**P.P.O.V. (PONY POINT OF VIEW)**

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Prologue

(*Opening shot: fade in to a stretch of railroad tracks running through the outskirts of Ponyville during the day. Zoom in slowly as birds fly past and Twilight Sparkle trots briskly into view from among the clustered houses, moving away from town and paralleling the tracks. Several yards back, an out-of-breath Spike tries to keep pace, but soon gives it up and stops.*)

**Spike:** Twilight, can you slow down a bit?

(*In close-up, he wipes the freely running sweat from his face and blows out a breath; Twilight backs up to him, hooves clopping excitedly against the hard-packed dirt.*)

**Twilight:** Sorry, Spike. It’s just Pinkie Pie, Rarity, and Applejack are getting back from their Seaward Shoals boat trip! And I can’t wait to hear all about it! (*She hurries on, floating him onto her back.*) It’s such a shame Rainbow Dash and Fluttershy had to miss it for their Cloudsdale flight school reunion. Maybe the rest of us not going was for the best, anyway. I know the three of them were really looking forward to getting out of their element.

(*Reaching the train station, she hops up the steps and onto the platform.*)

**Spike:** Getting out of their element? (*Twilight stops; he jumps down.*)

**Twilight:** (*looking off in distance, shading eyes*) I think they all just wanted to try something new.

**Spike:** Huh. I guess a boat trip qualifies as that.

**Twilight:** My only worry is that they’ll be so excited, they’ll talk over each other and I’ll miss some of the details! (*floating up a quill/scroll, shoving them into Spike’s hands*) Just to be safe, I may need you to take notes.

(*Her eager grin stands in sharp contrast to his look of mild resentment. The chug of an approaching train engine is heard.*)

**Spike:** Uh, right.

(*It pulls in, hiding them from view, and vents clouds of steam that fill the screen. When they clear, the view has shifted to a close-up of the legs of Applejack, Pinkie Pie, and Rarity standing side by side, just inside the open door of one car. All three are liberally besmirched with dirt and muck, manes are out of order, and Rarity is wearing a rumpled, dark red trenchcoat. Zoom out quickly to frame the trio fully, all displaying very bad attitudes and draped in assorted bits of loose seaweed, then cut to a recoiling Twilight and Spike. The screen quickly tiles itself with three horizontal panels that slide in from the left, each framing an extreme close-up of one pair of narrowed, disgruntled eyes, then cuts back to the welcoming committee. Twilight slaps on her best placating grin, while Spike stares in silent bewilderment.*)

**Twilight:** So, how was the trip?

(*She rubs one foreleg nervously with the opposite hoof just before all three try to push through the doorway at once. After a long moment’s strain, they spill out and tumble to the platform in a filthy heap. They stand up, Applejack and Rarity walking away from each other along the length of the train, and Pinkie throws befuddled glances from one to the other. In an overhead shot of the station and platform, the farmer and fashionista exit off opposite ends of the platform, while the party planner clambers up onto the train roof and leaps off the other side to put her back to the others. A close-up of Twilight and Spike picks out the instant dismay that has rooted itself on her face; he has put away the quill and scroll she foisted on him.*)

**Spike:** (*shrugging*) Well, at least you don’t have to worry about them talking over each other.

(*She grimaces as the full import of his words sinks in, and the view fades to black.*)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(*Opening shot: fade in to the dining room in the Castle of Friendship. Twilight is busy setting the table for tea, floating cups to rest in front of the seats and giving one a final nudge; zoom in as Spike brings in a plate of cookies and sets it in place. The pot is levitated up for a critical inspection, as is a napkin which she licks and uses to polish up a spot before sending it away again.*)

**Twilight:** I don’t know what happened on that boat trip. (*smiling, returning pot to its place*) But once Rarity, Applejack, and Pinkie Pie have some tea and talk it out, I’m sure everypony will feel better.

(*Another bit of her aura removes the lid, immerses three tea bags to steep, and sets it back on. Spike takes advantage of the momentary distraction to snatch a cookie, but she is quick to whip it away and return it to the plate so that his teeth snap together on empty air. He gives her a dirty look as the sound of knocking at the doors is heard.*)

**Twilight:** (*trotting across, magically opening one*) Come on in, everypony!

(*Her grinning gesture of welcome gets no immediate response, as no living thing is immediately visible in the corridor beyond. She glances confusedly out the door; cut to a close-up of three most unexpected visitors: Applejack’s dog Winona, Pinkie’s alligator Gummy, and Rarity’s cat Opalescence. Winona has a note in her mouth, while Opal bears an envelope clipped to her collar that shows Rarity’s cutie mark. Gummy carries no such freight. Zoom out slightly to frame Twilight staring at them on the start of the next line.*)

**Twilight:** Gummy, Opalescence, and Winona? (*She backs up a bit; they enter.*) This is a surprise.

(*Spike runs up; cut to the corridor as he peers out into it.*)

**Spike:** Aren’t Pinkie Pie, Rarity, and Applejack with you?

(*Close-up: Twilight looks down toward the sound of Opal’s purring, and the camera tilts down to frame the pampered feline rubbing up against her legs. She plucks the note away with her telekinesis and unfolds it to read.*)

**Twilight:** (*reading*) “Sorry, darling, but I must decline the invitation to your *soiree*. While I’m sure it will be positively resplendent, there are certain ponies I’d rather not associate with at the moment. Rarity.”

(*The substance of this message seems to affect her thought processes in the way that a gas tank full of water might affect the performance of the average car. The sound of Spike’s running footsteps marks his return from the corridor, and he snatches the note away for a frantic perusal.*)

**Spike:** Rarity’s not coming? (*Groan; he lets it drop.*) So I polished my scales for nothing.

(*The boss rolls her eyes and grimaces to herself. Cut to one end of the dining room table, where Winona has perched on a seat and is idly turning herself around on it by wagging her tail. Gummy climbs up next to the plate of cookies and rolls onto his back, exposing a swath of writing on his belly. The pooch’s missive is plucked away in Twilight’s field, so she turns her attention to scratching behind an ear. As Twilight gets it into position to read, Opal contents herself with circling around Spike and brushing her tail against him.*)

**Twilight:** (*reading*) “Sorry I can’t make it, but I’m still a mite upset about everything that happened on the boat. Applejack.”

