**THE CUTIE MAP—PART TWO**

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Prologue

(*Opening shot: fade in to a “Previously on My Little Pony” title card, then to black, then in to Twilight Sparkle addressing her friends in the throne room of her castle—the prologue of Part One.*)

**Twilight:** As Princess, I’ve been chosen to spread the magic of friendship across Equestria.

(*Long shot of the castle during the day, zooming in slowly.*)

**Twilight:** (*voice over*) So why would the Tree of Harmony want us to sit in a castle in Ponyville?

(*The throne room again: the ridges of crystal lacing in from the six full-size seats converge at the center of the floor, and the table begins to rise.*)

**Spike:** (*voice over*) This is incredible!

(*Fade to white, then snap to an overhead shot of all seven staring at the magical map that has appeared on the new furniture. Zoom out slowly.*)

**Spike:** (*voice over*) It’s got all of Equestria!

(*Close-up of Twilight and Pinkie Pie in turn, each with her cutie mark flaring up, then cut to the cluster of all six images roving over the map toward the distant foothills.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*voice over*) Why are our cutie marks over there?

(*Cut to a scene from Act One: the group—sans Spike, recall—has reached the cliff overlooking the desert village to which the map has guided them. Zoom in past them to frame the double row of houses and the single one belonging to Starlight Glimmer.*)

**Twilight:** (*voice over*) Seems like the map wants us to find out.

(*Act Two: cut to a stretch of road filled with permanently grinning locals going about their day and pan from here to another busy area.*)

**Twilight:** (*voice over, hushed*) An entire village with the same cutie mark? (*Cut to Starlight, stepping out from a darkened doorway within her house.*)

**Starlight:** Welcome!

(*Act Three: cut to one group of smiling, staring ponies and pan to two others.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*voice over*) This must be the most pleasant place in Equestria!

(*To Starlight, leading the group up into the mountains; as she speaks, cut to behind them, now facing the cutie mark vault, and zoom out to frame all of it.*)

**Starlight:** I’m delighted you’re interested in our cutie mark vault. (*Twilight realizes that…*)

**Twilight:** It’s a trap!

(*The magic from the Staff of Sameness pulls the mark from her haunch; cut to the vault as those of all six are locked away behind glass.*)

**Starlight:** (*voice over*) Now you can spend the rest of your lives here…

(*During this line, cut to Fluttershy, Pinkie, and Rainbow Dash—colors faded, fighting spirit gone, equals signs appearing on the newly blank flanks. The camera then shifts to an overhead shot of this cave, having rotated to horizontally frame the double line of ponies that has hemmed in the group. All six have had their colors partially bleached out; recall that by this point, they have all had their marks replaced by equals signs. A large white one superimposes itself on the double line as the entire scene fades to black.*)

**Starlight:** (*voice over*) …without your cutie marks.

(*Fade to black.*)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(*Opening shot: fade in to a slow pan across the village road, from one side to the other. The area is deserted except for a stallion and mare standing on either side of the front door to one house, at the end opposite the one used by Starlight. Even though she is not present, her voice makes itself heard easily, with an eerily calm tone.*)

**Starlight:** (*amplified, slightly muffled*) In sameness there is peace. (*Muffled thumping from within.*) Exceptionalism is a lie.

(*Dissolve to the source of these exhortations—a loudspeaker mounted on the rafters inside. The voice is heard clearly now, and all lines spoken by Starlight during this scene come in through the loudspeaker.*)

**Starlight:** Free yourself from your cutie mark.

*(Zoom out to frame the entire space. All six mares have been confined to this room, whose walls are liberally decorated with equals-sign posters and pictures, and Pinkie is perusing a book, taken from a shelf, whose pages show nothing but this symbol. Twilight stands thinking; Applejack paces the floor; Fluttershy huddles in a corner, near a feed trough full of hay, to peek out one of the narrow windows; Rainbow hammers ineffectually at the door—the cause of the thumping—and Rarity gloomily regards the drab window curtains in another corner. The purpose of this building is now clear: they have been placed here under guard in an attempt to break their resistance to Starlight’s doctrine, including the propaganda being piped in.*)

**Starlight:** Choose equality as your special talent. (*Close-up of Rainbow, ramming the door; the volume fades somewhat.*) Difference is frustration. To excel is to fail. (*She gives up.*)

**Pinkie:** (*from o.s.*) Hey! (*Cut to her.*) This is pretty good! (*Flip pages; equals sign on every one.*)

**Starlight:** Be your best by never being your best. (*Twilight and Applejack pace; the broadcast volume fades to near-inaudibility as Twilight speaks.*)

**Twilight:** (*groaning*) We’ve gotta find a way out of here. I can’t take much more of that voice!

**Rarity:** (*distraught, mascara running*) Oh, this is horrible! (*She starts crying.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*crossing to her; gently touching her back*) There, there, Rarity. It’s not so bad.

