**FAME AND MISFORTUNE**

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Prologue

(*Opening shot: fade in to a slow pan along a Ponyville street during the day. Twilight Sparkle strolls past an elderly mare and a couple of laughing, galloping fillies. The camera shifts to a head-on close-up of the contented Princess, whose hooves come to an abrupt halt when a glob of ice cream is flung into view from one side, splatting against her chest. A filly’s voice speaks up.*)

**Filly voice:** Oops!

(*Cut to frame both Twilight and the speaker, Toola Roola. Light pink earth pony; short red/yellow/pink mane tied back; light blue-green eyes; two-tone blue tail; cutie mark of a paintbrush drawing a spiral curve. A capsized ice cream cone lies on the ground, not the flavor mashed into Twilight’s coat, and a table of assorted frozen dairy treats stands next to Toola.*)

**Toola:** Sorry, Princess Twilight. (*sourly, pointing across road*) That was meant for *her!*

(*Pan quickly in this direction and stop on an empty tub sitting outside a house. Both it and the areas of ground/wall surrounding it are liberally daubed in ice cream, and up from behind it comes a second scowling filly, Coconut Cream. Pale blue earth pony; narrowed yellow-brown eyes; mane/tail striped in bright pink, yellow-green, and yellow; cutie mark hidden behind the tub for now. She prepares to pitch a banana split.*)

**Toola:** INCOMING!! (*She and Twilight duck.*)

**Twilight:** Whoa!

(*The dessert barely misses their heads and lands on the table of a unicorn stallion, knocking away the bowl of soup he has been eating. After a brief puzzled stare at the sudden meal change, he shrugs and happily plunges his face in, having lost his spoon. Twilight straightens up and addresses each filly in turn.*)

**Twilight:** (*crossly*) Toola Roola! Coconut Cream! What are you doing?

(*Coconut steps out from behind the tub, revealing a small pie on her haunch.*)

**Coconut:** (*pointing at Toola*) That was meant for my *ex*-friend.

**Toola:** I’m not *your* ex-friend, you’re *my* ex-friend!

(*She seizes a small ice cream float from her table and lets fly—but her aim is just as bad as before and she nails Twilight again instead. Within seconds, the winged unicorn is being pelted from both sides and has lost her patience for this squabble.*)

**Twilight:** Both of you, stop!

(*She projects an egg-shaped shield around herself, the combatants’ last salvos squishing against its surface, and lets it drop once they have ceased fire. The ice cream stuck on her falls away as well, and she directs worried looks to each in turn. Clock wipe to the three standing together and in rather better spirits.*)

**Twilight:** So you see, friendship isn’t always easy, but there’s no doubt it’s worth fighting for.

**Coconut, Toola:** Awww…

(*They put a hoof across each other’s shoulders and laugh, their quarrel forgotten; Twilight, on the other hand, puts a puzzled hoof to her chin.*)

**Twilight:** Hmmm…that sounds familiar.

(*A thought hits, prompting her to gasp happily and trot away. Dissolve to a long shot of the Castle of Friendship, seen from the edge of Ponyville, and zoom in slowly as locals go about their business. A cut to the library frames Twilight levitating books down from the shelves and mumbling to herself as she flips through one or another. After several attempts, a particularly dusty volume comes to light, a six-pointed pink star visible on the back cover. She hoists it high, giving a clear view of the heavily battered and dog-eared pages as Starlight Glimmer enters, and then brings it down to eye level. The front cover gives away her find is the journal in which she and her friends recorded their observations on friendship throughout Season 4. The cover is in just as sorry a shape as the pages, sporting assorted frays, nicks, and stains.*)

**Twilight:** Aha! Here it is! (*Close-up of Starlight; she peers closely, with some disgust.*)

**Starlight:** What is *that?*

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) Come on, Starlight. (*Back to her.*) Don’t judge a book by its cover. (*She takes it in hoof.*) This is the friendship journal my friends and I used to keep. (*Flip pages.*) It’s filled with all the things we’ve learned, like… (*reading, floating it open*) …“Friendship isn’t always easy, but there’s no doubt it’s worth fighting for.”

(*A couple of pages choose this moment to fall out of the binding, deflating her self-satisfied mood a good bit.*)

**Starlight:** I’ll judge a book by its cover just this once.

(*Her mentor lets the beat-up tome drop and growls to herself. Fade to black.*)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(*Opening shot: fade in to the throne room, where all five of Twilight’s friends have taken their seats. Spike’s small throne is empty, and the central map table is bare. The doors open to admit Twilight and Starlight.*)

**Twilight:** Thanks for coming, everypony. (*Close-up.*) I’ve got a surprise for you.

**Fluttershy:** (*from o.s.*) What is it, Twilight? (*Cut to frame both.*) Do I need to prepare myself?

**Twilight:** It’s *this!*

(*A poof of magic materializes the journal, which thuds down onto the table and sends up a small cloud of dust. Applejack and Rarity regard it with visible disdain.*)

**Rarity:** Ugh! What is that thing? (*fanning at her nose*) Why is it so smelly? (*Pinkie Pie leans toward it.*)

**Pinkie:** Wait a minute. (*She snatches it with a shuddery gasp.*) Is this our old friendship journal? I haven’t seen this thing in forever!