(*Opal gets bored and walks off on the end of this. The Princess exchanges concerned glances with Spike and lets this letter drop; cut to Gummy, who starts to nudge one of the cookies free with the end of his tongue before she floats him off the table. Zoom out to frame her, peering closely at the ink on his scaly hide.*)

**Twilight:** (*reading*) “Sorry I can’t make the tea party today, but there’s a small problem with the guest list. Plus I’m right in the middle of a very important cupcake.” (*setting him down*) “Pinkie.”

(*Her mood sours considerably as Spike crosses to her and Opal strides imperiously past the table.*)

**Twilight:** Come on, Spike. Since our friends won’t come here and tell us what happened— (*walking out*) —we’ll just have to go to them! (*Winona jumps down to follow Opal.*)

**Spike:** Right behind you!

(*But not immediately; he darts back to the cookies and proceeds to stuff nearly every single of them into his mouth before hurrying after her. Dissolve to a close-up of Rarity’s unkempt, highly annoyed reflection in a mirror within the Carousel Boutique; she is no longer wearing the trenchcoat she sported in the prologue. Throwing a disgusted look at a strand of seaweed clinging to her mane, she levitates it away and brings up a hairbrush to put the purple locks back in order. It catches on something buried deep, which proves to be a small crab that has been hiding somewhere near one ear. She voices a cry of revulsion and uses her magic to pluck it away, holding it by one pincer as it clacks the other one at her.*)

**Rarity:** I am sorry— (*fluffing mane*) —but my mane wasn’t made to support marine life!

(*She lowers the crustacean to the floor; in close-up, it gives her a baleful look, then scuttles grumpily away past Twilight’s hooves. Zoom out to show both her and Spike on the scene, which is in Rarity’s upper-story workspace and living quarters; Spike has swallowed the cookies he filched from the tea party setup.*)

**Rarity:** (*crossing to them, floating trashed coat along*) Ruined! Completely ruined! (*Cut to Twilight, smiling encouragingly.*)

**Twilight:** I don’t know, Rarity. Maybe you could—

**Rarity:** (*from o.s.*) —throw it away? (*Back to her; she pulls it back.*) Yes, I agree. (*It goes into a trash can.*) Just another innocent casualty of that disastrous boat trip.

**Twilight:** About that. Spike and I were wondering what happened out there.

(*The glow of her horn brings out the quill and scroll that Spike ditched at the train station and smacks him in the face with them. He glares down at the offending items as they drop into his hands, then transfers the ire-filled green pupils to her.*)

**Rarity:** Please, darling. I don’t know if I’ll ever be able to discuss it. (*hoof to forehead*) It’s far too painful!

(*Her favorite couch slides into view under her influence, and she flops onto it with a pained sigh, landing on her back.*)

**Spike:** If it’s too difficult to talk about, we completely understand.

(*He pushes the scroll back to Twilight, who shoots daggers at him from her narrowed eyes, and Rarity sits up, the focus shifting to her in the fore.*)

**Rarity:** Well, since you dragged it out of me. (*Close-up of her.*) It all started at the docks. (*Zoom in slowly.*) I knew Applejack and Pinkie Pie wanted to get out of their element, so I thought I would surprise them with an elegant cruise.

(*The view undergoes a wavering dissolve to a long overhead shot of a sizable sailing vessel moored at a dock, with several rowboats tied off to nearby rocks in the water. One of the three sails is marked with a giant red apple, and the mast to which it is attached flies a flag that shows a stylized sunrise and crescent moon. Pinkie stands waiting by the stern with loaded saddlebags slung up, and the distant purple/white speck that is Rarity moves along the dock with a second pony trailing closely behind. It is daytime. Zoom in slowly.*)

**Rarity:** (*voice over*) I had brought a small bag with just a few key essentials.

(*Close-up: she wears a life jacket and is followed by a bearded stallion sailor in a striped sweater and knit cap. His teeth are clamped around the handle of a smallish travel bag whose jewel accents mark it as hers.*)

**Rarity:** All right, ponies! Prepare yourselves for luxury on the high seas!

(*She reaches Pinkie, whose bags can now be seen to be stuffed with equipment for other diversionary pursuits—including a fish-shaped piñata. She also has a stack of board games balanced on her back and is wearing a life jacket of her own.*)

**Pinkie:** That sounds… (*forcing a grin*) …fun?

(*Orange-tan legs step into the fore, catching the two mares by surprise. Applejack’s forelegs and front half are covered by a dark gray, long-sleeved garment with the edges of light green sweater sleeves peeking out from the cuffs. Cut to a head-on shot and tilt up slowly: the outer garment is a heavy pea coat, the sweater is a thick turtleneck, and she has traded her cowboy hat for a red knit cap. The overall “old salt” impression is further reinforced by her scowling countenance with one eye screwed nearly shut, and by the gravelly pirate cadence that overlays her Southern accent.*)

**Applejack:** The sea air carries a portent for trouble this day. ’Tis a treacherous and perilous journey that lies ahead of us. We sail to adventure—or our very doom.

(*Neither Pinkie nor Rarity has any immediate response to this radical shift in their friend’s demeanor. The prim unicorn is first to speak.*)

**Rarity:** I…have no idea what you just said. (*smiling*) But your wardrobe is delightfully seaworthy.

(*Double grin, Pinkie’s a bit hesitant; the dour farmer-turned-seafarer clomps past them and up the gangplank. Dissolve to a long shot of the ship now sailing through open water and zoom in slowly. Applejack stands on the main deck, Pinkie at the bowsprit mounted on the prow, Rarity on the elevated poop deck near the stern. Pinkie has unloaded her gear, while Rarity has her bag floating at eye level. Zoom in slowly.*)

**Rarity:** (*voice over*) Despite Applejack’s colorful seafarer attitude—

(*She lowers it to the planks on the end of this; cut to a close-up. She undoes the clasp and lets her horn bring up a serving dish with a cover far taller than the bag’s dimensions should allow.*)

**Rarity:** (*voice over*) —I was still determined to get my friends out of their element— (*She descends from the poop deck with it.*) —by providing them with all the refinements of a luxury cruise. (*It is set down on a spool of rope.*) I’d made sure to bring all the most delectable nibbles for them to enjoy.

