**THE SADDLE ROW REVIEW**

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Prologue

(*Opening shot: fade in to a stretch of road in Ponyville, the camera angled up from ground level to point toward the sky over a row of houses. It is daytime, and Rainbow Dash flaps into view, short of breath and leading Twilight Sparkle, Applejack, Fluttershy, and Pinkie Pie in a mad dash toward the Carousel Boutique in the not-too-far distance.*)

**Rainbow:** Come on! If we hurry, we can get there before the paper’s even delivered to Rarity’s house!

**Pinkie:** (*singsong*) Maybe she won’t read the article…

**Applejack:** I’m pretty sure Rarity’s gonna read a review of her new boutique in Manehattan.

(*Identified as “Rarity for You” at the end of “The Gift of the Maud Pie.”*)

**Rainbow:** I still can’t believe we all just blabbed everything that happened to that reporter!

**Fluttershy:** I just hope it doesn’t end up being an article about how her friends almost ruined the opening.

(*They skid to a stop at their friend’s front door.*)

**Twilight:** I think you’re all overreacting. Rarity’s our friend. If anypony is gonna understand, it’ll be her.

(*She raises a hoof to knock, but a magic glow takes hold of the door from within and swings it open to expose one rather put-out white unicorn.*)

**Rarity:** I was wondering when all of you were going to show up.

(*The other five gasp in unison; she surprises them again by breaking out into an ear-to-ear smile and levitating a newspaper up from floor level.*)

**Rarity:** Now we can all read the review together!

(*She wheels into the showroom, taking the paper with her and missing the uneasy glances that her friends shoot to each other. Cut to a profile close-up of her crossing the floor, and zoom out to show the others following at a distance on the start of the next line.*)

**Rainbow:** Um, I have an idea. (*All stop.*) How about we *don’t* read it?

**Twilight:** (*magically pulling paper to herself*) What she means is, before you read it, we should probably tell you about—

**Rarity:** (*taking it back*) No, no, darling. (*opening it*) Please, no spoilers.

**Fluttershy:** But—

**Rarity:** (*fiercely*) *NO SPOILERS!!*

(*Rancor instantly shifts to a blissful grin as she buries her face in the pages. More worried looks pass among the other five mares before the view snaps to black.*)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(*Opening shot: fade in to a close-up of Rarity’s reading glasses resting on a stool. These are floated up and onto her nose.*)

**Rarity:** (*adjusting paper*) Now, is everypony ready to hear what I’m sure is a stellar review that describes in stunning detail exactly how each of you contributed to the successful opening of Rarity for You?

(*Apparently not, if their grimaces—and Fluttershy’s high-speed bug-out—are any indication. The yellow pegasus ends up peeking out from among the rack of dresses that the group wore to the Grand Galloping Gala in “The Best Night Ever.” Rarity gives her a puzzled look, then clears her throat and turns her attention to the newsprint.*)

**Rarity:** (*reading*) “Many a pony has tried their hoof at joining the ranks of the elite fashion trendsetters currently ensconced in the boutiques of Manehattan’s famed Saddle Row.” (*Giggle.*) “Some might say it’s the ultimate achievement in Equestrian fashion, and never before has a reporter been granted such unfettered behind-the-scenes access until now.”

(*These last two words are punctuated by a giddy rise in her voice and a huge grin.*)

**Fluttershy:** I wish it had been more fettered. (*Rarity blows out a breath.*)

**Rarity:** Uh… (*Mumble through a few lines.*) …oh!(*reading*) “I sat down with—” (*Giggle.*) “—Rarity and her friends after the opening to get the inside scoop. And what a scoop it was!”

(*Dissolve to a booth in a restaurant, where a unicorn waitress has floated up a teapot to refill one of the two customers’ cups. Night has fallen beyond the windows. As she finishes pouring and turns away, the camera pans to another booth in which Rarity sits facing an older earth pony stallion. Tan coat; light yellow-brown eyes; short salt-and-pepper mane/tail/mustache;, white dress shirt with loosened, striped red necktie and rolled-up sleeves. A cutie mark of a notepad and pencil is just visible beyond the hem of the shirt. The pad resting before him on the table marks him as a reporter, and his accent and cadence point to him as a Manehattan native—the action has shifted to the big city. He has a cup of coffee, while she has tea.*)

**Reporter:** Okay, kid. You successfully opened a shop in Manehattan, and that’s no mean feat. Most ponies might wonder what it feels like. (*Cut to Rarity; he continues o.s.*) Here’s how it’s gonna be. (*She reacts with surprise; cut to frame both again.*) I’m gonna interview you and your friends so I can paint a picture of how it all came together. A word picture, mind you, not an actual picture. Any questions?

(*Cut to his perspective of her.*)

**Rarity:** Well, I was wondering how—

**Reporter:** Let’s get started! (*Both again.*) Ms. Rarity, you got shops all over Equestria, but this was your first time trying to make it in the big city. What made you think you could tackle it on your own? (*His perspective of her.*)

**Rarity:** Well, I wouldn’t say “all over Equestria.” I just have two other boutiques, one in my hometown of Ponyville and one in Canterlot. (*Chuckle.*) Uh, still, when I decided to open this one, I was nothing but confident.

(*In the instant it takes for a desk bell to ring, she has been replaced by Twilight, who sips tea from a cup held in her magic.*)

**Twilight:** Let’s just say that if I could choose, I probably wouldn’t do it that way again.

(*Embarrassed grin and barely audible chuckle. Now Pinkie takes her place, the table cluttered with a slice of cake, two cupcakes, and a gargantuan ice cream sundae.*)

**Pinkie:** Weeeellll…it wasn’t the funnest party ever.

(*A sour-faced Applejack’s turn, with nothing before her but a piece of pie.*)

**Applejack:** It was a plum-puckered, pig-pushin’ disaster!

(*A very casual Rainbow is up now, with a cup of soda on the table and one foreleg propped on the seat back.*)

**Rainbow:** After a lifetime of awesome, I think everypony’s allowed to mess up every now and then, right?

(*The sound of pencil scratching on paper brings up a load of apprehension.*)

**Rainbow:** Wait. Are you writing this down?

(*Now Fluttershy appears in the seat; nothing before her except silverware.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*toying with fork*) Um, it didn’t go exactly how I thought it would, but it, um, started out all right.

