**BLOOM & GLOOM**

**Written by Josh Haber**

**Produced by Devon Cody**

**Story editing by Meghan McCarthy**

**Supervising direction by Jayson Thiessen**

**Directed by Jim Miller**

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

Prologue

(*Opening shot: fade in to a long shot of the Cutie Mark Crusaders’ clubhouse during the day. Zoom in slowly to the sound of a gavel.*)

**Apple Bloom:** (*voice over*) Hear ye, hear ye! This meeting of the Cutie Mark Crusaders is now in session!

(*Cut to her at a lectern inside.*)

**Bloom:** Who wants to do roll call? (*Longer shot; Scootaloo and Sweetie Belle are here as well.*)

**Scootaloo:** I’m pretty sure we’re all here.

**Sweetie:** Yeah. Apple Bloom, what’s this all about?

**Bloom:** (*smiling innocently*) Oh, nothin’…

(*Long pause, after which she whips out a sheet of paper signed at the bottom, with a pair of scissors drawn in alongside. The finger holes are shaped so that they combine to resemble the exposed surface of a cut apple half.*)

**Bloom:** (*excitedly, holding it toward camera*) …except this letter from Babs Seed saying she’s got her cutie mark! (*She pulls it back; the other two crowd in around her.*)

**Scootaloo, Sweetie:** *What?!?*

**Bloom:** She says it’s a pair of scissors. (*Close-up of Scootaloo, perplexed.*)

**Scootaloo:** So…she’s good at cutting stuff?

**Sweetie:** (*from o.s.*) Of course! (*Cut to her, fiddling with her curls.*) She was always fussing with her bangs and tail. I’ll bet she grows up to be a celebrity stylist!

**Bloom:** (*as Scootaloo turns away to think*) But…if she spends all her time cuttin’ hair, who’s gonna run the Manehattan CMC’s?

**Scootaloo:** Well, not Babs. She can’t be a Cutie Mark Crusader if she’s already got her cutie mark. (*The other two leave the lectern.*)

**Bloom:** Oh, wow. I guess you’re right. (*She sits on her haunches.*)

**Sweetie:** I’m glad she’s happy, but…I sure wouldn’t want to be up to my flank in mane hair all day. (*Zoom in slowly.*) Can you imagine getting stuck with a cutie mark you didn’t like? (*Cut to Bloom.*)

**Bloom:** (*softly*) No…or…at least I hadn’t.

**Sweetie:** (*brightly, crossing to her*) Don’t worry, Apple Bloom. Most of your family has apple-related cutie marks. (*poking her shoulder*) I bet yours will be, too. (*Bloom smiles.*) And what’s not to like about apples?

**Scootaloo:** (*from o.s.*) There’s the core… (*Cut to her.*) …and sour apples, and rotten apples… (*grimacing*) …and apples with worms in them…

(*Zoom out to show the young unicorn aiming a most disapproving look at her.*)

**Scootaloo:** What?

**Sweetie:** Not helping.

(*A cut to Bloom drives home the point; the yellow filly has hunched down into a shaking, shivering ball of nerves next to the lectern. Zoom in slowly and fade to black.*)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(*Opening shot: fade in to a long shot of Sweet Apple Acres and zoom in slowly on the main barn. Night has fallen, and a second-story window is the only one showing a light.*)

**Bloom:** (*voice over*) I guess I spent so much time worryin’ about how to get a cutie mark, I never even thought about what would happen after.

(*Cut to a close-up of her, lying on her back in bed and still as worked up as at the end of the prologue.*)

**Bloom:** There’s just so many things I never considered.

(*Zoom out quickly to frame Applejack standing at her bedside and nipping a blanket up to tuck her in—this is Bloom’s bedroom.*)

**Applejack:** I’m sure there are, but you don’t need to— (*Bloom sits up, throwing the bedclothes off to cover her.*)

**Bloom:** What if I finally get my cutie mark and I-I don’t like it?

(*Close-up of the blanket-covered big sister, trying to extract herself.*)

**Bloom:** (*from o.s.*) What if I get my cutie mark and nopony likes *me?* (*Applejack gets free.*)

**Applejack:** Well, that’s just ridicu—

**Bloom:** (*from o.s.*) What if the Crusaders drift apart? (*Back to her, huddled into a ball; Applejack gently covers her again.*) I mean, we won’t really be the Cutie Mark Crusaders anymore. (*Sit up; throw off blanket; huge gasp.*) What if it’s not an apple?

(*This time, the linens have caught on the brim of Applejack’s hat. If the visible portion of her face is any indication, this whole existential crisis is wearing thin for her.*)

**Bloom:** (*pulling them away, grabbing Applejack’s chest*) Will I have to move out? *Where will I live?* (*She slides down.*)

**Applejack:** (*smiling patiently*) All right, that’s enough, sugar cube.

(*Cut to the younger pony, curled up miserably against the pillows.*)

**Applejack:** (*from o.s.*) Those are way too many questions to answer all in one night. (*Zoom out to frame her; Bloom shoots upright again.*)

**Bloom:** But—

**Applejack:** (*chuckling, easing her down*) And nopony’s gonna make you move out. (*Cover her up a third time.*)

**Bloom:** Are you sure, Applejack?

**Applejack:** Of course I’m sure. Now get some sleep. (*Back to Bloom; she continues o.s.*) You’ll see. (*stepping into view, stroking Bloom’s cheek; she smiles*) Everythin’ll be better in the mornin’.