(*On the end of this, the cover lifts away to reveal a three-tiered tray of sandwiches and cupcakes; Applejack regards it with squinting scorn, Pinkie with wonderment.*)

**Pinkie:** Ooh! I brought food too!

(*A quick bit of o.s. rummaging yields a picnic basket, whose contents she gleefully empties onto the main deck—a mélange of candies and goodies that include bags of unshelled peanuts. She leans down over the lot.*)

**Pinkie:** Let’s see. I’ve got cotton candy, taffy, circus peanuts, and lots of other super-yummy stuff!

**Rarity:** (*airily*) Oh, Pinkie Pie, that all looks positively delectable. (*floating a sandwich up*) But you simply must try one of these cucumber sandwiches.

(*Cut to Pinkie’s side of the spool; a plate and utensils have been set out for her, and the food settles down into its place. She is fully upright again.*)

**Rarity:** (*from o.s.*) Dig in!

(*The pink pony proceeds to run a skeptical eye over the proffered sandwich for some seconds, tilting her head back and forth and voicing a series of thoughtful “hmm”s. Finally Applejack can take no more of this.*)

**Applejack:** Arr! (*sweeping the spread overboard*) Get those off me ship!

(*Both Pinkie and Rarity dart to the rail and watch unhappily as the delectable nibbles splash down and sink into the water, a few forlorn bubbles ascending to break the surface.*)

**Rarity:** (*to the o.s. Applejack*) Oh, I’m so sorry! I had no idea you had such distaste for cucumbers.

**Applejack:** (*slightly crazed*) Yarr-har-har-har! Har-de-har-har-har!

(*Wavering dissolve to a close-up of a dumbstruck Spike in the present. Zoom out to frame Twilight thinking carefully.*)

**Twilight:** Hmmm…that doesn’t sound like Applejack. (*Spike voices an affirmative grunt and lowers his quill/scroll.*)

**Rarity:** (*from o.s.*) Well, hold on— (*Cut to her.*) —because it gets even worse. (*She reclines on her couch and continues in a disdainful tone.*) Pinkie tried to lighten the mood with some fun maritime games.

(*Wavering dissolve to Applejack at the wheel, up on the poop deck. Pinkie’s fish piñata is hoisted up to hang from the boom attached to the bottom edge of one sail, and she straightens up in to view.*)

**Pinkie:** (*singsong*) It’s piñata o’clock! (*Cut to Rarity; she continues o.s., holding out a stick and blindfold.*) Want to give it a whack, Rarity?

**Rarity:** Oh, darling, of course!

(*Just as the stick becomes wreathed in her energy, a flash of lightning rips the sky. She wheels to stare out over the bowsprit; cut to her perspective. A wall of gray storm clouds is moving in far too quickly for comfort, the wind picking up for good measure. On the start of the next line, cut to Applejack at the wheel, now wearing a band of white cloth tied across her head to cover her left eye.*)

**Applejack:** Ha-ha-har, ha-har, ha-har! (*Zoom in.*) I’ll be chartin’ a course to the very heart of that maelstrom!

(*A spin of the spokes sends the vessel into a sharp turn, Pinkie and Rarity watching fearfully as the bowsprit swivels to point dead into the storm. Applejack pulls up a map and spreads it on the wheel, anchoring it with a hoof as Rarity steps over to her with a tremulous smile.*)

**Rarity:** Uh… (*Clear throat.*) …uh, Applejack, just a thought, but maybe we should steer the ship toward calmer waters.

**Applejack:** This be the only way to Plunder Cove!

(*Extreme close-up of the map on the end of this; she jabs a hoof against the wildly fluttering document, and Rarity flicks her uneasy blue eyes toward it and then the flashing lightning. The waters are becoming extremely choppy now, but the apple grower is undeterred.*)

**Rarity:** (*trying to pull map away with magic*) Perhaps if I take a quick look-see at that map of yours, I could find us a more cruise-friendly— (*Applejack slaps it back to herself and blocks Rarity’s reaching hoof.*)

**Applejack:** There’ll be no mutiny aboard me ship! (*Pinkie snatches it away.*)

**Pinkie:** Look at me!

(*She produces an old-style “bicorn” hat, the sort once worn by naval officers, and plunks it on her head.*)

**Pinkie:** I’m the captain too!

(*Her claim to authority is swiftly challenged in the form of the other two verbally challenging her and trying to take the map by force, Applejack using teeth and Rarity her horn. The wheel is left to turn on its own now.*)

**Rarity:** (*voice over*) Clearly Pinkie Pie had caught Applejack’s sea madness.

(*Applejack is first to lose her grip, tumbling across the poop deck an instant before a wave washes over the rail and plows them back. The map is swept away by the surge; Pinkie hits the rail back-first and is momentarily stunned as Applejack straightens up, a crazed smile showing under her exposed eye. The ship is now pointed directly into the path of an oncoming monster wave; she sprints to the wildly spinning wheel and wrestles it under control as Rarity watches in mute shock.*)

**Applejack:** Is that all you’ve got?!?

(*She trails off into completely unhinged laughter as the towering crest thunders down on the craft, totally submerging it and washing over the entire screen. The waters drain away to give a close-up of Twilight and Spike in the present, both faces frozen in the farthest extreme of brain-wrecking terror.*)

**Spike:** Then what happened?

(*Cut to Rarity, now sitting up on her couch and plying a levitated file against a hoof.*)

**Rarity:** (*casually*) Oh, the boat sank, obviously.

(*She shows just as much visible concern over the bit of dust that she blows off—that is to say, none at all. Princess and dragon look helplessly to each other for any suggestion as to how to process this total disconnect in the narrative, but it does them not a bit of good. Fade to black.*)

Act Two

(*Opening shot: fade in to the pair.*)

**Twilight:** So…Applejack got some sort of sea madness and caused the boat to capsize? (*Spike starts in fear.*)

**Rarity:** (*indignantly, floating file away*) After all the effort I put in to provide her and Pinkie with the exact luxury cruise they needed to get out of their elements, *that* is how Applejack thanked me!

**Spike:** So you were stuck out in the middle of the ocean? How in Equestria did you get back?

(*The overly dramatic narrator falls full length on the couch with a sigh, hoof to forehead.*)

**Rarity:** Spike, darling, you’ll have to forgive me. I am far too emotionally drained to discuss the matter any further.

**Twilight:** (*crossing to her with Spike*) Rarity, I don’t suppose there’s any chance you might be…uh, exaggerating things just a little?

(*During this last, Rarity summons a container of ice cream and a spoon to herself and starts eating. The words prompt her to sit bolt upright, good and sore.*)

**Rarity:** *Well!* I can assure you that that is exactly what happened! And if you don’t believe me, you can ask Pinkie Pie.