(*She offers up a tentative little grin. Dissolve to the sun shining brightly in the daytime sky over the Manehattan rooftops and tilt down to ground level, bringing Rarity into view during the next line. A jewelry shop stands out prominently on this block.*)

**Rarity:** (*over her shoulder*) Welcome to Saddle Row!

(*Long shot, seen from across the street: she leads the other five down the sidewalk. High-class establishments, all of them.*)

**Rarity:** An entire street lined with the most fashionable boutiques in all of Equestria! (*Close-up.*)

**Applejack:** If it’s supposed to be the most fashionable block of shops, where’s Stinky Bottom’s Discount Hat Emporium?

**Rarity:** (*dryly*) I suppose it didn’t make the cut. (*She stops short with a giddy gasp and points ahead.*) Here it is!

(*Long overhead shot of the group. They have stopped in front of the three-story building that Rarity chose for her new shop at the end of “The Gift of the Maud Pie.” Two changes have been made to the place since then: the boards over the ground-floor windows and central door, and the wrought-iron gate barring that door, have been removed. The other door, near one corner, remains as it was.*)

**Rarity:** Rarity for You!

(*Cut to just inside the door as she opens it. Bits of debris litter the floor, and a cloud of dust is stirred up by the motion. She smiles proudly into the space, but none of the others share her high spirits—and a series of cuts around the area tells why. Cobwebs have built up in nearly every nook and cranny, including the once-impressive brass chandelier; one end of a wall-mounted shelf breaks loose; a mouse squeaks and scampers its way out from behind a crate and a fallen curtain rod resting in a corner. The six mares enter cautiously, all but Rarity taken aback at the overall decrepitude.*)

**Twilight:** Rarity, it’s lovely. But are you sure you’ll be ready to open tonight?

(*So the action has shifted to a still earlier time frame than the restaurant interviews. Bending over a counter, Pinkie gets a lungful of its deep-drifted dust and lets off a sneeze that propels gray clouds of the stuff to fill the screen. When the view clears, it has shifted to the other five, now caked with dust to various degrees; Fluttershy has taken the worst of it, coated from head to tail. The other four shake themselves clean in short order.*)

**Rarity:** No need to fret over a mere moderate amount of preparation. My clothes arrive soon, my sales associate after that—

(*Cut to Fluttershy, beginning to scrape herself off.*)

**Rarity:** (*crossing to her, levitating a pushbroom*) —and with a little…dusting… (*pacing, passing brooms to Twilight/Applejack/Rainbow*) …we’ll be ready for the grand opening tonight.

(*The budding cleanup is interrupted by the boisterous, gravelly voice of an older stallion with a heavy Russian or Eastern European accent.*)

**Stallion voice:** Rarity!

(*Cut to the open from door, Rarity looking toward it with some trepidation at two new arrivals. One, the speaker, is Mr. Stripes: bulky earth pony; white coat; deep purple eyes; short, two-tone violet mane/tail/mustache/goatee; heavy beard stubble and eyebrows; white-striped blue track suit jacket zipped over a lighter blue shirt; towel and gold medallion around neck; cutie mark of three two-tone striped violet stars. The other is his teenage daughter Plaid: gangly orange-tan earth pony mare; eyes and long, curly, slightly messy two-tone mane/tail in lighter hues than his, with the mane tied back in a ponytail using a furry green scrunchie; light blue jacket with overlapping plaid/stripe patterns and a vivid magenta fur collar; prominent eyebrows; braces; severe overbite; cutie mark of a plaid-patterned magenta heart.*)

**Mr. Stripes:** Is so good to see you! Your store, it’s going to be a very good place, I think. (*Chuckle.*)

(*Cut to the reporter’s booth in the restaurant: his perspective of Rarity, who is using her magic to steep a tea bag in her cup.*)

**Rarity:** Mr. Stripes owns the building. He’s a very pleasant landlord. (*Float the cup up.*) Although he can be pushy at times.

(*She puts on a thoroughly unconvincing smile to cover a beat of tense silence.*)

**Rarity:** Okay, all the time.

*\*\*\* From here on in, the words “The booth” at the beginning of a stage direction indicate a cut back to this spot in the restaurant, seen from the reporter’s perspective. \*\*\**

(*The shop again.*)

**Mr. Stripes:** You’ve met my daughter? The apple of my ear. The hay in my hoof. (*leaning in close*) You will let her work with you.

**Rarity:** (*suddenly unnerved, giggling weakly*) It’s just… (*Slow pan across the room; all the others are tidying up, and Fluttershy is now entirely clean.*) …I’m dreadfully busy preparing for tonight’s grand opening— (*He glares at her.*) —as you can see, uh…

**Mr. Stripes:** (*smiling*) There are only two things I love more than being pushy. (*pulling Plaid closer*) One is my daughter.

(*Profile close-up of Rarity’s face; he holds a tiny couch, armchair, and table up on one hoof.*)

**Mr. Stripes:** (*from o.s.*) The other is miniature doll furniture. (*Zoom out; he leans menacingly toward her.*) And I would sell my entire mini-furniture collection to make my daughter happy. (*putting set down, smiling, throwing foreleg around her shoulders*) You understand?

