**THE HOOFFIELDS AND McCOLTS**

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Prologue

(*Opening shot: fade in to the living room of Fluttershy’s cottage, with the daytime sky visible through a window. She sits on her belly, sharing the couch with her rabbit Angel, and animals of all sizes have arrayed themselves about the floor and furniture. A few of them are holding hardback books in different sizes.*)

**Fluttershy:** Does every animal have their copy of *Wuthering Hooves*?

(*A pig and swan each hoist one, Angel whips his out from behind a couch cushion, and Harry the bear—identified by name in “Scare Master”—and a mouse find themselves holding copies better sized for one another. They quickly trade, and Fluttershy brings hers up, framed in profile close-up from the neck up.*)

**Fluttershy:** Hooray! I love Furry Friends Book Club! (*opening it*) Now, let’s discuss the theme of nature as it applies to Hoofcliff’s love.

(*A steady pulse of light from somewhere close behind prompts her to put the book down and look around with no small measure of confusion.*)

**Fluttershy:** Did somepony leave a light on?

(*Pan slightly to frame Angel, who pokes impatiently at her mane and then at the source of the disruption as the camera zooms out slightly. It is her cutie mark, flaring to indicate a summons for a friendship-related mission.*)

**Fluttershy:** Oh, it’s me.

(*She turns back to her reading, but realizes after a few seconds what it all means.*)

**Fluttershy:** Oh! (*standing, setting book down*) It’s me!

(*An image of the butterfly cluster lifts away from her haunch and zips out through an open front window. She flies out after them, but opens the top half of her front door a moment later.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*hastily*) We’ll continue this discussion when I get back!

(*Zoom away, then back to pull the door shut. With the mare of the house now gone, the rest of the book club members promptly fall to a lively discourse in a babel of their own languages. Fade to black.*)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(*Opening shot: fade in to a long shot of Twilight Sparkle’s castle and the path leading to it from Ponyville proper. The spectral butterflies wing toward it, chased by Fluttershy, and vanish through the closed front doors. Fluttershy touches down on the stoop just in time for the doors to be magically thrown open, barely missing her head, and Twilight hurries out to grab hold of one yellow foreleg.*)

**Twilight:** You’re here!

(*She teleports them away; cut to within one of the castle’s corridors as they materialize. Now her cutie mark can be seen to be sounding off as well.*)

**Twilight:** (*showing it off*) Isn’t this exciting?

(*Fluttershy drops to her haunches, initially covering her eyes with a foreleg to shield them from Twilight’s tail, but soon risks a look at the starred haunch.*)

**Fluttershy:** Oh! You were called too! Thank goodness. (*She stands up.*) I feel so much better going with a friend.

**Twilight:** (*excitedly, taking telekinetic hold of one set of doors*) I was about to come and get you, but then I got distracted.

(*Cut to an extreme close-up of the doors she has selected, which swing open to reveal the two mares in the hallway. Fluttershy’s eyes pop in puzzlement as the camera zooms out to frame the throne room, whose central table has manifested the map that called them. Books are stacked/scattered on the floor and any bit of the table with enough free space to accommodate them, and sheets of notes and graphs are taped up on the walls.*)

**Fluttershy:** Oh. (*Close-up; they step in.*)

**Twilight:** Ever since the map called us, I’ve been doing a ton of research— (*She teleports over to a heavily chalked blackboard.*) —testing out potential friendship problems—

(*On the end of this, she floats up a piece of chalk and adds a second underline to a pair of smiling pony faces. The next pop of magic takes her back to Fluttershy’s side, where she maneuvers a thick book over to herself.*)

**Twilight:** (*patting it*) —diversifying my solution portfolio…

(*Trot perkily across the room. Leave it floating in place, then poof it away before Fluttershy can get more than a brief look at the cover.*)

**Fluttershy:** Ever since the map called us? But…that happened five minutes ago. (*Twilight is now sitting on Applejack’s throne, a book lying open before her.*)

**Twilight:** I know! But I want to be one hundred percent prepared. (*spreading wings*) I mean, I’m the Princess of Friendship. (*Close-up.*) How would it look if I couldn’t solve a friendship problem?

(*Her face splits in an unconvincing grin. On the start of the next line, zoom out to frame Fluttershy crossing to her; both cutie marks go quiet.*)

**Fluttershy:** Oh, I’m so lucky I’m being sent with you. Speaking of which, where are we going?

**Twilight:** (*pointing across table*) The Smoky Mountains!

(*The pegasus turns to follow the gesture; cut to a close-up of the stars and butterflies circling above a pair of mountain peaks standing on opposite sides of a broad valley. Zoom out to frame Fluttershy eyeing the spot.*)

**Fluttershy:** Oh, I’ve never been there before.

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) Neither have I. (*Cut to her, walking to stacked/strewn books and notes.*) And there isn’t a lot of information on them.

(*While saying this, she floats a pile of tomes off the floor to reveal Spike beneath, reading one of his comics. The target of her search is a book lying right in front of him, which she levitates up.*)

**Twilight:** All I could find was this.

(*It is slung back across the room, the rest of the literature being set down to bury the baby dragon again. In close-up, Fluttershy cringes as the book hurtles toward her, but it stops just short of her face and flips open. On the start of the next line, cut to a close-up of it, showing a two-page illustration of the two vegetation/tree-crowned summits and the lush valley and stream between them.*)

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) The Smoky Mountains harbor the most beautiful valley in all of Equestria, between its two majestic mountain peaks. (*Back to Fluttershy.*)

**Fluttershy:** That’s gorgeous. (*Book closes; she rises to her hind legs and claps her front hooves as she continues.*) And where there’s nature, there’s a ton of animal friends! (*Twilight darts over.*)

**Twilight:** (*scooping up book*) I can’t wait to get started! I’m a little nervous since that’s all I could find. (*floating it away*) I usually like to be a bit more prepared.