(*The name is spoken in a tone that is the audio equivalent of picking up some particularly noxious bit of refuse with two fingers and holding it at arm’s length.*)

**Rarity:** I’m quite certain her story will be the same.

(*The view pivots 180 degrees around an imaginary vertical axis through its center, becoming a close-up of this very mare. She has cleaned herself up and is standing in Sugarcube Corner, but looking very much out of sorts.*)

**Pinkie:** So that’s what Rarity said happened on the boat, huh?

(*Zoom out slightly. She stands at one of the ovens in the kitchen, and she pulls the door open, slides in a tray of cupcakes or muffins, and kicks it shut. Cut to a nervously grinning Twilight standing by the counter, on which Spike has taken a seat next to a mixing bowl. He is no longer holding the quill and scroll.*)

**Twilight:** We thought there was a chance she might have… (*Clear throat; Spike stirs the bowl…*) …embellished the story just a tad. (*…and pulls out a spreader laden with batter.*) So we wanted to hear about what happened from you.

(*Before the reptilian tongue can make contact with the implement, her magic removes it from his grip and returns it to the bowl. His face falls at being denied this treat.*)

**Twilight:** Did Applejack really capsize the boat?

(*The two secretarial items are telekinetically shoved over to the number-one assistant again.*)

**Pinkie:** (*cheerfully*) Of course not! Pfft. That’s just silly. There’s no way Applejack could’ve sank the boat.

**Twilight:** I knew it!

**Spike:** That’s a relief. (*Pinkie zips over into Twilight’s face, full of rancor.*)

**Pinkie:** Because Rarity did! (*She walks past them.*)

**Twilight, Spike:** What?

(*The baker has reached a cabinet, and she turns back to them with assorted useful items now lodged in her mane.*)

**Pinkie:** It all started on the docks.

(*One vigorous shake sends them flying across the kitchen; Spike has to do a very hasty backwards slide in order to make room for everything to land in one neat line. She pops up behind the counter, her fit of pique having ended as quickly as it began.*)

**Pinkie:** I knew Rarity and Applejack wanted to get out of their element, so I figured I’d throw them the funnest, silliest boat party ever. (*sourly*) But I guess Rarity had other ideas.

(*Wavering dissolve to the docked ship, as seen at the start of Rarity’s account, except the positions of the principals have changed. Now Applejack stands near the stern, wearing the red knit cap and having switched the pea coat and turtleneck for a life jacket, and Pinkie walks toward the ship with the same full load of gear. Zoom in slowly, then cut to a close-up of the pink pony during the next line, showing her to be wearing the same safety gear.*)

**Pinkie:** (*voice over*) I thought *I* over-packed, until I saw Rarity and her team of porter ponies!

(*She reaches Applejack on the end of this. The farmer is studying the same map as before, but there is no longer anything unusual about her appearance. Rarity’s legs step into view in the fore, stopping both of them cold; her front half is decked out in a sparkly purple jacket with gold bands/buttons at the sleeve cuffs and a white shirt visible beneath. A head-on view of her frames the outfit fully: gold shoulder epaulets and breast pocket trim on the jacket, white dress shirt with blue bow tie and gem studs, white peaked cap of the sort worn by naval officers, lightly tinted sunglasses, mane tied back in a ponytail. Behind her is not one happy sailor stallion toting a single bag, but an entire squadron of them in striped sweaters and caps—all hauling gear, none looking too thrilled about the assignment.*)

**Rarity:** Prepare yourselves for a luxury cruise! A day of opulence, decadence, and extravagance!

**Pinkie:** (*sardonically*) That sounds fun.

**Applejack:** (*smiling, saluting*) Ahoy, mateys! Batten down the hatches, y’all, ’cause this here’s gonna be a boat ride of adventure!

**Pinkie:** (*smiling*) Eh, I can live with that.

(*Applejack’s words demonstrate that she is back to her usual manner of speaking in this recollection. Rarity grins from ear to ear and boards, followed by her numerous porters. The other two mares’ enthusiasm gradually fades as the procession goes on and on and on.*)

**Pinkie:** Huh. They just keep coming.

(*Wavering dissolve to a long shot of the ship on open water, zooming in slowly. As before, Applejack is up front, Pinkie at the bowsprit, Rarity on the poop deck. The only difference is that Pinkie is hunkered down, as if fishing something out of the bags she is no longer wearing.*)

**Pinkie:** (*voice over*) Now you can’t throw a silly boat party without snacks.

(*Close-up of the rope spool that served as a table the first time; she sets down a platter loaded with all the goodies she dumped onto the main deck back then.*)

**Pinkie:** (*voice over*) So I made sure to pack the funnest party food I could find.

(*Rarity descends the steps as Applejack looks over the spread and Pinkie sets one last giant lollipop in place. The unicorn regards them with narrowed, disapproving eyes.*)

**Pinkie:** Rarity, would you care for some cotton candy? (*holding two cones of it out to her*) It’s freshly spun.

**Rarity:** (*laughing haughtily*) Oh, Pinkie Pie, those all look simply… (*pulling shades down to peer over them*) …well, simple. (*Back up to her eyes.*) But they’re obviously unfit for a luxury cruise.

(*Just as before, her aura brings over the serving dish with its tall cover. Pinkie’s offering is shifted off the spool to make room for it, and the cover is pulled off to reveal the higher-class treats. She brings a sandwich over to herself.*)

**Rarity:** Now my cucumber sandwiches, on the other hoof—try one. (*sending it back to Applejack/Pinkie*) Then you’ll understand.

(*She puts on a supremely self-assured little grin; cut to Pinkie. The whole thing jams itself into her mouth, and it takes a moment or two for her to chew it down.*)

**Applejack:** (*from o.s.*) Ooh! (*Cut to her, pointing at the top-tier cupcakes as Rarity glances her way.*) Are those chocolate chip?

