**A HEARTH’S WARMING TAIL**

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Notes: All lines marked with one asterisk (\*) are delivered as a voice over.

Background song lyrics are in square brackets.

Prologue

***Majestic orchestral instrumentation, bright 4 (D major)***

(*Opening shot: fade in to a thick bank of clouds and zoom out slowly to ground level, framing the snow-covered Ponyville town hall and surrounding houses. It is early evening, and ponies dressed for the cold are hard at work putting up decorations and lights for Hearth’s Warming Eve. A wagon pulls away from the camera, with the Cutie Mark Crusaders riding in the back.*)

**All:** Ponies’ voices fill the night, Hearth’s Warming Eve is here once again

(*The pullers turn out to be the parents of Rarity and Sweetie Belle. Lemon Hearts levitates a mistletoe sprig over herself and a stallion and gives him a kiss on the cheek; both blush.*)

Happy hearts so full and bright, Hearth’s Warming Eve is here once again

(*Cut to the topmost spire of the Castle of Friendship, topped with a bow, and zoom out as a pegasus wraps it with a ribbon. The sky has cleared—later evening now.*)

Oh, what a sight, look at the light

(*Another one adds red ribbon to an unmarked candy cane as Octavia directs a group of carolers.*)

All for tonight, Hearth’s Warming Eve is here once again

(*Rainbow Dash flies past, towing a cloud; behind its trailing edge, the view wipes to a hovering Fluttershy directing the work with hoof signals.*)

**Fluttershy:** Clouds arranged so they’re just so

(*Zoom out. Three other pegasi each set one near the spire.*)

**All:** Hearth’s Warming Eve is here once again

**Rainbow:** Gonna make some awesome snow

(*She bounces from one to the next, setting off the flurries.*)

**All:** Hearth’s Warming Eve is here once again

(*They rest side by side on a cloud, watching more lights go up over a path.*)

**Fluttershy, Rainbow:** The chill wind blows, making a show

Snowflakes aglow

(*Three fillies build a snow pony as three mares work on decorating a tree.*)

**All:** Hearth’s Warming Eve is here once again

(*A pegasus loops past, hauling a length of red/green-striped cloth that fills the screen. It is pulled away, the view now having shifted to the upper reaches of the edifice’s well-bedecked entrance hall. Zoom out to ground level; the ponies are hard at it, and Twilight Sparkle flies a wreath across overhead.*)

***B major***

(*Pinkie Pie, wearing jingle bells around her midsection, plunks a stocking cap on Cranky Doodle Donkey’s head.*)

**Pinkie:** A day that’s filled with songs to sing

(*Ponies trot past, bringing a surprised smile to the old face.*)

**All:** Ding, dong, ding-dong-ding

(*Applejack has brought in a pie cart and is unloading it alongside a table set with Sugarcube Corner goodies, brought by Mr. and Mrs. Cake.*)

**Applejack:** Cakes and pastries we shall bring

(*Lights are strung up among the many bells.*)

**All:** Ding, dong, ding-dong-ding

(*Berry Punch gets a steaming mug of cider ladled up from a pot in the nearest fireplace and wastes no time in sipping away.*)

**All:** We’re so busy making merry, windigos should all be wary

***Modulate to E major***

**Stallions:** As our mighty voices carry

(*Minuette and a pegasus haul in a tree by wing and telekinesis.*)

**All:** Hearth’s Warming Eve is here once again

***C major***

(*Pan to Rarity, seated on her haunches next to bolts of fabric and stitching a snowflake pattern onto one piece with a needle held in her aura.*)

**Rarity:** Decorations we shall make

(*Banners are quickly strung from one column to the next.*)

**All:** Hearth’s Warming Eve is here once again

(*The finished product—a stocking cap—finds its way onto a stallion’s head.*)

**Rarity:** Perfection you just cannot fake

(*Tilt up to the top of a tree, where Derpy Hooves flies in—lights around her neck, ornament in teeth, star-shaped topper on head.*)

**All:** Hearth’s Warming Eve is here once again

**Rarity:** Not one mistake, don’t let that break

(*The ornament hits the floor and shatters. Instant exasperation.*)

Oh, goodness’ sake

(*Derpy gives an embarrassed smile and shrug.*)

**All:** Hearth’s Warming Eve is here once again

(*A wreath-carrying pegasus mare flies up past the camera, the view wiping behind her to the closed front doors. These swing inward, pushed by two other flyers, to make way for Big Macintosh and the wagon-load of presents he is bringing in. The first syllable of the next line overlaps with the last syllable of the preceding one.*)

**All:** Happy [happy] Hearth’s Warming [Hearth’s Warming Eve]

(*Granny Smith pops up and begins tossing gifts, flattening one pony; next Derpy gets a brainstorm and sits on the uppermost bough of the tree to top it herself.*)

Happy [happy] Hearth’s Warming Eve

(*Overhead shot of the area, seen from a balcony.*)

Hearth’s Warming Eve is here once again

***Song ends***

(*Starlight Glimmer steps into view at the rail, not exactly seeming to be in the holiday spirit, and is soon joined by a cheerful Twilight and a present-carrying Spike.*)

**Twilight:** Hey, Starlight! Ready to celebrate your first Hearth’s Warming Eve here in Ponyville?

**Starlight:** I was thinking I might just skip it.

(*That declaration draws a stereo gasp of undiluted shock from Princess and assistant alike, and the bottom of the gift box falls open to let a candy cane plop down on the carpet. Snap to black.*)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(*Opening shot: fade in to the balcony doorway. Spike straightens up incredulously into view.*)

**Spike:** Skip Hearth’s Warming Eve?!? (*Longer shot of the three; he has set his present down.*)

**Starlight:** I just find it all a little…silly. (*pacing*) It’s mostly a day dedicated to presents and candy, isn’t it? (*He catches up, circling to face her.*)

**Spike:** And why would you deny yourself presents and candy? (*Both stop.*) That’s crazy talk!

(*Twilight’s magic takes hold to drag him away; now the winged unicorn steps up to the plate.*)

**Twilight:** I *think* what Spike means to say is, Hearth’s Warming is about more than presents and candy. It’s a time to spend with friends and family— (*Spike hurries back to them.*) —when we celebrate a very important day in Equestria’s history.