**Rarity:** (*suddenly angry*) Yes, it is! Look at those drapes! (*Close-up of one window, zooming in; she continues o.s.*) I have no idea if they’re tacky or not! (*Back to Fluttershy.*)

**Fluttershy:** Well, I think they’re nice.

(*The equals sign on Rarity’s haunch flares black for a moment, and she starts into a despairing moan that works its way up toward fire-siren pitch before turning into a fresh crying jag. Two Pinkie-caliber gushers of tears accompany it.*)

**Rarity:** SO DO I!! (*Fluttershy backs away slowly; a bird lands at the windowsill with a chirp.*)

**Fluttershy:** Oh, thank goodness! (*crossing to it*) Can you help us, little birdie?

(*It twitters a response—and then the yellow pegasus gets the same flare as her formerly fashion-attuned friend.*)

**Fluttershy:** Go on now! Fly away and get us help!

(*It voices a puzzled reply in close-up; zoom out to frame a flustered Fluttershy.*)

**Fluttershy:** Oh… (*It flies off.*) …even tweets don’t make sense anymore!

(*Cut to Rainbow, sitting on her haunches with her back against the door. The clatter of hooves snaps her out of her deep blue funk and prompts her to go airborne an instant before Applejack gallops into view. The farm pony pivots, crashes both rear hooves into the planks—and ends up tumbling forward rather than smashing them to toothpicks. She fetches up on her belly with a groan of pain and disgust.*)

**Applejack:** This door’s shut tighter than a… (*losing steam; she stands and Rainbow hovers down*) …summer of… (*Her mark flashes.*) …uh, piglets in…shoot! I can’t even make country-isms no more! (*Pinkie stands up into view.*)

**Pinkie:** I don’t know. Maybe it’ll be super-fun to be all the same! (*Hers goes off; perkiness goes bye-bye.*) Sort of. More pleasant than fun, I guess. (*She sits down to her book.*)

**Twilight:** (*pacing*) Something odd about that staff. I haven’t studied eastern unicorns as much as I should’ve, but I’m pretty sure Meadowbrook only had eight magical items, not nine. And I don’t remember any of them being a staff.

**Applejack:** (*flopping onto her back*) Well, it looks like you’ll have plenty of time to try to think about it.

*(The camera angle of Twilight’s pacing picks out a tub of water standing next to the hay trough, not previously visible in this sequence. She is referring to Starlight’s claim in Part One that the Staff is one of the nine enchanted items belonging to the mage of old. Applejack pulls her hat over her eyes on the end of the previous line and closes her eyes for a nap; cut to an overhead shot of the room. Twilight sits on her haunches; Rainbow settles onto her belly; Applejack is lying with her hind legs propped against the door; the other three are as before. The propaganda fades up again and continues as shown below, over a sequence of dissolves that shift the mares into assorted positions around the room. Every book Pinkie takes from the shelf has equals signs on pages and cover. One shot, from ground level, picks out Twilight once again pacing the floor and thinking very hard, tongue clamped between teeth. When the view shifts to overhead again, she does her best to keep her wits about her, but the others have gone to sleep in the late-day dimness. Two parallel shafts of sunlight shine in from the front windows, gradually lengthening and lightening the enclosure and eventually fading away altogether—a new morning has come. The repetition of previous slogans gives them away as part of a recording on continuous playback.)*

**Starlight:** Choose equality as your special talent. Difference is frustration. To excel is to fail. Be your best by never being your best. Conformity will set you free. Accept your limitations, and happiness will follow. You’re no better than your friends.

(*The winged unicorn snaps to her hooves, the broadcast fading greatly in volume as she begins to speak.*)

**Twilight:** I’ve got it! (*The others wake up with a cry of surprise.*) I know how we can get out.

**Rainbow:** (*sighing wearily*) Forget it, Twilight. This door’s not opening. (*Cut to Rarity.*)

**Rarity:** And I’m afraid the windows are much too small for escape. (*Zoom out to frame Twilight.*)

**Twilight:** (*shrewdly*) But there is a third way.

**Pinkie:** (*from o.s.*) Of course! (*Cut to her.*) Eventually the wind and weather will wear down the walls until they start to crumble. Then when [*sic*] all we have to do is wait for a big enough hole to form, and we can just walk out! It’s the perfect plan! (*Mark flares; she loses her cheer.*) I guess.

**Twilight:** We don’t actually have to escape. They’ll just let us out when they think we’ve accepted their philosophy.

**Applejack:** But they’re never gonna believe we switched over in just one night. (*Cut to Twilight.*)

**Twilight:** There’s one of us they might believe.

(*As she speaks, pan away from her to frame Fluttershy, who becomes just a tiny bit nervous at finding the attention shifting to her. A cut to her perspective frames the expectant smiles of one Princess, one dressmaker, one daredevil, one farmer—and one party planner when she leans into view. Back to Fluttershy, whose wings and eyes pop wide open in surprise.*)

**Fluttershy:** Oh! Me?

**Rainbow:** You’ve been saying how great this place is since we got here!

**Fluttershy:** Well, that’s because everypony’s so nice and their village is so pretty and—and…

(*Her wistful smile gives way to a look of resignation—that faded yellow rump is firmly in the hot seat now—and she lets her head droop.*)

**Fluttershy:** Oh, you’re right. (*folding wings*) They probably would believe me. (*Head up; zoom in slowly.*) I hate to lie to them. They’ve been so welcoming and friendly—aside from locking us in here and trying to brainwash us into abandoning the things that make us special.

(*Now she gets it; her head comes up to let her look the others straight on, and she narrows her eyes in determination.*)

**Fluttershy:** Okay. I’ll do it.

**Pinkie:** (*jumping high*) WOO-HOO!!

(*Her mark flares at the peak of her leap, and she settles sedately back onto her hooves.*)

**Pinkie:** I mean, cool.

**Fluttershy:** (*crossing to Twilight*) But…what do I do once I’m out?

**Twilight:** You’ve gotta find a way to get our cutie marks back.

(*Fluttershy swallows hard, just before the loudspeaker cuts in with a crackle of static and a squeal of feedback to end the propaganda recording loop. The noise gives way to Starlight’s normal speech.*)

**Starlight:** Oh, good morning!

(*The door opens to admit the beaming village founder.*)

**Starlight:** I trust you had a pleasant night? (*turning to lead them out*) This way, please. There are some friends who would like to see you.

