**IT ISN’T THE MANE THING ABOUT YOU**

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Prologue

(*Opening shot: fade in to a Ponyville street bristling with market stalls. The camera points out from behind a display of floral arrangements and across the way as Berry Punch steps up to survey the offerings. A moment’s indecision yields to a pleased little grin; cut to outside the stall. Rose is behind the counter, Daisy and Lily off to either side, and Berry takes a bouquet in her teeth, pays Lily, and walks off. Pan slowly away from the trio and along the sizable line of customers waiting their turn, with Diamond Tiara and her father Filthy Rich joining the end. It is daytime.*)

**Filthy:** Hmph! Looks like I’m not the only one who left Mare’s Day to the last minute.

(*Diamond rolls her eyes at his lack of planning. Meanwhile, Bon Bon has reached the counter and is at a complete loss in the face of the brightly colored options.*)

**Bon Bon:** There’s just so many. How can I choose?

(*She is promptly joined by a knot of ponies all clamoring for assistance.*)

**Rose:** Now hang on, everypony! (*Silence; she tacks on a big smile.*) We’ll help all of you! (*Bon Bon leans into her face.*)

**Bon Bon:** *HOW?!?!?*

**Rarity:** (*from o.s.*) What I would do…

(*A collective gasp, and the crowd parts to reveal her standing proudly at its rear, a faint corona shining briefly around her and fading away.*)

**Rarity:** …is pick flowers that accentuate my mane. (*She flicks a curl and advances toward the stall.*) It makes for a captivating color story when you present them to whomever they’re intended.

(*She gives Bon Bon’s nose a playful little poke on the end of this, then uses her magic to float a bunch of flowers off the display and wrap them in paper. The overjoyed earth pony clamps her jaws around the stems’ ends and hurries away.*)

**Lily:** (*happily*) That’s it!

(*The line begins to move rapidly, its shrinkage marked by two dissolves that also shift the three florists among the positions before and behind the stall. After the second dissolve, the last stallion in the queue leaves with a bouquet as Rarity telekinetically runs a brush through her mane. The shelves have been picked nearly clean.*)

**Rose:** Color consultations was [*sic*] a great idea, Rarity! Now, what can we do for you?

**Rarity:** (*tossing head*) Oh, darling, I need a dozen lavender pieces for Photo Finish’s shoot on “The Most Beautiful Manes in Equestria.”

(*The three are a bit caught out by this, finding nothing in easy reach but a single sheaf of mixed blossoms.*)

**Rarity:** I know you’re swamped, but it’s for *Vanity Mare*. (*flicking a curl*) She’s going to take pictures of my mane, so color coordination is a must.

(*She ends this line by steepling her front hooves together and offering up her best imploring grin and shining eyes. A beat of silence, and the proprietors smile.*)

**Rose:** Anything for you, Rarity.

(*The white unicorn grins dazzlingly in close-up. Behind her, the background dissolves to a roomful of indoor fans going like sixty. Every purple hair on her head and rump waves vigorously back and forth in the wash as the camera zooms out slowly; she addresses herself o.s.*)

**Rarity:** Have you a single big one? If the wind came from one direction, it would really intensify the effect.

(*Cut to just behind her shoulder; she is speaking to Mr. Breezy, the fan shop proprietor seen briefly in “The Show Stoppers.” Standing behind a counter at a cash register, he speaks with a slight Irish brogue.*)

**Mr. Breezy:** I don’t. Uh, but I could make you one. It’s not like I’ve got anything else to do.

(*She follows his glum gaze across the shop and finds it to be bereft of any other signs of life. The door opens to admit a stallion, who leaves in a very big hurry to chase down the hat that gets blown off his head by the fans.*)

**Rarity:** Hmmm…I do enjoy the windswept look, but other ponies might need to see it before they feel it.

(*Mr. Breezy ponders for a moment, then grins under the impact of an inspiration. Cut to just outside his front window; the rows of fans are swiftly yanked away in Rarity’s aura, he plops a single unit at one side, and she floats a mare mannequin with a voluminous mane/tail in to stand before it. As soon as Mr. Breezy hits the power switch, the masses of synthetic hair begin streaming wildly backward. Zoom out to frame several curious onlookers, then cut to just inside the shop. Rarity uses a bit of power to straighten Mr. Breezy’s bow tie just before door opens and they enter, instantly all a-murmur upon seeing the goods. His amazed grin is met by a supremely confident, cocked-eyebrow smile from Rarity, and he surprises her by wrapping her up in a crushing hug. Once she levitates a curl free from being pinned against her neck by his foreleg, she offers him a warm smile and reciprocates the embrace.*)

(*Dissolve to an extreme close-up of the head end of a couch as she drapes herself over it, mane unrolling indulgently across the cushion. On the start of the next line, cut to frame her in the Quills and Sofas shop and addressing its proprietor Davenport, who holds a document.*)

**Rarity:** My mane will be flowing over the *chaise* in the tableau I have in mind. But I *was* hoping to choose the color?

(*His face registers a touch of concern, and the camera zooms out to frame more of the showroom as she lets her eyes flick around it. An elderly mare is scrutinizing a different sofa, and one wall is given over to racks of the quills that constitute the other major item in his inventory.*)

**Rarity:** Could you make one in a pale yellow? I need something across the color wheel from… (*flicking a curl*) …this. (*Airy laugh.*)

**Elderly mare:** Oh, if these came in different colors, I’d buy one for every room!

**Davenport:** Hmmm…sales *have* been down. (*He thinks and mutters to himself, then smiles.*) More colors it is!

(*Rarity allows herself a pleased little grin, and the elderly mare tips some coins out of a pouch in her teeth and offers them. The grin is joined by a wink in Davenport’s direction. Dissolve to an extreme close-up of the bell hanging above a door in Sugarcube Corner. The door is thrown open to ring it, and a zoom out frames Rarity entering from outside as she runs a floating brush through her mane. Streamers line the walls and doorframe.*)

**Rarity:** Pinkie? I need to put Photo Finish in a good mood. And nothing creates a better mood than your confecti— (*staring wide-eyed*) —ooh.