(*Fluttershy looks concernedly around herself, the camera zooming out slowly to frame the extensive background work again.*)

**Fluttershy:** You seem pretty prepared to me.

(*A glance off to one side; cut to two pairs of bulging saddlebags by one wall as the two cross to them.*)

**Fluttershy:** Are those…for us?

**Twilight:** (*tucking book into hers*) Yep. I’ve prepared our things. Snacks, books, blankets, books…

**Fluttershy:** You said “books” twice.

**Twilight:** There are a lot of books.

(*The bags come off the floor, held in her aura. She settles hers onto her back and trots off with a grin and no visible effort, but the ones for Fluttershy nearly crush her to the floor when they settle into place.*)

**Fluttershy:** Oof!

(*She struggles to get upright; cut to just outside the open front doors as Twilight trots out.*)

**Twilight:** What do you think our friendship problem’s gonna be?

**Fluttershy:** (*crawling after her, straining*) I don’t know, but I’m sure we’ll figure it out.

(*Another attempt to stand up to full height just causes her legs to buckle further. Twilight, meanwhile, has reached the hot-air balloon she and her friends have used in the past, moored at a platform among the houses of Ponyville. She climbs in as Fluttershy heaves and groans her way across the cobblestones; in close-up, she tests a connecting rope as the pegasus gets her bags up onto the edge of the basket.*)

**Twilight:** Do you think it’ll be a problem about lying? (*They topple in; Fluttershy hoists herself up.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*out of breath*) I’m sure we’ll find out when we get there.

**Twilight:** You’re right.

(*Fluttershy gets herself onboard, and the Princess undoes a rope to cast off. Up they go, the view dissolving to a long shot of the balloon drifting over the countryside.*)

**Twilight:** (*echoing slightly*) Ooh! Could it be about when two friends just randomly decide to do something together, but they forget to invite the third friend, and the third friend feels left out?

(*Dissolve to the craft now parked at the edge of a forest. Twilight walks ahead, eyeing a sheet and still toting her saddlebags, while Fluttershy secures the mooring line with her own bags resting on the grass. The winged unicorn stops after a few steps.*)

**Twilight:** (*as Fluttershy struggles into her gear*) Or where one friend tells another friend’s secret after they ask them not to?

**Fluttershy:** (*walking toward her, straining*) We’ll know very, very soon, since we’re almost there.

(*Whereupon Twilight lifts off, document and all. Dissolve to her in flight, still reading intently; after a few flaps, she shifts into a hover, grins, and rolls/stows the page. Her eyes flick worriedly behind herself; to the sound of Fluttershy’s weary moan, the camera zooms out to show her slowly and painfully trying to gain altitude. Magic takes hold of her overstuffed bags.*)

**Twilight:** Here. Let me get that.

(*Both sets of luggage are levitated away, and Fluttershy rises to her level with a relieved sigh.*)

**Fluttershy:** Thank you.

**Twilight:** Sorry I feel a little skiddly-bop-de-boo. (*giddily*) I just can’t believe this is finally happening!

(*Her high spirits vanish in the fraction of a second it takes for a pumpkin to hurtle across from behind the pair, plowing their equipment away. A telekinetic downward yank on Fluttershy’s mane saves her from being brained, and Twilight is left with nothing but the solution portfolio she mentioned during her prep work in the castle. A long shot of the area shows that they are hovering between the two peaks of the Smoky Mountains—but the landscape is noticeably different from that shown in Twilight’s book. The stands of timber on both pinnacles are gone, replaced by scraggly saplings on the left one and stumps on the right. The left one is topped with a plethora of pumpkins—the side from which the shot came—and a scatter of ramshackle wooden buildings. The grass on the right one is dead and brown, while a sturdy log fort stands at the highest point. Between them, the valley is now a weed-and-boulder-choked expanse split by the long-dried-up stream bed.*)

(*More pumpkins are fired off toward the fort, one nearly wiping out both airborne mares in close-up.*)

**Fluttershy:** Whoa!

**Twilight:** Whoa! What in Equestria is happening? (*Another projectile threads the needle between them.*)

**Fluttershy:** It’s nothing like your book said it would be!

**Twilight:** Oh, boy. I’m feeling very unprepared. Where do we even start? (*She ducks a pumpkin.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*pointing back the way it came*) Maybe by figuring out where the flying pumpkins are coming from?

(*They head toward the left peak. Cut to a close-up of an elderly, medium brown mare with darker, bushy eyebrows over deep blue eyes and yellowed buck teeth. Her curly mane is in two shades of faded dust-brown and tied back, and a red kerchief is knotted around her neck above a faded blue shirt collar. This is Ma Hooffield, who speaks with a pronounced backwoods accent.*)

**Ma:** Ready!

(*Longer shot of the area. The shirt sleeves are rolled up, and she wears a blue denim vest over it; her cutie mark is a pumpkin. Nearby is a cannon carved from a log, attended by two stallions in shades of red and brown; one loads a pumpkin into the muzzle and packs it down with a ramrod, while the other has his teeth clamped onto the free end of a rope attached to the breech. All three are earth ponies.*)

**Ma:** Aim! (*The loader nudges the muzzle upward, then bails out.*) FIRE!!

(*A yank on the rope sends the gourd on its way, and she shades her eyes to follow its trajectory toward the opposite mountain. A splat of orange just outside the walls tells the near miss.*)

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) Um, hi! (*Ma glares back; cut to frame the two visitors walking up.*) Hello. Excuse us, but what are you doing?

**Ma:** (*pointing*) We’re pumpkin-in’ our neighbors!

**Fluttershy:** Yes, but, um…*why* are you “pumpkin-ing” your neighbors?

**Ma:** (*scornfully*) Well, because the McColts are just plain rotten! (*suspiciously*) Hey, wait a tick. Who are you two? You’re not spies for the McColts, are you?