**Starlight:** I think to most ponies, it’s just an excuse for silly songs and fun— (*pacing*) —not a day to remember some old story.

(*A moment of quick thinking on Twilight’s part leads her to teleport into Starlight’s path, startling her into a halt.*)

**Twilight:** Maybe you just haven’t heard the right Hearth’s Warming Eve story yet.

**Starlight:** (*as if reciting from memory*) Earth ponies, pegasi, and unicorns sing songs around a hearth to fight back an eternal winter caused by the mythical windigos? (*Dismissive laugh.*) Every foal and filly knows that story.

**Twilight:** Not that one. My favorite holiday story—*A Hearth’s Warming Tail*.

**Spike:** Ooh, I love that one!

(*He throws a hopeful grin at the less-than-enthused unicorn. Dissolve to a close-up of one shelf within the Castle library. Twilight’s field pulls a book loose and floats it away, steering it toward herself on a couch nearby. Spike sits next to her, and Starlight is across the way in one of two armchairs, facing her across a low table stacked with books. A reading lamp on a pole glows warmly.*)

**Twilight:** This is the story of a powerful unicorn named Snowfall Frost— (*Book opens in front of her.*) —who hated Hearth’s Warming Eve. (*Zoom in slowly.*) It all began many moons ago in Canterlot.

(*The scene undergoes a wavering dissolve to a winter nighttime cityscape full of holiday decorations and gently glowing windows. Ponies hustle and bustle in all directions, their general manner of dress suggesting the Victorian era in English history; the architectural style reinforces this impression. Zoom in slowly.*)

**\* Twilight:** Every home in Canterlot was filed with holiday spirit.

(*Dissolve to a long shot of one particular building that sports only a couple of lit windows and exactly zero festive paraphernalia. The zoom continues.*)

**\* Twilight:** Every home, except one.

(*Cut to a cluttered worktable inside; a small weight is levitated onto one pan of a balance scale, evening it out against a rock in the other. During the next line, the stone is floated away and the camera zooms out to frame Snowfall—portrayed by Starlight. Seen from behind in close-up, she wears a magenta formal jacket over a white shirt and dark purple collar band.*)

**\* Twilight:** It was said of Snowfall that she was almost as studied as Starswirl the Bearded.

(*Snowfall pivots partway toward the camera, revealing scornful blue eyes behind a pair of tiny pince-nez glasses with light orange frames. The collar band disappears behind a ruffled white ascot, and her forelock is in the divided style that she—or rather, Starlight—used at both ends of Season 5. The rock still in her magical grip, she crosses this workroom toward a caldron heating in the fireplace, revealing white spats on her rear hooves. An open book rests on a stand near the hearth, shelves of bottles and books stand at the walls, and tumbles of literature litter the floor. During the next line, she magically flips pages and peers closely at one that shows a pictorial equation: rock plus unicorn horn magic equals gold—an alchemical transmutation. This fireplace, and every other one seen in the story, uses glowing orange crystals rather than flames as a source of heat and light.*)

**\* Twilight:** (*with growing fervor*) Almost, since everypony knows that Starswirl was an expert at everything from transfiguration, dimensional calibration, teleportation—

(*Freeze frame, with the colors partially fading and going white around the screen edges.*)

**\* Spike:** (*impatiently*) We get it. Starswirl’s awesome.

**\* Twilight:** Right. The point is… (*Normal color and motion resume; Snowfall smiles smugly.*) …Snowfall was also a powerful unicorn.

(*Said unicorn moves closer to the cauldron, now seen to contain a bubbling green mixture.*)

**\* Twilight:** She wanted to be perfect.

(*The rock, now suspended just above the surface, begins to sparkle and turn gold from top to bottom as she grits her teeth with the effort of the spell.*)

**\* Twilight:** Anything that got in the way of that was a waste of time.

(*Such as the clangor of a bell being rung outside. She cries out in surprise, letting the rock drop and the spell dissipate so that it is its old mineral self by the time it shatters on the floor. Cut to the street; three stallions pass, ringing hoof-held bells, as she glares from a closed upper-story window.*)

**Snowfall:** (*slightly muffled by glass*) Well, that batch is ruined. (*addressing the room*) Snowdash!

(*Inside: the pony in question—played by Rainbow—flies into the workroom. Snowdash wears a violet vest over a long-sleeved light yellow shirt and a red-orange bow tie. The sleeves are held by violet garters and cuffs, and each foreleg spots a dark purple sock with a hole at the hoof’s front edge. Her mane is cut short and parted in the middle, but her tail is as unruly as ever.*)

**\* Twilight:** Snowdash was Snowfall’s loyal assistant. (*She touches down.*)

**Snowdash:** What do you need?

**Snowfall:** (*floating a broom to her, crossing o.s.*) Get this mess cleaned up. Those foolish ponies were ringing those blasted bells outside the window and I lost my concentration.

**Snowdash:** (*very snarky, to herself, sweeping up*) Whoa. Ponies actually enjoying Hearth’s Warming Eve. Where did they get that crazy idea?

**Snowfall:** (*from o.s.*) Today is nothing to celebrate. (*Cut to her, approaching the worktable.*) Hearth’s Warming Eve is a menace! A dangerous day for all of Equestria. (*She goes back to work.*)

**Snowdash:** Dangerous? It’s awesome! It’s the day we remember how unicorns, pegasi, and earth ponies came together in friendship to defeat the windigos! (*Snowfall grimaces.*)

**Snowfall:** That silly legend is the problem! (*mockingly, crossing to a countertop*) Telling everypony that singing songs and being nice will solve anything? (*fiercely*) I’ve spent years studying magic, and that’s not how it works.