***Quiet music-box melody, slow 4 (B major)***

**Applejack:** Hush now, little sister, you’re loved by all you know

You’ll never lose their friendship, no matter where you go

(*backing off; Bloom’s eyes drift shut*)

There ain’t no call to worry, so don’t you cry or fret

(*easing out the door*)

A cutie mark won’t change you, no matter what you get

***Song ends***

(*She gently pulls the door closed behind herself, and the lights go out; Bloom yawns and settles in under the covers.*)

**Bloom:** (*sleepily*) No matter what I get…

(*Zoom in slowly for a few seconds, then dissolve to her sprawled out on her back and snoring peacefully away. Birds can now be heard chirping outside, and a shaft of sunlight makes its way up the bed toward her face—morning has come. The crowing of a rooster causes the red-gold eyes to open drowsily, and she rubs the sleep out of them and puts on an eager little grin as her face becomes fully illuminated. The wake-up ends with her sitting upright.*)

**Bloom:** Hoo-wee! Nothin’ like a good night’s sleep. (*An iron triangle rings out.*)

**Applejack:** (*from downstairs, through floor*) BREAKFAST!!

(*The filly is out of bed like a shot. Down in the kitchen, Applejack sets a plate stacked high with pancakes on the table; a bowl of apples has also been set out. Bloom peeks in from around the threshold, the focus shifting to her from Applejack as she speaks.*)

**Bloom:** You were right, Applejack. I feel much better. (*Close-up, from the back up; she walks in.*) I don’t know what I was so worried about last night. (*Cut to Applejack.*)

**Applejack:** See? Now what did I tell you? (*Bloom moves closer and stops; only head and forelegs are in frame.*) A good night’s sleep’ll fix just about a—

(*Her sentence ends as if slashed off by a knife, the green eyes widening as she cocks her head for a look at something not in view and brings it back to horizontal.*)

**Applejack:** (*flabbergasted*) Well, no wonder you were so worked up!

(*She shifts into a smile by the end of this line; close-up of Bloom’s face.*)

**Bloom:** (*rubbing cheeks, finding nothing*) What? What is it?

**Applejack:** (*from o.s.*) Looks like somepony got her cutie mark!

(*That gets Bloom’s full and undivided attention, and the camera pans/zooms out very slightly as she runs an eye over her haunch. On it is a canister with a pump handle on top and a hose attached to the side, which terminates in a sprayer wand. The entire rig resembles an old-style, hand-pumped fire extinguisher. The side of the canister displays a circle with a slash through it, and issuing from the wand is a cloud of white vapor with an apple inside. Bloom gasps at the sight.*)

**Bloom:** I can’t believe it! (*Zoom out.*) I got my cutie mark!

(*She wiggles her rump a bit, as if trying to confirm that it is not just a sticker that will peel off, then zips over to Applejack.*)

**Bloom:** (*shaking her wildly*) *I GOT MY CUTIE MARK!!*

(*The onslaught leaves her big sister’s eyes rattling wildly in their sockets. Long shot of the barn, zooming out slowly; Big Macintosh is plowing a field.*)

**Bloom:** (*from inside, echoing*) I GOT MY CUTIE MARK!!

(*These five words are delivered with enough sheer force to shake the camera, freeze the red stallion in his tracks, and frighten a great many birds out of the distant orchards. Back in the kitchen, Bloom is hopping in place like a Mexican jumping bean pumped full of espresso, while Applejack smiles indulgently and straightens her hat.*)

**Bloom:** Wait ’til I tell the others that my cutie mark is a… (*eyeing it, puzzled*) …a…

(*Close-up of it, then zoom out to frame the sisters’ faces.*)

**Bloom:** What is it?

**Applejack:** I have no idea what it means. (*An old, slightly quavery male voice cuts in.*)

**Male voice:** (*slightly muffled*) I know what it means!

(*Cut to a set of four tan hooves stepping to the threshold of the open door leading from the kitchen to the barnyard, and zoom out/tilt up to frame this new arrival. Earth pony stallion; same cutie mark as Bloom, but without the apple and vapor cloud; collared shirt with foreleg sleeves rolled up; short white/gray mane/tail; face completely hidden by a steel helmet with goggles and respirator attached. Strapped to his back is a piece of machinery from which a cylindrical glass jar stands straight up. Mounted on the side is a flared horn pointing straight back, with a hose running from its base, over the stallion’s chest, and connecting to the other side of the device. After a hissing inhale and exhale, he removes the helmet to expose a wrinkled, smiling face with brown eyes topped by prominent brows, as well as a chin speckled with stubble. The exterminator has arrived.*)

**Exterminator:** It means I can retire!

(*Zoom in to a close-up of his mark as he lets off a whooping laugh, then wipe to a long shot of the barn, seen from the side. A zoom out frames Bloom following the old stallion toward the orchards; the latter has traded his helmet for a baseball cap and is chewing on a leaf.*)

**Bloom:** Infestations? (*She stops.*) You mean like parasprites? (*She hurries to catch up.*)

**Exterminator:** (*chuckling contemptuously*) Please. Anypony with a trombone can get rid of parasprites. I’m talkin’ about the serious stuff! (*softly, ominously*) You ever hear of…twittermites?

(*He has referred to Pinkie Pie’s strategy for dealing with the pests in “Swarm of the Century.” Lightning cracks the sky behind him after he finishes speaking.*)

**Bloom:** (*confused*) Twittermites?

(*A jar is held up to her face—identical to the one on his back, but filled with buzzing insects that emit a bright, pale blue-white glow. She scrunches up her face and allows herself a better look; close-up of the creatures.*)

**Exterminator:** (*from o.s.*) Pest ponies like you and me are the only things keepin’ these live wires from destroyin’ half of Equestria! (*Pan to frame him on the end of this, then cut to Bloom.*)

**Bloom:** Pest ponies?

**Exterminator:** (*from o.s., pulling jar away*) It’s no easy trade.

(*Longer shot of the two, the jar now mounted on his back.*)

**Exterminator:** (*wistfully*) Even the best of us yearns for the day they can move on to greener pastures. (*smiling, walking off*) Oh, now that you’re here to take over, my day has finally come.

**Bloom:** (*skeptically, following him*) Take over? (*Her perspective: he stops and gives her a squint-eyed glare.*)

**Exterminator:** You’re gonna need to stop repeating everything I say and pay attention if you want to learn anything.

(*Cut to frame both; he is leaning so far into her face that she has backed down onto her haunches.*)

**Bloom:** I’m sorry. (*He backs off and walks ahead; she stands up.*) I guess this just wasn’t what I was expecting.

**Exterminator:** (*chuckling*) Don’t worry. (*She catches up.*) With a cutie mark like that, I’m sure you got the touch.