**Applejack:** Hoo-wee! It’s lookin’ a little, uh…overripe. (*Rainbow Dash flies over to Pinkie.*)

**Rainbow:** I’ll say.

(*Taking the journal, she hovers a few feet up and starts to leaf through the pages. Close-up of one, which has an apple crushed onto it and a good bit of splatter on the facing page.*)

**Rainbow:** (*from o.s.*) There’s a smushed apple in Applejack’s lessons.

(*Another turn brings her to a page that is blank except for a square of tiny writing jammed into the top right corner.*)

**Rainbow:** Fluttershy’s lessons are so small, you can barely read them.

**Fluttershy:** I, uh, wanted to leave room for all of you.

(*A few more flips, and the ace flyer reaches a page whose lines are neatly and elegantly written.*)

**Rainbow:** I-I don’t even know what this is. (*She faces the book to Rarity, who eyes the passage and smiles.*)

**Rarity:** It is called calligraphy, darling. If you’re going to make words, at least make them fabulous.

(*Rainbow passes off to Applejack at her gesturing request, and the farmer turns it sideways with some degree of confusion. One page slides down, nearly falling free; it is marked with copious rents from either heavy erasing or bearing down too hard while writing.*)

**Applejack:** Looks like you got a little aggressive with your friendship lessons, Rainbow Dash. (*Cut to her perspective, looking at Rainbow through one of the many holes.*)

**Rainbow:** What can I say?

(*She reaches in to take the book; once the covers close and fill the screen, snap immediately to the table again. All but Pinkie and Starlight are in view.*)

**Rainbow:** When I learn something, I learn it hard.

(*The moment she reopens it, a blast of confetti and streamers greets her.*)

**Rainbow:** (*dryly*) I found Pinkie’s page. (*Giggle from the o.s. Pinkie; pan to her.*)

**Pinkie:** Well, I *am* surprised! (*Back to Rainbow, the journal levitating out of her grip.*)

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) That wasn’t the only surprise.

(*Cut to her on the end of this, having left her throne. As the book touches down on the table, Starlight steps up and takes a cue from Twilight to rev up her horn. One burst of magic lances into the journal, lifting it away until it floats above the center of the table. Six beams of blue-green energy extend radially outward from it, each terminating above a different throne, and sustain for a moment before winking out. The free ends of the beams have become fresh, new hardcover bindings whose design matches that of the journal. These are empty, but the original begins to spin in place, spewing pages at them like an automatic playing-card dealer gone haywire. Pan slowly across the incredulous Fluttershy and Pinkie and the two mages who put this scheme in motion, then cut to two of the bindings as freshly duplicated pages insert themselves neatly into place. When finished, they close themselves and descend to Applejack and Rarity.*)

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) Ta-da! Starlight and I decided to make one for each of you!

**Applejack:** That’s amazin’! (*Look inside.*) A perfect copy! (*Cut to Twilight, Starlight, and Fluttershy receiving her own.*)

**Starlight:** I learned the spell years ago when I needed to make copies of a certain…

(*Long pause, marked by an extremely nervous grin and a back-and-forth flick of the bright blue eyes. She clears her throat before finishing the sentence.*)

**Starlight:** …manifesto.

(*No doubt referring to the equals-sign books she used as part of her attempt to brainwash the six mares in Part Two of “The Cutie Map.” Now Rarity sniffs deeply at the cover of hers.*)

**Rarity:** Ahh! Even better than a perfect copy. (*Fluttershy skims a page.*)

**Fluttershy:** Oh, I’d forgotten all about this lesson. (*Pan to Rainbow, laughing and holding hers open as she hovers.*)

**Rainbow:** Remember this one from when I helped Daring Do? (*reading*) “Never underestimate the power of friends who always got your back.” (*Pan to Pinkie, looking over a passage.*)

**Pinkie:** (*warmly, but with growing fervor*) Aw, Cheese Sandwich. Party cannon! Ah! Birth-iversary!

**Starlight:** After Twilight remembered the journal, I had so much fun reading all the stuff you’ve all learned— (*floating up another one*) —I just had to have my own copy. (*Down again.*)

**Twilight:** And that brings me to the second part of the surprise—my idea. How would you girls feel about making our journal available for everypony? If we can get these lessons into other ponies’ hooves, maybe they’ll benefit from them.

**Fluttershy:** Oh, I think that’s a great idea! (*Pan to Pinkie.*)

**Pinkie:** I’m in! Yaaay! (*Cut to Applejack and Rarity.*)

**Applejack:** We—we always said we wanted to.

**Rarity:** Sounds fabulous. (*A laugh from the o.s. Rainbow; cut to her, reading away.*)

**Rainbow:** I’m awesome.

(*She realizes that the room has gone silent an instant before the camera zooms out to show too many pairs of eyes sending funny looks in her direction.*)

**Rainbow:** (*sheepishly*) Oh, yeah, uh, good idea.

(*Dissolve to a slow pan down a street in Cloudsdale. Market stalls have been set up here, much the same as in Ponyville, and Twilight approaches one of them—a bookseller—with her saddlebags slung up. She pops a flap and floats out a copy of the journal to show to the pegasus mare proprietor, who gets a grip and places it on a shelf. The two trade a smile before the view dissolves to a close-up of another copy resting atop a stack in a different location; Twilight’s magic maneuvers one into view and props it up so the cover can be clearly seen. A longer shot picks out this place as a newsstand in Canterlot; Twilight has shed her bags and is now levitating the inventory alongside as she gives the unicorn colt in charge a searching look. Suddenly inspired, she transfers one more copy from her field to his so he can start reading, then leaves with a smile and wave.*)