(*Cut to Pound and Pumpkin Cake sitting in front of the display case. A cupcake with a lit candle has been set before each toddler, and a few bits of confetti litter the floor.*)

**Rarity:** (*from o.s.*) Am I interrupting? (*Pinkie Pie leans into view.*)

**Pinkie:** We were just celebrating the anniversary of the twins’ first sneezes!

(*Giggle; cut to a longer shot that frames the entire shop floor. Treats, gifts, and party favors cover the tables, and banners and strings of paper cutouts in the twins’ likenesses stretch overhead. Pinkie nips an accordion out of its case with her teeth, flips it back overhead, and catches its ends with her forelock and the tip of her tail while clearing her throat.*)

***Cheerful accordion/xylophone melody, leisurely 4 (F major)***

(*As she plays, she leans over to poke Pumpkin’s nose.*)

**Pinkie:** Just about one year ago, there was a tickle in your nose

(*A hug for Pound; she mashes her own nose, snorts loudly through it as she sings, and stands up to let her instrument drop.*)

You snorted through the nursery, happy sneeze-iversary

***Song ends on a B flat major chord***

(*She picks up an aerosol can, holds it in front of her face, and pretends to sneeze three times while pressing its button with her forelock. It sends out tendrils of yellow “silly string,” the last one rapidly and completely filling the screen. Snap immediately to the shop floor, now festooned with ropes of the stuff at all levels from ceiling to floor; of the four inhabitants, only Pinkie has emerged completely untouched. The can lies discarded by the accordion case.*)

**Rarity:** (*sourly*) Congratulations.

(*The twins choose this moment to blow out the candles on their cupcakes, the view snapping to black at the same moment.*)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(*Opening shot: fade in to a more-or-less empty stretch of the shop floor, seen from above. A hand mirror is shifted into view, presenting an all-too-clear image of Rarity and her gunked-up mane; she floats up her brush to attack, but only manages to get it stuck good and tight. A cry of distress gives way to an annoyed glare directed off to one side.*)

**Rarity:** Pinkie! I can’t have Photo Finish shoot my mane like this! (*Cut to frame the whole room.*) And this party string won’t come off!

**Pinkie:** Oh, that’s because it’s not just party string. It’s super-sticky celebration string!

(*Rarity lowers the mirror and lets go with a soft, menacing growl that takes the wind out of the pink pony’s sails.*)

**Pinkie:** Sorry. (*Both twins throw their cupcakes aside.*) I guess my sneeze-iversary was a little too sneeze-ebratory.

(*She offers up a weak giggle as Pumpkin jumps on the prone Pound, but Rarity’s only response is a shuddery little sigh followed by a slightly crazed grin.*)

**Rarity:** It’ll be fine, Pinkie. I will find a way to clean this up before the shoot tomorrow. (*She moans quietly and lets the mirror drop all the way.*) Actually, you might consider doing the same.

(*Only now does the pink party expert take full notice of the twins. She darts over and tries a rapid succession of strategies to dislodge them from the floor—pull, push, kick—but they are stuck fast due to the contents of that aerosol can. Brute force yields to brainpower in due time.*)

**Pinkie:** If only we had some kinda super-sudsy mane-conditioning shampoo for you, *and* a magical cleaning remover potion for me!

(*One puzzled shrug later, she whips a crowbar out of her mane and starts trying to pry the babies loose as Rarity gasps happily.*)

**Rarity:** That’s it! We’ll pay a visit to Zecora! She’s a wonder with a caldron. I’m sure she can mix up a fix for both of us.

(*Having had no luck so far, Pinkie stomps both front hooves on the free end of her crowbar and finally gets Pound and Pumpkin loose—from the floor, at least. However, they end up stuck to either side of her head.*)

**Pinkie:** (*gesturing toward counter*) That’s good, because it would take forever to yank all those baked goods out of this super-sticky celebration string.

(*Zoom in on one open box, heavily encrusted with the adhesive, then cut back to the four.*)

**Rarity:** (*hesitantly*) I think you may still have some baking to do.

(*Dissolve to an extreme close-up of a patch of spiderwebs at ground level on an outdoor path. A bit of magic pulls them up and away as Rarity’s hooves advance into view, and Pinkie’s own four hop blithely after them. Pairs of glowing yellow eyes open in the shadows of the undergrowth, and a long shot establishes the path as leading through the Everfree Forest. More eyes peer inquisitively after the two mares as they push through a stretch of overgrown foliage. Pinkie has removed the twins from her head, but now has quite a load of twigs and leaves caught up in her mane and tail.*)

**Rarity:** I do wish Zecora lived in town. One shouldn’t have to brave the darkest part of the forest for shampoo. (*Pinkie drops into a walk.*)

**Pinkie:** Do you think Photo Finish would want to take a picture of my mane?

(*Both stop and she fluffs it with a grin, the camera cutting to a close-up; a bird emerges from the thick bushes and flies away past her. Zoom out to frame Rarity on the start of the next line.*)

**Rarity:** W—um… (*Clear throat.*) …I’m not sure that your style is quite right for this particular photo essay. (*walking on*) Photo Finish traveled everywhere in her search for the most beautiful of manes.

(*Pinkie shakes her head vigorously, sending a twig flying to smack against one pair of prying eyes and eliciting an animal whimper. In a head-on close-up, she catches up to Rarity, all the debris now gone from her mane and tail.*)

**Pinkie:** Even Yakyakistan?

**Rarity:** Well, yaks don’t have manes *per se*, and I’m not sure their style is quite what she’s looking for either.

(*A splash brings them both up short; tilt down to frame the puddle she has just stepped in, then cut to a close-up of her staring disconsolately into its wavering surface.*)

**Rarity:** Though at this moment, neither is mine! (*Pinkie’s hoof plants itself in the water.*)

**Pinkie:** (*from o.s.*) Don’t worry. (*Both again.*) Zecora will absi-tively be able to help! (*She hops ahead.*)

**Rarity:** I’m sure you’re right.

(*She leans down to one group of eyes with sudden great animosity.*)

**Rarity:** Listen, spooky eyes! Why don’t you take a picture? It will last longer!

(*They all clear out in a burst of frightened squeaks and chitters, and her outrage melts into self-pity just as rapidly.*)

**Rarity:** On second thought, don’t. (*galloping off*) Getting my picture taken in this state is what I’m trying to avoid!