(*She adds a stomp on the end of this to hammer the point home. Cut to Snowdash, broom and dustpan in hoof now.*)

**Snowdash:** I think you might be missing the point. (*Snowfall teleports over and leans into her face so hard that Snowdash flops onto her back.*)

**Snowfall:** Work hard, learn, and use your skills to better Equestria! *That’s* a worthy goal for anypony. (*Back off; return to table; float up a mortar and pestle.*) But by all means, if you want to go home early, ignore all of the work you have, and spend the rest—

(*On the end of this, cut to Snowdash, hunkered down to sweep the rock fragments up into the dustpan held by the handle in her teeth. She instantly drops gear and pops into the air.*)

**Snowdash:** *Sweet!*

(*She bugs out, leaving Snowfall to voice a disgusted groan and watch her race down the street as a babel of cheerful voices floats up.*)

**Snowfall:** I *hate* Hearth’s Warming Eve! All of Equestria would be better off if we just skipped the day altogether!

***Quiet, ominous string/woodwind melody with light percussion accents***

***Deliberate 4 (A flat minor)***

**Snowfall:** (*mockingly*) “Happy Hearth’s Warming,” they say in the street

(*Closing the curtains with magic, she paces back toward the fireplace and up/over a stack of books.*)

(*sourly*) “Happy Hearth’s Warming,” they think they’re so sweet

Words said so often that they lack any meaning

(*Float a couple of containers off a shelf.*)

Why should I join in when I could be intervening?

(*crossing room again, retrieving more ingredients*)

Everypony loves this curséd holiday

(*A sweep of one foreleg clears the worktable, and a cup is thrown down; various liquids are poured in, their colors merging to a sickly green.*)

But would they be better off with it out of the way?

(*The concoction belches up a cloud of vapor that fills the screen, and she emerges with the cup in her magical grip to approach the camera.*)

***G minor***

**Snowfall:** Well, okay

***Brass/percussion in for one bar, then drop back***

(*When the inside of her mouth fills the screen, fade to black and snap to just outside her front door. She peeks out and uses her aura to yank off the wreath that has been hung on it.*)

**Snowfall:** Say goodbye to the holiday

(*Duck back in with it; slam the door; walk down the block.*)

With my magic I’ll erase it

(*Remove the bows that a mare has been hanging up over the windows. Elsewhere, a joyful Pipsqueak receives a doll from his parents.*)

The greatest gift that I give today

(*She strolls by, plucking it from his grip.*)

And everypony will have to face it

***Brass in***

(*Now she watches the goings-on from her balcony, seen in an overhead view; the focus shifts from the other ponies to her.*)

No more little games for you to play

(*Head-on view: she has several stolen items under her power.*)

After you say goodbye to the holiday

***Percussion in (C minor)***

(*She wheels toward the house; cut to inside as the door flies open and she enters, dumping the loot and slamming it shut. A moment later, she is at the fireplace and floating the items up.*)

**Snowfall:** Goodbye, Hearth’s Warming, you had a good run

Goodbye, Hearth’s Warming, it’s over, you’re done

(*Everything splashes into the caldron at once, triggering a wisp of vapor within which the ghostly images of a wreath and gift float up.*)

Finally set free from your forced celebrations

(*A glare from her sends them tumbling away.*)

No need to reply to your trite invitations

(*Pace the floor, levitating a calendar whose top page shows a wreath; this is ripped away.*)

Calendar shorter by a single day

(*Several bottles float off the shelves to hover nearby.*)

Is my magic up to the test?

(*A quick flip of book pages, stopping at the transmutation spell she was trying earlier.*)

Time to see, I can’t delay

***G minor***

(*Back to the caldron; the stoppers are pulled and the components poured in.*)

**Snowfall:** Say goodbye to the holiday

Prepare the spell, no hesitation

(*She leans over the brew, letting the sluggishly bubbling surface reflect her determined visage.*)

All memories shall fade away

(*A cloud of blue vapor rises, forming into two windigos that drift toward the camera.*)

See Equestria’s new transformation

(*Fade to black, then snap to the specters looming large and circling above her.*)

**Snowfall:** No more shall anypony say

(*Extreme close-up.*)

(*spoken, softly*) “Happy Hearth’s Warming”

(*A devious giggle, and the camera zooms out slowly as she raises her forelegs in triumph.*)

**Snowfall:** After today

(*The windigos plunge back into the caldron, and she steps up to gaze into it with a look of fierce pride. Zoom in slowly.*)

***All parts drop out except for a quiet string accompaniment***

**Snowfall:** (*softly*) After today

***Song ends on one final sustained chord***

(*The scene fades to black around her grim-set blue eyes as the chord is held out, and the eyes themselves vanish when it cuts off.*)

Act Two

(*Opening shot: fade in to a close-up of Snowfall beaming savagely over the caldron and zoom out slowly.*)

**Snowfall:** Once the spell is cast, all of Equestria will be better off. (*She turns to face the room.*) And they’ll have *me* to thank for it!

(*As in the Act One pause, the color fades and the screen edges go white in a freeze frame.*)

**\* Starlight:** Wait a minute!

(*Cut to her, Twilight, and Spike in the Castle library. The baby dragon has procured a mug of hot chocolate.*)

**Starlight:** Snowfall doesn’t like Hearth’s Warming Eve, so she decides to cast a spell to get rid of it altogether? That seems a little extreme. (*Close-up of Spike.*)

**Spike:** Says the pony who tried to make everypony the same by replacing their cutie marks with equals signs?

(*As he takes a sardonic sip, one light violet wing snaps out to hide him from view. Zoom out to frame its owner.*)

**Twilight:** (*glaring at him, retracting wing partway*) I *think* what Spike is trying to say is that everypony has their reasons for doing things, even Snowfall. (*pointedly, to him*) And if I could continue the story, we might just find out what they are.