(*Plaid chips in a grinning eyebrow waggle, but Rarity is not swayed by this ham-hoofed appeal to emotion and uses her magic to push Mr. Stripes’s leg away.*)

**Rarity:** I’m sorry. I just don’t think it’s going to be possible.

**Mr. Stripes:** Let me say another way. (*leaning into her face, all cheer gone*) Hire her or I raise rent until you no can afford. (*Tight little grin.*)

**Rarity:** Oh! Uh, welcome aboard!

(*Plaid moves a bit closer to Rarity and gestures for her to lean in. Once a white ear is within easy whispering range, she speaks up—excitedly, with a tiny bit of a lisp and enough volume to make Rarity wince. No foreign accent, though.*)

**Plaid:** First idea! Instead of clothes, we sell glow-in-the-dark teeth! Like this.

(*A few overly enthusiastic chomps demonstrate the concept.*)

**Plaid:** *But* they glow in the dark! (*Rarity scrapes up a humoring smile.*)

**Rarity:** Golly, what a splendid idea! (*Weak chuckle.*)

(*The booth: she sits with teacup on table and claps hooves to temples, caught up in the throes of supreme frustration.*)

**Rarity:** Glow-in-the-dark teeth! (*propping head on hooves*) What was she thinking?

(*Slow pan across the shop; the other five are policing it up as she opens the curtain to a back room and steps behind it. A cry of fright brings the group up short.*)

**Rarity:** (*from behind curtain*) Fluttershy! Your assistance is required in the stockroom, post-haste!

(*The animal lover lets her broom drop and gallops toward the curtain; cut to its other side as she opens it and slips in. A look of wonder snaps onto her face; cut to a close-up of a blue-eyed raccoon on the floor, scrabbling at the side of a barrel and trying to jump up to its top. On the start of the next line, zoom out to frame more of this stockroom; Rarity balanced precariously atop the barrel on her haunches, the raccoon jumping into the outstretched paws of a second, a third one lounging nearby, and Fluttershy smiling warmly in the critters’ general direction. The room is in the same disarray as the rest of the shop, including a rusty water heater.*)

**Fluttershy:** Aww, hello!

**Rarity:** (*whispering*) But what are they doing here?

(*Fluttershy cocks her head to catch a quick round of chittering, then turns back to Rarity.*)

**Fluttershy:** Smoky made too much noise eating garbage, so Soft Pad’s mother made them move out of the trash can.

(*The booth: she sits flanked by the three animals, all drinking soda and eating fries.*)

**Fluttershy:** Then Smoky Junior found a nice home in the crawlspace behind the building. (*petting the blue-eyed one’s head*) But Mr. Stripes demolished it, so they were temporarily camped out in the back until they found a new place to live. (*Grin.*)

(*The shop again. Rarity’s magic yanks the curtain open and she hurries out of the stockroom.*)

**Rarity:** No, no, no. I can’t have a family of rubbish-scented raccoons living in my boutique!

(*There now comes an electronic, bass-heavy dance groove from somewhere overhead, muffled by the ceiling as it sets the chandelier vibrating.*)

**Rarity:** (*uneasily*) Uh…did you hear that?

(*The booth: she sighs wearily, a teacup sitting forgotten on the table.*)

**Rarity:** (*very snippy*) Turns out there’s a club pony party palace upstairs.

(*In a microsecond, she is replaced by a madly grinning Pinkie and her tea by plates of carrot dogs and pizza.*)

**Pinkie:** (*leaning over table*) Turns out there’s a club pony party palace upstairs!

(*The exterior of the building, seen from across the street; the music is audible even at this distance. Rarity storms out of the central door and in through the corner one, the camera tilting up toward the top floor to the almost inaudible sound of stepping hooves. Evidently this door gives onto a stairwell that allows access to the rest of the building. Cut to the entrance to the “party palace”—a dance club done out in shades of blue and violet—where a heavyset earth pony stallion is on guard duty. The music comes through loud and clear now. Light blue-gray coat, short blue tail/beard/mustache, earpiece radio, scalp shaved bald, dark gray suit jacket over a white dress shirt and light blue tie, cutie mark of a closed padlock, eyes hidden behind opaque black sunglasses. Spots of light play over the walls and floor as Rarity trots determinedly up to him and glances past. What she finds are three mares getting their groove on in the middle of the dance floor while DJ P0N-3 works her turntables on a stage stacked with speakers. When Rarity tries to advance, though, the guard blocks her with a foreleg and pushes her back.*)

**Rarity:** (*voice raised*) I’m sorry! Could you please ask her to turn it down? (*No response.*) Could you ask her to turn it down, please? (*Silence again; she drops onto her haunches, begging.*) Turn it down, *pleeeease!*

(*Two garishly dressed earth pony mares, whose outfits and mane styles are straight out of the 1980s, trot up and are promptly allowed through the velvet rope to reach the dance floor.*)

**Rarity:** (*sobbing*) Oh, please!

(*She can only stare and glower as the stallion clips the rope back into place. The booth: she is back in the seat with her tea, and Pinkie’s food is gone. She voices a disdainful little scoff.*)

**Rarity:** Foals today listen to their so-called music far too loud. (*She makes air quotes on “so-called music,” then smiles.*) I realize that makes me sound like an old mare. (*indignantly, knocking cup over*) But this is business!

(*Cut to the shop, the music having stopped. In close-up, Applejack hunches down to the floor, the handle of a dustpan in her teeth; debris is swept into it, but the start of a new track jolts the room so badly that she spills the lot and a few bits of plaster patter down from the ceiling. Cut to Rainbow, hovering near the chandelier.*)

**Rainbow:** I wish we were having as much fun as they are. (*Overhead shot of Twilight—with the broom—and Applejack, now upright.*)

**Twilight:** Well, sweeping can be fun too.

(*She begins to chant “sweep, sweep, sweep” in time with the music, plying the broom across the floor and even giving it a twirl for effect. Neither Applejack nor Rainbow can quite wrap their heads around her affinity for turning housework into a club craze. The booth: daredevil and workhorse sit side by side, and Rainbow takes a pull from the cup of soda that has replaced Rarity’s tea.*)

**Rainbow:** Only Twilight could make a dance remix about sweeping. I mean, how lame is that?

**Applejack:** Yeah. It wasn’t even catchy. (*Rainbow pushes the cup aside.*)

**Rainbow:** Nope.

(*High five. Back to the shop; Twilight is still at it, and the other four who are still on the premises drop in behind her to help with the cleanup. Applejack—no longer toting the dustpan— and Rainbow are the only ones who join in on “sweep, sweep, sweep” with Twilight, clearly enjoying themselves and giving the lie to their restaurant denial. Fluttershy does not, due to the broom handle in her teeth, and Pinkie is having too much fun hovering just off the ground and twirling her tail like a helicopter rotor so that it skims the floor. Rarity returns, very much out of sorts, and the others fall silent.*)

**Rarity:** Apparently DJ P0N-3 has a residency at the party palace upstairs, but security won’t let me speak to her!

(*A goose-like horn blast scares a yelp out of her.*)

**Rarity:** What in the name of Celestia was *that?!?*

(*The booth: now Plaid is in the hot seat and has put on dangling earrings in the shape of teaspoons. The table is littered with juice boxes instead of Rainbow’s soda.*)

**Plaid:** You know how most stores have a little jingle bell when the door opens? (*Clear throat.*) I thought we should have something with a little more pizzazz! So I installed one of Daddy’s antique horns.