(*Fluttershy gets a round of encouraging smiles from the other five. Outside, a great many grinning ponies have gathered in the road and are awaiting the group’s emergence, with Double Diamond at their front.*)

**Starlight:** (*voice raised*) Gather ’round, friends, gather ’round! (*Close-up of some, then back to her as she continues at normal volume.*) We’ve come to ask if any of you are ready to join us. There are so many friends to be made once you realize you don’t need your cutie marks— (*leaning into Twilight’s face*) —or the talents that come with them. (*Cut to Double.*)

**Double:** We have a welcome ceremony for new friends. The whole village joins together to build you your own cottage.

**Rainbow:** (*from o.s.*) Not interested! (*General shock; cut to her, Applejack, and Pinkie.*) You may have them now, but we’re going to get our cutie marks back!

**Applejack:** Y’all don’t understand, do you? You can’t force nopony to be friends. It don’t work like that.

**Stallion:** Please! Join us!

**Mare:** We love new friends!

**Starlight:** It’s all right, everypony. This is a perfectly normal part of the equalization process for those who haven’t…mmm, quite seen the light yet. We’ll try again tomorrow— (*to the six*) —once *you’ve* had a bit more time to consider our philosophy.

(*Her slight nod is the cue for them to file back into their prison, bowed in by the ever-grinning guards; Twilight glares daggers back at Starlight with every step. Lagging well behind her and bringing up the rear is Fluttershy, who continues docilely toward the door until Twilight kicks her foreleg to remind her of the plot. She stops short.*)

**Fluttershy:** I’d like to join!

(*She claps her front hooves over her mouth, but her decision sets off a buzz of excited chatter among the locals.*)

**Twilight:** (*mock disbelief*) Fluttershy? How could you?

**Fluttershy:** If giving up my cutie mark means I get to stay in this lovely village with these lovely ponies… (*crossing to Starlight*) …then I’ll do it.

(*Twilight sends her nastiest look back at the two as she crosses the threshold; once she is in, Starlight magically closes the door.*)

**Starlight:** We have a new friend, everypony!

(*Villagers gather happily around Fluttershy for a moment, then back away at Starlight’s approach.*)

**Starlight:** Now, there’s one more order of business. (*dramatically, briefly touching Fluttershy’s shoulders*) It seems some in our midst might be dissatisfied with the village life.

(*Cut to the crowd; general concerned gasps and mutters break out.*)

**Starlight:** (*from o.s.*) Unfortunately, it’s all too true, my friends.

(*Cut to an uneasy Fluttershy during the previous, then zoom out to frame the greasily smiling unicorn addressing her.*)

**Starlight:** Will you kindly tell us the names of those “friends” who so desperately miss their cutie marks that they would sneak around in the shadows—

(*The smile vanishes on “friends” and she caresses Fluttershy’s chin in a gentle yet disquieting way. From here, cut to Night Glider, Party Favor, and Sugar Belle at the back of the crowd—all realizing that they could be in a whole heap of trouble for their subversive activities in Part One.*)

**Starlight:** (*from o.s.*) —talking to strangers about it? (*Back to her and Fluttershy; she smiles warmly again.*) Just so we can be sure your intentions are indeed pure?

(*On this last word, cut to a close-up of one very, very scared pegasus and zoom in slowly. She swallows hard before the view snaps to black.*)

Act Two

(*Opening shot: fade in to Fluttershy wilting slowly under Starlight’s impatient gaze. Zoom in slowly.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*hesitantly*) Um…I don’t know who they were. (*smiling*) Um, I’m sorry.

(*Cut to her perspective, panning across the onlookers.*)

**Fluttershy:** I don’t know your names and faces yet. (*Back to the pair.*)

**Starlight:** (*smiling, airily*) Nonsense! Obviously these ponies must have asked you directly. (*gesturing toward crowd*) Kindly point them out!

(*Cut to the slightly freaked out Night, Party, and Sugar and zoom in slowly on them through the crowd. The stallion is first to find some nerve; cut to Fluttershy, slowly backing down as Starlight’s eyes bore into her. She chews her bottom lip and grits her teeth, wishing mightily that she could teleport away like Twilight—and then Party’s voice smashes the silence.*)

**Party:** (*from o.s.*) It was me!

(*The entire crowd quickly backs off to one side or the other, leaving the trio to stand conspicuously alone.*)

**Party:** It was only me! (*He races up and kneels in front of Starlight.*) I only wanted it back for a little while!

**Starlight:** (*smiling smugly, lifting his chin*) And you’re quite certain it was *only* you?

**Party:** I just wanted to remember what it was like.

**Starlight:** (*hurt tone*) And no thought to the pain you’d cause your friends. (*That hits home; he slinks down o.s.*) Such selfishness.

(*A couple of bystanders add their disapproving glares to hers, and in too short a moment, he is upright and trudging toward the house in which Twilight and company are imprisoned. The stallion who was on guard, a unicorn, uses his magic to open the door as two other ponies usher Party through it.*)

**Party:** I’m sorry, everypony! I never wanted to leave the village! (*Cut to Fluttershy and Starlight on the end of this, then back to him.*) I love all of—

(*His entreaty is cut off by the door slamming in his face. Cut to Night and Sugar and zoom in slowly as their minds race through the prospects for the ordeal their friend is about to face.*)

(*Inside the house, Party rams the door headfirst, hard enough to get the end of his horn stuck in the wood.*)

**Party:** What was I thinking? I can’t believe I even considered asking for my cutie mark back.

**Rainbow:** Don’t worry. Fluttershy will have us outta here in no time. (*Party darts over to her, suddenly panicked.*)

**Party:** Didn’t you see what just happened out there? Your friend has accepted our way! (*Others back away.*) You will all accept our way! It’s only a matter of time!