(*He pushes the wing back the rest of the way and offers a contrite smile.*)

**Spike:** Proceed. (*Twilight rolls her eyes good-naturedly and turns back to the book.*)

**Twilight:** (*reading*) “Snowfall was all set to cast her spell that would erase Hearth’s Warming Eve for all time—”

(*Cut to the freeze frame.*)

**\* Twilight:** “—when a voice from the hearth caught her attention.”

(*Normal color and motion resume with the start of the aforementioned voice—which belongs to Applejack and reverberates slightly in the space.*)

**Voice of Applejack:** You sure you want to go through with this?

(*Caught totally off guard, Snowfall sucks in a little gasp as a green apple floats up from the caldron.*)

**Snowfall:** Who’s there?

(*The fruit pops in a burst of droplets and is followed by the translucent, pale gray-tinted head of the blond workhorse rising from the pot. Her hat has had some stitching and a snowflake pin added, and her mane is in two braids. She is…*)

**Applejack:** The Spirit of Hearth’s Warmin’ Past, that’s who!

(*“Past,” for short. The unicorn mage boggles at the new arrival, who rises fully out of the caldron and drifts down to a four-point landing. Her clothing consists of a long-sleeved white blouse under a sleeveless dress styled with a fringed hem; the sleeve cuffs, neckline, and skirt all carry snowflake accents. With a little grin, she starts to back Snowfall up across the workroom.*)

**Past:** And you and me have got to have us a little chat.

**Snowfall:** A spirit! (*skeptically, passing a hoof through the chest*) I didn’t cast any spirit-summoning spell. What are *you* doing here?

**Past:** (*walking through Snowfall, front to back*) You don’t think a spell like that would get by without some powerful forces noticin’? You’ve got our attention, Snowfall Frost.

(*The ethereal contact causes bits of Snowfall’s mane/tail to stand up on end briefly and throws a good shiver into her. Past stops to gaze out the window.*)

**Past:** And *we’ve* got some pretty strong opinions on this spell of yours. (*Cut to Snowfall.*)

**Snowfall:** “We”?

**Past:** (*from o.s.*) They’ll be along in a bit. (*Cut to frame both.*) For now, it’s just you and me. Let’s get a move on. (*Back to Snowfall; she continues o.s.*) We got a ton to see and barely any time to see it.

(*This last pronouncement is accompanied by a top hat floating onto the holiday hater’s head—magenta to match her jacket, dark purple band for the one at her collar. It moves on its own, as Snowfall’s horn is not lit.*)

**Snowfall:** (*chuckling disdainfully*) I’m not going anywhere. (*turning to fireplace*) I’ve got a spell to cast, and I *don’t* need a history lesson about Hearth’s Warming Eve. (*The window is now open.*)

**Past:** We aren’t goin’ to the past to learn about the holiday. We’re goin’ to learn about *you*.

(*With one deft throw of a lasso, she proves herself just as adept at roping as her present-day counterpart—perhaps even more so, as it flies toward Snowfall under its own power. The loop snags its target around the midsection, and she is jerked toward the window with a cry of surprise. Cut to just outside it; Past soars out to trot through the night, while the yelling Snowfall is hauled along on the end of the suddenly animate rope. Motes of light and bursts of vapor appear around the pair, and an aurora borealis forms in the clouds. The reverb is gone from Past’s voice when she begins to sing.*)

***Light bluegrass melody with acoustic guitar/banjo/mandolin/bass/violin, percussion accents***

***Brisk 4 (B flat major)***

**Past:** As a young thing, life sure is somethin’

(*A flash of white fills the screen and fades to show them descending toward a small village.*)

You go makin’ choices large and small

(*They circle a large tree, which shrinks down to a sapling before they land. A faint glow suffuses Snowfall’s form.*)

Always growin’ like a seedlin’, and playin’ is like dreamin’

(*Stop on the last hill before the village. The lasso is gone from Snowfall’s midsection.*)

And before you know it, big and tall

***Stoptime, with woodwind/brass accents***

And every little bitty choice you make

***Stoptime/accents end***

(*They make their way down the road and among the houses, all tricked out with simple Hearth’s Warming finery.*)

Sends you down a path to who you are today

So let’s take a little trip down memory lane

(*They watch as three foals across the central square to rendezvous with a filly who can only be Snowfall’s younger self, wearing a sailor-suit dress and hat—this trip has gone into the past. She rears up happily at their arrival.*)

And see just what the past has to say

**Past:** Aw, look how cute you were! Looks like you’re not too upset it’s Hearth’s Warmin’ Eve, either.

***All parts out except mandolin/guitar/strings; tempo slows***

(*Cut to a string of lights being hung up by Filly SF’s magic and tilt down to the four foals. She begins floating gifts out of a nearby cart to give to the others.*)

**Past:** The seeds of the past, they grow pretty fast

(*Snowfall regards the tableau glumly in close-up; zoom in slowly.*)

Just look at who you were back then

(*Filly SF hustles by, floating a box of decorations; she and it pass through the adult unicorn’s insubstantial image.*)

The seeds as they grow, look what they can show

Reveal the truth time and again

***Music pauses***

(*Both glance off to one side, the camera panning in that direction to pass through a sudden blaze of blue-green light. Behind this, the view wipes to a schoolhouse classroom, which Filly SF is entering with her box in tow. Setting it down, she begins to float and hang up items; in profile close-up, the edge of a dark gray garment and a gray muzzle set in a disapproving frown advance into view in front of her. On the start of the next line, the camera cuts to a head-on view of this figure, Professor Flintheart. Unicorn stallion; gray coat; lined face; gray-black cloak over a severe suit jacket in a slightly lighter hue; straight, lank, dark gray mane/tail; deep magenta eyes. Filly SF has inadvertently hung an ornament on the end of his horn. Flintheart speaks with a gravelly British accent and an utterly humorless tone.*)

**Flintheart:** Just what do you think you’re doing, Snowfall?

**Filly SF:** Decorating the classroom for Hearth’s Warming Eve, Professor Flintheart. (*He floats the ornament away; now pale gray shirt sleeves are visible under the jacket.*)

**Flintheart:** You said you wanted to learn to be a powerful unicorn, did you not?

**Filly SF:** I do!

**Flintheart:** And what is the way that one becomes a powerful unicorn?

(*The youngster clears her throat and gathers herself proudly to recite from memory.*)

**Filly SF:** Work hard, learn, and use your skills to better Equestria.

(*Grin. Cut to Snowfall and Past, now on the scene. The latter throws a cocky smile to the former, who lets her mouth and ears droop dejectedly at having heard the old adage come out of her own mouth. She manages a weak grin before Flintheart resumes his drubbing of the filly.*)

**Flintheart:** And how do these help you to learn magic?

**Filly SF:** I want to be strong enough to stop windigos and help ponies!

**Flintheart:** That’s just a story we tell little ponies. Real magic takes time to learn.

(*The merest flick of effort is all he needs to crush the ornament and drop its shards into her box, much to her dismay. She gazes up at him with big sad blue eyes as his field pulls down a bow and drops it back in.*)

**Flintheart:** It’s your choice. (*turning away*) Spend your time learning to become a powerful unicorn, or— (*kicking box toward her*) —play with your toys and make nothing of yourself.