(*She is very surprised indeed to see the overdressed mare suddenly float the entire tray off the spool and heave it overboard. Both earth ponies hustle to the rail and see the snacks sink away amid a sad, scarce froth of bubbles as before.*)

**Rarity:** (*from o.s.*) Sorry. (*Cut to her.*) Cucumber sandwiches are *so* ten seconds ago.

(*A wavering dissolve begins…*)

**Twilight:** (*voice over*) Wait, wait, wait.

(*…and ends on her, Pinkie, and Spike in the present. The little guy has put away the quill and scroll and procured a bag of popcorn, which he eats with gusto.*)

**Twilight:** That doesn’t sound like Rarity.

**Pinkie:** Just wait until you hear how much more unlike her she sounds! (*smiling, propping one knee on the counter*) I thought I’d lighten the mood with some super-fun party boat games. (*bitterly, both knees on counter, chin on hooves*) But Rarity was a real wet blanket.

(*Wavering dissolve to the poop deck as the fish piñata is hoisted up onto the boom. Pinkie quickly straightens up into view; behind her, Applejack is at the wheel.*)

**Pinkie:** It’s piñata time! Ooh!

(*Cut to Rarity, who is busy in brushing down her jacket as the stick and blindfold are held out to her.*)

**Pinkie:** (*from o.s.*) Want to give it a whack, Rarity?

(*The invitation elicits a burst of loud, slightly mocking laughter that gradually trails off as the items are withdrawn.*)

**Rarity:** Oh. You were serious. (*smiling*) Well, that’s adorable.

(*And she proceeds to trot past the dismayed mare, only for Applejack to take her place.*)

**Applejack:** I’ll give it a go! (*Pinkie brightens again.*)

**Pinkie:** That’s the spirit! Let’s get this boat party started!

(*The cloth is quickly tied over Applejack’s eyes and she takes the stick in hoof. One good hard spin later, she is veering and wobbling about the main deck, laughing woozily with every step.*)

**Applejack:** Whoa, doggie!

(*Here comes the lightning, which scares her back to full equilibrium; she nudges the blindfold off just in time to see the bowsprit angling itself toward the most unfriendly cloud bank. As the wind churns the waters, she dives for the wheel and seizes the spokes to halt its uncontrolled spin. A wave swamps the vessel, pulling all of Pinkie’s game supplies overboard when it recedes; cut to her, staring sadly after them only to be interrupted by cries and grunts from the o.s. Applejack and Rarity. They are fighting over the map, trying to wrest it away with teeth and magic.*)

**Pinkie:** Tug of war? (*Happy gasp.*) Now we’re talking! (*She claps hooves onto the page and starts pulling mightily.*) Whoever wins gets to be captain!

(*This goes on for several seconds until the unattended wheel starts to spin wildly again; Pinkie is first to notice, her levity going bye-bye.*)

**Pinkie:** Or…one of us could just be captain now?

(*Rarity releases her hold, leaving both Applejack and Pinkie to careen into the rail and hit it with their backs as the map blows away on the wind. Instead of taking the wheel, though, she advances serenely to the prow.*)

**Rarity:** Oh, don’t worry, dear. (*A huge wave bears down on the ship.*) Luxury cruises never sink. (*Pinkie gets up.*)

**Pinkie:** What?!?

(*Her fellow earth pony is right behind her to fight the jittering wheel, but it is too late. Just as before, a colossal wave breaks over the vessel, submerging it and filling the screen with froth. And, just as before, the water drains away to return the scene to the present time. Pinkie is stirring the bowl of batter from which Spike tried to swipe a taste; he has set his popcorn on the floor and has been industriously taking notes.*)

**Pinkie:** And that’s why the boat sinking was all Rarity’s fault.

**Twilight:** That seems…odd. (*Pinkie gives her a hairy eyeball.*) I mean, we trust you, of course. But it’s all so…extraordinary?

(*She gets an irate face leaned over the counter into her own.*)

**Pinkie:** Oh, it’s extraordinary, all right. But that’s exactly what happened! In fact, the only thing I might have gotten wrong was that there was even more porter ponies! (*smiling*) But just to be safe, you should talk to Applejack. She’ll know exactly how many porter ponies there were.

(*Twilight takes a second to mull this over.*)

**Spike:** Okay. But if the boat sank, how did you all get rescued?

**Pinkie:** Ah, that’s easy. We just…

(*She gets no further before clouds of thick gray smoke begin to drift into view overhead. A quick sniff at the air leads into a panic-stricken gasp, the camera zooming in quickly to an extreme close-up.*)

**Pinkie:** MY MUFFINS!! (*She dashes away; Spike hops down from the counter, fed up.*)

**Spike:** That’s it! (*to Twilight, rolling up scroll*) We’ve gotta go talk to Applejack. (*The smoke slowly clears.*)

**Twilight:** Good idea. She’ll straighten this out. (*She starts for the door.*)

**Spike:** I just really, really want to know how they made it back. (*following her*) But, yeah. That’d be great too.

(*Wipe to an extreme close-up of one tree within the Sweet Apple Acres orchards. Applejack rears up into view and bucks it, releasing a shower of apples, then straightens up to address herself o.s. Like Pinkie in Sugarcube Corner, she has had a chance to wash up from the disastrous outing, but is quite cross.*)

**Applejack:** Hold on a tick!

(*Longer shot: she is addressing Twilight and Spike, the latter not carrying the quill and scroll.*)

**Applejack:** Pinkie Pie says it’s Rarity’s fault, and Rarity says I sank the boat? Well, that’s plumb crazy! If you two really want to know what happened, I’ll tell you. Y’all know how Pinkie Pie and Rarity wanted to get out of their element?

(*Cut to the two visitors; once more Twilight’s magic sticks Spike with the writing tools, which he accepts with visible resentment.*)

**Applejack:** (*from o.s.*) Well, I brought a treasure map to give ’em a rip-roarin’ seafarin’ adventure.

(*For the third time, the view undergoes a wavering dissolve to the docked ship and zooms in slowly. Applejack stands by the stern, wearing a life jacket and her usual brown hat, as Rarity approaches with a second pony trailing close behind. The unicorn has donned a different outfit from her captain’s getup now.*)

**Applejack:** (*voice over*) But *they* had other ideas.

(*Close-up. Rarity wears a pinstriped white traveling suit with a long skirt that covers her entire rear half except for the tail. Dark magenta trim at lapels, belt, and sleeve cuffs; the same color for her wide-brimmed hat decorated with an enormous white/pink-striped bow; white blouse with a black ribbon tie held by a blue gem clip; mane gathered into a loose bun; pale pink gloves on her front hooves; small blue gem earrings. The other pony is the sailor stallion from her own account of events, but carrying her gear in saddlebags and a box on his back this time. She sings a couple of notes to announce herself.*)