**Bloom:** The touch? (*Both stop; he glares at her again.*) Oh. Sorry.

(*As he continues along the path, she lets her unease at this unexpected special talent come through loud and clear on her face. Cut to a close-up of a large metal model of a parasprite and zoom out on the start of the next line. It is mounted atop a rack of containment jars on a cart; a small horn projects from one side, and a net stands vertically in a clamp on the rear end. Bloom now wears a rig on her back identical to his own; he has removed the jar full of twittermites and has installed an empty one in its place.*)

**Exterminator:** Now, you’re gonna need to be quick. (*He retrieves the full jar from within the cart.*) Once these things get out, it can get pretty shockin’.

(*Once he flips the lid away, it takes almost no time for the bugs to zoom skyward in a hissing, incandescent mass and spread out into several smaller groups. The camera follows this motion and stays on them as sparks begin to crackle from one to the next.*)

**Bloom:** (*from o.s.*) Wait. (*Cut to her; one group sneaks up behind.*) What do you mean?

(*She gets the point when a bolt connects squarely with her rump.*)

**Bloom:** Ouch! (*She ends up on her haunches in front of the oldster, who laughs.*)

**Exterminator:** Told you! And the farther apart they spread— (*Overhead shot; the groups slowly pull apart.*) —the more powerful these jolts’ll get!

(*Ground level; the filly leaps away from one that leaves a prominent scorch mark in the dirt.*)

**Bloom:** What do I do?

**Exterminator:** You call them back, of course.

(*With a new burst of determination, Bloom pulls the horn from its resting spot and gets it ready to use.*)

**Bloom:** (*calling overhead*) Twittermites!

(*She moves a few steps ahead and whistles shrilly, following it with a yelping shout and a nimble leap up toward several groups. The device is quickly aimed here and there, sucking up the twittermites like a vacuum cleaner, and within seconds every last one has been pulled into the jar. Bloom makes a perfect three-point landing, looks back at her cargo of captive high-voltage pests, and grins broadly before dashing off. Cut to another swarm hanging out near a tree.*)

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

(*They follow the sound of her voice, only to get vacuumed up in short order when she drops into view, hanging from a tree branch. Next she balances on one rear hoof atop a fence post and leaps to the next one to avoid a shock, all the while rounding up the insects. She leaps away from the fence, continuing her roundup in midair with increasing ease; cut to an extreme close-up of one still on the loose. From this distance, its antennae and the rear half of its body can be seen to have jagged lightning-bolt contours.*)

**Bloom:** (*from o.s.*) Bug-bug-bug-bug-bug-bug-bug!

(*It looks around in confusion, zoom out quickly to frame Bloom standing right next to it. One touch of the trigger pulls it neatly into the machine, after which she twirls the horn and slots it back into place like a gunslinger showing off with his revolver.*)

**Exterminator:** (*from o.s.*) Well…

(*She looks quickly around herself; cut to him, now standing a short distance away. He has traded his work shirt for a flowered one, perched a pair of sunglasses on his cap, and done away with his cart and vacuum rig. Two suitcases stand next to him as well, one on either side—he is ready for a vacation.*)

**Exterminator:** …it looks like you’re all set. (*close-up; putting on shades*) Drop me a note sometime at the Piney Shade Retirement Community.

**Bloom:** (*from o.s.*) Now hold on!

(*Cut to her; the cart stands in the background.*)

**Bloom:** (*removing/setting down vacuum*) I’m sure this job is real important, but I don’t think I want to call bugs for the rest of my life.

(*The camera returns to the spot where the elderly stallion had been standing—but he is now gone without trace. She pops up into view to stare down the path.*)

**Bloom:** Hey! Where’d he go?

**Diamond Tiara:** (*from o.s.*) Well, well, well.

(*The young pest control expert throws a panicked glance back over her shoulder; cut to Diamond and Silver Spoon standing by the cart. Silver has detached the jar of twittermites from the vacuum and is idly tossing it up.*)

**Diamond:** Look at the new bug pony. (*Bloom crosses angrily to them.*)

**Bloom:** It’s “pest pony.”

**Silver:** (*walking past, shoving jar into her chest*) Ugh. It sure is. Ew!

(*The impact knocks Bloom back onto her haunches; in close-up, Diamond crosses to her.*)

**Diamond:** I might have known you’d end up with the *worst cutie mark ever!*

(*Her derisive laughter mingles with that of the o.s. Silver as Bloom looks despondently down at her haunch, the camera zooming in on said mark. From here, cut to Silver.*)

**Silver:** But look on the bright side. (*She and Diamond circle slowly around Bloom.*) Whenever you need a friend, you can just go out and catch one! (*Giggle.*)

**Bloom:** That’s not funny.

**Diamond:** (*as if calling a dog*) Here, friend-friend-friend-friend-friend!

**Bloom:** Stop it!

**Silver:** (*following Diamond’s lead*) Here, bug! (*to a ladybug*) Here, bug! Will you be my friend, bug? (*looking over shoulder at Bloom*) Because nopony else will! (*She and Diamond laugh; Bloom stands up, plenty sore.*)

**Bloom:** You know what? My cutie mark isn’t the worst, you two are!

(*Throwing aside the jar of twittermites, she gallops away as the two snobs have a good laugh, Diamond falling onto her flank. A close-up of the jar picks out the cracks that begin to form due to hitting the ground, as well as the pinpoints of lights that shine through. Bloom races through the countryside, slowing to a walk after several hundred yards; behind her, the terrain slowly shifts from farmland to deep forest.*)

**Bloom:** (*sighing*) I hate to think that Diamond Tiara is right, but…this cutie mark sure isn’t what I was hopin’ for.