(*Exit the straitlaced instructor, every hoof clacking decisively against the floorboards. Zoom in slowly on the crushed Filly SF.*)

***Music resumes: mournful string/woodwind backing for vocals, slow 4 (B flat major)***

**Past:** Then some distress, words so careless

Standin’ there, you don’t know what to do

(*The pinkish-violet face hardens and she walks off past the two visitors.*)

Feeling helpless, you can’t make it hurt less

(*Cut to the other three foals playing outside, seen through the window, and zoom out to frame her looking on morosely.*)

So you go and change your point of view

***Strings/brass/woodwinds build; faster tempo (F minor)***

(*They gallop toward her; cut to outside as she glowers, turns away, and magically yanks the shade down.*)

**Past:** And in that moment, though you didn’t know it

(*Inside, the decorations hit the trash can and book/quills land on the desks.*)

Your defense is set up, walls you build to last

(*Filly SF bends her entire mental focus to the new pile of heavy reading.*)

Leading to the pony you’ve become today

(*Zoom out as Snowfall and Past watch ruefully from opposite sides.*)

And the spell you’re about to cast, it all comes from your past

***Quiet solo acoustic guitar with backing strings, slow 4 (B flat major*)**

**Snowfall:** The seeds of the past, we grow up so fast

(*All four blue eyes fill with tears; Filly SF pauses to wipe hers clear, then glares anew at her books.*)

Some hurts never go away

**Past:** The seeds as they grow, this we can’t let go

All tied to this one holiday

***Song ends***

(*Fade to black as they drift away from the camera.*)

(*The screen splits horizontally and expands as if it were an opening eye to give a blurry close-up of the caldron on Snowfall’s fireplace—this is her perspective, back in the workroom. The image gradually comes into focus, and the camera cuts to a profile of her standing before the vessel. The ethereal glow around her form is gone, and she hitches in a little breath and looks fearfully around the place. Not another soul is present, living or otherwise.*)

**Snowfall:** Spirit? W-What am I supposed to…

(*She loses her power of speech upon looking off to one side, and she steps cautiously that way as the camera zooms out slightly. The thing that has caught her attention is a colossal present nearly twice her height and as wide as she is long. After a long, tense moment, the top of the box bursts open, instantly shredding the ribbon and paper, and a blast of confetti and streamers rains down over the workroom as a black silhouette with white-glowing eyes stands up from within with forelegs spread wide. The curly forelock instantly gives this one away as Pinkie, but details of her outline suggest a fur-trimmed garment.*)

**Pinkie:** (*reverberating slightly*) Snowfall Frost! It is I…

(*The lights come up on the pink nut as she leans down over the edge of the huge box. From this angle, a yellow robe trimmed with paler fur at cuffs and collar is readily visible, along with a cotton candy circlet nestled in her mane and studded with assorted candies.*)

**Pinkie:** (*spookily, no reverb*) …the Spirit of Hearth’s Warming Presents! (*Snowfall backs up a step, then collects herself enough to be confused.*)

**Snowfall:** Um, don’t you mean “present,” like the time?

(*“Presents” instantly zips down to her, revealing a candy-cane-striped belt with a piece of candy as a buckle, and holds up a stuffed bird doll.*)

**Presents:** No! Toys, Hearth’s Warming dolls—here, want a cupcake?

(*During this line, she ducks back and forth to give one of each to Snowfall: the bird, a crude likeness of her old friend Sunburst, and the sweet treat. The unimpressed unicorn ends up holding all three in her magic.*)

**Snowfall:** Fine. Presents.

(*Close-up of a trash can; all three are dumped in, and the camera zooms out to frame her.*)

**Snowfall:** All of the pointless things that ponies waste their time on.

**Presents:** (*from o.s.*) Oh, Snowfall. (*hopping around her to can*) It’s not what the gift *is* that matters— (*She fishes the goodies back out.*) —it’s what the gift *means*. (*Close-up of Snowfall, putting hoof to face wearily.*)

**Snowfall:** It doesn’t *mean* anything. It’s just stuff.

**Presents:** (*from o.s.*) Exactly! (*She cuddles the cupcake lovingly.*) Sometimes a cupcake means “I love you.” (*Switch for the bird.*) Or a toy means “Hi! How you doin’?” (*For a book; toss it over her shoulder.*) And sometimes a book means “Your mane looks amazing!” (*A scarf flutters down across her shoulders.*) And sometimes a scarf means…

(*Wrapping it around her neck, she finds herself at a rare loss of words for a second.*)

**Presents:** …well, scarf usually means “You look cold.” That one’s easy.

**Snowfall:** I don’t understand anything you’re saying.

(*Before Presents can explain any further, she undergoes a series of full-body jitters and shudders that float her clear of the floor.*)

**Snowfall:** What’s happening to you?

**Presents:** My “Spirit of Hearth’s Warming Presents” Sense is going off! (*Close-up; the scarf is gone, as are the shakes.*) That means a song is coming on!