**Rarity:** Prepare yourselves for the most luxurious boat outing that ever outed a boat!

(*She reaches Applejack on the end of this, the camera now close enough to show the pick and shovel that the workhorse has slung across her back. Pinkie steps into view in the fore, already wearing her own life jacket; both turn toward her, and the camera cuts to a close-up of her hooves and tilts up. Here are the saddlebags stuffed with the fish piñata and other items, but the tottering tower of other recreational equipment on her back would easily fill them three times over. The stick she had previously offered to hit the piñata protrudes from her mane.*)

**Pinkie:** And more fun than you can shake a stick at! (*Big squeaky grin; she yanks it loose.*) Because I brought a stick! (*Cut to Applejack.*)

**Applejack:** All right, mateys! But just y’all wait ’til you see the high-seas adventure I’ve got planned.

(*A dip of the head toward her life jacket, and she comes up with the map in her teeth and lets it unroll. The grating sound of something very heavy being pushed along combines with the sound of Pinkie’s hopping to make her glance toward the prow. The stallion is bulldozing a very large chest up the gangplank for Rarity, who stands at the bowsprit as Pinkie hops merrily near the rail, no longer holding the stick or carrying any of her other freight. Applejack rolls up the map, stows it, and trots to join them. Dissolve to a long shot of the boat on the move and zoom in slowly; she paces near the prow, Pinkie hunches down to peer at something on the main deck, and Rarity descends from the poop deck. In close-up, the blond mare brings out a spyglass and extends it to full length ,having stowed her digging tools.*)

**Applejack:** (*voice over*) Unfortunately—

(*Her perspective, raising the glass to one eye to focus on an outcropping of rock and then panning to a distant island and a shipwreck in turn.*)

**Applejack:** (*voice over*) —they seemed less interested in a treasure-huntin’ adventure— (*Back to her as she continues; she lowers the glass.*) —and more interested in snacks.

(*She turns to look behind herself, her face falling; zoom out to frame Pinkie setting her load of goodies on the rope spool. Game equipment is now scattered all over the main deck. The lot is held out for the approaching Rarity, who eyes it with unease and then mild contempt.*)

**Rarity:** Oh, darling— (*pushing it away*) —that food isn’t fit for a pony of proper breeding, darling, and refinement, darling. (*floating her own tall covered serving dish over*) Now my cucumber sandwiches, on the other hoof…

(*The dish is set down and the cover pulled off. Applejack has stowed her spyglass now.*)

**Pinkie:** Betcha I can fit them all in my mouth! (*opening mouth very wide*) Ahhhh…

(*So wide, in fact, Applejack cringes mightily at the sight or the thought that she might actually pull it off. Any gustatory stupidity is averted when the magic field floats the whole tray safely out of reach.*)

**Rarity:** Pinkie, darling, please!

(*The poised teeth clack together a few times as Applejack cuts her a wide berth. One hoof comes down on a volleyball, sending her into a yelling roll across the main deck as she tries desperately to keep her balance on it. Gravity wins out, though, and sends her tumbling into Rarity; the tray of refined eats hurtles over the rail and into the drink, sending up the all-too-familiar spray of sad bubbles as all three watch. Rarity aims a murderous glare at Applejack and growls softly in the back of her throat.*)

**Applejack:** Oh, uh, Rarity, I—

**Rarity:** Well, I never! Hum-phuh! (*She strides away; Pinkie darts in to replace her.*)

**Pinkie:** Me neither! Hum-phuh!

(*Away she goes. Wavering dissolve back to the present.*)

**Twilight:** (*dryly, to Spike*) Do you want to say it or should I?

**Spike:** I’ll go. (*to Applejack*) That sure doesn’t sound like Rarity or Pinkie Pie.   
**Applejack:** Oh, it gets a sight worse than that.

(*Wavering dissolve to the fish piñata being hoisted onto the boom; Applejack is at the wheel, and Pinkie stands up into view in the fore.*)

**Pinkie:** It’s PWT—Piñata Whacking Time!

(*The stick and blindfold are held out to Rarity, who recoils as if she has just been offered a big frothy mug of toxic waste.*)

**Rarity:** Oh, darling, whacking is a base pastime for common ponies. (*pushing them away*) Doesn’t interest me in the least.

(*She paces along the main deck, full of pride in herself and not noticing the very weird look that Pinkie aims after her. The pink pony shifts to a nonchalant grunt and shrug, then instantly brightens up. As Applejack continues to steer the vessel, Pinkie peeks out behind her from each side in turn, voicing a giggle before ducking back out of sight.*)

**Applejack:** (*looking around herself*) Huh?

(*Before she can react further, the blindfold is swiftly tied into place over her eyes and she is spun around, the stick ending up in her grasp. Applejack moans and stumbles her way toward one mast, but a lightning strike from the approaching storm puts the sense back into her. Setting the stick down and pushing the cloth off, she grimaces at the rough weather that is rapidly closing in and scrambles back to the wheel.*)

**Applejack:** Looks like we need to change course!

(*The map is whipped out for a quick look, but Rarity’s magic whisks it away so she can run an eye over it instead.*)

**Rarity:** Ooh! Why, this will make a perfect tablecloth for my cheese board!

**Applejack:** (*taking it back*) Maybe so, but it’s also the only way to find Thunder Cove!

(*A slightly different name from the one she used in Rarity’s description of events—“Plunder Cove.” Now Pinkie reaches into view and latches onto the document with a giggle; cut to her, now wearing a peaked cap and laughing over the tussle.*)

**Applejack:** (*voice over*) And Pinkie Pie was just about as helpful as a weasel in a henhouse. (*All three struggle over the map now.*)

**Pinkie:** Captain Pinkie Pie, reporting for map duty!

(*A wave breaks over the rail, soaking Applejack and causing her to let go. She looks up through her sodden mane to see the wheel twirling in a blur of spokes—and the gargantuan crest building up dead ahead. A moment later she is fighting the wheel to reassert a semblance of control, but the howling winds rip her hat away. Pinkie just watches, her tongue hanging out between her vapidly smiling lips and flapping like a sail in its own right.*)

**Applejack:** Hold on, everypony!

(*The ship makes its final, doomed ascent up the wave and is lost under a screenful of thundering water. This drains away to give a view of Twilight and Spike in the present, the Princess bending to look closely over Spike’s shoulder at the abundance of notes he has taken. The sky above them has advanced to late afternoon, hinting further at the length of Applejack’s account.*)

**Twilight:** Wait. So it was Rarity *and* Pinkie’s fault?

**Applejack:** Yep. (*She flips a tub of apples onto her back using her head.*) And maybe if they ever apologize, I’ll consider talkin’ to them again.