(*Cut to the exterior of a bookshop on a city street. Journals are stacked up to form a prominent display in the front window, but they vanish in short order until only two are left, one propped on the other. One pair of hooves yanks the supporting copy away, and the other barely has time to hit the ledge before another pair snaps it up. Copies rain down past the camera, the view wiping behind them to a slow pan through the Bridleway theater district in Manehattan. As taxi carriages roll this way and that, the camera stops on a billboard depicting a tall stack of journals and tilts up to frame two others mounted above it, each showing a single copy. Another tumble of literature shifts the view to a slow pan through a stretch of park land outside Ponyville. Here, a line of excited, chattering foals snakes back into the distance; stop on Twilight at its head. She has several journals under her control and is shifting one so a unicorn filly can carry it away in her own. Before the Princess can shift her attention to the next customer, the voice of Toola cuts in.*)

**Toola:** (*from o.s., crossly*) No! I don’t want to play with you anymore!

(*Pan quickly to her and Coconut, glaring at each other across a hopscotch layout drawn on the grass.*)

**Coconut:** Why not? You love playing hopscotch.

**Toola:** No, *you* do because you always win!

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) Hey, girls. (*crossing to them, two books in tow*) Couldn’t help but overhear. You might want to take a breather. (*floating one down to them, opening it*) Maybe read Rainbow Dash’s chapter on Rainbow Falls? It might help. (*They smile.*)

**Toola:** Sure, Princess.

**Apple Bloom:** (*from o.s.*) Thanks, Twilight!

(*Pan quickly to the Cutie Mark Crusaders amid a knot of other foals; Bloom is holding a copy. On the next line, zoom out slowly to frame Twilight looking on, having crossed back to them and disposed of the other book.*)

**Bloom:** The friendship journal’s makin’ us super-popular! (*Excited murmurs.*)

**Twilight:** (*puzzled*) Oh!

**Bloom:** We were thinkin’ of puttin’ together a cutie mark summer camp. Now everypony’s definitely gonna sign up for it. This is gonna be awesome!

(*She exits with a giddy little laugh, accompanied by her two partners in mayhem, and leaves a noticeably discomfited Twilight behind. On the start of the next line, pan slightly to show Starlight approaching.*)

**Starlight:** A cutie mark camp is a great idea.

**Twilight:** Yeah, but the purpose of the journal isn’t supposed to be marketing.

(*She heads off, Starlight following with a bit of her enthusiasm sapped. Dissolve to the two walking down a street.*)

**Twilight:** I just hope those foals actually learn something from our lessons. (*Head-on close-up.*)

**Starlight:** They will. I’m sure ponies all across Equestria will—

(*Both stop short and she trails off into a cry of surprise as the camera zooms out to put an eagerly smiling stallion and mare directly in their path. Each has acquired a copy, and the next shot picks out two more stallions who have done likewise. All four keep their eyes trained on Twilight and Starlight, who glance back and forth for a long, tense moment before the former manages to inject some cheer back into her demeanor. The stallion who speaks up in response to her next words is a unicorn.*)

**Twilight:** Uh, hello! Can I…help you?

**Stallion 1:** We’re here all the way from Fillydelphia because we got copies of your friendship journal. (*Close-up of Twilight.*)

**Twilight:** Wow! How wonderful! What was your favorite friendship—

**Stallion 1:** (*from o.s., levitating it toward her*) Will you sign them?

(*The other three brandish theirs in hoof and aura, and he brings out a quill.*)

**Twilight:** (*magically opening his, taking quill*) Oh! Uh, I guess so. (*writing*) So, what did you think of the lessons?

**Stallion 1:** Oh, we haven’t read them. These are keepsakes. (*sliding his into a plastic bag*) We gotta keep them in mint condition. (*Laugh.*)

**Twilight:** (*deflated*) Oh.

(*She finishes with the last and the owners take the books and quill back.*)

**Stallion 2:** Wow, that was worth the trip.

(*All four visitors hurry away, talking and laughing among themselves, as Twilight lets go with a heavy sigh and Starlight puts a comforting hoof on her shoulder. Dissolve to them walking into view and past the Ponyville Café.*)

**Starlight:** Don’t worry, Twilight. I’m sure lots of other ponies are being inspired to be better friends.

(*They get within earshot of a table occupied by a stallion and mare, each possessing a copy, with a hedge very close by.*)

**Stallion 3:** Well, I for one found the journal terribly illuminating.

(*Twilight voices a soft gasp and darts behind the hedge for cover, followed by Starlight. Cut to a close-up of them on the start of the next line, putting the table out of view; both are smiling.*)

**Mare 1:** I agree. I’m seeing sides of these ponies I didn’t know were there. I only wish they’d left Rarity out. (*The smiles vanish; Twilight peeks around at the pair.*) *She* clearly doesn’t belong in that book with the rest of them.

(*The camera shifts to point toward the patrons from just over the shoulder of a pony at a nearby table. A newspaper is held open in the fore, with the edge of one page just in view—a review of the journal, giving one and a half stars out of five.*)

**Stallion 3:** Oh, I know. Who does she think she is? Certainly she did a fine job setting up the Ponyville Days celebration, but does she really believe it was a success just because of her? (*snorting laughter*) The nerve!

(*A reference to the festival that figured in “Simple Ways.” Pan slightly to frame the holder of the periodical—who also happens to be the target of his derision. Rarity’s constricted eyes fill with tears, and she fights a silent battle to keep herself together but loses after a few seconds. The paper is flung away, and she gallops off wailing at the top of her lungs. Twilight and Starlight aim worried looks after her from their vantage point.*)

**Twilight:** But that’s not what she was saying! (*calling after her*) Rarity!

(*The two mares transfer their concerned looks to one another before the view fades to black.*)

Act Two

(*Opening shot: fade in to Rarity fleeing from the scene of her drubbing, still in fine voice and now with her mascara running badly.*)

**Twilight:** Oh, poor Rarity! She overheard all the mean things those ponies were saying! She must be devastated! I’m going after her.