(*Cut to a spot just inside the shop entrance, the camera positioned near the top of the open door. The horn she mentioned has been attached up here, and the closing door squeezes its rubber bulb to generate the obnoxious honk. As it happens a few more times, zoom out quickly to frame Plaid swinging the door; Rarity cringes at the sound, and Plaid waves to her and steps away. The employee is not wearing the spoon earrings now.*)

**Rarity:** (*shuddering a bit*) We’ll have to do something about that— (*All her friends except Pinkie gather in; only Twilight still has her broom.*) —after I think of a way to quiet down that music—and after I finish designing the window display!

(*A rumbling crash shakes the camera and startles all five, bringing a yelp from the fashionista for good measure. As Pinkie hover-sweeps her way back into view, eyes turn toward the door and the camera cuts to a blue-uniformed delivery stallion who is wheeling the last of several dented boxes into a pile that now stands in the corner. He dumps them off as an incredulous Rarity approaches the disordered shipment. Her magic extends to cover the top of one box; cut to within it, the camera pointed up toward the flaps as they swing open and she peeks in.*)

**Rarity:** (*suspiciously*) Wait…is this my merchandise shipment from Ponyville? (*Outside the box again; she turns to the stallion.*) It’s completely disorganized!

(*With the barest of shrugs and not a word, he rolls his cart out the door, leaving her to put hooves to temples and sputter out her frustration. The next arrival is a thoroughly disheveled Coco Pommel—eyes watery, cheeks flushed, nose reddened by having been blown or wiped repeatedly in a short time. Suffering from either a cold or a nasal allergy, she lets go with a major-league sneeze almost as soon as she steps in the door.*)

**Rarity:** Gesundheit! (*realizing who it is*) Ooh, Miss Pommel! (*crossing to her*) I’m so glad to see you! Now as the sole sales associate at Rarity for You, I hate to add to your already-overflowing plate of responsibilities— (*smiling coaxingly*) —but it looks as though we have just a tad more to do before tonight than I thought.

**Coco:** Actually, I— (*Another sneeze.*) —I can’t work tonight.

**Rarity:** Oh? Why not?

(*The booth: now Coco sits here, with Plaid’s juice boxes gone and replaced by a mound of wadded-up tissues. She blows her nose loudly on the fresh one she has pulled from a handy box. Back to the shop: she lets go with a third sneeze, this one directly into Rarity’s face, and the unicorn floats up a tissue to wipe herself off.*)

**Rarity:** Feel better, my sweet. (*Drop it; touch her chest gently.*) We’ll manage without you— (*turning away, confidence gone*) —somehow. (*increasingly unhinged*) And we’ll manage glowing teeth and car horns and disorganized clothes and dance music—am I forgetting anything?

(*As she reels off this list, the camera cuts to the following: a grinning Plaid, the horn above the door, the pile of tumbled boxes, and finally back to her, crumpling to her haunches and clapping hooves to temples. Coco has departed by this point. Her query is answered in the affirmative when the three raccoons from the stockroom scamper and chitter across the room right in front of her. Zoom in to a close-up, one eye starting to twitch alarmingly, then cut to a long shot of the building, seen from across the street. Zoom out slowly.*)

**Rarity:** (*from inside, sobbing*) WHAT AM I GOING TO DO??

(*The outburst causes passersby to stop and stare, and a stallion pulling a carriage even comes to a screeching halt. Snap to black.*)

Act Two

(*Opening shot: fade in to the booth. A worried-looking Twilight is now on the receiving end of the interview, and the table is clear.*)

**Twilight:** Well, opening a store in Manehattan is a pretty big deal. (*tapping front hooves together*) It’s natural that Rarity would be a *little* stressed about how it was going—since it wasn’t going well. (*smiling*) Still, I think she handled it all right.

(*Cut to the shop; Rarity stands up into view, fully primed for a complete freakout; the music from upstairs has stopped.*)

**Rarity:** (*overwrought*) The dream is doomed! Doomed, I tell you! (*sobbing*) Doomed!

(*She pitches to the floor; the other five gather across from her. Twilight has stowed her broom.*)

**Twilight:** I know things haven’t gone perfectly so far, but we’ve done this kind of thing before. If we all work together, w— (*Rarity stands up.*)

**Rarity:** I appreciate the offer, but this is Manehattan. To make it in the fashion scene here, everything has to be perfect!

(*Outside, overhead view: she steps out the door, the camera zooming out.*)

**Rarity:** The perfect location! (*Inside again.*) The perfect clothes! The perfect opening!

**Twilight:** Maybe we should just postpone. (*Rarity gets in her face.*)

**Rarity:** *Postpone?!?* Darling, tonight is the last night of the fall season. If we don’t open tonight, it won’t be…

**Twilight:** (*sighing*) …perfect.

**Rarity:** Yes. (*smiling fiercely*) I know what needs to be done. I just need more of me! Oh, how I wish I could make copies of myself.

(*The booth: here sits Pinkie, equipped with a mammoth stack of pancakes and a pitcher of maple syrup whose contents have already been liberally applied.*)

**Pinkie:** (*very hesitantly*) Yeah. Making copies of yourself always sounds like a great idea, but before you know it, you’re locked in a room with fifty Pinkie Pies watching paint dry.