(*Her ruminations are cut off by a second unknown voice—this one female, distant, sounding as if carried on the wind, and wavering ever so slightly in pitch. A gust comes through at this point, whipping at Bloom’s mane/tail.*)

**Female voice:** Why should you have to keep it, then?

(*Zoom out quickly to show that the filly has arrived in a small clearing, with only a couple of sunbeams shining down through the forest canopy for illumination.*)

**Bloom:** Who’s there? What do you mean?

(*A dark blur whisks past in the foreground; Bloom starts to back fearfully away, not seeing it zip behind her.*)

**Female voice:** If your cutie mark bothers you so much, get rid of it.

**Bloom:** (*grimacing*) Well, if you know how to wave a hoof and erase a terrible cutie mark, you go right ahead!

**Female voice:** As easily said as done.

(*Another gust, which nearly blows Bloom sideways; when it dies away, she looks at her haunch and finds it unadorned.*)

**Bloom:** (*smiling*) Huh. Now *that* is some serious magic.

(*A leaf floats down, completely filling the screen; behind its trailing edge, the view wipes to the spot from which she fled. She trots happily to the center of the path, stops, and looks from one side to the other. Here come her two nemeses along with a plethora of other ponies as part of a panicked perambulation—a stampede, that is. Bloom ends up knocked onto her belly.*)

**Bloom:** Hey! Where’s everypony goin’?

(*In Ponyville proper, utter bedlam has taken hold. The streets and air are filled with terrified equines dashing madly this way and that, and every building in sight has had its upper portion charred or partially burned away. Bloom gawks at the damage and gallops over to Mayor Mare, who has laid several scrolls on the ground and is frantically reading over one she has unrolled. Nearby, two ponies are loading their possessions into a cart for a fast bug-out.*)

**Bloom:** Mayor! What’s goin’ on?

**Mayor Mare:** (*hoof to Bloom’s shoulder*) Apple Bloom, you’ve got to get your family out of town!

(*A sizzle of electricity draws their focus to a house that stands a short distance away—but not for long, as a twittermite shock reduces it to a charred jumble of timbers. Tilt up to show the main swarm now broken up into several small groups that are well separated into a loose ring, with far too much electrical energy coursing from one to another.*)

**Bloom:** TWITTERMITES!

(*She gallops away. Cut to the jar she threw aside—now empty and broken in two—as she reaches it and gasps in quiet horror. Her features rearrange themselves into an expression of fierce resolve, and the camera pans to a close-up of the empty jars on the pest control wagon. One of these is taken down and fitted to her vacuum rig, and she slings it up, tightens the strap to hold it on her back, and gets ready to do her thing with the horn.*)

**Bloom:** (*calling out*) Twittermites!

(*One group buzzes past behind her, going completely unnoticed.*)

**Bloom:** Here, bug-bug-bug-bug-bug-bug!

(*What she gets for her efforts is a hearty jolt that sends her toppling to the earth, a tendril of smoke rising from her form. Looking across the way, she spots another bunch idling past a tree; she hangs from one branch, ready to suck them up.*)

**Bloom:** Here, bugs!

(*No dice again; they give her a shock that drops her like a rock. One capture attempt after another ends the same way; unable to capture even a single twittermite this time, she ends up lying at the center of a very large burn mark and with her mane/tail/face nicely singed. The charged-up nuisances fly away.*)

**Bloom:** Come on, here!

**Applejack:** (*from o.s.*) Apple Bloom!

(*Cut to her, now on the scene with a full sack on her back. Bloom sits up and wipes herself clean.*)

**Applejack:** What in tarnation are you doin’? (*Bloom gallops to her; the stampede continues around them.*)

**Bloom:** I’m tryin’ to stop the infestation, of course!

**Applejack:** Only a pest pony can do that!

(*An upward glance shows her that the problem has moved into this area.*)

**Applejack:** (*galloping past*) Now come on! We gotta skedaddle! (*Bloom looks helplessly around herself.*)

**Bloom:** But I’ve gotta do somethin’! (*She sprints toward the swarm.*)

**Applejack:** (*calling after her*) Are you crazy?!?

(*The glowing clouds spread out a bit farther and begin to charge up, and the camera zooms out to show that they are now directly above the family’s main barn. Bloom reaches an overlooking hill just in time to see them unleash a massive bolt that hits the structure dead center. Cut to a close-up of her, a reflection of the strike shining in the pupils of two eyes that bug out over a jaw that has fallen open to its fullest extension over this utter catastrophe. Zoom in quickly and snap to black.*)

Act Two

(*Opening shot: fade in to Bloom staring sadly from her hilltop at the smoking, burned-black framework which is all that remains of the barn. The twittermites slowly move off, having done all the damage they can do here, and she drops despondently to her haunches and lets her gear clatter to the ground. A crackle draws her gaze upward; zoom out to frame a few dozen of the varmints hovering directly overhead. She has time for one short gasp before they let her have it—and then the camera cuts to her sitting up in bed with a scream. The rooster’s crowing from outside marks the start of a new day.*)

(*A very jittery Bloom lets her eyes flick all around the room for the moment; cut to just outside her window. The rooster, sitting on the sill, leaps away with a squawk when she mashes her face up against the glass—and it somehow manages to leave an egg behind.*)

**Bloom:** (*smiling, slightly muffled*) Hoo-wee!

(*Long shot of the grounds, panning slowly across; the barn is intact.*)

**Bloom:** (*voice over*) That’s what I call a nightmare! (*Back to her, inside.*) It seemed so real!

(*The triangle in the kitchen sounds off.*)

**Applejack:** (*from downstairs, through floor*) BREAKFAST!!

(*Just as in Act One, the young pony is off at full speed. In the kitchen, Applejack has once again made pancakes—some topped with chocolate chips, whipped cream, and sprinkles, others with blueberries, rather than plain as in Act One. Several muffins are also on the table, and the bowl of apples has been replaced by lemons. The focus stays on Applejack as Bloom peeks into view around the threshold.*)

**Bloom:** Applejack— (*Focus on her.*) —you are not gonna believe the dream I just had! (*Close-up, from the back up; she walks in.*) I guess I needed more sleep than I thought. (*Cut to Applejack.*)

**Applejack:** See? Now what did I tell you? (*Bloom moves closer and stops; only head and forelegs are in frame.*) A good night’s sleep’ll fix just about—

(*Stop short. Cock the head to one side with a gasp.*)

**Applejack:** (*tilting head back to horizontal*) Well, no wonder you were so worked up! (*Close-up of Bloom’s face.*)

**Bloom:** What?

**Applejack:** (*from o.s.*) Looks like somepony got her cutie mark! (*Bloom looks toward her haunch; zoom out.*)

**Bloom:** Again?

(*That spot now depicts a flask containing a red apple and spurting green liquid from its neck.*)