(*Several similarly colored stallions and mares—earth ponies all—gather around with a round of hard glares.*)

**Twilight:** I am Twilight Sparkle, the Princess of Friendship, and I’m here to solve your friendship problem.

**Fluttershy:** I’m Fluttershy, and, um, I’m here too.

**Ma:** (*shaking hooves with Twilight*) Ma Hooffield. Pleased to meet you, but you’re wastin’ your time. We don’t have a friendship problem—we have a McColt problem.

(*On these last three words, cut to a close-up of her seamed face and zoom in on her squinting, distrustful eyes. The camera then zooms out to show an equally aged, green-eyed stallion now standing alongside Ma, with long beard/mustache, brows, and wisps of curly mane in faded blond.*)

**Hooffield stallion:** And there’s absolutely no friendship there!

(*He zips away; Ma nods grimly, but Twilight just brings her portfolio over to herself and Fluttershy so they can check an entry.*)

**Twilight:** Well— (*sending it away*) —maybe there could be if we figure out what the McColts did to make you so mad.

**Ma:** (*stomping*) Oh, well, they’ve done so many things! Why, just today, they shot pebbles at our farmhouse and wrecked it!

(*Pan quickly in the direction of her gesturing hoof to the collapsed remains of a building, one that could never have passed for a paragon of sound architectural design even when it was intact. The camera then cuts back to Ma.*)

**Ma:** See, we’re not very good at buildin’, so all it took was a little pebble. (*indignantly*) But still!

(*As Twilight checks the portfolio again, Fluttershy looks away toward ground level. Cut to a close-up of a loose pumpkin, in which a family of mice has gnawed a window and door and taken up residence. As one of the Hooffield stallions nips it up by the stem, a straggler leaps for the door and grabs hold of the paws being held out toward it. The whole thing is unceremoniously jammed into the muzzle of the cannon, prompting a rush of panicked squeaking.*)

**Fluttershy:** Oh, no!

(*She gets over there just in time to pull it loose before the stallion shoves the ramrod down the barrel, oblivious to the theft. Twilight lowers and closes the portfolio as Ma shifts her eyes from trying to bore a hole through the covers to trying to make sense of the contents.*)

**Twilight:** I know what to do. (*floating it away*) We’re gonna talk with these McColts and hear their side of the story. Once we have all the facts, we can put an end to this, using reason and rationale.

(*The old mare just looks at her as if she has grown two extra heads; across the way, Fluttershy has set the mice’s pumpkin down with its inhabitants safe and sound.*)

**Fluttershy:** Good plan! (*They scurry out; she lowers her voice and addresses them.*) That’s why she’s the Princess.

**Twilight:** (*to Ma*) In the meantime, could you please call off the pumpkin-ing?

**Ma:** (*begrudgingly*) Oh, all right.

**Twilight:** Thanks. (*trotting away*) Come on, Fluttershy.

(*Both lift off. Wipe to an extreme close-up of a barrier of wooden planks; one light violet hoof reaches into view and knocks, and a longer shot frames the Ponyville pair standing before a set of closed gates in a sturdy wall. This can only be the fort on the other peak—McColt territory, according to Ma. A male voice, as rural-sounding as hers, calls down from above.*)

**Male voice 1:** State your business!

(*Both pairs of eyes glance upward, the camera tilting quickly upward to the speaker—a stallion with a drab grayish-blue coat, dark blue eyes with birdcatcher spots, and a short, light blue mane—glaring down at them from the wall’s top. A similarly colored mare joins him, a pink kerchief with white polka dots knotted over her darker blue mane. Both wear light gray shirts and have no horns.*)

**McColt mare 1:** (*to him*) Don’t even bother. They’re probably spies for the Hooffields.

**McColt stallion:** Hey, wait! (*leaning over wall*) You’re an alicorn! (*His perspective of the pair.*) I thought just the three Princesses were alicorns!

**Twilight:** (*echoing slightly*) There are *four* alicorn princesses in Equestria now. I am Twilight Sparkle, the Princess of Friendship.

**Fluttershy:** (*softly*) And I’m Fluttershy. (*Back to the two McColts.*)

**McColt stallion:** We have a new princess? When did that happen? (*stammering a bit*) And-and how did the Hooffields come by a princess spy? (*Zoom out to ground level, framing Twilight and Fluttershy.*)

**Twilight:** We are not spies! (*to Fluttershy*) Why does everypony assume we’re spies?

(*The sound of several bolts being undone throws them for a loop; cut to a close-up of the gates, which open to expose a tall, dirty, round-crowned hat whose brim is level with the bottom of the screen. A second male voice speaks up, this one with a deeper tone and drawling quality to it.*)

**Male voice 2:** Because we don’t get a lot of visitors!

(*A tilt down to ground level brings this speaker into view, Big Daddy McColt, framed in a head-on shot. Lined face, light grayish-blue coat, straight mustache/beard/tail in two shades of dark blue-gray, brown eyes with birdcatcher spots under thick brows, baggy overalls. His most distinctive physical feature, though, is his height—or rather, his lack of it; he might be as tall as the average colt, and the hat stands nearly as high as he does.*)

**Big Daddy:** I’m Big Daddy McColt. You caught us at a weird time. We’re in the middle of a giant feud with our *TERRIBLE NEIGHBORS!!*

(*These last two words echo through the air as he darts forward to shout them at the Hooffields’ side with all the lung-power he can muster. The camera angle shifts during this motion to clearly show his close-cropped tail and lack of wings. His yell sets the scrawny trees vibrating on the opposite peak, scares a flock of birds into flight, and causes a couple of rickety structures to come crashing down.*)

**Twilight:** Well, actually, that’s why we’re here. (*He passes between her and Fluttershy…*) To solve your problem with the Hooffields! (*…then whirls to face them.*)

**Big Daddy:** So you’re here to help us get rid of ’em!

(*Several other members of the clan put their heads out around the gate, cheering, blowing party favors, and throwing confetti.*)

**Twilight:** No! That’s not what I meant at all!

**Big Daddy:** (*menacingly*) Well, if you ain’t fer us— (*tilting head forward to shade eyes; zoom in*) —you’re agin’ us.