**Starlight:** (*menacingly, pivoting toward table*) Go ahead. I’m gonna have a chat with these two.

(*Her teacher gives her a firm nod and peels out, leaving her to zero in on the offenders. After a few more screaming, blubbering seconds of Rarity’s flight, Twilight begins to close the gap.*)

**Twilight:** Rarity, wait!

(*She is promptly stopped dead in her tracks—and plowed back several yards to boot—when Pinkie slams head-on into her. The two end up in the middle of the road, Twilight on her back with Pinkie pinning her down.*)

**Pinkie:** Twilight, isn’t it amazing? Our journals are everywhere!

**Twilight:** Pinkie, I-I’ve got to—

**Pinkie:** Ponies keep stopping by to tell me my entries are hilarious!

(*One stallion eases up to the scene, journal and pencil in hoof; he holds the former out to her, and she takes the latter in her teeth to autograph it. Twilight gets upright, brushing away some dust, and Pinkie turns to throw a foreleg across her shoulders; the pencil is now gone.*)

**Pinkie:** I even had somepony come all the way from Las Pegasus to say how much he liked my lessons!

**Twilight:** (*relieved, as Pinkie backs off*) I am so glad to hear some ponies are being inspired by the journal.

**Mare voice:** Hey, look!

(*Zoom out slightly. The speaker is Cherry Berry, one of several ponies who have congregated around Twilight and Pinkie. All have their own copies.*)

**Cherry:** There’s Pinkie Pie, the funny one! (*Spectators laugh uproariously.*)

**Pinkie:** (*nudging Twilight*) Giggly feedback is the best kind! (*Again.*)

**Twilight:** Well, at least you’re getting a positive reaction. I just saw Rarity, and I’m afraid this whole journal thing really upset her.

**Pinkie:** Aw, that’s too bad.

(*The friends are caught very much off guard by an ensuing round of guffaws, even though neither has so much as smiled on their last exchange. Pinkie does not speak again until this has subsided.*)

**Pinkie:** Wait. That wasn’t even funny. (*But the crowd still gets a rise out of it.*)

**Twilight:** (*hesitantly, touching Pinkie’s chest*) Oo-kay. Well, I guess I’ll catch you later.

(*Her slightly fearful grin is met with dead silence from the peanut gallery, broken only by a cough from Cherry. The Princess grumbles to herself and plods away.*)

**Pinkie:** (*waving*) Yep! Bye, Twilight!

(*Here come the laughs again, falling on her ears like a great annoyance and prompting her to back slowly away. A mare addresses her closest neighbor, Berry Punch.*)

**Mare 2:** Classic Pinkie! Oh, she’s even funnier in real life!

**Pinkie:** *YOU’VE KNOWN ME FOR YEARS!!*

(*A beat of total quiet, followed by another salvo of roaring mirth. Dissolve to Twilight walking grumpily through the outskirts of town, her deep blue funk being interrupted by a sudden shower of book pages landing on and around her.*)

**Rainbow:** (*from o.s.*) Maybe it’s time to call it a day.

(*Twilight lifts off, the papers fluttering off her noggin. Cut to the blue flyer standing on a cloud before two pegasus fillies armed with a copy of the journal. The one who speaks up has a slight speech impediment, not reproduced here, that causes several of her R’s to sound as W’s.*)

**Filly:** I ripped out all the Twilight Sparkle lessons ’cause they were getting in the way of the good ones. (*The other filly nods; Twilight flies up to them.*)

**Twilight:** What do you mean, you skipped the lessons? We’ve all had valuable experiences.

**Rainbow:** (*to fillies*) Hey, here’s a great idea. (*circling behind, pushing them toward Twilight*) Why don’t you guys talk to *Twilight* for a while, so I can get back to things like working and napping and, well, uh, pretty much anything else?

(*The two youngsters have now turned to face her and shut the book; Twilight touches down behind them.*)

**Filly:** Aw, we don’t wanna hear her boring lessons! (*opening book; Twilight glares daggers at her*) Come on. Tell us again about when you met Daring Do!

**Rainbow:** (*chuckling weakly*) Again? (*She touches down on the cloud.*) Haven’t we already covered that one…a couple dozen times?

**Filly:** (*gasping excitedly*) We can’t get enough of it! (*slyly; close-up of the pair*) Come on. You don’t want to disappoint your fans.

(*Tilt up from them and stop on Twilight, who looks behind herself to find quite a few school-age pegasi now hovering just past the cloud’s edge. All are holding journals, and one also sports a cap with blue wings and the colors of Rainbow’s mane. The recipient of all this unexpected adulation groans softly to herself and thinks fast before continuing, while gray clouds start to drift past in the background.*)

**Rainbow:** It’s just that I, uh…uh, really need to get those storm clouds back in their…pens.

**Filly:** Oh, cool! We’ll come along. You can tell us the story there!

(*Rainbow lifts off on the end of this, after which the whole group starts to follow, cheering and starting up a loose chant of “Rainbow Dash! Rainbow Dash!” Twilight remains on the cloud for an indecisive moment, then gathers her indignation and flies after them, only to stop short at the sound of a commotion below.*)

**Twilight:** Oh, what’s going on now?

(*Cut to an overhead shot of a street just past the edge of the town square. Quite a few ponies have gathered at the doorstep of a particular house, and Twilight swoops down for a better look. She comes in for a landing at a distance before the camera cuts to a close-up of Fluttershy, huddled and shaking on the step.*)

**Fluttershy:** Please! Just leave me alone!

(*Twilight levitates two members of the crowd out of her own way and steps up.*)