(*Dissolve to the exterior of Zecora’s hut, zooming in slowly.*)

**Rarity:** (*voice over*) Are you certain that’s safe?

(*On the end of this line, cut to an extreme close-up of a handle dangling from the end of a vine rope inside. A striped hoof reaches up to pull this; tilt up through the height of a bamboo framework and stop on a wooden mug poised above a hollowed-out vertical branch. The rope runs over a pulley and is tied to the mug’s handle, and Zecora’s tug tips it over to empty the violet contents into the branch; two lower outlets send the liquid in different directions as a puff of vapor wafts up.*)

**Zecora:** (*from o.s.*) I’m sure they seem strange, but my methods are mine.

(*One flow sets a small wheel to spinning and turns yellow and then green; the other touches three hanging leaves, turning them to dust, and goes green before returning to violet.*)

After all, I’ve been doing this for quite a long time.

(*They land in dispensers above separate caldrons and drip slowly in. After stirring one of them with a mouth-held ladle, she transfers a load to one of two empty bottles on a waiting stool. Cut to Pinkie and Rarity, standing before a bare table; the potion expert sets this bottle, now full and corked, before them.*)

**Pinkie:** I’ll have those cupcakes cleaned off in no time!

**Rarity:** You *really* should bake new ones.

**Pinkie:** Nah.

(*The second bottle goes on the table, also filled and stoppered. Both are identical in every detail, including the color of the liquid within, and neither bears any label or identifying mark.*)

**Zecora:** (*to Rarity*) For your mane, of course, just soap will do,

So use my super-sudsy shampoo.

**Rarity:** (*laughing, toying with mane*) Oh, what a relief! I can’t tell you how worried I was that my mane wouldn’t be ready for the shoot.

(*It takes her a bit of effort to pull her hoof loose; she smears its residue of celebration string onto her chest with an airy giggle.*)

**Zecora:** You were right to be concerned.

(*running a hoof through her mane*) Manes are tricky, I have learned.

**Rarity:** (*groaning loudly*) Pfft! Tell me about it!

**Zecora:** Cleaning is simple, but a magical fix

(*pacing away*) Could cause any number of troublesome tics.

**Pinkie:** Really? (*Zecora is back at the caldrons; zoom in slowly.*)

**Zecora:** Ohhh, there are tales I could tell to make your hair stand on end.

Horrifying, terrifying attempts to mane-mend!

(*Cut to Pinkie and Rarity.*)

**Rarity:** Well, I do enjoy a good yarn, but I’m not sure I could take any more mane fright today.

**Pinkie:** Well, I *love* a good scary story! (*Giggle.*)

(*The white mare magically lifts one bottle from the table and starts for the door, but stops at Zecora’s next words.*)

**Zecora:** (*from o.s.*) There’s the contagious frizz that spreads friend-to-friend,

(*crossing to table*) Or the story of the infinitely splitting end.

(*Rarity rears up with an affrighted cry, jolting the table and sending the bottles bouncing across the floor to stop at Zecora’s hooves. They are quickly levitated back up, and she keeps one in her aura while setting the other on the table with a shaky little laugh.*)

**Rarity:** (*hastily, turning to door*) Mmm—yes, well, very entertaining, uh, thanks for the shampoo, ta-ta!

(*One bound takes her out into the wild woodlands; the sound of her pounding hooves fades as Pinkie turns to Zecora with a smile.*)

**Pinkie:** Anything about curls that keep on curling until your whole body is one big curl?

(*She demonstrates the idea by elongating her neck and coiling it into a spring. The zebra is more than a bit surprised, but comes up with a humoring chuckle.*)

**Zecora:** There is one story I nearly forgot,

Of an earth pony who needed to clean up her shop.

**Pinkie:** Wooow! That’s just what I have to do! Ha! Weird.

(*Accompanied by her body whirling in place while her head remains stationary, so that she ends up with her anatomy back to normal. This line brings a slightly unamused look from Zecora, but it lasts only a moment before she smiles and paces the floor.*)

**Zecora:** Perhaps it’d be better if I were more clear.

(*She indicates her open door.*)

You can’t clean up Sugarcube Corner from here.

**Pinkie:** Gee, Zecora. I can take a hint.

(*The magenta forelock snakes around the remaining bottle and lifts it away; cut to just outside the door as she steps to the threshold.*)

**Zecora:** With just a few drops, any mess you’ll improve

If you focus on that which you want to remove.

**Pinkie:** It won’t be hard to focus on the super-sticky celebration string. (*hopping away*) It’s kinda the only thing you can see.

(*She leaves a mildly concerned zebra in her wake. Dissolve to a patch of floor within Sugarcube Corner; three cloths extend into view—one on her hoof, the others covering smaller ones—and are joined by the now-open bottle in her forelock.*)

**Pinkie:** (*from o.s., dosing each cloth*) Zecora said it would only take a few drops, but I figured we should all chip in.

(*A longer shot frames the messy shop floor; she has recruited the twins to help with the cleanup.*)

**Pinkie:** Just in case! (*scrubbing a box of cupcakes; suds start to bubble up*) Remember to only focus on the party string. We don’t want to accidentally remove anything else.

(*The babies ply their cloths on one another with a giggle, raising more bubbles, and Pinkie notices the effect on the box she is cleaning.*)

**Pinkie:** Ooooh! Sudsy!

(*She giggles merrily as soapy clouds begin to spread across the floor. A particularly large one floats up past the camera in the foreground; behind it, the view wipes to a bathroom within the Carousel Boutique. The shower is running, and Rarity is visible only as a silhouette beyond the closed curtain that encircles the bathtub. She sings to herself a bit as the camera zooms in slowly. Her bottle of Zecora’s brew sits at the edge of a mirrored vanity.*)

**Rarity:** (*tossing head*) Ah! A relaxing shower really gives you the chance to focus on the fabulosity of your mane.

(*A carefree laugh and sigh mark the magical removal of the cork and the bottle’s journey behind the curtain. She sniffs at it.*)

**Rarity:** Not the most pleasant scent— (*dumping it over her head*) —but it gets the job done.

(*She hums to herself while sending the bottle back to the vanity and lathering up. Cut to her favorite robe and a folded towel lying ready on a countertop; these are lifted away under her influence, the shower flow stopping, and the camera returns to the tub. The curtain is opened, and the mare of the house steps out wearing the robe and with her mane covered by the towel. Once she has moved o.s., the latter item is floated back to the tub and wrung out before being draped over the edge. The next shot is a close-up of the vanity mirrors; even steamed up as they are, a hazy image of Rarity and her scrambled, sodden mane can be discerned. Her field brings up a squeegee to clear the center mirror and expose what used to be an elegant coiffure. Most of her mane is simply gone, leaving only spots of stubble around her horn, and the remnants look as if they have fallen victim to a set of psychopathic hedge clippers. If the abounding soap suds from Pinkie’s cleanup campaign had suggested a mix-up of the two bottles, this revelation etches it in stone.*)