(*Princess and traveling partner recoil in shock at this pronouncement. Snap to black.*)

Act Two

(*Opening shot: fade in to a long shot of the McColts’ fort and zoom in slowly. The gate has been closed, and both the path leading to it and the outer wall are clear of ponies—the group has moved within.*)

**Twilight:** (*from inside*) We are not on anypony’s side. (*Close-up of her and Fluttershy, the latter grinning shakily.*) We’re here to help you become friends again!

(*Zoom out quickly to show family members giving them the hairy eyeball—some resembling the two on guard duty at the gate, others closer to Big Daddy’s coloration. Like the Hooffields, they are all earth ponies. The diminutive patriarch approaches.*)

**Big Daddy:** Well, that’s gonna be hard. I don’t believe we’ve ever been friends with the *Hooffields*.

**Twilight:** But you could be. They’re just really upset you ruined their farmhouse. (*He leans into their faces.*)

**Big Daddy:** Wait a hog-wogglin’ minute! We only did that because the *Hooffields*— (*pointing to one side*) —pulled the pin out of our wagon wheel!

(*Pan quickly in the indicated direction to the vehicle in question, which is loaded with produce—mostly pumpkins and squash—and is missing one wheel. That corner is propped up on a stick, which promptly gives way; when the wagon topples, several items are jolted out and one pumpkin smashes on the ground.*)

**Big Daddy:** A whole week’s worth of food, rollin’ down the mountain! (*removing hat, exposing bald scalp*) Us McColts are mighty fine builders, but we don’t know the first thing about farmin’.

(*The kinfolk around him nod and neigh softly in assent as he claps the hat back on.*)

**Big Daddy:** We have to travel a ways away to buy our food.

(*Extreme close-up of one gourd splattered on the hardpan—the aftermath of a Hooffield strike. On the start of the next linen, zoom out to frame him glaring at it and the other debris spread around him.*)

**Big Daddy:** And now we’ll be stuck eatin’ the pumpkins the *Hooffields* launched at us! (*with slight fondness*) Pumpkin bread, pumpkin soup, pumpkin quesadillas… (*Cut to Twilight and Fluttershy; he continues o.s.*) …pumpkin paella, pumpkin cheese, pumpkin pie… (*Back to him.*) …pumpkin frittatas…actually, that all sounds pretty good. (*venomously, leaning into their faces*) But it’ll get old!

(*His pronunciation of “quesadillas” differs from the typical one in two ways. First, he turns the S sound in the second syllable into an X; second; he voices the double L as a single one, rather than a Y as in “yes.” Twilight floats up her portfolio and skims a page as Fluttershy turns her attention elsewhere. Across the compound, as soon as a dustpan-load of pumpkin scraps is emptied into a barrel, a stallion promptly moves in and scrapes the load into a bag he holds in his mouth, delivering it to a full table next to which a mare is tending a cooking pot over a fire. One chunk falls to the ground, catching the eye of a squirrel behind a table leg; it starts out from this hiding place, only for a broom to come down and sweep the morsel away. The furry brown face falls in disappointment, but another piece is pushed into view by Fluttershy and it answers her smile with one of its own.*)

(*Cut back to Twilight, still reading.*)

**Twilight:** Have you tried meeting at a neutral location, talking about your problems, and really listening to each other? (*Book down.*)

**Big Daddy:** What?!? No! (*He whisks up to a lookout point atop the wall.*) They’d sooner launch their dinners at us than listen to us!

**Twilight:** Well, they’ll listen to me. I’m an impartial third party.

(*A few quick flaps bring her to an airborne vantage point between the two mountains. Here she casts a spell that projects a spark of white light onto her throat, where it fades away on contact. Its effect is to magnify her voice so that it easily carries to both sides, with a bit of an echo.*)

**Twilight:** Attention, Hooffields and McColts! I’m not on anypony’s side, but I can see you’re both wasting time and resources on being mean to each other. Ponies are supposed to help each other and be kind. So let’s stop this senseless fighting!

(*During her second and third sentences, the camera cuts first to Ma and a couple of her kin listening with some bemusement, then to Fluttershy, Big Daddy and another mare on the McColt wall. For the last sentence, the view shifts to frame both sides again and the speck that is Twilight. She returns to the McColts’ side after she finishes, the camera cutting to the top of the wall as she touches down next to Big Daddy. The amplification spell is no longer in effect.*)

**Twilight:** There! That should do it. Ready to go home, Fluttershy?

**Fluttershy:** I’d love to, but…if we solved the problem already— (*glancing at her haunch*) —shouldn’t our cutie marks be glowing again?

**Twilight:** (*a bit smugly*) Oh, yeah. (*glancing at hers*) They should be glowing any minute now.

(*Except that hers is not. It does, however, get redecorated in red when a tomato sails into view and splats wetly against it. She grimaces fearfully and cuts her eyes back toward the Hooffield side as the report from their cannon drifts across the gap and a salvo of vine-ripened ammo whistles through the sky. All the McColts in the vicinity quickly evacuate it.*)

**Twilight:** Or not.

(*She and Fluttershy get hit, the screen instantly filling with pulp and clearing to show a knot of McColts panicking and getting their hooves in gear to stay ahead of the new barrage. Twilight and Fluttershy race across the grounds, wings up to protect their heads as best they can, and take cover in a shed. Shaking herself clean, the thwarted peacemaker brings out her portfolio.*)

**Twilight:** (*magically tearing out/balling a page*) So much for potential friendship solution number twenty-eight. (*It winks out.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*as Twilight closes book and floats it away*) I guess we should find out why the Hooffields are launching tomatoes now.

(*Cut to that side, where three clan members have set up slingshots and are firing at will. Ma catches sight of one mare who is about to fire two tomatoes at once.*)

**Ma:** One at a time, Greenhoof. If you smush them tomaters in the slingshot— (*smiling savagely*) —they won’t break on the McColts.

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) What are you doing?