**Twilight:** Fluttershy! What’s wrong?

**Stallion 4:** We want answers!

**Mare 3:** Yeah, we’re entitled to know!

**Twilight:** What is it, everypony?

**Mare 3:** We want to know why Fluttershy keeps learning the same thing over and over again. Be assertive already!

**Stallion 5:** Even I’ve learned more than she has. (*Starlight walks up.*) Why can’t I be in the book?

**Starlight:** What?! Really? (*She suspends him in her field.*) Are you attacking my friend because you want to be in a book? (*Fluttershy stands up.*)

**Fluttershy:** It’s okay. I got this, girls.

(*She takes a deep breath and puts some steel into her voice.*)

**Fluttershy:** Listen up! I *am* more assertive! (*crossing to Mare 3*) And yes, it took me a while to get there. (*Starlight sets Stallion 5 down; he bugs out during the following.*) But can you honestly say that *you* could learn something one time and completely change who you are?

(*The overly critical reader finds herself at a total loss for words under the yellow pegasus’ penetrating glare.*)

**Fluttershy:** I didn’t think so.

**Stallion 4:** Wow. You’re *way* different from the Fluttershy in the book. (*She smiles.*) I don’t know how I feel about that.

(*The smile turns into a dispirited moan, and she takes to the air amid murmurs from the remaining out-of-towners.*)

**Twilight:** (*to Starlight*) It feels like everypony in Equestria is missing the “friendship” part of the friendship journals.

(*Dissolve to the exterior of the Carousel Boutique. Zoom in slowly as the two approach the front door, then cut to within one of the rooms inside as its door swings open. A pincushion and spool of thread are flung into view, barely missing both mares’ heads when they peek in. The place is considerably darker than usual.*)

**Twilight:** Rarity, are you all right?

(*She ducks with a yell of alarm to avoid an incoming bolt of fabric, a sound as of shattering ceramic drifting back to mark its o.s. impact. The whir of a sewing machine asserts itself just before the camera cuts to behind the two new arrivals’ heads. They have entered Rarity’s upper-story workspace and living quarters, whose windows have had their curtains closed, and the dressmaker herself hunches over the device amid an utter bedlam of materials and half-finished outfits draped on pony mannequins. Her mane and tail are a frazzled wreck.*)

**Twilight:** What are you doing?

(*Rarity turns to them, exposing a face smeared with runny mascara and set in an expression that is the pinnacle of mental derangement. Draped across her hooves is a long swath of fabric stitched together from several others that have no earthly hope of coordinating.*)

**Rarity:** Why, I’m creating a gown, darling!

**Twilight:** For what?

**Rarity:** I don’t know! I’m stress-sewing! (*She laughs madly to herself as the folds fall over her.*)

**Twilight:** Stress-sewing? (*Rarity crosses to her and Starlight.*)

**Rarity:** When I overheard those two at the café, I suddenly understood why I’ve been getting cancellations for days! (*Pace the floor.*)

**Starlight:** What? Why are ponies canceling their orders?

(*The crazed fashionista turns one mannequin’s head to face them.*)

**Rarity:** Because! (*crumpling to floor*) Nopony likes me anymore! They’re boycotting me!

(*With a feral snarl, she snaps to her hooves and gallops over to peek out through one set of curtains. The sound of an angry crowd wafts up to her; cut to just outside this window as Twilight joins her at it, then zoom out quickly to ground level. Several ponies have gathered on the lawn, carrying signs that depict a red circle-and-slash superimposed on a silhouette of Rarity’s head. Inside, Twilight crosses to the now-closed door.*)

**Twilight:** I’m sure if I go out there and talk to those ponies, they’ll see that they’re being unreasonable.

(*She does not even get hoof to knob before the door is flung open, pinning her between it and the wall. Applejack stands at the threshold, heaving for breath and with her mane/tail badly out of order.*)

**Applejack:** I need a hundred blankets, and I need ’em now! (*She spots the hoof/wing edges protruding beyond the door.*) Sorry, Twilight.

(*As Applejack races into the room, it swings back partway to expose her half-flattened form and the venomous look on her face. Rarity has gone back to her sewing machine.*)

**Rarity:** Right away, pony who still likes me! (*Supplies are levitated up; Applejack reaches the fabric rack.*)

**Applejack:** I don’t need nothin’ fancy.

(*She nips the closest stack of folded cloths off the shelves, drops them on her back, and hurries for the door.*)

**Twilight:** What’s the matter, Applejack? (*Applejack stops.*)

**Applejack:** I’m popular, Twilight. I’m popular and I don’t like it one bit! (*Out she goes.*)

**Starlight:** (*to Twilight*) You go ahead. I’ll stay here.

(*The violet Princess takes a quick breath to settle her nerves and gallops off, leaving her student to wonder just how much worse this can get. Dissolve to a stretch of Sweet Apple Acres land; a couple of stallions stroll blissfully through the fields, followed by Big Macintosh as he strains to carry their luggage. Each has a sheet of paper taped to his haunch, one showing half a red apple, the other two apples and two hearts. The excited chattering of a crowd is heard in the near distance, and a pan to the main barn picks out the multitude that has gathered on the grounds. Regardless of age, gender, or race, they all have one thing in common: an apple-related mark on a page stuck to the haunch. Applejack has returned, and Granny Smith wearily brings out a tray of food for the ones gathered at a long dinner table. Twilight arrives to survey the scene and notices several of the newcomers taking it easy among the apple trees. Pan quickly from this bunch to the table; Granny’s tray gets picked clean within seconds of its being set down, and she glumly picks it up for another trip to the kitchen. Another quick pan shifts the focus to several others enjoying cider from a keg tended by a gloomy-faced Bloom. She runs a glass full for a stallion, who chugs it down and holds it under the tap, and she snarls to herself while giving him a refill.*)

(*Having seen quite enough freeloading for the moment, Twilight crosses the barnyard to Applejack, who has begun to distribute the blankets she took from the Carousel Boutique to ponies as they pass.*)

**Twilight:** Applejack, who *are* all these ponies?

**Applejack:** They call themselves the Sweet Apple Admirers. They say they read my journal entries, and they felt like a part of the family. And now they actually want to *become* part of the family!