**Bloom:** I mean… (*smiling*) …I did? (*circling briefly in place*) Woo-hoo! Potion-making! Now that’s more like it!

**Applejack:** More like what?

**Bloom:** Never mind. I’m just glad Princess Twilight’s lessons finally paid off!

(*Referring to Twilight Sparkle’s tutoring of the Crusaders in “Twilight Time.”*)

**Applejack:** I expect you want to run off to the clubhouse and tell your friends all about your new cutie mark.

(*During this line, Bloom breaks into a huge grin and the camera cuts to a close-up of Applejack.*)

**Applejack:** But before you go, make sure you do all your…

(*She loses her power of speech and stares uncomprehendingly ahead; cut to an overhead shot of the kitchen, in which she is now very much alone. A look all around the room confirms it.*)

**Applejack:** …chores?

(*Cut to a stake set up for a game of horseshoes, next to the lectern in the Crusaders’ clubhouse. One shoe has already scored as a ringer, and a second one sails into view and clatters down on top of it. Cut to Scootaloo and Sweetie, the former with a shoe in her mouth and ready to throw, the latter smiling at her accuracy; the sound of the door being thrown open cuts in ,and its edge swings into view.*)

**Bloom:** (*from o.s.*) WOO-HOO!!

(*The interruption startles Scootaloo into throwing the shoe off in some random direction. Zoom out to frame the earth pony at the door.*)

**Scootaloo:** Why all the excitement?

**Sweetie:** Yeah! What’s going on?

**Bloom:** (*walking in, smiling innocently*) Oh, nothin’… (*excitedly, presenting her haunch*) …except this brand-new cutie mark!

(*Close-up of it on the end of this; the other two race across the floor to her. The next two lines overlap.*)

**Scootaloo:** That’s amazing!

**Sweetie:** Wow!

(*There follows a jumble of happy exclamations, accompanied by a jumping group hug.*)

**Bloom:** I don’t suppose either of you got yours.

**Scootaloo:** (*suddenly dejected*) Nope.

**Sweetie:** (*ditto*) Me neither.

**Bloom:** I know it’s silly, but I always hoped we’d get our cutie marks together. (*She sits on her haunches for this last word.*)

**Scootaloo:** Me too.

**Sweetie:** (*smiling*) But I’m still super-excited for you! (*Grin.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*smiling*) Absolutely!

(*A synapse or three fires under the big pink bow, and its wearer stands up.*)

**Bloom:** I know! (*She zips to the podium and taps her hoof against the gavel block.*) Let’s call this meeting to order! I’m sure the three of us can figure out how to get two more cutie marks.

(*A worried look passes between her two partners in mayhem.*)

**Sweetie:** (*hesitantly*) Um…yeah. The thing is…

**Bloom:** What?

**Scootaloo:** Well, you can’t be a Cutie Mark Crusader if you’ve already got your cutie mark.

**Bloom:** (*deflated; the others walk away*) Oh…yeah. Just like Babs Seed. Well, I can just sit quietly in the corner while you two figure out what you’re gonna do.

**Sweetie:** (*now o.s.*) Well…

(*Cut to her and Scootaloo, now standing by the open door and utterly devoid of any friendly reaction.*)

**Sweetie:** (*gesturing toward it*) …technically the clubhouse is for Crusaders only. (*Scootaloo nods.*)

**Bloom:** (*floored*) Oh. Right. (*Cut to just outside; she exits.*) I guess I should just come back later, then?

**Sweetie:** Why? I mean, you can’t come in then, either.

**Bloom:** Oh.

**Sweetie:** Rules are rules.

**Scootaloo:** I don’t even think we’re still supposed to be friends.

(*The conversation ends when Sweetie slams the door. Close-up of a shocked Bloom.*)

**Bloom:** What?!?

(*The eyes pop wide as she looks back toward the structure, finding that the door and windows have been instantly boarded up. Another close-up and zoom out reveal that she has been transported to the same foreboding clearing in which she met the presence that stripped away her first cutie mark.*)

**Bloom:** (*pacing, calling out*) Sweetie Belle! Scootaloo! Come on, fillies, this isn’t funny!

(*Here comes a wind gust that stops her cold, and then that disembodied female voice.*)

**Female voice:** More trouble with cutie marks?

(*The dark apparition that whisked through the trees during Bloom’s first visit looms behind her, then zips away.*)

**Bloom:** (*looking around herself*) No…I mean…wh…yeah…I-I mean…well, I got mine, but my friends didn’t get theirs and now there’s all kinds of trouble.

**Female voice:** Sounds to me like cutie marks and trouble are two peas in the same pod. (*Another quick pass by the image.*)

**Bloom:** (*pacing more slowly; it keeps pace behind her*) I guess so. I mean, if I was a blank flank again, there wouldn’t be a problem!

**Female voice:** Your wish is my command.

(*A gust blows in, encircling the filly to become a small tornado that expands to fill the screen. Dissolve to a patch of grass littered by fragments of shattered planks. Scootaloo and Sweetie advance into view, seen head-on and goggling at the mess, but are forced to stop suddenly when another piece crashes to the ground right in front of them. They look up and o.s.*)

**Scootaloo:** Hey, Apple Bloom. Why’d you want to meet here?

(*Cut to Bloom, standing cheerfully on the ramp that leads up to the clubhouse. The boards on the windows and door have been stripped off, and she kicks a piece of wood off the ramp. Her potion cutie mark is now gone.*)

**Bloom:** (*descending*) Well, us blank flanks have to meet somewhere. (*Sweetie grimaces…*)

**Scootaloo:** Um…actually, Apple Bloom…we both sorta got our cutie marks. (*…then nods sadly; Bloom stops short.*)

**Bloom:** You did?

(*The fluffy red tail flicks instinctively forward to cover her new lack of one, just as Babs Seed used to do.*)

**Bloom:** (*forcing a smile*) What are they? (*Profile close-up of the other two faces, set in haughty disdain.*)

**Scootaloo:** Oh, we don’t have time to go into all that. (*Sweetie whips over to Bloom.*)

**Sweetie:** And we certainly don’t have time to hang out in an old clubhouse. (*Here comes Scootaloo on the other side.*)

**Scootaloo:** Yeah. We’ve got responsibilities now. (*Both start walking off.*)

**Sweetie:** But maybe we’ll see you later.

**Scootaloo:** (*now o.s.*) Much later.

**Bloom:** Wait! Hold on! I can get my cutie mark back…I think! (*Close-up; loud, frustrated groan.*) I mean, I got it once, right? Oh, just wait a second!