(*Exit one ticked-off earth pony.*)

**Spike:** If they all blame each other, I don’t know how we’re gonna get them to talk again.

**Twilight:** Neither do I, Spike. Neither do I.

(*Fade to black.*)

Act Three

(*Opening shot: fade in to an overhead shot of the throne room in the Castle and zoom in slowly. Twilight paces the floor at the back as Spike lounges on Pinkie’s throne. The scroll he has been using to take notes in all three interview sessions has unrolled to stretch quite a few feet across the central map table, which is bare.*)

**Twilight:** There’s gotta be some way to fix this! (*Close-up.*) If Applejack, Pinkie Pie, and Rarity keep not talking to each other, they could forget what good friends they really are!

(*Cut to Spike, who starts to flip through the folds of parchment. This shot reveals that he has had to tape several scrolls together, end to end, in order to accommodate the day’s observations.*)

**Spike:** I just don’t get it. All of their stories are so different. (*He sets it down and plops his chin on the table with a sigh.*) We’re never gonna figure out what really happened.

(*The mega-scroll is pulled away in a burst of magic so Twilight can do her own reading.*)

**Twilight:** Their stories were different— (*Spike crosses to her.*) —but they also had a lot in common.

**Spike:** (*not entirely convinced*) I guess. They were all on a ship that sank and…that’s about it. (*She rolls up the whole thing and grins.*)

**Twilight:** Not quite.

(*It is propelled away and promptly replaced by a blackboard, whose chalk floats up under her power and begins to draw: a sandwich, a cluster of bubbles, an ocean wave. Zoom out slightly from this last to show her deep in thought. A brainstorm strikes, bringing a big smile to her face.*)

**Twilight:** Aha! Not only do I think I know how the boat sank, I have a pretty good idea how to get Rarity, Applejack, and Pinkie Pie back together!

(*The smile becomes a grin, but Spike is totally lost in trying to follow her chain of reasoning. Just as in the shift from the end of Rarity’s interview to the start of Pinkie’s, the scene spins 180 degrees around a vertical center axis to shift the action to the dock. Twilight and Spike stand out here next to a sailboat; zoom in slowly and cut to a close-up of them.*)

**Spike:** (*uneasily*) I hope this plan of yours works.

(*There comes the clatter of racing hooves on the dock planks; cut to Applejack galloping out to them.*)

**Applejack:** Winona brought me your note about a friendship emergency! (*Rarity gallops in behind her.*) H-How can I help?

(*The unicorn slides to a stop next to her, drawing an extremely vexed sidewise glare as she catches her breath.*)

**Rarity:** Opalescence delivered your message, Twilight! What’s the emergency?

(*Here comes Pinkie, popping up in the middle and pushing them aside to make room for herself.*)

**Pinkie:** It’s a good thing it was time for Gummy’s bath— (*They give her dirty looks.*) —or I might not have seen your note about the emergency, Twilight!

(*Only now does each fully take in the presence of the other two, the six eyes broadcasting undiluted enmity in every direction.*)

**Applejack, Pinkie, Rarity:** (*pointing at each other*) What’s *she* doing here?

**Twilight:** Sorry, but I just didn’t know else to get the three of you here together. And there really is a friendship emergency—yours.

**Applejack:** (*rolling eyes*) Oh, there’s no emergency. I’m just waitin’ for an apology.

**Rarity:** (*affronted*) An apology?

**Pinkie:** *What?!?* (*to Applejack, pointing at Rarity*) Why would you want me to apologize when it was Rarity’s fault?

**Rarity:** (*pushing the hoof down*) What are *you* talking about? (*She jabs at the nose of…*) Applejack clearly caused the boat to sink! She stranded us in the middle of the ocean!

(*Spike, who has had to put up with both hearing these conflicting stories and writing them up, finally snaps and lets go with a yell of supreme frustration.*)

**Spike:** *Will somepony please tell me how you made it back?!?*

(*The three squabbling ponies are stunned into silence, flicking their eyes back and forth among themselves with a real measure of unwillingness to say any more. Wavering dissolve to the shredded sails and off-kilter masts of the ship sinking into the now-calm ocean under a clear blue sky. Applejack is first to break the surface, gasping for air, and is quickly followed by Rarity doing the same; last is Pinkie’s tail, followed by a few bubbles and her head. All three are now wearing life jackets; under hers, Rarity has switched her traveling suit for the dark red trenchcoat she wore in the prologue. All three are filthy with dirt and seaweed, and Applejack fishes up her bedraggled hat and puts it on. They then stand up their full height, finding the water level below their knees/hocks, and stare in total bewilderment as the camera zooms out to establish their exact location—in the shallows only a few feet from the docks.*)

(*Wavering dissolve back the contrite trio in the present.*)

**Rarity:** Well, maybe it wasn’t the middle of the ocean.

(*Having had his burning question answered in such an anticlimactic way, Spike slaps a hand to his face and pulls it down with a groan. Applejack zeroes in on Twilight with a critical eye.*)

**Applejack:** Even so, I don’t appreciate being hornswoggled into comin’ back here. (*She walks off.*)

**Rarity:** On that, at least, we agree. (*Ditto.*)

**Pinkie:** Yeah! (*Ditto; close-up of Twilight.*)

**Twilight:** I know you each have a different perspective on how the boat capsized and blame each other. (*Zoom out slightly; she smiles and indicates the boat behind her.*) But if you come on the boat with me, I’ll show you what *really* happened.

(*The three not-friends stop their exit and turn hard eyes back toward her, thinking the offer over very carefully.*)

**Rarity:** Well, not that *I* have any doubts— (*starting toward boat*) —but it will feel good for everypony to see exactly whose fault it was. (*Applejack follows suit.*)

**Applejack:** I think we all know which pony’s about to be proven right. (*Pinkie looks around herself.*)

**Pinkie:** We sure do.

(*She goes after them. Back to Twilight and Spike, the Princess using magic to untie the mooring rope. Behind them, Applejack is already aboard, wearing a life jacket, and facing stonily toward the stern with eyes closed.*)

**Spike:** Like I said, I sure hope this works.

(*They prepare to board as the camera zooms out slowly. Rarity stands at the bow, looking straight out over the water, and Pinkie is starboard with her back to the dock. Dissolve to an overhead shot of the boat on open water, with Twilight standing at the bow, Spike nearby, and the other three seated facing astern and resolutely refusing to meet each other’s eyes. All five have donned life jackets.*)

**Spike:** (*laughing nervously, then addressing Twilight tensely*) Whatever you’re looking for, I hope you find it soon.

