**THE MAUD COUPLE**

**Written by Nick Confalone**

**Produced by Devon Cody**

**Story editing by Nicole Dubuc, Josh Haber**

**Supervising direction by Jim Miller**

**Directed by Denny Lu, Mike Myhre**

**Transcribed by Alan Back (**[**ajback@yahoo.com**](mailto:ajback@yahoo.com)**)**

Prologue

(*Opening shot: fade in to a long shot of a building that faces a Ponyville street at night. The lighted sign on its roof displays the faces of two laughing mares and a microphone between them, marking the establishment as a comedy club. Zoom in slowly as an announcer stallion’s voice is heard.*)

**Announcer:** (*voice over*) Please put your hooves together for your next performer, Maud Pie!

(*Inside, he stands behind a mic on a small stage before an applauding crowd, seated at tables with small lit candles. After beckoning to one side, he clears off to make room for Maud Pie, who steps up from that end as the room goes absolutely silent. After a couple of taps to make sure it is in working order, she starts into her routine; her next four lines are amplified by the sound system.*)

**Maud:** What do you call an alicorn with no wings and no horn? (*Long pause.*) Earth pony.

(*The joint remains dead quiet save for Pinkie Pie’s wild laughter from somewhere off to one side, which brings more than a few puzzled looks.*)

**Maud:** But seriously, being an earth pony isn’t so bad. (*Slow pan across the baffled patrons; she continues o.s.*) We’ve got magic powers too, like walking around— (*Back to her.*) —and picking stuff up with our teeth. (*A bout of confused murmurs.*) That’s sarcasm, by the way.

(*Her sister’s braying laugh slashes the quiet again; pan quickly to Pinkie, pounding the table at which she is seated with Bon Bon and Lyra Heartstrings. They both give her a nasty look as she calms down just a bit and throws a foreleg across Lyra’s shoulders chummily.*)

**Pinkie:** It’s funny… (*pulling her closer*) …’cause it’s true!

(*She releases her hold on the green unicorn; cut back to the stage.*)

**Maud:** My favorite thing to listen to is clastic rock. The accumulation of sediments over millennia forming to create sandstone, shale, and breccia. It sounds something like this.

(*Her slight lean toward the microphone is accompanied by a brief whine of feedback; after it fades away, all the puzzled listeners strain their ears to pick up any further sound. They get a whole lot of nothing until Maud opens her mouth after some seconds and backs away.*)

**Maud:** And that’s my time.

(*With the performance now concluded, the raucously laughing Pinkie bounds onto the stage.*)

**Pinkie:** (*throwing foreleg across Maud’s shoulders*) Isn’t my sister Maud the most hilarious, entertaining, amazing comedian ever?

(*After a beat of total quiet, the audience erupts into gales of laughter, several members banging on the tables and even collapsing onto them. Pinkie nods acknowledgment and throws a grin to her stoic sibling. Zoom out slowly from the stage and fade to black.*)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(*Opening shot: fade in to the exterior of the comedy club. Zoom in slowly as the doors open to let the two sisters out, then cut to a close-up of them.*)

**Pinkie:** (*giddily*) Your jokes, your hilarious delivery, your— (*sputtering a bit*) —your everything!

**Maud:** How was my… (*Long pause.*) …timing?

**Pinkie:** (*laughing*) You got me! Come on. (*hop-pivoting to fall in next to her; they start walking*) Let’s celebrate, sister style! We can get matching stickers that say “Eyes on the Pies,” then show them off at the Ponyville Sticker Convention that I could plan for tomorrow if you want?

(*During this line, she pulls out a sheet of four identical stickers—a googly-eyed pie—and plasters them all onto her own cheek. The two stop walking as she finishes.*)

**Maud:** Actually, I’m busy tonight.

**Pinkie:** Aww, that’s what you said yesterday! (*Pull the stickers off.*) And the day before that, and the day before the day before that. (*Sigh; circle to face Maud.*) It’s just…we haven’t hung out in a really long time because you always have other plans— (*pulling a can of whipped cream from her mane*) —even when you promised to build whipped cream pyramids with me.