(*As she gives away the last blanket, one mare crowds in alongside, grinning for the camera that she holds up and aims at herself and Applejack. The workhorse slaps on a big fake grin just in time for the flash, but lets it crumble just as quickly afterward.*)

**Twilight:** Your journal entries? (*Applejack pushes a tub of apples across the yard with her head.*)

**Applejack:** (*rapid fire, bitterly, as ponies help themselves*) Yeah, you know, all the stuff about how friends are like family and whatnot?

**Twilight:** Can’t you get rid of them?

**Applejack:** (*half-crazed, pulling two fillies close*) And kick out my own family?

(*Granny trudges past, dirty dishes stacked high on back and head.*)

**Applejack:** (*galloping after her*) Granny Smith! Hang on! Let me help!

**Mare 4:** There she is! (*Applejack races by.*)

**Crowd:** YEE-HAA!!

(*Pan from them to Twilight, who grimaces fearfully at the craziness that has affected all her friends due to this publishing project.*)

**Twilight:** Oh, I wish we’d never released that journal.

(*Fade to black.*)

Act Three

(*Opening shot: fade in to Twilight, sitting on a couch in her bedchamber within the Castle and staring despondently out the window. Zoom in slowly, then cut to just outside it, the camera angled to catch Starlight’s entrance from the corridor.*)

**Starlight:** (*slightly muffled by glass*) There you are! Okay. I just left Rarity, I-I think she’s doing better, and…ooh, boy. (*Cut to her, heard clearly.*) Window-staring, huh? Was it that bad at Sweet Apple Acres?

(*A balloon marked with the anti-Rarity protesters’ symbol floats up beyond the panes.*)

**Twilight:** It’s bad everywhere! I thought I was doing something good. I thought I was helping! (*pacing*) How could our friendship journal have led to so much… (*She magically brandishes the original.*) …anti-friendship?!? (*Starlight pushes it down.*)

**Starlight:** Oh, Twilight, i-it’s not your fault.

**Twilight:** (*pulling at ears*) Of course it’s my fault! If I hadn’t had the big idea to make copies, none of this would be happening! I’m afraid I made life awful for my friends! (*She lets her head drop.*)

**Starlight:** (*stroking her mane*) I really think you’re being too hard on yourself. (*Twilight snaps up to face her.*)

**Twilight:** Am I?!?

(*Any further debate is curtailed by a distant knock. Cut to an extreme close-up of the front doors, which swing open under Twilight’s control to reveal her and Starlight standing just inside the entrance. Both faces register surprise and Twilight lets out a yelp just before the camera zooms out to put a clamoring mob on the steps. Applejack’s hat and the heads of Fluttershy and Rainbow can immediately be discerned in the front row, the blue pegasus having donned her favorite black sunglasses, and a slow pan across that rank tells it all. Pinkie and Rarity wear hooded cloaks to disguise themselves, Pinkie sporting oversized eyeglasses and Rarity with her messy makeup cleaned away, Applejack and Fluttershy are exhausted, and Rainbow cowers behind her shades. All five gallop into the entrance hall, barely keeping ahead of zealots and agitators alike, and Starlight hastily uses her magic to slam the doors, breaking a mare’s pro-Twilight sign off its stick. She gives a big dopey grin to Twilight, who uncorks a heavy sigh.*)

**Applejack:** I didn’t know where else to go. I’ve got so much cookin’ and cleanin’ and family-in’ to do… (*pulling hat down over ears*) …I ain’t got time for anythin’ else!

(*She hunkers down miserably to one side of a vase standing on the floor; Fluttershy is on the other, sitting on her haunches and looking to be on her last good nerve. Up pops Pinkie’s head from the ceramic itself, having shed her cloak and spectacles.*)

**Pinkie:** At least ponies aren’t laughing every time you talk! (*Fluttershy stands.*) Not even I want to be funny all the time! I’m telling you, my days of hilariosity-ness-ness are over!

(*She drops back into the vase; cut to Rainbow, now in a hover and without her shades.*)

**Rainbow:** You think you’ve got problems? (*touching down*) I know I’m awesome, but I can’t even go to the bathroom without somepony trying to tell me how cool I am.

(*She takes note of a length of fabric that extends into view toward her; zoom out to show it attached to a multi-layered mishmash of a gown worn by Rarity. She has shucked out of her cloak and stacked no fewer than three different hats atop her disheveled mane.*)

**Rainbow:** Uh, Rarity? What are you wearing?

**Rarity:** My emotions, darling! (*Float up a measuring tape.*) Stress *couture*! (*Cut to Fluttershy.*)

**Fluttershy:** I don’t know what I’m gonna do if I have to defend myself one more time!

(*On the end of this, the tape makes its way over and starts to take a few measurements; she regards it with pure hostility, then gives Rarity a dose of the same.*)