(*Sheer brain-melting horror runs through his mind for a split second, after which he hangs his head and clumps over to lie down in a corner.*)

**Rainbow:** (*whispering, to others*) This guy’s a barrel of laughs.

**Pinkie:** (*matter-of-factly*) Laughs don’t come in barrels. They come from inside you as your body’s response to delight.

(*Four flabbergasted pairs of eyes turn her way at this unexpected deadpan delivery.*)

**Applejack:** (*hushed*) So what are we gonna do while Fluttershy’s out there lookin’ for our… (*even softer*) *…cutie marks?*

**Twilight:** We have to stay as positive as we can. If Party Favor sees how much we really do like each other, even though we’re all different, maybe we can use him to spread our message to the rest of the village. (*The loudspeaker crackles/whines to life.*)

**Starlight:** (*recorded, over loudspeaker*) To excel is to fail. (*Volume fades.*) Be your best by never being your best.

**Rarity:** (*hushed, over end of previous*) Let’s just hope they don’t convert any of us first.

(*Dissolve to a slow pan along a row of smiling, waving ponies on the road, three of whom call “Welcome” one by one, then cut to Fluttershy walking among them.*)

**Fluttershy:** Gosh. You really are the nicest ponies I’ve ever met. (*Pan to frame Starlight as she steps up.*)

**Starlight:** Come. All new friends stay with me until their cottage is completed. (*leading Fluttershy to her door, magically opening it*) Let’s get you settled, and then you can enjoy all that our little village has to offer.

(*On the end of this, cut to her perspective, the camera pointing back along the road and panning from one side to the other. Night and Sugar, walking past in the fore, slap on the most convincing grins they can scrape up and make eye contact with Fluttershy. The camera then shifts to a close-up of the pegasus, who glances dejectedly toward the ground and completely misses the suspicious look coming from Starlight. However, she too works up a smile and allows the unicorn to escort her into the house, this time not catching the squint-eyed smile that Starlight aims back toward the two dissenters. A shot of magic closes the door behind the two.*)

(*Dissolve to a head-on shot of the house at night. A puff of sooty smoke burps out of the chimney, accompanied by a grinding of stone on stone, and a very grimy Fluttershy pops out after it. One coughing fit and vigorous shake later, she has cleared her lungs and cleaned herself off.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*sighing*) Get the cutie marks back. That’s all you’ve gotta do, Fluttershy. Just sneak through the dark— (*huddling down, increasingly fearful*) —to that spooky old cave, with the scary magical staff— (*lifting off*) —and get the cutie marks back.

(*Dissolve to a profile close-up of her walking along, seen from the flanks up.*)

**Fluttershy:** Okay. You’re doing great. The cave’s gotta be close now.

(*She stops short and looks down toward her hooves; zoom out to frame all of her. She is still on the roof, having traveled only a few feet from the chimney.*)

**Starlight:** (*from o.s. below*) Excellent work, Double Diamond. (*Fluttershy peeks over the edge.*)

**Double:** (*from o.s. below*) Of course.

(*On the start of the next line, tilt down to ground level. Starlight stands at her open front door, addressing Double at the bottom of the steps. A crate filled with jars stands next to him.*)

**Double:** But I don’t understand why you wanted me to bring them here. (*Starlight levitates the crate and walks in with it; he follows.*) Fluttershy is one of us now. Surely she can be trusted.

(*Her field closes the door; cut to within. Fluttershy puts her head up outside at the windowsill as Starlight paces, floating the crate up. At this distance, the jars—six in all—can be seen to contain the Ponyville group’s cutie marks.*)

**Starlight:** (*levitating the jar with Twilight’s mark*) This one belongs to a princess. It could be very important to our cause. (*Close-up of the horrified yellow face, hunkering down.*)

**Double:** (*from o.s.*) But if Twilight Sparkle becomes our friend— (*Cut to him and Starlight; she sets the crate down.*) —then what do we care about this old cutie mark?

**Starlight:** I just want to keep them close until everything is…settled. You may go, Double Diamond.

(*He does so, leaving her to gaze fondly at her stolen prize. Outside, Fluttershy takes cover behind the corner of the house just before he lets himself out, the door swinging shut behind him. She peeks after the departing stallion, then returns to her vantage point at the window and sees Starlight walk past, now floating all the jars from the crate.*)

**Fluttershy:** Oh, dear. How am I ever gonna get the cutie marks back now?

(*Cut to just inside the window; the blue-green irises, shrunken with agitation, flick back and forth in time for a loud crash.*)

**Starlight:** (*from o.s.*) Ow!

(*Outside again; Fluttershy flies up toward the roof. Inside, at another window: she looks in and sees a wooden tub roll across the floor, shedding droplets of water as it comes to a stop beneath the sill. The camera returns to her side, giving a clear view of a suddenly sodden Starlight in her own bedroom with the jars floating nearby—she evidently dumped the water over herself.*)

**Starlight:** (*slightly muffled by glass*) Ugh! Starlight, you clumsy fool!

(*Inside again: the jars are placed on a dresser and a nearby towel is levitated over so she can dry herself. Once she moves it away, the equals sign is seen to be gone from her haunch; in its place is a four-pointed violet star overlaid on a white one, trailing wisps of swirling, two-tone blue-green light. Zoom in to a close-up of this—her real cutie mark—then cut to just inside the window as Fluttershy stares in total shock, eyes bugging out and jaw falling wide open.*)

(*Inside the bedroom, Starlight quickly puts her magic to work, applying makeup to match her coat color and cover the star, then using a stencil and brush to re-apply the fake mark. Fluttershy pulls in a soft gasp, drawing Starlight’s attention instantly to the window and making her drop the tools, but she plunges out of sight with a fragment of a fraction of a second to spare. Cut to just outside the window; Starlight glares through the panes but finds nothing, then steps out of view and turns off the bedroom light. A tilt down brings the covert operative into view—in an upside-down spreadeagle position, hanging for dear life on the underside of a ledge that runs beneath the window. She drops into a hover and rights herself.*)

**Fluttershy:** Oh, no!

(*She flies off. Dissolve to a long shot of the village, now seen during the following morning, and cut to the crowd gathered outside her friends’ prison as they are escorted out. As with the previous morning, Starlight is waiting for them; now, though, Fluttershy stands alongside.*)

**Starlight:** (*to crowd*) I’ve got a good feeling about today! (*to the quintet*) So, do any of you have… (*Cut to a pan along the dispirited mares; she continues o.s.*) …anything you’d like to say?