**Rarity:** My mane feels lighter alr—

(*She cuts herself off, face distorting into a stare of utmost, brain-liquefying horror. Cut to just outside the Carousel Boutique’s second-story windows and zoom out quickly to frame the entire building in time with a scream forceful enough to shake the vicinity. Snap to black, the sound becoming instantly muted and dying away a moment later.*)

Act Two

(*Opening shot: fade in to Zecora tranquilly stirring a caldron in her hut. She brings the ladle out and takes a sip just before the door behind her swings open. The interruption causes her to spit out her mouthful; on the front step is Rarity, clad in a dark gray hooded cloak that leaves only her face and hooves exposed.*)

**Rarity:** It’s important that you know that I am not pointing hooves, but—

**Zecora:** (*turning to her*) I don’t understand. Is that you, Rarity?

Why would you think to point your hooves at me?

**Rarity:** (*smiling uneasily*) Let’s just say I understand why your shampoo hasn’t made a splash in the marketplace.

(*With an almighty cringe, she lowers her hood to expose the follicular wreckage. Zecora recoils before the extent of the devastation.*)

**Rarity:** (*sighing*) Goodness, Zecora, you could at least pretend it isn’t that bad!

**Zecora:** I’m sorry, my dear, but there’s nothing to say.

You just took the wrong potion from here yesterday.

**Rarity:** (*smiling*) Oh, thank goodness! (*toying with strands*) I thought maybe your shampoo had triggered early-onset mare pattern baldness.

**Zecora:** No, this lack of hair was put into motion

When you mistakenly washed with *remover* potion. (*She crosses the hut.*)

**Rarity:** (*laughing lightly*) Oh, what a relief! (*crossing to a stool*) Well, if you could just whip up a cure, I’ll be on my way. (*sitting, levitating out an open scroll*) So much to do before the shoot tomorrow.

(*Zecora turns away from her caldron to face the ravaged unicorn.*)

**Zecora:** As I mentioned before, there’s no easy fix.

Mane-mending magic’s the trickiest of tricks.

**Rarity:** (*distractedly*) Hmm? Ooh? Uh, sorry?

(*The naturalist takes hold of Rarity’s horn and uses it to tilt her head forward for a better look, while the scroll goes to the floor.*)

**Zecora:** I doubt that your mane has left us forever.

There’s a chance we can fix it, I think, if we’re clever. (*She paces away.*)

**Rarity:** (*stammering badly*) Wait. There’s a—there’s a *chance?* (*standing on stool*) You *think?!*

**Zecora:** I need to focus if I’m to work any faster.

(*She pulls a plant bulb down from the ceiling on its stem and shakes pollen into the brew.*)

One wrong ingredient spells utter disaster.

(*As soon as she releases her grip, the bulb snaps up and out of sight.*)

You should go finish your list of to-do’s.

(*stirring*) Keep your mind off of all of these mane-losing blues.

(*Rarity grimaces fearfully and levitates her scroll. Dissolve to the flower sellers’ stall, restocked with both bouquets and customers. Bon Bon accepts one from Daisy and departs; zoom out to put Rarity in the fore, hunkered down behind an apple stall to keep a clandestine watch on the proceedings. She lets out a quivery sigh and turns away after a moment. Her hood is still down.*)

**Rarity:** There’s nothing to worry about. (*floating list out from cloak*) Zecora will have a cure before I’ve even finished my to-do’s. (*unnerved*) But I don’t know if I can even show my face looking like this!

(*A sharp gasp snaps her out of these ruminations; pan slightly to frame Caramel and a filly standing thunderstruck just behind her. The voice is his, and the youngster swiftly launches into a loud crying jag; he tries to comfort her as Rarity puts her hood up and hastens away. At the flower stall, Rose bundles up a collection of blooms for a mare, who sets her teeth into them and exits to make room for the hunched-down Rarity. Rose considers her with some trepidation, glancing at one side of her covered head and then the other before looking her straight on.*)

**Rose:** I’m sorry, miss, but I can’t match your mane if I can’t see it.

(*One white hoof goes up to push the hood back, but the big reveal is cut off by the sudden arrival of Carrot Top.*)

**Carrot:** (*fluffing her mane*) What about mine?

**Rose:** Marigold, I should think.

**Rarity:** Um, sorry, I, uh, believe it was my turn and—and I— (*stammering badly*) —I just need to pick up some— (*Rose presents a bunch to Carrot.*)

**Carrot:** Perfect!

(*As soon as she gets her jaws on them and clears off, another mare takes her place.*)

**Mare 1:** Now me!

(*Rarity tries to move up, but gets a faceful of the new arrival’s tail instead and decides to get gone, tears pooling in the blue eyes. Wipe to just inside the closed door of Mr. Breezy’s shop; a burst of magic turns the knob to open the way for a re-hooded Rarity. The sound of a running fan is heard, and on the start of the next line, the camera cuts to the stallion in charge and a trio of ponies, all watching the mannequin/fan display that Rarity and Mr. Breezy set up in the window.*)

**Mare 2:** It’s wonderful how this display shows that your fans provide just the right amount of air.

**Mr. Breezy:** (*tipping cap*) Well, I owe it all to Rarity.

(*Puzzlement flickers over his face; cut to his perspective as Rarity joins the group.*)

**Rarity:** Oh, so kind of you to say. I-I—

**Mr. Breezy:** (*holding up a hoof*) Uh, indness has nothing to do with it. (*Back to him.*) Rarity always knows how to make something look its best, probably because she looks so good herself. (*nudging her knowingly; she looks bashfully away*) That ain’t something us non-fabulous folk here can understand.