**Rarity:** Hm? Oh, uh, sorry, darling. Force of habit.

(*Twilight risks pulling aside the curtains over one window, only for a knot of ponies to mash themselves against the glass and shout mixed threats and adoration. She pushes the cloth back into place just as quickly and wheels away from the window in a fright. Cut to a slow pan across the rest of the gang—skittish Rainbow, Rarity curled up and rocking back and forth, sullen Fluttershy, snoozing Applejack, Pinkie trying to emerge from her hiding vase and falling across Applejack to wake her up. Starlight watches these developing mental breakdowns with clear concern as Twilight crosses to her.*)

**Starlight:** Okay, so maybe they are having a hard time with it. That doesn’t mean you did anything wrong.

**Twilight:** Yes, I did! Releasing the journal was my idea, and it backfired in ways I could never have imagined!

**Starlight:** It’s not your fault! It’s everypony else’s! They’re just focusing on the wrong things and—

(*She cuts herself off sharply with a gasp as a few synapses fire.*)

**Starlight:** Wait here! I’ve got an idea! (*She teleports away.*)

**Twilight:** I can’t wait any longer. I’ve got to fix this.

(*She marches off across the entrance hall, her friends gathering to watch her; Pinkie is now out of the vase. Outside, the mob is perhaps two or three rounds of invective away from moving on to actual physical violence when Twilight throws the doors open.*)

**Twilight:** Everypony, please stop!

(*No soap; they simply crowd up the steps toward her. Among them is a unicorn stallion reporter levitating a notepad and bringing a pencil out from behind his ear. Light brown coat, grayish-green mane, green eyes, loose necktie striped in two shades of green, cutie mark of a pencil within a word balloon. The mob falls silent as he speaks and begins to take notes.*)

**Reporter:** Princess Twilight, I’m with the *Canterlot Chronicle*. Quick question. What would you say to ponies who wonder why you moved to Ponyville in the first place?

**Twilight:** I moved here to learn about friendship. That’s why the journal even exists.

(*Pinkie steps up on one side to offer a reassuring smile and pat, and soon the other four co-authors are standing with them. Rarity has shed her crazy-quilt outfit, she and Applejack have groomed themselves properly, and Fluttershy is her usual sweet self again.*)

**Twilight:** It took some time for me to get the hang of it, but it was each of these ponies standing next to me who taught me the lessons in those journals. (*Cut to each in turn; she continues o.s.*) Applejack, Pinkie Pie, Rainbow Dash, Rarity, and Fluttershy too. (*Back to her.*) Then it was all of you. I’ve learned so much from—

**Reporter:** What I mean is, some ponies would argue that it doesn’t seem believable that the six of you would be friends.

**Twilight:** Believable?

**Reporter:** (*putting pencil behind ear, briefly floating up a journal*) Well, sure. I read this journal cover to cover, and I have to say, your character would have been much more interesting if she’d stayed in Canterlot.

**Twilight:** (*needled*) My character? We are real ponies! This journal is a record of things that actually happened to us! We made mistakes, and we learned from them!

**Stallion 3:** What about Rarity? Are we really supposed to believe she learned anything she wrote in there?

(*On the start of the next line, cut to a trio of airborne pegasus foals, the two fillies who refused to leave Rainbow alone in Act Two and a colt. The one who did the speaking in that scene now wears a T-shirt marked with the ace flyer’s face inside a heart, and the colt wears sunglasses in her favorite style and carries a sign with her cutie mark.*)

**Filly:** That’s why you want to be Team Dash! She’s the only one who didn’t really need to learn anything, because she was already so cool.

**Mare 5:** (*poking at journal*) Twilight was better before she got wings!

**Mare 3:** Fluttershy is just so painfully shy, it’s hard to relate! I mean, come on!

(*The arguments break out anew, and sweat begins to run down Twilight’s face as she glances fearfully from side to side and the camera zooms in slowly.*)

**Twilight:** Wait a minute, everypony!

**Stallion 6:** (*frantically, hooves to head*) Are Pinkie Pie and Applejack related, or what?

(*In the tumult, one copy is thrown free to land before the six friends, open and with its cover facing up. Zoom out to show it lying only a few feet from Twilight, who looks around herself in vain for some relief from all this madness.*)

**Twilight:** Listen to me! (*echoing*) LISTEN TO ME!

***Stoptime acoustic guitar/string melody, moderate 4 (B minor)***

(*The crowd instantly shuts up; she points out the dropped journal.*)

**Twilight:** I never claimed to be perfect, my mistakes are all written in ink

None of us claim to be perfect, and it’s sad if that’s what you all think

***Stoptime ends; electric bass, light percussion, piano in***

(*walking among the crowd*)

Our flaws help to make us special, they bond us and keep us strong

(*The other five smile at each other.*)

Our flaws are what brought us together, so stop acting like something’s wrong

***Piano out; mandolin, full percussion in***

(*She teleports back to them.*)

**All six:** We’re not flawless, we’re a work in progress

(*Fluttershy and Rainbow sing to one another, each appearing against a background of the other’s coat color in a split screen. A 180-degree turn of the dividing line erases them, but they step back out from it on each other’s side and share a winking embrace.*)

We’ve got dents and we’ve got quirks, but it’s our flaws that make us work, yeah

(*The six again.*)

We’re not flawless, we’re a work in progress

(*They are reflected in the six-pointed pink star on the journal’s cover; zoom out as it opens, a rainbow-streaked mountain skyline popping up.*)

So tell me what flaws you got too, ’cause I still like what’s flawed about you

(*Rainbow zooms into view, following the bright arc into the sky until it disappears behind a billboard.*)

***Strings out***

**Rainbow:** They say I’m a big shot, that my ego’s the size of a whale

(*The display shows her in bigger-than-life detail, including sunglasses; she flies off.*)