(*Silence reigns for several beats.*)

**Starlight:** Aw, a pity. Well, let’s try this again tomorrow, shall we?

(*Back into the house they go.*)

**Starlight:** (*to the crowd*) No new friends today, I’m afraid!

(*Fluttershy’s smile turns into a grimace; she speaks up after a moment.*)

**Fluttershy:** Wait! I’d like to lock them in. (*Puzzled reaction from Starlight, shifting to a smile; Fluttershy grins.*)

**Starlight:** Marvelous, Fluttershy! (*Fluttershy steps ahead.*) That’s the spirit! (*all business*) Party Favor, will you join us, please?

(*Said stallion gallops out at full speed as Fluttershy herds the last of her friends toward the door; he throws himself to the ground, hugging Starlight’s foreleg.*)

**Party:** I’m sorry, Starlight! I’m sorry, everypony! I’ve seen the error of my ways! I never want to look at my cutie mark again! (*Cut to Starlight.*)

**Starlight:** (*smiling*) It seems there’s cause for celebration after all! (*Cheers from the gathered spectators.*)

**Party:** (*from o.s.*) They tried to break me! (*Cut to him.*) They wouldn’t stop talking about how different they are, and that somehow makes their friendship stronger.

**Starlight:** Such backwards thinking.

(*He stands up, now displaying the kind of crazed grin and disjointed eyes that would have given Pinkie a run for her money during her mental breakdown in “Party of One.”*)

**Party:** But I didn’t listen! (*Snap back to normal.*) I knew what they were up to, and I didn’t listen! (*Here it comes again; she touches his chest.*)

**Starlight:** Well done, Party Favor! We welcome you back with open hooves.

**Fluttershy:** (*from o.s.*) Um, Starlight?

(*Cut to her, standing next to the still-open door with an apologetic little grin.*)

**Fluttershy:** I think we might have one more friend joining us today.

(*Out steps a cowed Twilight, prompting a round of gasps from the o.s. crowd. Across the way, Starlight pushes Party aside and aims a slightly incredulous eye toward the pair.*)

**Starlight:** Is this true?

**Twilight:** I…I think so. But I just want to be sure. (*crossing to Starlight*) If I agree to leave my cutie mark in the vault, I’ll really be happier?

**Starlight:** (*cheerfully*) Just look around. Equality has given us more happiness than you’ve ever known.

**Twilight:** (*spreading wings, eyeing new mark*) And you wouldn’t let me just live here in the village with my old cutie mark? (*Cut to Starlight.*)

**Starlight:** Out of the question! A pony with a different cutie mark in our midst would destroy our entire philosophy! (*smiling, indicating crowd*) We are all equal here. (*Zoom out slightly; murmurs of assent among them.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*from o.s.*) Then how do you explain… (*Cut to her, hovering overhead with a bucket of water.*) …*this?!?*

(*She hurls the contents downward, straight toward Starlight, but a timely sidestep saves the unicorn from her second thorough dousing in twenty-four hours. A drop lands on her back and begins to trickle down toward her haunch, though. Any shred of good humor evaporates as she glares up at Fluttershy with the purest hostility.*)

**Starlight:** I knew you couldn’t be trusted!

(*Party’s eyes suddenly go very wide, aimed in Starlight’s general direction, and a close-up of her haunch tells the tale. As the drop descends, it dissolves some of the makeup she has applied and partially exposes her real mark. He quickly steps up, his ragged cloak now held in his teeth, and rubs it over the spot to fully reveal the deception.*)

**Starlight:** No! Get away!

(*Party drops the cloak, giving the crowd a full view; they gasp in shock and disbelief, and Starlight grimaces and covers her haunch with her tail.*)

**Starlight:** Wh…what are you looking at? (*pointing toward Twilight and company*) They’re the problem, not me!

(*Fluttershy lands next to them, Twilight standing ahead of the group; confident smiles have taken hold on all six faces.*)

**Party:** (*to Starlight, mind blown*) How could you?

**Double:** (*stepping up*) You said cutie marks were evil! You said special talents led to pain and heartache!

**Starlight:** They do! Don’t you see? Look at them!

**Sugar:** (*from o.s.*) Then why? (*She steps up.*) Why did you take ours and not give up your own?

**Starlight:** I… (*suddenly angry*) …I had to, you fools! How could I collect your cutie marks without my magic?

**Night:** But…the Staff has all the magic we need! (*Starlight leans into her face.*)

**Starlight:** The Staff is a piece of wood I found in the desert! It’s *my* magic that makes all this possible. You’d all still be living your miserable lives, thinking you’re better than everypony else, if it weren’t for *my* magical abilities! (*turning from one pony to another*) *I* brought you friendship! *I* brought you equality! *I created harmony!*

**Double:** You lied to us!

**Starlight:** So what? (*smiling nervously*) E-Everything else I said is true. (*pacing a bit*) The only way to be happy is if we’re all equal!