(*A reference to the final test in “Too Many Pinkie Pies,” to determine which Pinkie was the real one. The peppy pony scoops half the pancakes into her mouth, letting her cheeks bulge out and a dribble of syrup ooze down her chin; behind her, the back of a head of frizzy magenta mane topped by a dark blue fedora can now be seen. This head turns slightly, exposing a duplicate of Pinkie’s face—possibly a fugitive clone created in the Mirror Pool during that earlier episode.*)

(*Cut to the shop.*)

**Twilight:** We *can* do this, and we can stay true to your vision.

**Rarity:** You’d…do that? (*smiling*) Fluttershy, you’ll handle those…strong-smelling raccoons for me?

**Fluttershy:** Of course!

**Applejack:** Leave Plaid Stripes to me. I’ll handle her and her, uh…”good” ideas. (*Pinkie zips up past her.*)

**Pinkie:** Ooh, ooh, ooh! (*hopping in place*) And I can go upstairs to that nonstop party and have tons of fun and eat some cake and set up party cannons and—

(*She reins herself in at a pointed throat-clearing from Rarity.*)

**Pinkie:** (*a bit glumly*) —and then make them be quiet.

**Twilight:** (*crossing to boxes*) I’m pretty sure I know somepony who wouldn’t mind organizing this merchandise shipment for you.

(*Five very puzzled stares come her way.*)

**Twilight:** I’m talking about myself.

(*The stares continue to be very puzzled.*)

**Twilight:** Oh, *please* let me organize it! (*Big grin.*)

**Rarity:** This all sounds splendid! But I don’t even have a single employee, and I’ll need the best of the best.

**Rainbow:** Leave the hiring to me. (*Rarity squeals happily and paces a bit.*)

**Rarity:** This is it, my dears! If you can handle these problems, I’ll focus on the designs for the front window display. We’ll show Manehattan what Rarity for You is all about!

(*The others cluster around her for a six-way group hug.*)

**Rarity:** Oh, what would I do without you?

(*The booth: Rainbow sits here now with a cup of soda, one foreleg draped lazily over the seat back. Pinkie’s pancakes are gone, as is the copy of her in the next booth.*)

**Rainbow:** What would she do without us? Huh—let me think. (*overwrought, imitating Rarity, leaning across table*) “Darlings, I’m absolutely doomed! Doomed! Doomed!” (*own voice, laughing, leaning back*) I sounded just like her.

(*Just as in Act One, the sound of pencil on paper makes her goofy, casual air vanish in a tick.*)

**Rainbow:** Hey, you’re not writing this down, are you?

(*Cut to the sidewalk outside the shop. Through one of the ground-floor windows, a small door leading from the shop floor into the display area is ajar; a pony mannequin stands in here, and Rarity steps in with a full box in her magical hold.*)

**Rarity:** (*setting it down, slightly muffled by glass*) Now for the perfect window display.

(*The door closes; cut to her within, floating a notepad and quill out of the box.*)

**Rarity:** Hmmm…

(*Wipe to a close-up of DJ P0N-3 at her decks upstairs. She starts a new track, setting the original three dancers on the floor into motion all over again, as the door guard stands impassively at his post. The two club-goers who showed up during Rarity’s Act One visit are no longer present. Zoom out quickly to frame Pinkie hiding behind a large urn next to a column and glancing furtively in his direction. She lets out a pained little squeal.*)

**Pinkie:** I can’t *really* stop a super-fun party in the middle of mega-happy fun times, can I? (*pained*) Oh, what would Rarity want?

(*A little pinkish-red Rarity poofs into being on her left, wearing devil horns and a point at the end of her tail and holding a trident. The gems in her cutie mark are yellow rather than blue.*)

**Devil Rarity:** Keep that party going ’til the break of dawn!

**Pinkie:** (*brightening*) Really?

(*Now a pale yellow one appears on her right, sporting a halo on a wire above her head and a set of fully operational wings strapped to her midsection. Her cutie mark is normal.*)

**Angel Rarity:** Indubitably! And as for the roof, get jiggy! Raise it, Pinkie! Raise it like you’ve never raised it before!

**Pinkie:** (*trotting toward dance floor*) Ah! If you say so! (*Devil Rarity jabs the trident into her mane and yanks her back.*)

**Devil Rarity:** Oh, please, Pinkie Pie. Never in a million years would I say such balderdash.

(*She disappears, and her angelic counterpart shrugs and does likewise when Pinkie throws her a puzzled look. The party planner utters a dejected little moan, but quickly comes up with a calculating smile and trots up to the guard. Up comes one broad hoof, prompting her to slide to a halt, but that smile stays in place.*)

**Pinkie:** (*holding up a record*) Obviously DJ P0N-3 only plays the sickest of beats.

(*Close-up of the unmoving face on the end of this; she waves the vinyl before his nose.*)

**Pinkie:** (*limbo-dancing under the velvet rope*) I just wouldn’t want her to miss out on the coolest new music, straight from the back-alley underground zip-zap party scene!

(*A moment later, she has reached the DJ booth and is holding up the record.*)

**Pinkie:** I’d play the whole thing if I were you— (*DJ P0N-3 takes it with her magic.*) —no matter what other ponies think.

(*After a bit of thought, the turntablist swaps one of her current discs for the new one. The music stops with a loud needle scratch and is replaced by a subdued bossa nova rhythm that brings the dancers to a dead stop. Pinkie walks backwards across the dance floor on her hind legs.*)

**Dancers:** Awww…

(*Wipe to the sidewalk just outside the front door. Three variously dressed mares stand before Rainbow, two earth ponies and a unicorn, each holding a sheet of paper in hoof or magic, as the case may be—a résumé or help-wanted notice, perhaps.*)

**Rainbow:** Rarity for You is only hiring the best of the best. And to me, that means the fastest!

(*Cut to the trio, trading slightly perplexed looks, and zoom out to frame her.*)

**Rainbow:** Now, uh, before we begin…

(*Turning her head briefly away from them, she makes a sound that can be best translated as…*)

**Rainbow:** (*softly, to herself*) Am I doing this right? What would Rarity want? (*An idea hits; she turns back to them.*) New plan!