(*On the start of the next line, zoom out to frame her and Fluttershy coming in for a landing. Fluttershy is now clean of tomato residue.*)

**Twilight:** I-I asked you to stop fighting!

**Ma:** Oh, is that what you were hollerin’ about? (*picking up a tomato*) We thought the McColts rubbed you the wrong way— (*tossing it idly*) —so we tomater’d them for you. (*Throw it aside.*) My mistake. (*to the shooters*) STOP THE TOMATER SLINGSHOTS!!

(*They are quick to comply with this order, but through the sudden silence, a new sound is heard as of a catapult being triggered. Cut to a close-up of three hay bales hurtling through the air, then back to the Hooffield firing line. A mare is hit dead on and instantly buried, and Twilight and Fluttershy get the same treatment not long afterward; this result gets Ma’s dander up all over again.*)

**Ma:** Reload the tomater slingshots! We’re gonna paint their mountaintop red!

(*The out-of-towners poke their heads up from the mess, Twilight shaking hay off her head and Fluttershy spitting out the clump in her mouth.*)

**Twilight:** (*dryly*) Well, that didn’t work. (*puzzled*) I was so sure it would.

(*Her trusty portfolio pops out of the pile under her control, and she goes for a quick refresher as Fluttershy glances away. Cut to a tortoise frantically running for cover at top speed—which might rival that of a typical glacier—as the McColt bales rain down. One is the barest of misses, and the shelled slowpoke does a U-turn away from the impact site only to get spun in place and nearly trampled by a stampede of Hooffields. It ends up lying upside down, having retracted head/limbs/tail into its shell; when these pop out again, Fluttershy gasps in fright and is on the scene within a blink to lift and right it.*)

**Fluttershy:** It was a good plan. (*She flies the tortoise over to a bush.*) We need to think of another one, and soon. (*Lift the leaves to make an opening.*) This fight is really affecting the animals around here.

(*When it makes no immediate move toward the improvised shelter, she pushes it in and lets the foliage drop back into place.*)

**Twilight:** Not to worry. I’ll just, uh… (*Page flip; read closely for a moment, then a smile.*) …find the root of the problem and work from there!

(*Close the book. The McColts’ next shot takes out a barn and the jerry-built hayloft mounted above it. Ma loads a slingshot, locks her teeth onto the pouch, and backs up to fire, but Twilight and Fluttershy are now out of the hay and standing right behind her. The portfolio is within easy reach.*)

**Twilight:** Pardon us, Ma, but do you remember what started this whole feud in the first place? (*Ma lets fly and turns to face them.*)

**Ma:** (*menacingly*) They know what they did.

(*The entire scene pivots 180 degrees around a vertical line through its center, becoming a close-up of Big Daddy seen from the eyes up. The would-be-diplomats are facing him.*)

**Big Daddy:** They know what they did! (*Twilight grimaces as he walks between them to the wall.*)

**Twilight:** I’m starting to think neither of you know what either of you have done!

**Big Daddy:** Sure we do. Them *Hooffields* did us a grave injustice some time ago for some reason.

**McColts:** Hear, hear!

**Twilight:** (*floating up book, flipping pages*) Okay, backup plan to the backup plan. (*Read; smile.*) Maybe we can find some common ground that you can bond over. What do you do when you’re *not* fighting?

**Big Daddy:** That’s easy. Gettin’ ready to fight!

(*Pan quickly to the two now back on Hooffield turf and going over the portfolio.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*reading*) “What do you hope to get out of fighting?”

(*These words are addressed to Ma, who is now watching a stallion loading and preparing to fire a watermelon, using a catapult made from planks lashed to a log.*)

**Ma:** The satisfaction of winnin’!

(*Launch; pan quickly to Twilight and Fluttershy in the McColt fort, the former levitating a quill and note pages along with the book and writing a bit.*)

**Twilight:** Of winning what?

(*Meant for Big Daddy, who pounds his hoof against a nail protruding from a board.*)

**Big Daddy:** The fight, of course! To prove our family is the best!

(*Pan quickly to the pair in the pumpkin fields; Twilight’s notes have multiplied a bit.*)

**Fluttershy:** The best at what? (*Ma dumps out a basket of tomatoes for a slingshot gunner.*)

**Ma:** Winnin’! Haven’t you been listenin’? (*She shoves the basket away.*)

**Twilight:** (*to Fluttershy*) So the only thing they have in common is that they both want to win a fight, and neither of them know what it’s over. How can I end this feud if I don’t know what it’s about?

(*Portfolio, notes, and her face all hit the ground in a dejected scramble, but Fluttershy brightens as an inspiration strikes.*)

**Fluttershy:** Ooh! Maybe somepony just needs to say they’re sorry! (*Twilight straightens up with a smile.*)

**Twilight:** That’s a good idea! (*floating book up*) And friendship solution number forty-eight—but we can move it up.

(*Dissolve to a profile close-up of Twilight and Ma walking side by side, the latter harnessed to a load.*)

**Twilight:** I’m so glad you agreed to do this.

(*A longer shot reveals that “this” is a towering, three-layer carrot cake, liberally iced and studded with whole carrots and being pulled by Ma on a wagon. Fluttershy walks behind, keeping a front hoof on the edge of the platform it rests on for stability.*)

**Twilight:** This apology cake will go a long way to making amends between you two. (*floating up book, notes, quill*) Which part of my argument changed your mind? The part where I said the benefits of friendship outweigh the cost of war, or the part where I said forgiveness is an investment in happiness?