**Double:** Except for you!

(*In close-up, she pivots toward him, horn flaring and a grimace of purest fury on her face. On the start of the next line, pan slightly to frame Twilight approaching from behind; the spell dies down and rancor turns into surprise.*)

**Twilight:** Everypony has unique talents and gifts. (*Grimace again.*) And when we share them with each other, that’s how we—

**Starlight:** *QUIET!!*

(*None of the six can believe their ears that an adversary has told this Princess to stuff it—least of all the Princess in question.*)

**Sugar:** (*from o.s.*) You can’t have that cutie mark, Starlight! (*Cut to her, addressing Starlight.*) Either we’re all equal, or none of us are!

(*Hacked-off ponies step closer from one angle after another, each pair of eyes telling exactly what they would like to do to their leader/oppressor. Starlight backs up ever so slightly, only to find that she is about to run into the six mares who triggered the whole collapse of her utopia. As more of the locals move in to cut off her escape route, she fires up her horn and creates a hemispherical force field, expanding it suddenly to shove them all back. As soon as the barrier collapses, she gallops off to take refuge in her house, slamming the door behind herself.*)

**Double:** (*rearing up, galloping after her*) Come on! Let’s get our cutie marks back!

(*There follows a yelling stampede straight past that solitary structure and toward the mountains. Rainbow flies overhead and stops to beckon her friends on.*)

**Rainbow:** Come on! Let’s go get *our* cutie marks! (*She tenses to zoom out…*)

**Fluttershy:** (*from o.s.*) Our cutie marks aren’t in the vault!

(*…but stops dead at these words. The rest of the group has stayed put on the road.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*pointing ahead*) They’re in there…

(*Long shot of Starlight’s house, zooming in quickly.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*from o.s.*) …with *her!*

(*Snap to black.*)

Act Three

(*Opening shot: fade in to the vault, now steadily filling with ponies eager to reclaim their special talents. Hoof after hoof pounds against the glass covering with no visible effect, but all cease their efforts when the next voice cuts in.*)

**Double:** (*from o.s., distant*) STAND BACK, EVERYPONY!

(*They clear out at the sound of his rapidly approaching hooves; here he comes with the Staff clamped in his teeth. He flings it ahead, so that it spins end over end in its flight, and the tuning-fork tines connect with enough force to start cracks at the point of impact. These quickly spread to cover the entire surface, and the whole sheet disintegrates in a blinding flash. Motes of multicolored light erupt in all directions like a fireworks display gone haywire, and one of them strikes the equals sign on Double’s haunch, instantly replacing it with three blue snowflakes. He is lifted off the ground in a magic field, becoming a black silhouette as the background fades to white behind him, and he too fades away in turn. The process reverses itself to leave him fully visible again, with two noticeable changes. One: his mane/tail are no longer neat and short, but tousled and grown out somewhat. Two, there is a genuine, unforced smile on his face.*)

(*He settles to the ground amid a maelstrom of rocketing cutie marks, three of which hit Night, Party, and Sugar in turn. Each one winds up with a more brightly colored coat and mane/tail, the latter growing out and reverting to their original style. Night: deep blue coat; swept-back mane/tail in white and two shades of light blue; cutie mark of a crescent moon framed by two feathers bent into hemispherical arcs. Party: light blue coat; curly, bright blue mane/tail with lighter blue streaks; cutie mark of a balloon animal overlaid on party streamers. Sugar: light pink coat, curly purple mane/tail loosely held with beaded ties, cutie mark not immediately visible due to the camera angle. The transformation strips off her dingy apron.*)

(*Cut to outside the cave as more cutie marks come zooming out and the villagers charge/fly out after them, then pan to an overhead shot of the village. At ground level, an enraptured Rarity watches the display.*)

**Rarity:** Even without my cutie mark, I can tell this is beautiful!

(*Zoom out during this line to frame Twilight gazing as well, while Applejack, Pinkie, and Rainbow have the front door and windows of Starlight’s house staked out and Fluttershy stands off to one side. Inside, the deposed leader disgustedly watches at the bedroom window as more of the villagers recover their marks.*)

**Starlight:** They think they can come to *my* village and disrupt *my* life? (*She turns away to her six prize jars.*) Let’s see how they like spending the rest of their lives without their precious cutie marks.

(*On this last sentence, she gets her horn going and the camera cuts to her bed, which is slung aside to reveal an open floor hatch beneath it, then to just inside this, framing her at the edge. She gallops down an attached stairway, jars in tow. Outside, Applejack bucks the front door and achieves exactly as much success as in her earlier attempt to smash her way out of the brainwashing house—that is to say, none at all. Rarity adds her front hooves to the effort, also with no result, and Twilight joins Pinkie and Rainbow at the windows; only Fluttershy takes no part in the surveillance or breaching attempt. A loud whistle brings them all up short; pan quickly to one side and stop on its source—Double, Night, Party, and Sugar standing proudly on an overlooking ridge. Sugar’s cutie mark can now be seen as a cupcake topped with a cherry. Night lifts off.*)

**Night:** Stand back, everypony!

(*She cuts a wide arc down toward the house, the six scattering in all directions as she homes in on the front door. Inside, the pegasus’ impact smashes it off the hinges and throws it to the middle of the floor; she ends up standing on top of it as her friends, old and new, charge in around her. There follows a swift search of the room; cut to just inside the closed bedroom door as Fluttershy pushes it open and looks around.*)

**Fluttershy:** They’re gone! (*pointing*) They were right over there!

(*On the end of this, cut to her perspective of the dresser on which Starlight had kept the jarred marks. Pan across the room to the overturned bed and exposed floor hatch, then cut to just inside, the camera pointing up the stairs at the ten as they start down into the shadows.*)

(*Cut to outside, a short distance from the house, and pan away from the village to a cave. The team pours out of it—the other end of the secret passage Starlight used to get out of town.*)