***Bouncy Dixieland jazz combo melody, energetic swinging 4 (A major)***

(*Reaching up past the top edge of the screen, she pulls a new scene down like a windowshade. One very surprised unicorn finds herself being shoved out her front door and toward the camera by the hyperactive spirit. Fade to black as her face fills the screen, then snap immediately to the pair proceeding down a street filled with revelers and a few floating presents.*)

**Presents:** Take a look at everything around you

(*A piled-high dessert platter is set on a cart and hauled away.*)

All the smells that surely will astound you

(*She bounds over to a group setting up decorations, then returns with a wreath to hang around Snowfall’s neck.*)

Open up your heart, it will surround you

In the magic of Hearth’s Warming Eve

(*Wipe to a shivering, raggedly dressed mare; Twinkleshine floats a mug of hot chocolate to her, and the camera zooms out to frame Snowfall and Presents watching. Snowfall has shed the wreath.*)

**Presents:** The little things that make it better

(*Foals sing carols for an elderly mare at her doorstep.*)

Little ponies spreading cheer

(*Presents gives each of the next three items to a different recipient.*)

Give a toy, a hug, a sweater

Memories that last all year

(*Snowfall tries to sneak away, only to find Presents right in her way; another escape is similarly cut off, and the pink mare shows off a gift in each of the three named sizes.*)

**Presents:** The present’s always filled with presents

Large, medium, and small

(*A flick of her hoof causes tap shoes to appear on the rear hooves of Featherweight, who leans on a crutch and shivers in the cold.*)

Sometimes the most important things

Aren’t very big at all

***Stoptime (B major)***

(*Mare and colt go into an eight-bar tap dance, first separately, then together, after which the camera tracks around a properly bewildered Snowfall and stops as she finds Presents beckoning to her from outside a brightly lit window.*)

***Stoptime ends***

**Presents:** What a party, there’s so much to see here

(*Snowfall hesitantly approaches.*)

Can’t believe you didn’t want to be here

(*Close-up of the glass, showing a lively gathering within, and zoom in slowly; their reflections slowly fade from the surface. Near the back of the room, Snowdash is laughing with Flutterholly and Merry, portrayed respectively by Fluttershy and Rarity. Patterned white dress with green trim for the yellow mare, with part of her mane in a coiled braid atop her head; red gown and hat with purple sashes for the white one.*)

You’d have had a blast, I guarantee here

(*Inside, Snowdash gathers the other two into a hug.*)

This is the spirit of Hearth’s Warming Eve

(*Now inside, Presents pulls a mug of cider for herself, clunks it with that of another stallion, and both drink.*)

The cider’s flowing, this is living

(*She dances on a stage on which Octavia bows a violin and DJ P0N-3 works a gramophone; the unicorn wears a set of earpieces similar to those on a doctor’s stethoscope.*)

Come on and feel the beat

(*A unicorn stallion floats a present to a mare, who passes it to Presents, who tosses it onto a giant stack.*)

Life is better when you’re givin’

(*Snowdash gives a box to another pony, who tosses it over so that it balances on Presents’s nose; she flicks it up to the pile.*)

Each time you do, it feels so sweet

(*Now she pops up here and there from the accumulation of boxes, eventually appearing at the summit and surprising Snowfall greatly.*)

**Presents:** The present’s always filled with presents

So come on, open your eyes

Spend time with ponies just like you

And watch your spirits rise

(*A shift, and her precarious perch tumbles apart so that she surfs down on the topmost box; the avalanche blacks out the screen.*)

The present’s always filled with presents

(*Snap to a quick pan down a line of ponies, each of whom catches one.*)

Take a look around

(*One lands neatly in front of Snowfall; it trembles a bit, and Presents bursts out and bounds away.*)

The reason for the holiday

Is quite easily found

Yes, the reason for the holiday

Is quite easily found

(*She holds the last word out as the camera zooms out to an overhead shot of the entire party, then pops up right in front of the camera.*)

***A cappella***

**Presents:** And the reason is to be with your friends

***Song ends with a stinger***

(*She throws out a load of confetti; as it disperses, the view wipes behind it to a close-up of a beaming Twilight on her couch.*)

**Twilight:** (*imitating Presents, same melody as her last line*)

And the reason is to be with your friends

(*Her expression shifts into one of puzzlement; cut to the trio around the library table. Starlight smirks at her from its other side.*)

**Twilight:** (*normal voice*) What?

**Starlight:** You know you’re doing your Pinkie Pie voice, right?

**Twilight:** (*blushing, smiling sheepishly*) I was not!

(*But she chooses to hide her face behind her book in close-up. Zoom out to the sound of Spike’s stifled laughter, framing him, as she lowers the literature.*)

**Starlight:** (*from o.s.*) So… (*Cut to her.*) …what happens next? (*Back to Twilight, floating the book up.*)

**Twilight:** Well, the party was— (*Zoom out quickly to frame Spike.*)

**Spike:** Wait! Can we take a quick break? (*lifting his mug, now empty*) I need to refill my cocoa.

**Twilight:** (*groaning loudly, rolling eyes*) Fine.

(*Cut to just outside the library entrance and zoom out slowly as he darts into the hallway and she steps to the threshold.*)

**Twilight:** But hurry up! We’re almost to the best part!

(*Snap to black.*)

Act Three

(*Opening shot: fade in to a close-up of Spike climbing back up onto the couch, freshly recharged mug in hand. He blows to cool off the contents.*)

**Spike:** Okay. (*Cut to him, Twilight, and Starlight all back in their seats.*) I’m ready.

(*Up comes the book, and a wavering dissolve shifts the action back to the shindig.*)

**\* Twilight:** The party was in full swing. (*Zoom in slowly on a doorway; Flutterholly and Merry step through to meet Snowdash.*)

**Merry:** Snowdash!

**Snowdash:** (*listlessly*) Hey, Merry.

**Merry:** Why, whatever is the matter, darling?

**Flutterholly:** Was it the eggnog? Oh, I knew I put in too much cinnamon.

**Snowdash:** (*perking up, hovering*) Oh, no, the eggnog was awesome, Flutterholly. I’m just mad at somepony who was complaining about how awful Hearth’s Warming Eve is.

**Merry:** I don’t suppose that pony’s name starts with “Snow”…

**Flutterholly:** …and ends with “Frost”?

**Snowdash:** She said Hearth’s Warming Eve is just an excuse to party— (*Others gather around; zoom out slowly.*) —and we would all be better off spending time working to make Equestria a better place.

