. This is quickly snapped into place and the scooter pushed over to Twilight, staying intact the whole way.*)

**Scootaloo:** Thanks, Twilight.

(*As she clumps away, the camera cuts to Bloom at her potion setup. She adds a little bit of a new mix to a flowerpot, squinting through the smoke that boils up, and holds it at Twilight’s eye level. Up comes a shoot that blossoms into a small flower but quickly droops to one side.*)

**Bloom:** Thanks.

(*It is straightened up in a burst of magic, and here comes Sweetie, horn glowing to cast the enchantment. She pulls the bloom off the stem and floats it over to tuck behind Twilight’s ear.*)

**Sweetie:** Thanks.

(*All three head for the door, leaving their mentor temporarily at a loss for words. Finally she addresses the filly at the back of the line.*)

**Twilight:** Sweetie Belle?

(*All stop and Sweetie glances back over her shoulder; cut to a head-on shot of a now-smiling Twilight and zoom in slowly.*)

**Twilight:** Remember a moment ago when you asked me to give you a chance?

(*Her smile becomes a grin, prompting hopeful smiles on the three young faces, then shifts into a worried look at the sound of Spike’s labored grunting from o.s. A zoom out brings him into view, lugging a tray piled with nachos to nearly three times his own height. He sets it down next to Twilight and the scooter, then looks around and realizes that the intended consumers have cleared out of the joint. The bat-wing ears droop in stunned surprise before he gets his tongue working to voice his sudden frustration at having lost his audience.*)

**Spike:** Aw, come on!

(*Twilight just gives him a humoring smile. Dissolve to a close-up of the base of a book stand and tilt up; Sweetie stands here, writing in an open book with a pencil in her teeth. The next line marks it as the shared journal, in which only Twilight and her five friends have been making entries up to this point. The library has been cleaned up, as have she, Twilight, and the other Crusaders when they appear on camera during this scene.*)

**Sweetie:** (*voice over, dictating*) “I guess Twilight must not be so super-upset anymore, ’cause she’s letting us do a diary entry like our sisters do. Boy, did we get our priorities mixed up.”

(*She looks across the room, the camera panning to frame Bloom haunch-sitting at her potions kit with Twilight supervising. The latter has removed the flower from her mane.*)

**Sweetie:** (*voice over*) “We started acting special because we were friends with someone special.” (*Dose added to flowerpot; burst of smoke.*) “We almost forgot the real reason she’s special— ” (*A tall stem emerges and blooms into a broad pink/blue flower.*) “—because she’s our friend.”

(*Twilight congratulates the yellow filly, and the camera zooms out to frame a re-helmeted Scootaloo maneuvering the unicycle from the prologue—now fully rebuilt—back and forth with ease.*)

**Sweetie:** (*voice over*) “But she forgave us. And, like magic, things are good as new. That’s the kind of magic I *really* want to get good at…” (*She fires up her horn and gets the broom to do loop-the-loops.*) “…now that I’m getting so good at the other kind.”

(*It plants itself neatly and gracefully in front of Twilight, Bloom, and Scootaloo, and Sweetie crosses to them, having put down the pencil.*)

**Twilight:** Wow! (*Scootaloo stands on her front hooves and jumps off the unicycle.*) All three of you have made so much progress! I’m really proud of you. See you next time. (*They head for the door; cut to a head-on view of them.*)

**Sweetie:** (*voice over*) “We’re just glad Twilight Time is back to normal…well…”

(*They stop short, glance down toward the floor, and dip out of sight for a moment. When they come up, they have donned “disguises” that can only make them stick out like three sore thumbs. Bloom: cloche, scarf, coat, huge sunglasses. Scootaloo: gray trenchcoat and fedora, eyeglasses, fake mustache. Sweetie: broad-brimmed sun hat, coat, kerchief around neck, shades with frames styled to resemble wings.*)

**Sweetie:** (*voice over*) “…almost back to normal.”

(*Cut to outside. Bloom is first to exit through the open front door; a nearby trash can has been stuffed full of Spike’s unused nachos. They keep their voices down on the following lines.*)

**Sweetie:** (*from inside*) I just hope no one sees us! (*She and Scootaloo follow.*)

**Bloom:** Because we’re tryin’ to keep Twilight Time a secret now?

**Scootaloo:** Or because we look ridiculous?

**Sweetie:** A little of both, actually.

(*Twilight, standing in the doorway with the broom propped up next to her, laughs gently to herself. Fade to black.*)