(*Which involves her taking off in a multicolored blur and returning a second later to hover before them. All three have put their paperwork away by this point.*)

**Rainbow:** (*pulling out a scrap of cloth*) Who can be the first one to tell me what fabric this is?

(*Close-up of it, zooming out to frame the speaker on the start of the next line, Blue Bobbin. She is one of the earth ponies: light blue coat; violet eyes behind small, gray-tinted glasses; two-tone bright pink mane/tail, the former gathered into a messy bun at the back of her head; patterned white blouse; dark magenta necklace with three strands; cutie mark of a needle and thread.*)

**Blue:** (*bored*) That’s organza.

**Rainbow:** Are you sure?

**Blue:** It’s a thin, plain weave, sheer fabric traditionally made from silk, so… (*smiling smugly*) …yeah.

(*The amateur hiring manager finds herself at a loss in the face of this bit of textile knowledge. The booth: she and the soda she was working on during her last interview are both present.*)

**Rainbow:** I don’t know the first thing about clothes. Pretty much all I can do is look at something and tell you if it’s clothes or not. (*pointing down at seat*) This chair? (*Scoff.*) Not clothes.

(*The shop: close-up of Plaid. The top floor has gone quiet.*)

**Plaid:** See if you can keep up with me here. What are all clothes made of?

**Applejack:** Uh…fabric?

**Plaid:** BINGO!! But not in this store. (*shaking head*) Uh-uh! Not anymore!

**Applejack:** (*really confused*) Oh, no?

**Plaid:** (*foreleg on Applejack’s shoulder*) Two words for you—spoon clothes. All our clothes will be made of spoons! (*Zoom in on Applejack as she sighs heavily.*)

**Applejack:** (*to herself*) What would Rarity want?

(*A little smile comes across the birdcatcher-spotted face as an idea takes hold under the brown hat and blond mane.*)

**Applejack:** You know, I like you, Plaid Stripes. If it were up to me, we’d have a spoon clothes store right next to Stinky Bottom’s Discount Hat Emporium. (*She pulls her hat off.*) But it ain’t up to me. So, the answer is no.

(*Tears gather in Plaid’s eyes as she worries her lower lip to try and keep her composure. The booth: Applejack sits across the table, a piece of pie replacing Rainbow’s soda.*)

**Applejack:** Personally, I think spoon clothes ain’t such a bad idea. Useful, too. Eatin’ soup, stirrin’ gumbo, diggin’ little holes…

(*The shop: close-up of Twilight at a wheeled rack loaded with dresses. She levitates another one up on its hanger and sets it neatly in place.*)

**Twilight:** There!

(*Zoom out quickly. She stands between two long racks and a scatter of boxes. There is a rough but easily discernible progression of colors based on the visible spectrum: red/orange/yellow/green on the left rack from front to back, blue/indigo/violet on the right from back to front. The cobwebs and detritus have been cleaned up from the whole place now.*)

**Twilight:** Perfect! (*She looks around herself and thinks a bit.*) Although… (*Close-up.*) …what would Rarity want? Maybe she wouldn’t like it done by color. (*beaming*) Guess I have to start over!

(*A flare from her horn sends several dresses billowing across the screen. Behind their hems, the view wipes to the still-messy stockroom, where the blue-eyed raccoon—Smoky Junior—is being tucked in for the night by the other two, Smoky and Soft Pad.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*from o.s., a bit shakily*) Hello, Smoky? Soft Pad? (*They look up.*) Smoky Junior? (*So does this one; cut to her walking in, face downcast.*) I have some…interesting news. I…oh…I’d like you all to stay here forever, but… (*to herself*) What would Rarity want?

(*The tears that start to brim up in her eyes point to how quickly she figures out the answer and how much she does not like it.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*sobbing*) You have to move out!

(*That edict sets a new record for the shortest time to bring a raccoon family up to a screeching rage. Wipe to a close-up of the head of the pony mannequin in the front window; it wears a hat, which Rarity’s magic floats off. On the start of the next line, cut to a longer shot from the sidewalk that frames her, bringing up others from the pile of garments at her hooves and testing them out.*)

**Rarity:** (*slightly muffled by glass*) A window display *is* the first thing customers see. And if they like it, they’ll walk inside and experience the glory that is my boutique.

(*Inside, a shuddering Rainbow hovers before the three candidate mares, a pile of fabric samples draped over her forelegs.*)

**Rainbow:** I don’t know which one of you to hire!

(*Applejack, her hat on, backs up before Plaid and her irate father.*)

**Rainbow:** (*throwing her load onto the trio*) Just keep guessing fabrics!

**Plaid:** (*as Applejack runs into some boxes*) Daddy, Rarity’s friend doesn’t like my ideas!

**Mr. Stripes:** Spoon clothes! Is good idea!

(*Pan across the shop and stop on Pinkie, who has returned after her trip upstairs and is sitting on her haunches. Down through the ceiling comes the thump of DJ P0N-3’s dance mix.*)

**Pinkie:** Oh, no! (*hunching down, covering ears*) Not a shopping music mash-up!

(*Now Fluttershy races by, chased by the raccoons and circling around Twilight—who is half-buried in dresses she stripped off the shelves.*)

**Fluttershy:** I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’m sorry!

(*The pursuit ends with her standing on the counter to get out of their reach. As Twilight gawks at a degree of utter chaos that would have given Discord a good laugh, the glow of Rarity’s magic asserts itself around the knob of the door leading into the window display area where she has been working. Zoom in quickly to a close-up of this, then cut back to Twilight, who pulls in a sharp gasp. The action and sound shift to slow motion as she launches herself across the room…and the knob rattles and the door starts to swing open…and eyes turn toward the hurtling Princess…and normal speed resumes as Rarity prepares to step back in.*)

**Rarity:** How’s it—

(*Any further words turn into a muffled cry of surprise as Twilight slams the door shut and leans her whole weight against it. The booth: a sweetly smiling Fluttershy is taking questions, with Applejack’s pie gone and just the silverware before her.*)

**Fluttershy:** When you write the story, could you maybe skip over the part where we locked Rarity in the window display?