**All others:** BOOOOO!!

(*During this round of derision, cut to just inside the front window. Presents and Snowfall are both outside again, the latter staring dumbstruck as the former gives her a knowing nudge and wink. After this, cut back to Flutterholly and Merry.*)

**Merry:** What does Snowfall think a better Equestria looks like?

(*Zoom out to frame a vexed Snowdash, having styled her forelock to match Snowfall’s and donned a pair of pince-nez.*)

**Snowdash:** Ponies working hard, learning, and using their abilities for the benefit of Equestria.

(*The two on the floor giggle at the impression, but the genuine article is genuinely chastened—at least until a snowball smacks against the windowpanes, barely missing her. Young laughter rings through the night; cut to the source—a trio of foals having winter fun in the street. One puts the finishing touches on a snow pony, while another shakes off snow from the hit delivered by the third. Zoom out to put a newly annoyed Snowfall in the fore. The next two lines are slightly muffled by the windowpanes.*)

**Merry:** (*from inside*) It looks like we’ve got everything on Snowfall’s list right here.

(*Cut to Snowfall’s perspective of her and Flutterholly on the end of this, seen through the window.*)

**Flutterholly:** I think a perfect Equestria looks a lot like a Hearth’s Warming Eve party.

(*Longer shot, behind Snowfall; the curtains are pulled shut to cut off her view and she turns away. In close-up; tears begin to well in her eyes. Here comes Presents up alongside, her mouth curved into a knowing smile.*)

**Presents:** Me too! (*Face falls; the tears vanish.*) Too bad it’s going to be the last one ever!

(*She repeats the last word three more times, her voice steadily decreasing in volume as she backs into a thick patch of fog that has begun to roll in.*)

**Snowfall:** (*scared, advancing into it*) Spirit? What do you mean? What’s going to happen?

(*The fog has now thickened enough to blot out all details of her and the houses. Cut to her, slowly backing up through a thinned patch; the ground under her hooves is now blanketed with snow, and an unforgiving wind howls across the drifts. Presents is gone. Snowfall comes up short upon noticing that a tendril of the vapor is winding its way around her form, and a longer shot picks out a hooded silhouette that stands perhaps three times her height. A horn juts from the head bent down toward her, and the thickened fog is issuing from the hem of the cloak that covers every bit of the towering form except for two dark, shod, raised forelegs within the folds.*)

**Snowfall:** Who are you?

(*A head-on shot of the apparition, seen from over her shoulder, picks out the barely visible shape of a crescent-moon brooch at the throat. The voice, when it comes, is an otherworldly, reverberating variation of Princess Luna’s.*)

**Luna:** I am the Spirit of Hearth’s Warming Yet to Come.

(*“Yet to Come,” for short. She spreads her wings on the end of this; cut to Snowfall.*)

**Snowfall:** (*shielding her face*) Are you here to show me what future Hearth’s Warming Eves are like?

**Yet to Come:** (*from o.s.*) No. (*Back to her.*) For there are no more Hearth’s Warming Eves for me to show.

**Snowfall:** Why not?

(*The dark figure straightens up to full height, eyes burning white under the hood.*)

**Yet to Come:** You will succeed in erasing the holiday— (*She lights the end of her horn, fully illuminating her face.*) —as you wished.

(*The added light shows the color of her cloak not as a solid black, but rather as the same dark blue-violet of her coat, with black patches on hood/collar/haunch to match the background of her cutie mark.*)

**Snowfall:** And what happens?

***Ominous string melody with brass/percussion accents, ponderous 4 (A minor)***

(*Zoom in between and past them, toward a scattered few chimneys and rooftops that protrude from the frozen expanse, and pan slowly along the ravaged cityscape. The odd reverb is gone from the spirit’s voice now, but her words still echo slightly.*)

**Yet to Come:** I see a cold wind blowing through

I see days neither fun nor free

(*Snowfall turns fearfully toward her and backs away from an accusing hoof toward the edge of a cliff.*)

I see a future caused by you

I see a path not meant to be

(*The unnerved unicorn gets even more shaken up by a snowy gust of wind that roars up from the abyss behind her. Now Yet to Come swirls her front hooves in the air to generate a wisp of vapor that resolves into a spectral pegasus mare and stallion who dance above the snow.*)

***Intensity slowly builds***

**Yet to Come:** The future should be filled with magic

(*They bow to each other.*)

Dreams and wishes brought to life

(*She leans into view in the fore, the scene darkening behind her.*)

But the days ahead are dark and tragic

No time for hope when all is strife

(*The dancers dissipate at her gesture; now she leans down over Snowfall.*)

**Yet to Come:** Whatever might have been, all the dreams that ponies share

(*She sweeps past the camera.*)

Because of you, Snowfall Frost, now the future is a cold nightmare

***Song ends, but music continues to build***

(*Zoom out quickly as two windigos swoop down from the clouds and arc back upward.*)

**Snowfall:** Windigos? They aren’t real! It’s just a little fillies’ story!

**Yet to Come:** They are all too real, Snowfall. (*leaning down to her*) And your actions will allow them to return. (*Straighten up; drift slowly back into the storm.*) The future of Equestria shall be bathed in a blanket of eternal snow!

(*Overhead close-up of the horrified Snowfall, zooming out slowly as the windigos circle through the unceasing blizzard.*)

**Snowfall:** No! I-I never meant for this to happen! I-I didn’t understand! I didn’t see how important Hearth’s Warming Eve was! (*She prostrates herself in the snow.*) Please, Spirit! I haven’t cast the spell yet! Is there still time? I’M SORRY!!