(*Zoom out quickly, the background dissolving around her to become the interior of the clubhouse. The boards are back on the windows, and all of the decorations have been removed from the walls; cobwebs fill the corners, and only a few surviving items lie forlornly scattered about. She is alone at the lectern.*)

**Bloom:** NOOOOOOOOO!!

(*The family rooster pops up outside one window, its head visible in a gap between the boards, and crows loudly. Up pops the youngster’s head in the foreground—teeth gritted, eyes staring wildly, and completely scared out of her wits. Zoom out slightly to show her sitting up in bed, the background instantly changing to her room. A fretful glance to each side, and the camera cuts to a shot of the entire room, with blue morning sky beyond the window. The next shot is a long view of the completely intact clubhouse, seen through the glass, followed by a zoom out that frames Bloom gazing at it from bed. She pulls the blanket up like a cloak and hood.*)

**Bloom:** What in Equestria’s goin’ on? (*The triangle in the kitchen sounds off.*)

**Applejack:** (*from downstairs, through floor*) BREAKFAST!!

**Bloom:** (*climbing down from bed, still wearing blanket*) I’m not so sure sleep is the cure-all Applejack thinks it is.

(*Down in the kitchen, Applejack is making the last adjustments to the breakfast table. This time, though, she has prepared a cake, cinnamon rolls, and cupcakes and set out a punchbowl with fish swimming around in it. Two jars, one filled with honey and the other with dog biscuits, stand off at one end. For the third time, Bloom peeks into view around the threshold, the focus shifting to her as she speaks.*)

**Bloom:** Uh, Applejack? I know you said sleep is supposed to make me feel better, but… (*walking in*) …I’m pretty sure it’s making me feel worse.

(*The blanket falls off her head on the end of this. Cut to Applejack, her hat suddenly gone.*)

**Applejack:** See? Now what did I tell you? (*Bloom moves closer and stops; only head and forelegs are in frame.*) A good night’s sleep’ll fix—

(*Stop short. Eyes pop.*)

**Applejack:** (*confusedly*) Well, no wonder you were so worked up. (*Back to Bloom; the blanket has fallen off her entirely.*)

**Bloom:** Wh—didn’t you hear what I said? I was tryin’ to—

**Granny Smith:** (*from o.s., thoughtfully*) Weeeeell…

(*On the start of the next line, zoom out to show the youngest Apple now standing on a bare table. Applejack and Granny are eying her skeptically from opposite sides, the former with her hat back on.*)

**Granny:** …what do we have here?

**Bloom:** What is it, Granny? What’s wrong?

**Granny:** Oh, nothin’. Right, Applejack?

**Bloom:** (*backing away slightly; hat gone*) Right. Nothin’ at all. (*addressing herself o.s.*) Right, Big Mac?

(*The camera follows the turn of Bloom’s head to another side of the table, where the workhorse stands facing the wall. After a long pause, he turns to her.*)

**Macintosh:** Truth is, Apple Bloom, it’s your… (*disgustedly*) …cutie mark.

**Applejack:** Ee-yup.

(*Now Bloom’s haunch can be seen for the first time since her wake-up: a cross-eyed dolphin spouting water from its blowhole.*)

**Bloom:** Oh, no! (*peering at it*) What is it now?

(*Her eyes constrict in terror at the sight of it, and the view fades quickly to black, accompanied by the clunk of a switch being thrown. A second clunk flicks on a spotlight that picks out a very, very confused Bloom, now seated on her haunches atop a stool. Zoom out as the other three Apple family members pace slowly around her, staying just beyond the light’s edge. Applejack wears her hat again. All remaining lines in this act reverberate slightly.*)

**Macintosh:** Well, I can tell you what it ain’t. It ain’t no apple!

**Granny:** Nn-nope.

**Bloom:** (*aghast*) What?!? (*Applejack leans in toward her, hat off.*)

**Applejack:** (*Macintosh’s voice*) And we don’t have room for…*non-Apples.* (*Macintosh leans in, wearing the hat.*)

**Macintosh:** (*Applejack’s voice*) Nn-nope. (*Granny’s turn.*)

**Granny:** (*Macintosh’s voice*) Time for you to mosey on. (*Close-up of the dumbfounded Bloom; she/he continues o.s.*) You can’t stay here.

**Bloom:** But this is my home!

(*Zoom out to frame all of her as the living room fades into view around her and a bindle on a stick appears on one shoulder. She regards this with great puzzlement; cut to Macintosh, now hatless and standing against a background that shows a couple of snapshots of family events in which Bloom’s face has been covered by a splotch of paint.*)

**Macintosh:** (*smirking*) Oh, and you’re gonna have to change your name. (*Pan to Granny.*)

**Granny:** Ee-yep. (*On to Macintosh again.*)

**Macintosh:** I think just “Bloom” has a nice ring to it. Don’t you, Applejack? (*Cut to Applejack, with her hat and standing at the front door.*)

**Applejack:** Ee-yup.

(*Pulling the knob with her teeth, she opens it to expose a spiraling blue/black void beyond the walls. Zoom out quickly to put a terror-stricken Bloom in the fore; the camera rides with her as she is sucked out into this nothingness, slowly dropping into its depths.*)

**Bloom:** (*fading out*) NOOOOOOOOO!!

(*Fade to black.*)

Act Three

(*Opening shot: fade in to a patch of floor next to Bloom’s bed. A large wad of blankets thumps to the floor and begins to squirm madly—she is tangled up inside, and she gets her head and forelegs free with a grunt after a few seconds. Zoom out to frame the morning sky visible through her bedroom window as Pinkie floats past it, dressed as a chicken and with a bunch of balloons tied to her midsection. The pink nut crows like the family rooster.*)

**Bloom:** (*fed up*) All right. This is getting ridiculous!

(*She turns her eyes across the room, the camera following to stop on a free-standing mirror near the dresser. Approaching it with infinite caution, she squeezes her eyes shut and then opens one just a fraction to inspect her right haunch—nothing there.*)