**Ma:** (*impatiently*) Yeah, yeah, all of it! (*Long shot behind them, tilting up; they are nearly at the fort.*)

**Twilight:** Wait. Are you even listening to me?

(*The camera motion puts her o.s. as she finishes, and the camera then cuts to the gates as they pull up.*)

**McColt stallion:** Who goes there?

**Ma:** It’s Ma Hooffield!

**McColt stallion:** (*calling o.s.*) Hooffield alert! Arm the cannons!

(*It takes less than a second for two such weapons—metal, with ignitable fuses—to be produced and pointed over the top of the wall, but Ma just gives them a bucktoothed smile.*)

**Ma:** With an apology cake!

**McColt stallion:** (*softly*) Did you say “cake”? As in…

(*He licks his chops hungrily; cut to a close-up of the gargantuan dessert, ringed by a heavenly glowing aura, and zoom out slowly.*)

**McColt stallion:** (*from o.s.*) …cake? (*The aura fades; Ma leans into view.*)

**Ma:** Consider it a gesture of goodwill, from us to you.

(*Mare 1 licks her chops as a runnel of drool works its way down from the stallion’s gaping mouth.*)

**McColt mare 1:** (*wistfully*) I haven’t had cake in ages! (*The drool falls loose.*)

**McColt stallion:** Open the gates!

(*The cannons are swiftly pulled down and out of sight, and the gates swing open. Twilight magically lifts the cake off the wagon and steers it inside, where it is set down on a waiting wooden sheet. McColts gather around the offering, unable to believe their eyes.*)

**McColt mare 2:** (*sniffling, wiping eyes*) Oh, it’s such a beautiful cake! (*Twilight and Fluttershy are now inside, standing next to it; Twilight no longer has her portfolio.*)

**Twilight:** Think of this as more than just a cake. It’s the first step in the long road to forgiveness.

**Fluttershy:** Nothing says “let’s be friends” like a cake that says “Let’s Be Friends.” (*aside, to a stallion*) I wrote that in icing on the top.

(*Her giddy grin at this admission is interrupted by a most unexpected rustling and quivering of the cake, and the top tier explodes in a burst of icing and carroty mush to show why. Three Hooffields have stowed away inside and are spoiling for a fight.*)

**Hooffields:** FOR GLORY!!

(*Hurling lumps of cake, they effectively disperse the crowd and jump down to the ground—only to be swept up in a net and suspended several feet above it. Big Daddy, up on the wall, has triggered this trap by pulling a lever.*)

**Big Daddy:** McColts! Assume Delta Force formation!

(*Ten of them gallop over and arrange themselves into a large triangle, and he races down to take a position at its leading tip. All eleven sprint in a roaring body out the gate, sending Ma into a panicked retreat and leaving Twilight and Fluttershy alone in the dust they have kicked up.*)

**Ma:** Ready!

(*Two of her family members, waiting alongside the path, each have a piece of produce impaled on a stick in their teeth—an ear of corn for one, a pineapple for the other. They brace themselves.*)

**Ma:** Aim!

(*Pan quickly to a third Hooffield on the opposite side, readying two loaded watermelon catapults, then cut to a couple of mares attending to a large platform crammed with cupcakes. One mare adds two more on the last open spot, while the other stands ready at a pedal mounted in the base. Ma slides to a stop near them.*)

**Ma:** FIRE!!

(*A stomp on the pedal causes the platform to pop up on a spring and send its delectable payload flying. The McColt contingent slides to a stop, finding itself about to be on the very wrong end of a bombardment of items fresh from farm and oven. They squat down, holding wooden doors flat above their heads to shield themselves; one stallion is a bit slow to catch on and is struck down as the projectiles find their marks. A horde of Hooffields charges into the fray, directed by Ma, as Twilight touches down to face her.*)

**Twilight:** Ma Hooffield! You planted ponies in that cake?!?

**Ma:** Yeah! (*Laugh.*) Wait. Were you serious about apologizin’? (*A brawl has now broken out; she rushes up to Twilight.*) Why in Equestria would we do that?

(*The violet Princess is tossed aside like a sack of potatoes.*)

**Ma:** (*to the McColts*) We didn’t do anythin’ wrong! (*Big Daddy lowers his door-shield.*)

**Big Daddy:** What are you talkin’ about? (*Throw it aside.*) You done *so* many things wrong! (*Ma gets in his face.*)

**Ma:** Not as many as you!

(*Growling at each other like a pair of rabid dogs, the two family leaders start throwing hooves on the spot. Fights continue around them, involving younger stallions and mares from both sides, and the camera zooms out slowly as Twilight and Fluttershy walk despondently through the valley that has become a free-for-all. Snap to black.*)

Act Three

(*Opening shot: fade in to a long shot of the fracas, zooming in slowly, then cut to the scene where the individual combats continue to rage. Among the chaos, one beefy McColt stallion simply shoves away the less muscular Hooffield who is trying ineffectually to push him to the ground. A squirrel darts here and there, barely avoiding both the incoming vegetable artillery and the hooves of a Hooffield mare backing up from a fight, but Fluttershy slides across the dirt to pull it to safety. Once she has set it down in a relatively calm spot, she turns two worried blue-green eyes back toward the fighting and steps between two arguing mares. One of them is Greenhoof, whom Ma cautioned against overloading the tomato slingshots in Act Two.*)

**Fluttershy:** Um, if you could just not yell so much, or maybe stop saying words altogether…

(*No go; they fall to it again, catching her up in the violence, and she crawls away only to be brought up short by a salvo of carrots.*)

**Fluttershy:** Whoa! Twilight?

(*She catches sight of her friend trudging away along the dried stream bed and gallops to intercept. Twilight sits listlessly on her haunches, bringing out the portfolio that has done nothing but let her down, and magically tears out several pages so she can ball them up and poof them away. Shutting the book, she sets it down with a defeated sigh; on the start of the next line, pan slightly to bring Fluttershy into view.*)

**Fluttershy:** Um, Twilight? We should probably get back there. I mean, if you need a break, that’s fine, but I really can’t do this without you.