**Twilight:** (*smiling*) Don’t worry, Spike. I’ve got it all under control.

(*She turns her attention to the three passengers.*)

**Twilight:** While all of your stories seemed very different, they all had something in common—cucumber sandwiches.

(*They start in surprise; now Spike opens a cooler and retrieves a paper-wrapped package, which Twilight levitates out of his hands and opens. Inside is a sandwich, which remains aloft as the paper drops into the boat.*)

**Applejack:** What in the hay does that have to do with anything?

(*The food goes flying over the side, and all five gather to watch.*)

**Rarity:** And why would you waste a perfectly good *hors d’oeuvre*?

**Twilight:** You also mentioned the bubbling water.

(*Sure enough, a few bubbles float up from the depths as the sandwich sinks into them. Twilight’s next spell lifts the entire boat from the water, far enough so that it clears a sudden wave that rumbles past.*)

**Twilight:** And the swell. (*She sets it down again.*) Cucumber just happens to be the favorite food of the tri-horned bunyip. And bubbles, followed by a swell, is what happens when they swim up to the shallows from deep water.

(*Puzzled/suspicious glances among the three feuding friends.*)

**Applejack:** So…we attracted a tri-horned whatchamacallit? (*Something very large and dark starts to rise behind them, growling very softly.*)

**Rarity:** With cucumber sandwiches?

**Pinkie:** Sounds like a stretch.

(*Enough of the aforementioned something has now emerged to give views of a bulbous head on the end of a long, snaky neck, with a line of three horns on a doglike snout. A cut to just behind the head, looking down at the boat, picks out the dark magenta hide and the thick, stubby canine teeth protruding from the upper jaw. Twilight, facing astern, waves happily up at the beast; Spike can see it as well, but the other three still have their backs to it.*)

**Twilight:** Hello, bunyip, sir!

(*The heads turn; the eyes pop; the jaws drop open—and the tri-horned bunyip waves a forelimb in greeting with a cheery growl. Floppy pink ears hang down from the sides of the head, the eyes are bright green, two rows of orange spines run along the back, and the stump of a tail protrudes from the rear end. It does a quick roll, exposing an underbelly slightly darker than the spines, and comes up.*)

**Rarity:** (*tentatively*) So that’s a—

**Twilight:** A tri-horned bunyip! (*indicating it*) Who’s very sorry he accidentally knocked over your boat. Right? (*It nods and grunts agreement.*)

**Pinkie:** Wait. The storm had nothing to do with the capsizing?

**Twilight:** Nope. (*Cut to Rarity.*)

**Rarity:** All right. Even if our friend the bunyip *is* responsible for sinking the boat, that still doesn’t excuse a certain pony’s behavior. (*Applejack finds herself on the receiving end of this barb.*)

**Applejack:** Me?!? How ’bout you and Pinkie Pie?

**Pinkie:** Pfft! What! Who? Me? (*Scoff.*)

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) I think I can explain that too. (*Overhead shot of all five.*) Each one of you spent so much time trying to come up with the perfect way to get the others out of their element, that you didn’t notice your friends were doing the same thing. (*Close-up: Applejack has a flash of insight.*)

**Applejack:** Wait a minute. (*to Pinkie*) You brought all those games and things…for us?

**Pinkie:** Of course! I figured the boat trip was the perfect time to do things that were silly and fun. (*Grin.*)

**Rarity:** And I was just trying to give the two of you the elegant cruise I thought you deserved.

**Applejack:** And I just wanted to give you two a high-seas adventure, since that’d be somethin’ new and different for y’all.

**Applejack, Pinkie, Rarity:** Ohhhh! (*Each smiles now.*)

**Rarity:** (*warmly*) That is so sweet. You must have gone through so much trouble.

**Applejack:** Well, not half as much trouble as you did makin’ all that fancy food— (*to Pinkie*) —a-and bringin’ all those games. (*Cut to Twilight and Spike on the start of the next line.*)

**Twilight:** I guess this just teaches us that even longtime friends need to work at communication. (*Spike nods.*)

**Pinkie:** Well, there’s something I’d like to communicate to you all right now. (*beckoning; the other mares gather in*) You girls are the best friends a pony could ever have!

**Rarity:** Oh, let’s never fight again! (*Group hug.*)

**Applejack, Pinkie:** Agreed!/You got it!

(*Spike clambers across to join in, and the camera zooms out to show that the bunyip has craned its neck down to give a warm-hearted grunt of its own.*)

**Applejack:** All right, you big softie. Bring it in!

(*So it does, by hoisting the boat and nuzzling the hull in the group’s general vicinity. Dissolve to a close-up of the boom as Pinkie’s fish piñata is raised, then cut to a longer shot. The bunyip has been blindfolded and the stick placed in its jaws for a swing, and Pinkie stands ready at the stern; the boat is back in the water now.*)

**Pinkie:** Come on, bunyip, sir! You got it!

(*Pan ahead to the bow. As Twilight, Rarity, and Spike watch, Applejack hauls on a set of lines in her mouth and drags up a fishing net that contains a wooden chest bound in rusty iron. Rarity’s magic flips the lid open to expose the gold and silver coins that fill it to the brim, along with a few loose gems, a pearl necklace, and two jeweled goblets. She floats up this last pair of items between herself and Applejack and manipulates a spoon, whipped cream cans, and cherries to turn out ice cream sundaes, one of which she offers to the farmer with a grin. Cut to Twilight and Spike, the latter none too pleased at having suddenly been pressed into note-taking duty one more time.*)

**Twilight:** One thing’s for sure, Spike. There’s nothing like a luxurious adventure boat party to get you out of your element.

(*She catches him off guard by stripping the quill/scroll away and replacing them with a third sundae in its own goblet, bringing the little guy around to a smile. Cut to a long shot of the boat, silhouetted against the afternoon sun, and zoom out slowly as the bunyip keeps swinging at the piñata.*)

**Spike:** You said it!

(*Fade to black.*)