(*A burst of the sweet stuff fills her mouth and ends up hanging from her chin as a beard. Cut to the impassive sister.*)

**Maud:** I know. I am sorry, Pinkie. The reason is, I have a— (*A pink hoof corks her mouth.*)

**Pinkie:** (*from o.s., cheerfully*) Apology accepted!

(*Cut to frame both; she has put away the can, swallowed, and cleaned her face.*)

**Pinkie:** As long as we get some serious sister time before your birthday. (*casually, pawing at ground*) And there’s, uh, definitely no reason I want to hang out before your birthday. Just, uh, you know— (*out of one side of her mouth, nudging Maud’s chest*) —not planning anything special.

**Maud:** Okay.

**Pinkie:** What about tomorrow morning? (*Big grin.*)

**Maud:** Okay.

(*The excitable pink mare scatters a hoof-load of confetti.*)

**Pinkie:** Yay! Just you and me. Best Sister Friends Forever!

**Maud:** Best Sister Friends Forever.

**Pinkie:** (*hopping around her*) I can’t wait for tomorrow to be today!

(*She voices a near-ultrasonic squeal of pure joy while bounding toward the camera. Once her image fills the screen, she drops out of sight, the view behind her wiping to the cavern chamber in which Maud set up housekeeping at the end of “Rock Solid Friendship.” Her squeal continues as she hops into view, and stops only when she does. The subdued mare is nowhere in sight.*)

**Pinkie:** Tomorrow is today! Who’s ready for some fun times at Sugarcube Corner? (*hopping to bedroom area*) The answer is you! (*calmly*) I would also accept “Maud.”

(*Only now does the total absence of any other equine dawn on her.*)

**Pinkie:** Maud? (*louder, looking around herself*) Maud!

(*The second repetition echoes hollowly over the rushing waters; once it has subsided, an inspiration hits and she voice a happy gasp.*)

**Pinkie:** Oh, I get it! We’re playing hide-and-go-seek!

(*She hops away. Wipe to a Ponyville street during the day; a stallion outfitted for construction duty gets a very big surprise when his hard hat rises off his head, carried upward on Pinkie’s brain bucket. She peers intently in a certain direction, then vanishes as quickly as she came only to pop up from a nearby barrel and flip its lid onto the roadbed. The stallion warily eases away from the spot as she continues her scrutiny, drops out of sight, and does a quick there-and-gone peek by hanging upside down from above.*)

(*Out on the lake, a stallion and mare have their romantic rowboat outing interrupted when Pinkie’s head breaks the surface, carrying one of the floating lily pads with it. After a flick of the blue eyes from side to side, she plunges away to leave the pad as it was. Her next move takes her to the belfry of the village clock tower; cut to her perspective as she raises a pair of binoculars to magnify the images before her. The lenses swing from one bit of Ponyville to another, finding nothing that even resembles a trace of the missing geology expert; back to Pinkie, who lowers them with a frustrated scowl and departs.*)

(*Cut to somewhere in Yakyakistan. A passing yak finds himself abruptly being lifted off his hooves by Pinkie so she can check the patch of ground directly beneath his shaggy bulk. No dice, so she bugs out and leaves gravity to drag him back to earth for a spreadeagle landing. He lifts the curtain of hair away from one eye in order to aim a bemused stare after the departing mare. Pinkie’s next stop is Ghastly Gorge, where—now wearing a hard hat equipped with a headlamp—she peers out from one after another of the holes used as quarray eel nests. From here, she lifts a rock on the ground from beneath as if it were a manhole cover, looks around, and ducks away again.*)