**Twilight:** I don’t know if we can do this at all. Even if I make things right, they’re just gonna fight again.

(*A chittering noise draws Fluttershy’s focus away from the heartbroken Princess. It is coming from a rustling patch of greenery, which she lifts up to expose the cowering squirrel, a chipmunk, and a mouse. They cringe away at being bowled out, but she gives them a tender smile.*)

**Fluttershy:** Hey, little fellas. Oh, that’s okay, you can come out.

(*They do so, followed by quite a few other small cute critters who emerge from their own refuges, and Fluttershy sits down on her haunches as they gather around her. The moment of tranquility is broken by a sudden low growl or grunt.*)

**Twilight:** What was that?

(*The answer: the grumbling of the squirrel’s empty stomach. Cut to Fluttershy, who stands up and moves to get a better view of a tumbleweed blowing forlornly across the ravaged valley.*)

**Fluttershy:** Oh, you poor things! There isn’t enough food here for you! (*They hug her legs.*) Oh, brrrr! (*Sit down on her belly.*) And you’re freezing! (*draping wings around them*) I’m gonna take you all home with me and get you all hot cocoas. How do you feel about book clubs?

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) I don’t get it.

(*Longer shot and slow pan, framing both; Twilight is standing.*)

**Twilight:** This was supposed to be the most beautiful valley in all of Equestria. What happened?

(*Close-up: the squirrel clambers onto the now-standing Fluttershy’s back and squeaks in her ear.*)

**Fluttershy:** What’s that?…Oh!…Uh-huh…Twilight! They know what happened here!

**Twilight:** What?

(*The battle royal continues unabated as she flies up for a bird’s-eye view.*)

**Twilight:** Stop! You have to listen to me!

(*Here comes a cupcake upside the head; wiping the mess away, she decides that she has had quite enough of this culinary incivility and kick-starts her horn.*)

**Twilight:** EVERYPONY FREEZE!!

(*Her second word rings through the air as she unleashes a spell, which surges out in a magenta-edged blast of white to blank out the screen for a moment. When the view clears, every feuding pony and launched projectile is caught in her grip and stopped dead in his/her/its tracks—a souped-up version of the spell she used to calm her friends down near the end of “Castle Mane-ia.” She touches down among them, one eye squeezed shut to betray the degree of effort it is costing her to keep up the enchantment.*)

**Twilight:** Fluttershy! You have to tell them! (*Grunt.*) It’s a lot harder to freeze an army of ponies than just six of them!

(*Her vocal strain continues as the timid pegasus emerges from behind a bush, rising above the crowd with the squirrel on her back and the other animals watching.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*voice raised*) Before you keep fighting, there is something you should know! (*normal volume*) Long ago, there were two best friends.

(*The view undergoes a wavering dissolve to a sepia-toned close-up of a bearded earth pony stallion in straw hat and ragged overalls, walking into view. On the next line, the camera zooms out slightly to frame a second one, similarly dressed and bearded, traveling with him. The first has buck teeth and a curly two-tone mane/tail/beard, and he carries saddlebags stuffed with produce. The other’s beard/mane/tail are darker brown, two-tone and straight, and his bags are packed with boards and nails. They are, respectively…*)

**Fluttershy:** (*voice over*) Grub Hooffield and Piles McColt.

(*On the next line, cut to a long shot of the valley as it appeared in Twilight’s book—bustling with plant and animal life—and zoom out to put these two in the fore, trading a glance of agreement as they look on.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*voice over*) When they found the valley between the Smoky Mountains, they knew it was something special. (*They enter the valley.*) So they made a promise to each other to protect and preserve the valley for all its adorable furry inhabitants. (*Part ways for opposite sides.*) But they disagreed on how to go about it.

(*Cut to a close-up of several containers of fruit/vegetable seeds laid out on the ground. Pan slowly across them, then zoom out to frame Grub standing alongside; he scrapes up a bit of earth and taste-tests it, liking what he finds.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*voice over*) Grub wanted to start by planting crops so that everypony would have something to eat.

(*A house blueprint is lifted into view, blocking out the screen.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*voice over*) But Piles thought it would be better to start by building a shelter— (*Cut to him; he lowers the sheet and squints over its top edge.*) —to protect them against the cold and wind.

(*He beams widely; in close-up, Grub’s seeds are swept aside and several logs are dropped in their place.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*voice over*) The two ponies were unable to come to an understanding. (*Zoom out; Piles has his plans spread on the ground and gets a mallet in his teeth.*) So Piles went ahead and built a shelter anyway—

(*Here comes a shovel-toting Grub, who stops short in surprise upon finding that Piles is already working on a house frame.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*voice over*) —exactly where Grub was gonna start his farm. (*The spilled seeds, tilting up to Grub’s glare; shovel down.*) Grub was upset. (*He bucks the frame repeatedly.*) So he tore down Piles’s shelter so he could plant his crops.

(*The farmer trots contentedly away after it collapses, but the architect gapes at the demolition from where he has been sawing a log. Next they get into an argument from opposite sides of the stream that runs through the valley.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*voice over*) They kept fighting, back and forth, until it turned into a feud.

(*The straw hats are thrown into the water and begin to float away, and the two former friends turn back toward their own halves of the valley. Cut to Grub, replacement headwear already in place and all set to plant some new seeds; he gets the shovel shaft in his teeth, but the handle and blade instantly fall off. Here comes Piles, wearing a new hat of his own and with a saw over his shoulder to tell of the sabotage. As Piles pushes a wheelbarrow full of bricks with his head, the wheel pops off and rolls away, leaving the load to capsize on the ground. Grub walks past, idly tossing the bolt he has removed. Grub waters a patch of earth in close-up, causing seedlings to sprout up, but a massive log slams down to hide both him and them from view. Zoom out to frame its entire girth as he puts his head up from behind for a good look and a hostile glare toward one end, then pan to Piles as the culprit, leaning smugly on the axe he has just used to fell this tree.*)

(*Grub yanks down a house frame and Piles reciprocates by kicking a seed container and bucket of dirt into the stream. Cut to a long shot of the valley; a tent has been set up on the left bank of the stream for Grub, a cabin on the right for Piles, and items are being flung back and forth.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*voice over*) The valley suffered from the constant destruction, until finally the Hooffields and McColts moved to separate mountains.