(*She covers her face with her front hooves as her last two words echo through the night. Fade to white.*)

***Music ends***

(*Fade in to a close-up of her in the same position, with the floorboards of her workroom replacing the snowdrifts now. She uncovers her eyes and, after a moment to confirm that she is no longer lying in the middle of an apocalyptic winter storm, dares a look around the place while propping herself up on her forelegs. Cut to just outside one window, which she opens to the sound of a ringing bell, the holder is a stallion, one of several grown ponies and foals gathered in the street below. Snowfall regards them with newfound joy.*)

**Snowfall:** There’s still time!

(*She ducks back into the workroom. Wipe to a pan through the party that Presents took her to visit in Act Two and stop on Flutterholly and Merry. They start toward the door at the sound of a knock; cut to just behind Snowfall, now standing at the door, as they open it and regard her with sudden shock.*)

**Merry:** Oh, my.

**Flutterholly:** Snowfall Frost?

**Snowfall:** (*a bit shyly*) I was hoping I wasn’t too late for the party? (*floating several presents into view*) I brought gifts.

(*There comes the scratch of DJ P0N-3’s gramophone needle being yanked off the record, and the over-flying Snowdash is so floored that she spits out the mouthful of cider she has been working on. She has rearranged her mane back into its usual style and ditched the pince-nez she used to imitate her employer.*)

**Snowdash:** Boss? (*Snowfall steps in.*)

**Snowfall:** I was wrong earlier, about Hearth’s Warming Eve. It’s not all about singing and presents. The singing and presents are all about celebrating the ponies in our lives. (*Snowdash settles to the ground; Snowfall approaches her.*) The ponies we should listen to more often.

(*The blue face comes over in an accepting smile.*)

**Snowfall:** Our friends.

(*She distributes wrapped goodies to Flutterholly, Merry, and Snowdash with her magic.*)

**Snowdash:** Wow.

(*Balancing her gift on a front hoof, she rips the paper away with her teeth to find a corked bottle. Close-up of this, showing a label marked with a yellowed, creased clipping of…*)

**Snowdash:** (*from o.s., slightly deflated*) Dragon toenail?

(*Back to her; Flutterholly and Merry gather in closer.*)

**Snowdash:** (*forcing a smile*) Uh…thanks?

**Snowfall:** (*smiling sheepishly*) I was…in a hurry. I’ll do better next time.

**Snowdash:** (*laughing, hovering; bottle on floor*) You kidding? No one’s ever given me dragon toenail before! It’s awesome! Now come get some eggnog!

(*She flies off and returns with a mug. Zoom out slowly.*)

**\* Twilight:** And from then on, it was always said of all the Hearth’s Warming Eve celebrations— (*Snowfall takes the drink in her aura.*) —Snowfall’s was the Hearth’s Warming-est.

(*Wavering dissolve back to a close-up of her in the library.*)

**Twilight:** (*reading*) “The end.” (*Her magic closes and lowers the book.*) Well, that’s it.

(*She hops off the couch to cross the room, followed by Spike, who leaves his mug on the table.*)

**Twilight:** (*to Starlight*) Thanks for letting me read you the story. Guess you can call it a night. (*The book goes back on the shelf.*) Spike and I are heading downstairs, and if you wanted to, you’d be welcome to join us.

(*As Princess and dragon head for the door, the camera zooms out to put her student in the fore. The focus shifts to her, deep in thought and doubt. Dissolve to the balcony on which she watched the festivities during the prologue; she steps onto it from the nearest doors, magically opening them, and props her forelegs on the rail for another look. Twilight is now among the merrymakers, a mug of cider held in her aura, and she looks up toward Starlight.*)

**Twilight:** Welcome to the party! (*raising mug*) Happy Hearth’s Warming, Starlight.

**Starlight:** (*smiling*) Happy Hearth’s Warming, Twilight.

***Warm string/woodwind accompaniment, leisurely 4 (C major)***

(*Starlight trots down the stairs to the entrance hall and accepts a mug offered by Rarity.*)

**Starlight:** Hearth’s Warming Eve is filled with presents, some take you by surprise

(*She taps it against Twilight’s.*)

A story shared by your good friends that makes your spirits rise

(*She walks by the Apples’ pie cart, no longer carrying the drink, as Applejack flips one onto the pile from her head, then passes a pile of gifts presided over by Pinkie and Rainbow. A jingle bell is tied to the end of the fluffy magenta forelock.*)

Sometimes you just let go of the past, enjoy the present while it lasts

(*Rainbow flies across to plug two strings of lights together and lift them off the floor.*)

And really it’s not that much to ask with good friends by your side

***Full orchestra in***

(*Behind the multicolored tail, the view wipes to the upper reaches of the hall. Strings of crystal lights wink on at all heights as the camera tilts down—including the ones wrapped around Derpy’s midsection. Still perched atop the tree whose ornament she broke in the prologue, the cross-eyed pegasus literally glows from one end to the other due to both these lights and the star topper on her head.*)

***Same melody/tempo as last verse of prologue***

(*Starlight gets a loop of jingle bells placed around her neck.*)

**Starlight:** Now it’s time to celebrate

**All:** Hearth’s Warming Eve is here once again

(*She magically passes a cupcake to Apple Bloom from the Cakes’ table.*)

**Starlight:** All together, feeling great

**All:** Hearth’s Warming Eve is here once again

(*Rarity floats a holly sprig and nestles it by Fluttershy’s ear; Applejack and Pinkie flip items off their heads to each other—a cupcake, which Pinkie catches in her mouth, and a small gift that lands on Applejack’s head.*)

**Starlight:** Can’t hardly wait, we’ll party ’til late

(*Twilight/Rainbow/Spike gather, the dragon gulps down the contents of a gift bag filled with gems.*)

Our favorite date

(*Pan across the entire octet; Pinkie now has bells around her neck as well.*)

**All:** Hearth’s Warming Eve is here once again

(*The first syllable of the next line overlaps the last syllable of the previous. Zoom out slowly.*)

**All:** Happy [happy] Hearth’s Warming [Hearth’s Warming Eve]

Happy [happy] Hearth’s Warming Eve

(*Cut to a long shot of the Castle and zoom out slowly.*)

**All:** Hearth’s Warming Eve is here once again

***Song ends***

(*At the same time, the moon blazes white to fill the screen, which then snaps to black.*)

(*The usual closing theme does not accompany the credits. In its place is the Dixieland melody from the final verse of Presents’s song in Act Two.*)