**Bloom:** (*walking away*) Hoo-wee! I never thought I’d be so happy to *not* get a cutie mark!

(*The turn exposes one on the left haunch, though: an ice cream cone. She only notices it after a few steps, then freezes in her tracks.*)

**Bloom:** What the—

(*A half-turn presents a gleaming white tooth that has appeared on her right haunch, and the next shows a serving of French fries on her left in place of the cone. One last pivot, and she finds that the tooth has been replaced by her own face. This winks in close-up; the room behind Bloom darkens and warps slightly, and ghostly images of cutie marks begin to swirl around her. With her unnerved visage as the only properly lit feature of the room, she finally comes up with a supremely frustrated growl.*)

**Bloom:** (*batting marks away*) I don’t want to see another cutie mark as long as I live!

(*Normal light and dimensions resume with a cut to the bedroom door as she gallops out, her mark having changed to a door. Back in the forest clearing, she skids to a stop and looks behind herself—showing her mark now gone—to find that the laws of normal space have apparently taken a long lunch. Namely: a doorway has appeared among the trees, leading directly back to her room. This promptly seals itself, and the wind-carried female voice speaks up.*)

**Female voice:** Back so soon?

**Bloom:** All right, whoever you are! (*advancing across clearing*) I don’t know what spell you went and cast on me, but I want it to stop right now! (*She ends this line at a gallop.*)

**Female voice:** I didn’t cast a spell, on you or anypony else. I only did what you wanted. (*Bloom skids to a stop with a growl.*)

**Bloom:** Why would I want you to torment me with nightmares?

(*The wind kicks up, the camera tracking slowly around the confounded filly.*)

**Female voice:** You didn’t want to catch bugs, and I helped. You didn’t want to lose friends, and I helped.

(*She claps hooves to temples; on the next line, the camera stops to show a lightless blur directly in front of her, with two eyes and a smiling mouth that glow a malevolent yellow. This is the source of the voice, and the thing that has been flitting among the trees on every visit.*)

**Dark figure:** If there’s a problem with your family, I’m sure I can help with that too.

**Bloom:** (*galloping off*) I don’t want your help! Just get away from me!

(*She slows her headlong flight to a walk upon realizing that she has emerged into an area with rather better natural light. A very familiar, very calm voice echoes gently through the night.*)

**Princess Luna:** (*from o.s.*) Oh, Apple Bloom, you can’t get away from your own shadow.

(*In the night sky, a few wisps of cloud drift away from the moon, which kindles to a blinding intensity from which a form emerges, its face covered by two blue-violet wings. As the light fades back to normal, the Princess of the Night spreads them to full extension and gains a bit of altitude to gaze tranquilly down at Bloom.*)

**Bloom:** Princess Luna? My shadow? What do you mean?

(*Luna responds by directing a spell at the great orb, shifting it higher in the sky. The new angle causes the grinning specter to retreat toward ground level, its face slowly fading away, and Bloom sees it resolve into her own innocuous shadow.*)

**Bloom:** It’s just me? (*Overhead shot of her.*) You mean I’ve been doin’ all this to myself?

**Luna:** (*from o.s.*) Of course, Apple Bloom. It’s your dream.

**Bloom:** If I’ve been dreamin’ this whole time— (*Luna descends toward her.*) —why don’t I just wake up?

**Luna:** Sometimes we can worry about a thing so much that fear can make us feel like we’re trapped in a nightmare.

(*She emphasizes the end of this by covering her face with her wings, then pulls them away and casts a blinding spell that whites out the screen. Fade in to a close-up of Bloom, now standing among a field of stars and seen in a slightly soft focus. Zoom out on the start of the next line; she and Luna are on a walkway of stars stretching through the cosmos. Both voices echo in the space.*)

**Luna:** I don’t suppose there’s anything you’re particularly afraid of, is there?

**Bloom:** (*reluctantly, head drooping*) Yeah. (*Close-up.*) I guess I’m pretty worried about gettin’ my cutie mark.

**Luna:** (*from o.s.*) Well… (*Cut to her.*) …that is the same as worrying about who you are. (*lifting a wing to show her crescent moon*) That is all a cutie mark is. If you cannot accept who you are…

(*Back to Bloom, now very far down in the dumps and getting thoroughly rained on.*)

**Luna:** (*from o.s.*) …your life might seem like a bad dream.

(*Longer shot of them. The offending cloud is a small gray one directly above the soggy head, and tiny lightning crackles down from it.*)

**Bloom:** But— (*Luna gently blows it away.*) —if I like who I am— (*She instantly dries out.*) —do you think other ponies will too?

**Luna:** (*patting Bloom’s head*) Of course. (*An idea hits home.*)

**Bloom:** Then it doesn’t matter what my cutie mark is!

**Luna:** Indeed.

**Bloom:** (*hoof to face*) But that’s so simple! I must be the only pony in the universe that’s worried about her cutie mark.

**Luna:** (*knowingly*) Oh, I wouldn’t say that.

(*Two rows of doors instantly rush up from the measureless distance to line both sides of the walkway. One swings open, exposing pure white light beyond, and the camera zooms in to this. Fade in to three ponies—Rarity, DJ P0N-3, and Octavia—seated behind a table and framed in normal focus. The last of these is the gray earth pony cellist mare who has appeared from time to time, and whose human counterpart appeared in Rainbow Rocks. A longer shot of this area puts them facing an empty stage on which a microphone has been set up under the spotlights. Sweetie puts her head out from the wings and nervously makes her way to this. Letting out a sigh, she smiles brightly, takes hold of the mic, and inhales deeply to sing.*)

(*Before she can get out even one note, though, the camera cuts to an extreme close-up of her haunch and a flash of light plays across it. When it subsides, she has her cutie mark—a broom and bucket. Tilt up to reveal that the mic has become a broom she is holding upside down; her face contorts into a horrified grimace, and the three mares are not at all impressed. They hold up score cards—0 for DJ P0N-3 and Octavia, 1 for Rarity; the two unicorns float theirs up, while the earth pony uses her hooves. Onstage, a janitor stallion walks over to Sweetie and sets down the bucket whose handle he has been carrying in his teeth, to her great dismay. Evidently a life as a cleanup specialist was not in her master plan. Fade to white.*)