(*As she speaks, a series of three dissolves shifts each encampment farther up its respective peak and the unconventional artillery exchange continues. At the same time, the trees slowly thin out, the stream dries up, and the valley becomes a barren waste. One last dissolve brings the action back to the present day.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*echoing slightly*) Even then, the valley and all the animals in it continued to be caught in the crossfire. (*Close-up.*) You see, by fighting, you’re destroying the very thing that brought you here in the first place!

(*During this second sentence, the camera cuts here and there among the immobilized combatants, whose eyes are the only visible sign of the contrition that has taken hold. She comes in for a landing among them, the camera zooming in slowly as the other animals gather around her hooves.*)

**Fluttershy:** So it’s time you both put your differences aside and come together— (*smiling*) —if not for yourselves, then for the sake of these cute and cuddly guys!

(*She gathers them all in for a hug. As Twilight strains to keep her spell in place, Ma and Big Daddy—stopped in the middle of a grapple and a mallet swing, respectively—have softened from their previous unyielding hostility. Big Daddy’s hat has fallen off.*)

**Big Daddy:** Aw, shucks. We never meant to hurt you, little critters.

**Ma:** Yeah. We’re sorry. (*Fluttershy straighten up; the squirrel on her back chitters in her ear.*)

**Fluttershy:** They say they accept your apology. (*Long pause.*)

**Big Daddy:** Uh, Princess? Uh, you can un-freeze us now.

(*Said Princess continues to strain through gritted teeth for a moment until his words sink in, then relaxes visibly.*)

**Twilight:** (*brightly*) Oh. Right.

(*The spell is released, and fighters all over the valley tumble to the ground. Ma sets Big Daddy back on his hooves, and he puts down the mallet and dons the dropped hat.*)

**Big Daddy:** Ma Hooffield, we promise we won’t fight you no more.

**Ma:** Us too, except we promise not to fight you. I suppose it doesn’t matter who’s right. We’re both wrong.

**Big Daddy:** That’s one thing we can agree on.

(*Both clan leaders spit on a front hoof and mash them together to shake. Fluttershy smiles, the squirrel informant having finally dismounted from her back, and the Hooffield stallion standing with her smiles as well in time with the animals’ noises of approval. Twilight teleports over to Ma and Big Daddy, all smiles.*)

**Twilight:** This is wonderful! I am so proud of you two!

**Ma:** Oh, thanks, Princess. (*pointedly, to Big Daddy*) Though I would just like to point out that I was the, uh, *first* to admit I was wrong.

**Big Daddy:** (*needled*) That may be, but I promised not to fight first. That counts for more.

**Ma:** (*really steamed*) Oh, yeah?

(*Blue and brown eyes lock, seething with rapidly growing enmity, but the camera zooms out slightly to the sound of beseeching animal noises. They have all clustered nearby and are doing their best to defuse the renewed tension—along with annoyed looks from Twilight and Fluttershy. The squirrel is now on Fluttershy’s head and yelling angrily. After a long pause, they two contenders relent.*)

**Ma:** Oh, all right. We don’t have to speak animal to know what y’all are sayin’. (*to Big Daddy*) Truce.

**Big Daddy:** Truce.

(*The Ponyville two grin at them, then each other, and the squirrel jumps off Fluttershy’s head. Dissolve to a stretch of the valley floor, now revitalized and with a full stream running through it, as members of both families come together in work and play: hauling fruit and vegetables, raising a house frame, enjoying a picnic, planting a crop. The McColt stallion and Hooffield mare on this last job shake hooves cordially as several of the critters look on with approval.*)

(*Three planks drop horizontally into view to cover the screen; from there, cut to another pair completing a cabin wall for an audience of one squirrel and three mice. The next shot is of two sculptures—Grub rendered as a topiary, Piles in stone—smiling and shaking hooves. Zoom out to show this work mounted atop a fountain; as a Hooffield stallion waters the surrounding hedges, a McColt mare opens a valve to start the flow.*)

**Big Daddy:** (*from o.s.*) Hoo-wee! (*Twilight, Fluttershy, and Ma approach the fountain.*) Ain’t that a pretty sight! (*He is last to appear, mostly hidden behind Ma.*)

**Ma:** Sure is! (*to Twilight*) The McColts are gonna help us rebuild our homes—good ones this time.

**Big Daddy:** And the Hooffields are gonna help us grow some crops.

**McColt stallion:** (*hastily*) Not pumpkins! (*He backs off cautiously.*)

**Ma:** Thanks for teachin’ us that friendship is so much better than winnin’ a silly argument.

(*She and Big Daddy stroll away contentedly, and the two visitors’ cutie marks flare up—mission accomplished. Cut to an extreme close-up of Fluttershy’s mark and zoom out to frame both, eyeing their haunches with surprise and then beaming at each other.*)

**Fluttershy:** Yay! I told you we’d figure it out.

**Twilight:** We did. (*floating portfolio up*) And we didn’t need my friendship portfolio to do it. (*touching Fluttershy’s chest*) We just needed each other.

(*They embrace for a moment as she magically dispatches the thing to who-cares-where.*)

**Twilight:** So, what do you think’ll happen next? (*floating their saddlebags over*) We’ve all been called by the map now. (*They land on the backs, Fluttershy again nearly being flattened by hers.*)

**Fluttershy:** Oof! (*Twilight walks off; she strains to follow.*) I’m sure we’ll find out when we get home.

(*They make their way toward the setting sun, one rather slower than the other, and their cutie marks have settled down again.*)

**Twilight:** (*with mounting excitement*) What if it summons all six of us to another place? Or another pony we weren’t expecting? (*Gasp; her voice slowly fades out.*) What if it wants us to solve other kinds of problems, like quantum physics? Or why the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree?

(*Fade to black.*)

(*The usual closing theme does not accompany the credits. In its place is the light bluegrass melody that accompanied the first portion of Fluttershy’s history lesson—acoustic guitar/slide guitar/banjo with light percussion, bright 4, in D major.*)