(*The smile turns into an unstable grin, giggle, and darting of the eyes that would have drawn approval from Twilight herself. Snap to black.*)

Act Three

(*Opening shot: fade in to an extreme close-up of the doorknob, glowing and rattling under Rarity’s power. However, a chair has been wedged underneath it to keep the door closed. The upstairs music has stopped for the moment.*)

**Rarity:** (*muffled, through door*) Hello? (*Zoom out.*) The door appears to be stuck! (*The other five trade panicked looks.*)

**Twilight:** Yep! We’re working on it!

(*Cut to the unicorn’s side of the door; she has cut off her spell.*)

**Rarity:** Hmm. (*turning to mannequin*) Well, I shouldn’t let this time go to waste.

(*She has placed yet another hat from her collection on its head, and she drapes a matching short cloak around the body. In the shop, the Stripes father and daughter are arguing with each other, and the three job candidates are trading heated words of their own after digging themselves out from the fabric Rainbow dumped on them. Meanwhile, the raccoons are running wild as DJ P0N-3’s beats kick up again.*)

**Twilight:** How did this happen? (*Cut to Pinkie; music stops.*)

**Pinkie:** I shut down the party. (*Pan quickly to Applejack.*)

**Applejack:** I told Plaid Stripes no. (*To Fluttershy.*)

**Fluttershy:** I asked the raccoons to leave. (*To Rainbow.*)

**Rainbow:** I asked a lot of fabric questions.

**Applejack, Fluttershy, Pinkie, Rainbow:** Just like I thought Rarity would want!

(*The root of their four-way blunder starts to become apparent to all of them.*)

**Twilight:** Rarity asked us to help her with everything because she knows all of us so well. (*to Fluttershy, pacing a bit*) She knows how much you care for animals. She’d trust you to solve the problem your way. (*addressing the group*) Maybe we should all do the same. Doing this our way *is* what Rarity wants. It’s not too late. Let’s all dig in and we can fix this.

(*A quick zoom out to frame the entire room shows them just how tall an order this will be as the music resumes. By this point, the raccoons are hanging from the chandelier and swinging it back and forth.*)

**Twilight:** (*nervously*) Before Rarity finds out how bad we messed up.

(*Dissolve to the raccoons, now back in the stockroom and glumly packing their belongings into a suitcase for their impending departure. A contrite Fluttershy steps up as the lid is closed; the overhead thump has cut out.*)

**Fluttershy:** I’m sorry I asked you to leave. (*smiling*) The place is yours, if you want to stay. (*They brighten greatly.*) Though I would like to ask you all just one favor.

(*All three furry faces shift into suspicious glares. Wipe to Pinkie crossing the dance floor upstairs—now totally empty, silent, and without its usual light show. DJ P0N-3 sits slumped over her console.*)

**Pinkie:** I’m sorry I made you play that un-fun, super-boring music.

(*She gets only a halfhearted shrug in reply. Profile close-up of Pinkie, smiling even as she starts to slide backwards.*)

**Pinkie:** But if you’re up for it, I have an idea to make the party even better!

(*On this last word, zoom out to show that her source of locomotion is the door guard, who has her tail in his teeth and is dragging her out of the joint. Under the black-rimmed violet sunglasses, DJ P0N-3’s mouth curves into a smile. From here, wipe to Rainbow and the three job candidates standing on the sidewalk outside the shop.*)

**Rainbow:** Okay. I don’t get fabric— (*spreading/retracting wings*) —but I *do* get speed. And I need somepony fast enough to help all the customers Rarity’s gonna have. Soooo… (*hovering, pointing down the block*) …first one to the river and back gets the job!

(*Her encouraging grin is met by a round of thoroughly confounded glances that pass between the three mares.*)

**Rainbow:** It’s a race! Go!

(*The two earth ponies get to galloping, but the unicorn sets out at a much more sedate pace. Wipe to Twilight, back at the job of organizing the racks; she magically slips a dress onto a hanger and sets it in place, then rolls that rack out of the way and brings in another one. At the sound of Applejack’s throat clearing, the camera pans toward the sound to stop on her, Mr. Stripes, and Plaid near the counter. All three are rather more civil than they were during the previous free-for-all.*)

**Applejack:** (*removing hat*) Mr. Stripes, I owe your daughter an apology. (*donning it*) She’s got good ideas, and I should give ’em a chance. So here’s what I’m thinkin’.

(*The exterior of the shop, seen from across the street. Day fades to night, the ground-floor windows now glowing invitingly and the silhouettes of mannequins on display. In close-up, Rarity’s magic slips a ribbon onto the collar of one dummy’s blouse and ties it in a bow; zoom out through the window to frame her standing among three of them. One is a pegasus, hanging from the ceiling.*)

**Rarity:** (*slightly muffled by glass*) Perfect!

(*Inside the display area; she tries the doorknob with her aura but still cannot get it to budge. Having had quite enough of this confinement, she backs up a few steps and charges, fully intent on ramming the door with her shoulder. Before she can make contact, though, Twilight’s field pulls the door open, leaving her to tumble face first to the floor when the camera cuts to the other side. The details of the floor and display pedestal behind the two suggest that the place has undergone a considerable sprucing up, and the chair that had jammed the knob is gone.*)

**Twilight:** (*trying to sound casual*) Wow! Looks like we fixed that door just in time!

(*She helps the white unicorn up to get a good look around the shop, prompting a stunned gasp. Zoom in slowly.*)

**Rarity:** Oh! What’s all this?

(*Cut to her perspective, panning slowly around and cutting here and there. Curved racks of dresses hang at the walls; shelves above them are stocked with other accessories; floor-level platforms have shoes on display; an elevated platform at the back is set up with a DJ turntable and speakers; multi-level pedestals display dressed mannequins and purses. The whole place is done in subdued shades of blue and violet, and rows of pin spotlights shine straight down from the ceiling. Not a trace of the original disrepair or decay can be seen.*)

(*The booth: Twilight sits here smugly, the table cleared of the previous silverware.*)

**Twilight:** The whole place organized by style, cross-referenced by size, and reverse-indexed by fabric. She’ll be able to find anything in three seconds flat! (*Deep breath; she props her head on a hoof.*) It was some of my best work.

(*Cut to a portrait of Rarity’s head on a wall and zoom out. It hangs behind a semicircular sales counter, and she gazes wonderingly at it while her five friends gather a step behind.*)

**Rarity:** (*turning to hug Twilight*) Oh, I knew I could count on you! (*Step back.*) All right. I suppose this is the moment of truth.