**Billboard Rainbow:** (*raising/lowering shades*)

My confidence comes off as cocky, but it gives me the courage to fail

***Strings in***

(*The entire scene lifts out of view to reveal Rarity draped across a couch under a spotlight. Close-up.*)

**Rarity:** Sure, I can be a drama queen, a bit stuck-up, it’s true

(*Zoom out; the furniture has been replaced by Applejack, who bucks her off her back.*)

**Applejack:** And I can be too eager to please, there’s such thing as bein’ too honest, too,

’cause

(*As the crowd watches, unsure of what to make of all of this, Applejack and Pinkie step up to each other. A split screen puts each against the other’s coat color, Pinkie making a silly face; when the divider spins, Applejack emerges first from the pink side and Pinkie tackles her.*)

**All six:** We’re not flawless, we’re a work in progress

We’ve got dents and we’ve got quirks, but it’s our flaws that make us work, yeah

(*The six again.*)

We’re not flawless, we’re a work in progress

(*They are reflected in the star on the cover; when it opens this time, a rain of balloons flies up and leaves behind two Pinkies in a psychiatrist’s office setting. The one on the couch sings the next verse, while the other wears Groucho Marx joke glasses and takes notes.*)

So tell me what flaws you got too, ’cause I still like what’s flawed about you

***Instrumentation drops back sharply, then gradually builds again***

***Backing vocal accents under next verse***

**Pinkie:** Ponies think I’m all bubbles and laughter, that I don’t seem sincere

(*A third Pinkie pushes the whole scene up and out of view, then pulls Twilight and Rainbow to herself for a hug.*)

I might joke around a little too much, but I’m just so happy you’re here

(*A storm of bubbles rises past the camera; behind it, wipe to Fluttershy standing within an open clamshell. She rises into the night sky, Twilight’s face forming from the stars.*)

**Fluttershy:** It took me a while to be confident, to really come out of my shell

(*A teleport, and all six are back together; now Twilight and Rarity face each other.*)

**Twilight:** But nopony has to be perfect, by now don’t you know us so well, because, yeah

(*A split screen puts Twilight against a light blue background and Rarity against a pink one, and they emerge from these sides of the dividing line after it spins to clear them out. Twilight reads a book at first, but Rarity sets it aside with her magic so they can embrace.*)

**All six:** We’re not flawless, we’re a work in progress

We’ve got dents and we’ve got quirks, but it’s our flaws that make us work, yeah

(*The six again, standing back to back in a small cluster as the camera tracks around them.*)

We’re not flawless, we’re a work in progress

(*They are reflected in the star on the cover; when it opens this time, all six pop up.*)

So tell me what flaws you got too

**Pinkie:** You got too

**All six:** ’Cause I still like what’s flawed about you

(*Cut to an overhead shot of them in the same pose, now standing at the base of the front steps, and zoom out slowly.*)

***Song ends on a quiet chord in D major***

(*Close-up of Twilight as she approaches the crowd.*)

**Twilight:** So you see, everypony? None of us ever claimed to be perfect. Without our flaws, there wouldn’t be any friendship lessons to learn. (*Slow pan across the other five; she continues o.s.*) Without our flaws, there probably wouldn’t be any friendships at all.

(*The throng ponders this lesson for a beat—and then goes right back to its old, raucous behavior. All six faces fall, Applejack putting a disgusted hoof to hers. Cut to inside the again-closed doors, which Twilight shoves open with her magic so they can enter and then slams. There follows a collective sigh of defeat.*)

**Rainbow:** So *that* just happened.

**Starlight:** (*from o.s.*) Girls!

(*Cut to her, rounding a corner and followed by a smiling Coconut and Toola.*)

**Starlight:** I found two ponies who have something I think you should hear.

**Toola:** Um, we just wanted to say thank you— (*Close-up.*) —to all of you. (*Pan to Coconut.*)

**Coconut:** Yeah, our friendship…well, we were having trouble until we read your journal. It showed us that friends can go through all sorts of tough times and come through stronger than before. (*Toola throws a foreleg across her shoulders.*)

**Toola:** It’s made us better friends than we’ve ever been.

**Twilight:** Really?

**Coconut, Toola:** (*nodding*) Mmm-hmm!

**Twilight:** Ooh, I can’t tell you how much it means to hear that. Thank you for telling us. We’ve had a tough couple of days, but knowing we’ve helped fillies like you…

**Applejack:** (*crossing to fillies*) …it makes everythin’ we’ve been through worth it.

**Rarity:** Absolutely. Fads come and go. (*foreleg across Applejack’s shoulders*) Friendship is forever. (*Cut to Rainbow, hovering.*)

**Rainbow:** There *are* worse things than not being able to do anything without being told I’m awesome. (*Pan/tilt down to Fluttershy.*)

**Fluttershy:** And we can’t change the way other ponies think about us, but we *can* change how we let it affect us. (*Pinkie slides over to her, holding a pie.*)

**Pinkie:** Or how we *don’t* let it affect us!

(*She smacks herself in the face with it, the tin falling away to leave the big blue eyes shining out through a layer of filling and crust, and giggles.*)

**Pinkie:** Go ahead! Laugh!

(*The war of words starts to make its way in through the doors. Pan quickly to the unruly bunch, now all but ready to go straight to open armed conflict, then cut back to a close-up of Twilight amid the pony pile.*)

**Applejack:** Reckon we still have to deal with them, don’t we?

(*Pan quickly to the unruly bunch, now all but ready to go straight to open armed conflict, then cut back to a close-up of Twilight amid the pony pile.*)

**Twilight:** Stay in the friendship moment, Applejack. They can wait a little longer.

(*Fade to black.*)