(*The use of that adjective toward her brings up a stricken little gasp.*)

**Rarity:** Non-fabulous?

(*Sounds of agreement rise from the three browsing ponies, but quickly subside as she slinks away with her head hung low. Wipe to a head-on close-up of her walking down a street, casting anxious glances from side to side and raising a hoof to keep others from getting a good look at her face. A wave of surprised murmurs stops her in her tracks; the source proves to be a considerable line outside Quills and Sofas. Zoom in slowly on Davenport at the door; a yellow-upholstered item is prominently placed in the front window, matching Rarity’s Act One request.*)

**Davenport:** Now I appreciate everypony’s interest in our new sofa colors, but the yellow one is spoken for. (*Rarity puts her head up at the back of the crowd.*)

**Rarity:** (*softly*) Oh, thank you, Davenport. Um, perhaps I can pick it up once everypony lea—

**Berry:** I’ll give you twice whatever the pony who wants to buy the yellow one is paying!

**Mare 3:** Three times!

**Rarity:** (*normal volume, flustered*) But—but—I—I—

**Davenport:** Sold!

(*He pivots to enter the shop, followed by all the customers. As Rarity turns to leave, one of them steps on the hem of her cloak, causing the hood to drop around her shoulders. Eyes swivel her way, voices gasp in shock, and Rarity manages only a little gasp as she covers her head again. She then flees the scene with a cry of terror.*)

(*Dissolve to the upper reaches of the library in the Castle of Friendship and tilt down slowly to frame an overhead shot of the floor. Rarity has hunkered into one of the well-padded armchairs around a table stacked with books, her hood back up, and Twilight Sparkle and Starlight Glimmer are on hand to listen.*)

**Rarity:** I can’t believe how differently ponies treat you when you can’t command their attention. (*She buries her head in her forelegs; ground level.*)

**Twilight:** Are you sure that’s what happened?

**Starlight:** Wait. You can’t command ponies’ attention because your mane’s messed up?

(*She very nearly misses the “cut it out” gesture that Twilight frantically sends her way.*)

**Rarity:** (*acidly*) “Messed up.”

(*She straightens and throws back her hood, levitating a reading lamp closer so that its glare throws her features into sharp relief.*)

**Rarity:** (*crazed*) Does this look “messed up” to you?!?

(*Twilight and Starlight gasp at the sight, and Rarity’s fit breaks just as quickly as it came, the lamp settling back into place.*)

**Rarity:** Honestly! How hard is it to pretend it’s not so bad? (*She picks listlessly at a strand.*)

**Starlight:** Hard.

**Rarity:** If today is any indication of how ponies will treat me from now on, I can’t simply wait to see if my mane grows back!

(*Pulling the hood up, she contracts into a little dark gray ball of misery. The Princess and her student exchange concerned looks before the former moves toward the chair.*)

**Twilight:** (*touching Rarity gently*) I’m sorry, Rarity. I’m sure nopony means to make you feel worse than you already do. (*Starlight takes her place.*)

**Starlight:** Didn’t you say Zecora was working on a cure?

(*The edge of the hood shifts just enough for two narrowed blue eyes to glare out from beneath.*)

**Rarity:** (*dramatically, sitting up, throwing cloak wide*) Yes, well, even if everypony isn’t utterly indifferent to my presence, Zecora might not be able to fix *this* in time for the shoot!

(*She pushes the hood down on “this,” then throws herself at Twilight’s hooves in close-up after she finishes.*)

**Rarity:** Can’t you do a spell to restore some semblance of my mane?

(*Those blue eyes turn imploringly upward, the camera following them to stop on two properly rattled mares.*)

**Starlight:** The thing is, it’s pretty much like Zecora said. Fixing manes with magic is— (*Rarity springs to her hind legs, pitching both aside.*)

**Rarity:** (*borderline unhinged*) *Tricky!* I know! I don’t care! Make with the tricks! (*One eye starts to twitch warningly.*)

**Starlight:** (*shrugging confusedly*) Huh?

(*This last is meant for Twilight, who responds with a resigned moan and lets fly with a wide-angle blast from her horn. The energy lifts Rarity off her hooves as it fills the screen; fade immediately in to an extreme close-up of the white face with eyes shut tight. She risks a look from one, and the camera zooms out quickly as she regards the end result—a two-tone, blue-green style very similar to those worn by the denizens of the Crystal Empire. She pats her new forelock with a grin; pan quickly to a street in that far northern realm, where a stallion rubs a hoof over a scalp dotted only with stubble. The coloration of his tail matches that of Rarity’s new mane—the spell has literally snatched him bald—and he cuts loose with an ear-splitting scream as several bystanders gape at him.*)

(*Pan quickly back to Rarity, lost in the glory of once again having a mane to pat into place. Within seconds, though, it cracks and shatters like glass; the fragments rain down around her as her trashed tresses spring back into view. She turns to Starlight, who unloads a beam of her own; when this subsides, the designer is sporting a brown pompadour. The touch of a hoof reveals this to be rather more solid than she might like, and a bird flits across to start pecking furiously at it—solid wood. Rarity waves it away, and Starlight watches it exit; cut to a fresh hole in one of the doors, the exact shape and size of the ersatz toupee, marking the source of the material. After the bird flies out through the new gap, Twilight’s magic wraps itself around the handle to open the door and she steps out to look at it from the other side.*)

**Rarity:** (*from o.s.*) This won’t do! (*Cut to her, sitting by a table.*) I need an actual mane!

(*Head meets surface despondently as Twilight and Starlight cross to her.*)

**Starlight:** But it has to come from somewhere.

**Twilight:** Well, you can’t just make a mane with magic. The results could be disastrous. (*Rarity leans hard into her face.*)

**Rarity:** (*gesturing to her own head*) *More disastrous than this?!?*

(*A slam of cranium against table shakes a stack of books on it, knocks the wooden toupee free, and lets the purple mess spring forth once again. Wipe to a close-up of a stoically determined Twilight, who uncorks a fresh spell, then cut to Starlight doing the same. Both arcane power surges hit Rarity from opposite sides, narrowing their focus and growing in intensity to fill the screen. Snap to a long shot of the Castle and zoom out as blinding white light pours from every window, blanking out the entire view before subsiding. All is quiet on the royal front until masses of hair in a riot of colors spill from every available opening.*)

(*Dissolve to an extreme close-up of a few runaway locks in the library. Spike advances into view, clipping at them with scissors, and gathers up a large wad of hair; in a longer shot, he stows the load in an already-overflowing wheelbarrow and trundles it all away. A sigh from the o.s. Twilight; pan across the room to frame her and Starlight, half-knocked out in the seats surrounding the table where they first found Rarity. The subject of their experiments stands up into view and dispiritedly drapes a few loose purple strands over her forehead.*)

**Twilight:** I don’t think there’s anything else we can try.

**Rarity:** (*whirling to her; the hairs fall off*) W-We—but—but—but Zecora said there was still a chance!

(*The doors behind her swing open to admit that self-same zebra.*)

**Zecora:** At last, Rarity, I have searched for so long!

(*entering*) What I told you before was totally wrong.