(*She moves to the door and pulls it open with her magic—and instead of the squeeze-bulb horn Plaid installed, she hears the tinkling of a small bell. Zoom out slightly as she looks upward, the camera motion exposing the hardware change. She grins back toward the others; cut to just outside as she turns her attention to the street.*)

**Rarity:** Rarity for You is now open!

(*A round of soft giggles and chatter surprises her; zoom out slightly to show a few customers standing in line along the storefront. A quick pan follows, showing that the queue stretches most of the way down the block; a squirrel stands at the very end of it, but clears out when the last stallion waves it off angrily. Inside, Rarity steps aside and backs up next to Rainbow as the ponies begin to file in.*)

**Rarity:** Oh, dear. I wasn’t quite prepared for such a crowd. How will I handle them all?

(*On the end of this, Blue steps calmly up to a stallion who has stopped cold and is casting his eyes uncertainly about. Her previous bored tone gives way to friendly one.*)

**Blue:** My name’s Blue Bobbin. I’ll be your personal shopping assistant this evening. (*She leads him into the showroom.*)

**Rainbow:** Right this way, everypony—

(*She glances behind herself, the camera zooming out to frame the other two candidates standing and smiling in one corner.*)

**Rainbow:** —and one of our talented sales-ponies can help you out.

(*She grins at Rarity, whose slightly flummoxed expression turns into a smile. The booth: the speedster slumps over the table with a cup of soda.*)

**Rainbow:** Honestly, they were all pretty slow. But they finished the race! Plus, they knew a lot more about fabric than I did. So, I hired them all!

(*The shop: Rarity hustles toward a knot of customers, but she and they are all caught off guard when the lights dim, the pin spots brighten, and a soft, lively electronic groove kicks up. Looking across the showroom, Rarity finds DJ P0N-3 now working the sound system—and the door guard from upstairs keeping watch over the steps that lead up to her platform. Fog-machine clouds billow across the floor as the spots rove back and forth; once the view clears, the three dancers from the club can be seen moving to the beat. Rarity’s mouth falls open in shock; she looks fearfully around herself, but is met with the sight of the unicorn shopping assistant escorting a customer toward the sales counter and magically towing two dresses along. The entrepreneur smiles as Pinkie slides backwards over to her with a grin, drops onto her haunches, and twirls her front hooves in rhythm.*)

(*The booth: Pinkie sits amid a plethora of empty, dirty dishes and Rainbow’s soda is gone.*)

**Pinkie:** The way I see it, Rarity designs fashion, DJ P0N-3 designs beats. (*She puts her front hooves together.*) What better combination than a boutique dance club?

(*The waitress who appeared in the first restaurant scene in Act One stops briefly to drop off the check. One look drains all the levity out of the pink face, and she slides the paper toward the reporter with a big dopey grin—evidently the meal is a bit too pricey for her to cover.*)

(*The shop: Rarity makes her way through the crowd, but is a bit caught out upon passing one of the three raccoons. It is walking on its hind legs, dressed in a shirt, tie, vest, and apron, and carrying a tray of small bowls. A nearby stallion is equally puzzled at the unorthodox waiter.*)

(*The booth: Fluttershy sits here now with the three raccoons, none of them dressed, and the dishes have been cleared to make way for a whole pie.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*pushing it to them*) After a quick bath, they were more than willing to help.

(*Matched only by their willingness to attack the dessert. The shop: the stallion eyes the bowls in close-up, each filled with a blue liquid and topped with a sprinkling of herbs.*)

**Stallion:** Ah! A blue corn reduction with shallot *confit*! But how can I possibly enjoy it without a—

(*Zoom out slightly; one of Plaid’s forelegs extends into view, wearing a mitt fitted with three spoons.*)

**Plaid:** (*from o.s.*) Spoon?

(*Cut to her, now wearing the spoon earrings from her Act One interview. Each foreleg sports one of these mitts, and she has donned a pair of yellow-framed sunglasses whose lenses are shaded in a gradient from violet down to yellow. She brandishes the eating utensils like a ninja with highly questionable fashion sense.*)

(*The booth: here sits Applejack, the whole pie gone and replaced by a single slice. She lets off a short chuckle.*)

**Applejack:** Told you spoon clothes ain’t such a bad idea.

(*The shop: extreme close-up of one bowl as a spoon scoops up some of the contents, then cut to the stallion. He now wears a band around one front hoof with three spoons attached, and he tastes the concoction and smiles.*)

**Stallion:** Mmm…exquisite!

(*Long overhead shot of the gathering; zoom out slowly.*)

**Stallion:** This is the most whimsical and wonderfully fashionable boutique I’ve ever seen!

(*As excited chatter breaks out among the patrons, the camera cuts back to floor level; Rarity smiles warmly at her good fortune, then lets herself tear up at the sight of her five friends gathering before her.*)

**Rarity:** (*voice over, reading*) “In the end, Rarity’s grand opening was a smashing success.”

(*Dissolve to her with the newspaper in the present, as seen at the start of Act One.*)

**Rarity:** (*reading*) “True, it got off to a rocky start, but somehow this ragtag group of ne’er-do-wells—” (*lowering paper*) —ooh, heavens, I think he means you!— (*raising paper, reading*) “—came together and created the perfect boutique. A vision of Rarity, combined with the expertise of her friends.”

(*Cut to the others on the end of this; she giggles softly, after which the view shifts back to her. In this shot, Fluttershy has come out from the rack of dresses underneath which she had previously hidden herself.*)

**Rarity:** (*reading*) “This reporter, for one, is a believer.”

(*Lowering the paper and magically removing her reading glasses, she fixes the others with a questioning look.*)

**Rarity:** Why didn’t you tell me there were so many problems? (*Twilight and Pinkie cross to stand on one side of her.*)

**Twilight:** We all figured you had enough on your mind.

**Applejack:** (*moving to Rarity’s other side with Fluttershy/Rainbow*) And we didn’t want you to think that the openin’ wasn’t perfect.

**Rarity:** (*giggling*) Ne’er-do-wells or not, I know I can always count on all of you. (*Group hug.*) And nothing could be more perfect than that.

(*“Iris out” to black.*)

(*“Iris in” to the booth, where Plaid sits slurping soup loudly, using one of her spoon mitts and wearing the matching earrings, but not the shaded sunglasses. The bowl rests on the table in place of Applejack’s pie. She throws a big, goofy, brace-faced grin to the camera before the view snaps to black.*)