(*Fade in to Bloom on the walkway. A different door opens behind her, also revealing an intense white brilliance, and she turns toward it as the camera zooms in through the doorway. Fade in from the pure light to an insanely tall ski jump ramp, constructed in the middle of a plain and framed in a normal focus. The black speck of a figure can just be discerned at the top, and a close-up reveals it as Scootaloo. She has donned a starry purple cape and gloves, and she gets a matching helmet and eyeshade adjusted just so on her noggin. She steps onto her trusty scooter; extreme close-up of the handlebars as she gets a grip, then zoom out to frame her grim-set face. Her wings spread and begin to buzz, the cape shifting away from them, and she kicks off from the starting line.*)

(*Scootaloo and her vehicle sail forward into empty space and drop into a gravity-fueled charge, straight and true down the center of the ramp. Comes a flash across her haunch, and she now has her cutie mark—of a wire whisk mixing a bowl of batter. A poof turns her helmet/eyeshade into a white chef’s toque, and an instant later she is riding a giant hand-cranked eggbeater down the slope and has lost the rest of her daredevil outfit. The tool has two cranks, positioned to act as unicycle pedals under her hooves. The little pegasus screams the rest of the way down the ramp and through her jump off the end, describing a graceless end-over-end flip that drops her into a canyon full of batter. She manages to surface, pedaling furiously and trying in vain to keep her head above the rapidly rising tide. Finally she submerges as the gunk fills the screen.*)

(*Dissolve to Bloom, staring worriedly through the dream door and backing slowly away from it.*)

**Bloom:** Scootaloo and Sweetie Belle are havin’ nightmares too?

**Luna:** It’s been a busy night for us all. But I think it’s time to bring it to a close.

(*She conjures up one more door, which appears facing the pair from a few yards down the starry walkway. Cut to the interior of the clubhouse, its door matching the design of this one; it opens, and Bloom and Luna step inside from the space beyond. Pan quickly to Scootaloo and Sweetie near the lectern, both back to their normal, unmarked selves .Normal focus resumes at this point, and the voices of Luna and Bloom no longer echo in here.*)

**Scootaloo, Sweetie:** (*waving happily*) Princess Luna!

**Luna:** (*crossing to them with Bloom*) I know you’ve all had a lot on your minds tonight. But I think Apple Bloom has something she’d like to share before you wake.

**Sweetie:** (*puzzled*) We’re still asleep? (*Scootaloo gets her wings going and easily rises off the floor.*)

**Scootaloo:** Cool!

(*She does a few loop-the-loops, the last one carrying her past the lectern before Bloom stands up behind it.*)

**Bloom:** Well, I guess I should call this dream meetin’ of the Cutie Mark Crusaders to order.

(*Scootaloo touches down, and Bloom taps her hoof against the gavel block—which squishes as if made of rubber and gives a honking sound. Cut to Luna, stifling a giggle at the joke she has pulled; the camera shifts to frame all four on the first part of the next line.*)

**Bloom:** I know we all got pretty anxious when we found out Babs got her cutie mark, but I for one don’t want to have nightmares every night from now until we get ours.

**Scootaloo:** (*as she and Sweetie shake their heads*) Me neither.

**Bloom:** And even though we’re all a little scared, a cutie mark won’t change who we are or how everypony feels about us.

**Sweetie:** It’s lucky we’re all scared of the same things. That way we can help and remind each other to just be who we are.

(*She winks to Scootaloo and high-fives her on the end of this.*)

**Luna:** And when the day comes that you all finally get your cutie marks— (*smiling*) —you can be sure they’ll fit you to a T. (*Bloom pops up next to her.*)

**Bloom:** Exactly!

**Scootaloo:** Do you fillies think that Babs is worried or scared about some of this stuff? (*Bloom is back at the lectern; all three Crusaders think for a moment.*)

**Bloom:** I know! Let’s put together a care package for her!

**Sweetie:** That way she’ll know she isn’t alone! (*Scootaloo nods.*)

**Bloom:** We wouldn’t want her to think that just because she isn’t a Crusader, we can’t still be friends.

(*Smiles give way to unsettled looks, and the three young pairs of eyes turn toward the camera.*)

**Bloom:** But, uh…

(*Zoom out. The entire clubhouse is floating and rotating slowly in the ethereal realm, one entire wall gone, and the next two lines echo across the parsecs.*)

**Bloom:** …maybe we should wait until we wake up.

**Luna:** Good idea.

(*She makes with the magic, filling the screen with her spell’s white glow.*)

(*Fade in to a close-up of Bloom as she sits up in bed with a gasp. A look around herself, the rooster’s crowing of the morning, and she whips down the blanket for a good hard look at her haunch. Nothing there but light yellow coat hair, exactly as it was when all of this surreal subconscious madness began. She smiles, standing up to all fours and proudly showing it off, then flops back down with a relieved sigh.*)

(*Cut to a close-up of a plate loaded with plain pancakes on the kitchen table. Two more are dropped onto the stack; zoom out to frame Macintosh and Granny standing at the table, the stallion licking his chops expectantly. Bloom steps up to the threshold, this time advancing far enough to put her haunch in view.*)

***Same style/key/tempo as the Act One lullaby***

(*The next words bring a smile to Bloom’s face; zoom out to frame Applejack at the stove, working two griddles.*)

**Applejack:** There ain’t no call to worry, so don’t you cry or fret

(*A flick at one handle catapults another pancake toward the table; Bloom walks in.*)

**Bloom:** A cutie mark won’t change me, no matter what I get

***Song ends***

**Applejack:** (*flipping pancake from other griddle*) Well, it sure looks like somepony’s feelin’ better. (*Bloom reaches the table.*)

**Bloom:** You have no idea. (*Applejack joins her.*)

**Applejack:** See? Now what did I tell you? A good night’s sleep cures just about everythin’.

(*Bloom’s eyes pop in fearful surprise on the end of this—realizing that she has been on the receiving end of words very similar to these—but she manages a weak smile.*)

**Bloom:** I guess so. I just wish it hadn’t been so exhaustin’.

(*She helps herself to a pancake, taking no note of the thoroughly perplexed looks that pass among the other three Apples. Granny allows herself a smile before the view fades to black.*)