**Twilight:** Zecora! (*flying to her; Rarity follows*) You found a cure? That’s amazing!

**Rarity:** (*sighing happily, hugging Zecora*) You mean I’ll get my fabulous mane back in time for the shoot?

**Zecora:** (*pushing her back*) Oh, no. I’m afraid I can’t fix it before the big shoot.

(*ruffling Rarity’s mane*) But in time, the hair will grow back from the root.

(*Horror-stricken, the unicorn slithers her hood back into place.*)

There’s no magical cure to hasten us through it,

Unless you went backward in time to undo it.

(*Rarity uncovers her head and shoots a beseeching grin to Twilight and Starlight.*)

**Starlight:** (*as Twilight shakes her head*) Uh-uh. I think we can both say that’s not a good option.

(*Once again Rarity balls up under her cloak, this time on the floor, with a moan that shifts into a gale of sobs. Twilight offers a few consoling pats as the view fades to black.*)

Act Three

(*Opening shot: fade in to the exterior of the Carousel Boutique and zoom in slowly.*)

**Rarity:** (*voice over*) I have always believed that the right outfit can make up for any other areas that are lacking.

(*Cut to her upper-story workspace/living quarters on the second half of his line, framing her as a silhouette behind a translucent folding privacy screen. Applejack, Fluttershy, and Rainbow Dash stand watching her as she floats a dress down from its resting place draped over the screen’s edge and dons it. Cut to the three-mare audience, trading uneasy looks.*)

**Rarity:** (*from o.s.*) But I will need your honest opinions.

(*Out she comes, having shed her cloak at last. The dress is sleeveless, with alternating pastel yellow and blue layers accented by magenta trim; the belt and necklace are gold, the latter set with a large jewel. She makes a half-hearted “ta-da” sound, but quickly lets her feigned enthusiasm evaporate and fluffs what is left of her mane.*)

**Rarity:** How awful is it?

**Applejack, Fluttershy, Rainbow:** (*Rainbow covering face with a wing*) Uhhh…

(*Her cat Opalescence delivers the final verdict by springing up from the bed with an affronted yowl and peeling out.*)

**Rarity:** *Oh, come on!* Can’t anypony pretend it’s not bad? (*Rainbow gradually lowers her wing.*)

**Fluttershy:** We could, um, try.

**Rainbow:** (*tentatively*) Maybe…?

**Rarity:** (*voice slowly breaking, mussing mane, pacing*) Well, if any of you have an idea how to make this disaster look good enough for Photo Finish’s piece in *Vanity Mare* on “The Most Beautiful Manes in Equestria,” I’m open to hearing it!

(*She does her turtle-in-its-shell impression for the third time on the end of this line, balling up on the floor and magically pulling the skirt forward to cover her head as she degenerates into sobs. This shot reveals that her tail, previously either covered or out of view, has fared just as poorly as her mane. The spectators advance toward her with unexpected smiles.*)

**Applejack:** Is that all?

**Rainbow:** No problem! (*Rarity peeks out.*)

**Rarity:** (*small voice*) Hmm?

(*Getting a nod from Fluttershy and a grin from Applejack, she allows herself a tiny grin with just a sliver of hope. Dissolve to a long shot of the main barn at Sweet Apple Acres and zoom in slowly. As Big Macintosh and Sugar Belle amble off toward the orchards together, Applejack leads a re-cloaked, re-hooded Rarity across the yard toward a couple of cows. One of them is being milked by a figure whose features are completely hidden by a long dress and bonnet, and a close-up from behind picks out the thick blond braids that hang down from either side of the head. Zoom out slightly to frame the pair watching.*)

**Rarity:** I don’t understand, Applejack. How is milking a cow going to help?

**Applejack:** (*crossing to milker*) That’s just it. It *looks* like we hired a new milkmaid.

(*Who chooses this moment to stand up and pivot, revealing her identity as Granny Smith.*)

**Granny:** (*flicking one braid*) This is pretty close to my color as a young’un.

(*She removes the bonnet—with the braids attached—and Rarity steps closer to examine it.*)

**Applejack:** Just a little down-home ingenuity. (*Rarity drops her hood; the bonnet goes on her head.*)

**Rarity:** It’s a good idea, Applejack, but— (*stroking a braid*) —Photo Finish is looking for the most beautiful *manes*, not bonnets.

(*She floats the rig away dejectedly on the end of this line, letting Applejack take hold of it again. A bird flies in, grabs a wisp from one braid in its beak, and is gone before the rest of it can fall loose—hay or straw. Applejack offers an embarrassed laugh that fails to mollify the unicorn.*)

(*Dissolve to an expanse of sky in which Rainbow arcs up to grab a small cloud; she bulldozes it down to the top of a small hill on which Rarity is standing. They are in a meadow outside Ponyville proper.*)

**Rainbow:** This’ll do the trick. (*Plop it on Rarity’s head.*) Just you wait.

(*A few tight, fast circles turn the mass of water vapor into a collection of curls in pale grays and whites, and a levitated hand mirror elicits a gasp from Rarity once she sees the end result.*)

**Rarity:** (*toying with a curl*) You know, this is really quite fetching!

**Rainbow:** Yes! (*Mirror down.*) Nailed it!

(*Only figuratively, though, as the newly styled wig fails to stay on Rarity’s head when she starts to walk. It remains exactly where it is, in midair at scalp level, and disintegrates after only a few steps to bring her to a stop. Rainbow grimaces at the botched trial.*)

**Rarity:** (*slumping gloomily*) Just not portable.

(*The pegasus groans softly and puts a hoof to her face. Wipe to the backyard of Fluttershy’s cottage and zoom in slowly on her and several animals; Harry the bear sits on his haunches to work intently on something, his back to the camera. A head-on close-up sees him constructing a small shrubbery with tufts of leaves and grass sticking out at random angles, and in due time he presents a twig for Fluttershy’s consideration.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*pointing*) There!