**Rainbow:** (*pointing*) Look!

(*Ahead of them is a narrow trail that snakes along a treacherously high ridge toward a range of snow-capped mountain peaks. Starlight is visible only as a speck going like sixty toward these. As Pinkie shades her eyes with a hoof and squints ahead, Party gets an idea and glances back at his cutie mark with a smile. To the great surprise of the faded goofball, he produces a balloon, blows it up, and nimbly ties it into the shape of a pair of binoculars—somehow managing to incorporate a couple of extra colors into it for good measure. Party raises the instrument to his eyes, and the camera cuts to his magnified perspective: Starlight galloping full tilt and pulling a cart that carries the six unreleased marks. The image is tinted yellow due to the main color of the balloon he has used.*)

**Party:** She’s headed for the pass! (*Pan quickly to the mountains and re-focus.*) If she makes it into those mountains— (*Back to him and Pinkie; he lowers the binocs.*) —we’ll never find her!

(*Now Pinkie takes them for a look; the “lens” ends retract and extend a bit as she speaks.*)

**Pinkie:** These are amazing!

**Sugar:** There’s a whole network of caves up there! Your cutie marks will be gone forever!

**Applejack:** Then let’s get movin’, y’all!

(*They do so. Rainbow has her wings going in maximum overdrive, but is very much put out to find herself being outpaced—first by Night in the air; then by Double/Party/Sugar at a gallop, and finally by the rest of her friends at a more sedate trot.*)

**Rainbow:** Oh, come on!

(*Cut to Starlight going flat out; Night begins to close the gap.*)

**Starlight:** Are you all so willing to give up everything because of these strangers?

(*A shot from her horn dislodges a clump of accumulated snow, dumping it onto Night and knocking her out of the air. She puts her head up from the resulting pile, aims a venomous glare after the unicorn, and shakes her mane clean.*)

**Sugar:** (*galloping past*) We gave up everything for you, because we thought you were our friend!

(*Extreme close-up of a patch of snow on the trail. Twilight’s and then Fluttershy’s hooves crunch down through it; cut to frame the Ponyville bunch lagging well behind—with Rainbow still bringing up the rear.*)

**Rainbow:** I can’t believe we have to count on these other ponies to save *our* cutie marks!

**Twilight:** If we hadn’t come here to help them, they’d still be living under her rules! (*smiling*) Now it’s their turn to help us!

**Fluttershy:** And I know they can do it.

(*The fugitive starts across a natural bridge, looks back, and finds Double/Party/Sugar hot on her trail. Now it is Sugar’s turn to take inspiration from her cutie mark; a bit of telekinesis lifts a chunk of snow from a nearby drift and shapes it into a pie.*)

**Sugar:** My newest recipe… (*letting fly*) …snow pie!

*(The camera shifts to follow its arcing trajectory toward Starlight, then cuts to a profile view just before impact. That hit breaks the cart’s harness struts, dumping her into a head-over-heels tumble and sending the jars flying over the side. She desperately starts a spell as they plummet toward the rocks far below, managing to envelop and stop them with only inches to go. Having now shed the remains of the harness, she floats the jars back up, gets clear of the bridge, and stops to fire a beam into it. Most of the stone span’s length explodes into gravel and dust.)*

(*Double, Party, and Sugar skid to a stop at the edge of the gap; in close-up, the first and third of these find themselves at a loss as to how to continue the chase. The sound of a balloon being blown up catches them by surprise, and a cut to Party shows him ready to get to work with the one he is now holding. His front hooves disappear into a blur of deft manipulation, and within moments a multicolored bridge begins to grow. As it extends, Night swoops in to guide the free end across and secure it to the rock stub at the opposite side. Once it is in place, she flies ahead and the other three hop, Pinkie-style, across this marvel of rubber-based civil engineering. The Ponyville bunch watches from a higher ledge.*)

**Rainbow:** She’s gonna get away!

(*Now having traversed the bridge, Double slides to a stop as Party and Sugar continue on. The camera angle frames two long, flat items protruding into view, their ends cut off by the top/bottom edges of the screen, and he regards these with disbelief in a zoom out. Said items are skis, each with bindings to hold two hooves in place, their rear ends stuck in the snow; a helmet with goggles rests nearby.*)

**Double:** Whoa. (*walking to them.*) These are my old skis! (*He runs a hoof over one.*) This is where I first met Starlight.

(*On the start of the next line, zoom out to frame Night hovering above him nearby.*)

**Night:** Maybe you can reminisce another time. She’s almost to the caves! (*He grabs hold of that ski, a new fire in his voice.*)

**Double:** Feel like an air drop?

(*Starlight pounds on toward a cave, but gets a mighty surprise upon catching sight of her enforcer sailing past her—wearing the skis/helmet/goggles and a scarf, and being carried upward by Night. She drops him onto a snowy slope and peels out; he cuts a path parallel to Starlight’s, sending a wall of the frozen white stuff straight toward her. The fleeing unicorn has just enough time to warm up her horn before the screen fades to black.*)

(*Fade in to just outside the cave entrance, now almost completely blocked by the avalanche Double set off. Starlight is nowhere to be seen, but the six precious jars are floating here, still held in her magic. It fizzles out as Party and Sugar gallop to the site, and the jars fall to the ground and shatter; Twilight is first to get her mark back, fading to a silhouette, then white, then the process reversing as with Double’s restoration. Once the view clears, she is grinning from ear to ear, her coloration and wings behaving themselves properly. Her five friends recover theirs in quick succession.*)

**Applejack:** (*rearing up*) Yee-haa! (*bucking the air*) Finally I can buck like a five-bit snake herder in an Appleloosa ranch house again!