(*Once Harry has carefully inserted it in the indicated spot, he spreads his arms wide in triumph and the camera zooms out. The mass of greenery has been assembled on Rarity’s head, but neither she nor Fluttershy is particularly thrilled at the result. One of the leaves drops out.*)

**Rarity:** (*crushed*) Oh, let’s face it. We’ll just have to call Photo Finish and cancel.

(*The bird that stole the piece of straw from Granny’s braided bonnet perches on her head and tucks it in among the boughs as if making a nest, and Fluttershy grins lamely as Harry looks away and taps his claws together with a sad grunt. Dissolve to an overhead shot of Twilight, Applejack, Fluttershy, Rainbow and Starlight approaching the front door of the Carousel Boutique. Rainbow is the only one in the air, and Applejack no longer carries the bonnet.*)

**Twilight:** I think we all know how bad Rarity’s been feeling— (*Ground level; profile close-up.*) —but I never thought she’d cancel her shoot with Photo Finish. (*Rainbow swings down to her.*)

**Rainbow:** You saw her mane, right? (*Pan back to the other three.*)

**Applejack:** But it’s Rarity. If anypony can turn lemons into lemonade, it’s her.

**Fluttershy:** I guess it’s harder for her when she feels like the lemon. (*All stop.*)

**Twilight:** Well, she’s not a lemon. She’s our friend, and right now she needs our support.

(*Four smiles and a salute from the airborne mare prompt her to knock on the front door.*)

**Rarity:** (*listlessly, from inside, muffled*) Come in.

(*Twilight works the handle; cut to inside the door as she opens it, ringing the bell that hangs above. The showroom is dimly lit, and the mannequins are partly/totally covered with sheets. All five gather to look in from the doorway, and one of Rarity’s hooves rises limply into view, projecting from a sleeve of her robe.*)

**Rarity:** (*from o.s.*) Would you mind closing the door?

(*Cut to her, sprawled across a couch and surrounded by empty tubs of ice cream and full boxes of tissues. The hoof finds its way down to rest across her forehead, which has been cleared of Harry’s try at an arboreal mane replacement.*)

**Rarity:** I’m more comfortable in the dark.

(*All the lights flick on, surprising her greatly, and she turns to bury her face in the cushions as Opal emerges from a spent tub.*)

**Applejack:** (*fed up*) Okay, Rarity. (*The group enters.*) You’ve done just about enough sulkin’. Havin’ a fabulous mane is a wonderful thing, but it ain’t the only thing.

**Rainbow:** Yeah! And we’re here to remind you how awesome you are, mane or no mane. (*Rarity sighs; Opal stretches.*)

**Rarity:** It’s lovely of you to say, but it’s hard to argue with cold hard facts.

(*She thumps a hoof against the cushions on each of “cold” and “hard,” prompting Opal to jump up to one armrest, and lets her head flop to the other one on “facts.”*)

**Fluttershy:** What facts are those? (*Rarity lifts her head; zoom in slowly.*)

**Rarity:** (*wearily, flicking her mane*) That without my mane, I simply can’t shine as I once did, and ponies treat me like the sad invisible pony I’ve become.

(*She floats the nearest ice cream tub and a spoon over to her face and starts to eat.*)

**Twilight:** Rarity, you’re not invisible. (*She and Starlight smile.*) You’re our friend. A friend who’s started a fashion empire.

**Fluttershy:** A friend who made us all feel beautiful in her lovely creations.

**Rainbow:** A friend who’s stuck by us no matter what!

**Applejack:** A friend so generous that she once chopped off her own tail to help a sea serpent!

(*This litany of her achievements prompts her to sit up out of her self-pity, and Twilight crosses to her while using her own magic to remove the spoon and return it to the container.*)

**Twilight:** I know you lost some confidence when you lost your mane. But unlike your hair, confidence is something you can get back right now. (*She pulls Rarity into a hug.*)

**Rarity:** Goodness! You’re right! The only pony behaving differently today was me! (*She stands, knocking the tub away.*) Besides, one doesn’t shine from the outside in.

(*A bound and a few steps take her behind a privacy screen—the same one she used at the start of this act, or an exact duplicate—and her magic goes to work. Studded bracelets and lengths of dark purple fabric are pulled in after her, and the sounds of rapid-fire tailoring drift back out.*)

**Starlight:** (*worried*) Um, Rarity? (*More bracelets drift past.*) What are you doing?

(*Cut to ground level and pan slightly to follow Rarity as she emerges into full view. Seen from the chin down, she has outfitted herself in a sleeveless, belted purple top with flipped-up open collar and stud accents, with a matching bracelet on one foreleg. Her tail is neatly trimmed, striped yellow and light green in addition to its natural purple, and secured with a studded purple band. A few strands hang down into view over her neck, matching the dye job on her tail.*)

**Rarity:** I’m preparing to shine from the inside out!

(*Zoom out to frame all of her. The surviving portions of her mane have been styled and dyed to form a long, unruly Mohawk cut. The other five voice exclamations of surprise and delight.*)

**Rainbow:** Awesome!

(*Rarity strides calmly past them in the fore, the view wiping behind her to a row of market stalls. His forelegs loaded with what could well be the flower sellers’ entire inventory, Filthy takes a few staggering steps and sets his burden down.*)

**Filthy:** It’s my own fault. I shouldn’t have bought flowers without askin’ Spoiled what she likes.

(*A reference to Spoiled Rich, his wife. The next camera angle reveals that he has brought the bouquets back to these same three mares, whose shelves are almost bare.*)

**Rose:** Well, we don’t have much left. What does she like?

**Filthy:** Um…uh, purple? (*A slight motion reveals Rarity partially in view some distance back.*)

**Rarity:** I have a solution!

(*He steps aside with an incredulous stare, the camera zooming in on the punked-out mare.*)

**Rose:** (*admiringly*) Rarity, that mane is—

**Daisy, Lily:** —amazing!

**Rarity:** Thank you. (*crossing to them*) Although I’m afraid I missed my chance at *Vanity Mare*— (*slyly, to Filthy*) —which means I have quite a few lavender arrangements to spare. (*Wink.*)

**Filthy:** Uh, is lavender purple?

(*A quick glance from the color consultant, and the three vendors have whipped out a plethora of bundled flowers to answer that question with an overwhelming yes. Rarity lifts her head proudly in close-up; behind her, the background dissolves to the interior of Mr. Breezy’s shop, the fan still blowing at the mannequin in the front window.*)

**Rarity:** Mmm—the windswept look is very last-season. (*Longer shot; she faces Mr. Breezy and a fan twice his height, not running.*) Perhaps you could set this up outside. It’s sure to draw in the hoof traffic.

(*Wipe to a close-up of the gigantic appliance—doubtless made to her Act One order—sitting outside the shop and connected to a pedal. A stomp on this from Mr. Breezy’s hoof kicks it into gear, generating enough wind velocity to strip all his clothes off. He glances behind himself, the camera panning a short distance to stop on a group of watchers; his outfit has ended up on the one stallion among them.*)

**Stallion:** Ahhh!

(*There follows a round of murmuring/stomping/clapping applause, which begins to radiate out from the shop as Rarity effects her departure. Wipe to the interior of Quills and Sofas; in the foreground, a coin purse is emptied onto Davenport’s extended hoof. He backs out of view, then returns with a sheet in his teeth to drape over a sofa, and the camera zooms out to frame Rarity looking on—she has made this purchase.*)

**Rarity:** (*over her shoulder*) Photo shoot or no, you can always use a *chaise*.

(*Cut to Twilight, Applejack, Fluttershy, and Rainbow lounging on seats at the other side of the showroom. Her words were directed to these four, and she crosses to them. Pan slowly toward her during the next line.*)

**Applejack:** (*climbing off her seat*) Well, Rarity, if you wanted to shine from the inside out, I think this afternoon you became the brightest filly in Equestria. (*Close-up of her and Rarity.*)

**Rarity:** Oh, pshaw, Applejack. (*Davenport pushes the covered sofa past her.*) I’m simply making up for all the time I wasted feeling sorry for myself. (*Zoom out to frame Rainbow hovering nearby on the following.*)

**Rainbow:** I don’t know why you were so upset. Your mane looks awesome!

**Rarity:** I’m just glad that I have all of you to remind me that even if I accidentally use magical remover potion on my mane, I can look good on the outside as long as I feel good on the inside.

**Twilight:** (*crossing to her*) How’d you end up using remover potion on your head, anyway?

(*The smiling unicorn opens her mouth to respond, but her mood shifts directly to wide-eyed shock without using the clutch as the camera zooms in quickly on her.*)

**Rarity:** (*gasping deeply*) *Pinkie!*

(*Cut to a street; she gallops madly into view, leading the other four toward Sugarcube Corner.*)

**Rarity:** If I had the remover potion this whole time… (*She reaches the front door.*) …that means Pinkie must have the…

(*She gets no further before both halves of it fly open to release a torrent of suds and one very, very happy pink pony. Twilight throws up a spherical shield around the party of five, but the sheer momentum of the frothy tsunami is enough to push them down the block.*)

**Pinkie:** Wheeeeeee!

(*She trails off into a giggle as the wave subsides, carrying her past, and Twilight drops the barrier.*)

**Rarity:** …shampoo.

(*Pinkie straightens up out of the bubbles, revealing a mane whose volume and curl have been considerably augmented by Zecora’s elixir.*)

**Pinkie:** Shampoo? Wow! (*wagging tail; it is similarly affected*) That explains why our manes are all so bouncy and soft.

(*Up pop the heads of Pound and Pumpkin, whose manes have gained the same benefit. Cut to just inside the open door and zoom out as Rarity peeks worriedly in; the yellow celebration string is still plastered everywhere, now joined by mounds of suds.*)

**Rarity:** (*walking in, all but Pinkie and twins peek in at door*) Uh, perhaps I’ll fetch the rest of that remover potion. (*Pinkie hops in over her head.*)

**Pinkie:** Great! (*Twins reach the door; she eyes Rarity suspiciously.*) Heeeey. (*stroking chin*) Is there something different about you? (*Rarity smiles to herself; Pinkie peers at her hooves.*) New hoof polish?

(*That smile turns into a mildly disgruntled look at the pink mare’s utter failure to spot the obvious. Dissolve to the six mares out for a walk/fly down the street, Rarity back to her normal appearance in every aspect—mane/tail grown out and back to purple, new outfit gone. Pinkie’s mane has returned to its usual behavior as well.*)

**Rarity:** So you’re sure. (*patting a curl*) You’re sure it’s fully recovered.

**Applejack:** (*slightly irritated*) Yes, Rarity. It’s been months. (*They pass a newsstand.*) Your mane looks fine.

(*Pinkie whips back to scope out the display and covers the distance between it and herself in one impossible bound.*)

**Pinkie:** Ooooh, look! (*holding up a magazine, faced toward the others*) It’s the “Most Beautiful Manes in Equestria” issue of *Vanity Mare*! (*slyly, extending it to Rarity*) You should read it. (*Close-up of the unicorn.*)

**Rarity:** Oh, honestly, Pinkie, after all I went through, I’m not sure it even matters what mane graces the page—

**Pinkie:** (*from o.s., slapping it into her face*) READ IT!

(*A bit of magic peels the periodical from Rarity’s face, she sits on her haunches, and the eyes bug out and the jaw drops at what she sees—her own image on the cover, sporting the punk garb and mane style.*)

**Rarity:** But I—I canceled the shoot!

**Applejack:** (*circling around her, winking*) We had a little talk with Photo Finish.

**Fluttershy:** (*crossing to them*) And explained just how beautiful we thought you were, inside and out.

(*Rarity uses horn power to flip through the issue and stops short, wonder registering on her face. Cut to a close-up of it. The left page is filled with her beaming close-up, while the right shows one photo of her tail and another of her helping Filthy choose flowers for Spoiled. On the start of the next line, she turns ahead three times to find pictures of the following. Herself talking with Mr. Breezy; some of his fans; her foreleg bracelet…speaking with Davenport; her truncated forelock; her open collar…a two-page photo of Pinkie and Rarity cleaning up Sugarcube Corner with a bit of help from Pound and Pumpkin; a small corner picture in the lower right corner that shows a photographer hiding in some bushes.*)

**Rainbow:** (*from o.s.*) While you were shining from the inside out, Photo Finish took a few pictures.

(*A zoom in on this last picks out the renowned mare, zoom lens at the ready, mud smudged on her face, and a clump of foliage on her head. From here, cut back to the group.*)

**Rarity:** (*closing magazine*) I don’t know what to say!

**Applejack:** (*winking*) Luckily, you don’t have to say anything.

(*Zoom out across the street. Every mare in the area has adopted some variation of the mane/tail styling, with or without added color.*)

**Applejack:** Your style speaks for itself.

(*All six pile in for a giggly group hug as the view fades to black.*)