**Fluttershy:** Oh, and you got your country-isms back too!

(*Twilight leads the bunch in a gallop toward the cave. Night has joined Party and Sugar at the entrance, and Double skis to a stop here as well. They turn their attention toward the snowdrifts as Starlight’s forelegs break through to daylight; up comes her scowling face, prompting the four to recoil out of fear. She extricates herself, kindles a blinding spot of light at the end of her horn, and lets it rip toward the traitors—only for Twilight to land in front of them and throw up a defensive shield. It takes the form of a quarter-sphere, allowing Starlight’s power to wash over the surface and stream off the trailing edge. Finally she lets the beam dissipate and Twilight drops the shield, revealing not even a hair out of place on herself or the others. She is, however, good and sore. Cut to Starlight.*)

**Starlight:** Wha—? I studied that spell for years! How can *you*— (*Cut to Twilight and the four on the start of the next line; she crosses toward Starlight.*)

**Twilight:** I studied magic for years too. But what I didn’t know then was that studying could only take me so far. (*gesturing behind herself*) Each of my friends has taught me something different about myself.

(*Cut to all nine of those friends, gathering on the path, at the start of this last sentence, then back to her for the next line.*)

**Twilight:** It was their unique gifts and passions and personalities that helped bring out the magic inside of me. (*Cut to a slow pan across them; she continues o.s.*) I never would have learned that I represent the Element of Magic without these five. (*Back to her and Starlight.*) And I certainly wouldn’t be here to stop you now! (*Starlight rolls her eyes.*)

**Starlight:** Spare me your sentimental nonsense! I gave these ponies real friendships they never could have had otherwise!

**Double:** (*from o.s.*) How do you know that? (*Cut to him, removing his helmet/goggles and tossing them aside.*) You never even gave us a chance!

(*That does it. Her features contorting into a look of the clearest hate and fury and contempt, Starlight squinches her eyes shut and kick-starts her horn. All ten avert their eyes as a sphere of energy radiates outward from her position, culminating in a brilliant flash of white. When the view clears, the snow is gone from the cave entrance and there is no trace of Starlight except for a curl of smoke rising from the newly bare patch of ground. Cut to just inside, the camera pointing out at the group; a string of snowy prints and the fading sound of her racing hooves give away Starlight’s ploy. Her spell was meant to clear the way and distract them long enough for her to bug out.*)

**Rainbow:** She’s getting away!

**Double:** We’ll never find her in there! (*Outside again.*)

**Twilight:** We just have to hope that when she’s had a chance to think it over, she realizes that you all *have* taught her something.

**Party:** It’s *you* who have taught *us* something. We all came to this village because we were searching for something missing from our lives. We thought Starlight had given it to us. (*Cut to Double/Night/Sugar; he continues o.s.*) But now… (*crossing to them*) …now it seems it was in front of us all along. It’s us. (*Four-way group hug.*)

**Twilight:** Does that mean you’ll stay in the village?

**Night:** It’s our home. I’m not going anywhere.

**Double:** This is a chance for all of us to get to know each other again, for the very first time.

**Sugar:** And I finally have a chance to bake something besides terrible muffins!

(*All ten share a laugh as the camera tilts up to frame the sun in the clear sky.*)

(*Dissolve to an overhead shot of the village. The houses are strung with banners, strings of pennants run from one side of the road to the other, and celebrating ponies are all over the place. Twilight and her five longtime friends regard the shindig from the end opposite Starlight’s house. Cuts/pans around the block party pick out Night talking with a stallion, Party tossing a beach ball, a mare floating a cupcake off Sugar’s table of delectable baked goods, and Double—having shed his skis and scarf—chatting with a couple of mares before Party’s ball bounces off his head. Zoom in from him to frame the Ponyville six looking on contentedly.*)

**Pinkie:** Now *those* are real smiles.

(*Close-up of Applejack’s face, which goes slack with sudden shock. A tingle of magic is heard, and the camera tilts down slightly to follow her gaze and frame her cutie mark. Just as in the beginning of Part One, Act One, it is flaring quietly, as is that of Pinkie next to her.*)

**Applejack:** I’ll never get used to that. (*Ditto for Rarity.*)

**Rarity:** I think it’s divine. (*Cut to Fluttershy and Twilight; each glancing briefly at her own flaring mark.*)

**Fluttershy:** Does that mean the map is calling us somewhere else? (*The effect stops.*)

**Twilight:** I have a feeling it means our work here is done.

**Applejack:** (*from o.s.*) Looks like you were right, Twilight. (*Cut to her.*) The map *did* have a reason for sendin’ us here. (*Pinkie nods.*) We brought real friendship to these here ponies. (*winking*) Guess that’s why you’re the Princess of Friendship. (*Close-up of Twilight.*)

**Twilight:** But the map didn’t send *me.* (*Zoom out to frame all six.*) It sent *us.* You’re a part of me, all of you. And there’s no doubt you’re a part of my mission to spread friendship too.

(*A six-way group hug, with various happy squeals and laughs. A look of concern snaps onto Pinkie’s face, breaking the mood.*)

**Pinkie:** This feels like an ending. (*She sits up to her haunches.*) It doesn’t have to be an ending yet, right? (*smiling hopefully*) ’Cause that Sugar Belle can *baaake!*

**Twilight:** Maybe we can stay a little while longer. (*trotting ahead*) Come on!

(*The whole crew heads into the heart of the festival. Cut to an overhead shot of the village, zooming out slowly, and fade to black.*)

(*The usual closing theme does not accompany the credits. In its place is a lush orchestral piece with strings, French horn, and light percussion: brisk 4, triplet feel. The melody starts in E major and works its way through several keys to end up on a final chord in G major.*)