(*Cut to a close-up of a long-handled brush pasting up a poster that depicts Maud’s stolid countenance. A longer shot shows Pinkie having just stuck it on a tree in Ponyville; lines of text are visible above the picture, a row of question marks below—“have you seen this mare?” She has traded the hard hat for a pair of saddlebags in which the brush and several more rolled posters are stowed away, and a can of paste stands on the ground within reach. Worried eyes shift toward the copies she hast put up on a nearby building, and the camera pans in that direction to show a great deal more on walls, doors, roofs, the ground, a cart and its freight of hay bales, and even Derpy Hooves’ flank.*)

(*Cut to a close-up of a shut door as a knock is heard from its other side. Starlight Glimmer trots into view to open it—this is her bedroom in the Castle of Friendship—but before she can get hoof or magic to the knob, it flies open and comes within a hair of bashing her in the face. A fiercely determined Pinkie stands facing her across the threshold, having shed her bags and paste pot.*)

**Pinkie:** Aha! (*racing in*) Found you!

(*She darts farther in and o.s., creating a tumult of ransacking that throws the occupant for a very big loop. Starlight gets her horn in gear to catch all the items flung her way and return them to their places; her eyes express pure perplexity as Pinkie scans the room from several different angles, including one in which she dangles from a rope that drops into view. When a 360-degree turn from this vantage point yields no results, she jumps down and tips the bed up by its footboard for a quick peek underneath. This too gets her nowhere, so she sets it back down.*)

**Pinkie:** Where’s Maud? (*pacing*) I’ve already checked Discord’s dimension, Granny Smith’s wax museum, and Yakyakistan! (*Close-up.*) She has to be here! (*Pan to Starlight on the next line.*)

**Starlight:** Nn-nope, it’s just me, reading.

(*As evidenced by the book lying open on a stand; Pinkie zips over, lifts it, riffles the pages, and even gives it a good shake to dislodge any evidence that might be caught between them. Nothing of the sort turns up, so she glumly sets it back in place.*)

**Pinkie:** Story checks out. (*half-crazed, leaning into Starlight’s face*) *Or does it?!?* (*calmly*) It does. (*pacing to bed*) But are you sure there’s nopony hiding…

(*A magnifying glass is produced and held forth with great emphasis.*)

**Pinkie:** *…in your closet?!?*

(*Her perspective of the room as she lowers the instrument. There is no closet in sight, and the only detail even slightly out of the ordinary is a picture of a butterfly that comes partly loose from the far wall. Back to Pinkie and Starlight, the pink mare having put the glass away and adopted an expression of great vexation.*)

**Starlight:** (*crossing to her*) Pinkie, I don’t have a closet. Is everything okay?

**Pinkie:** (*sadly*) No. I was supposed to go birthday cake shopping with Maud today.

**Starlight:** And ruin her surprise party?

**Pinkie:** (*smiling*) I wasn’t gonna tell her why, silly. But now I can’t even find Maud. (*shading eyes, looking around*) I’m usually way better at hide-and-seek than this.

**Starlight:** Well, she probably just found a new rock formation and forgot you two were gonna hang out. (*foreleg across Pinkie’s shoulders, easing her toward door*) Tell you what. You take care of the cake, and I’ll look for Maud.

(*They stop a few feet short of the door, Pinkie hopping and turning a semicircle in midair to face her.*)

**Pinkie:** Really? (*hopping in place*) Thanks, Starlight!

(*Noticing some flowers in a pot on a bookcase, she uproots them for a quick look inside; no luck, so she plunks them back in place.*)

**Pinkie:** (*walking out*) Just checking.

(*Wipe to a building whose hanging sign—a wire whisk and chef’s white toque—mark it as associated with the baking profession. Pinkie hops merrily toward its front door; cut to just inside as her momentum knocks it open. Shelves and barrels of baking supplies/ingredients line the walls, and a pony-shaped mannequin sports a toque and apron. Pinkie reaches the counter at the opposite end of the shop, behind which a unicorn mare cashier is standing; she cocks a foreleg on it and grins slyly. The trip has put her just ahead of Mudbriar, a tall, dull gray earth pony stallion with a short mane/tail in two shades of brown, the former in a bowl cut. He bears a cutie mark of a stick with a leafed offshoot, standing in a puddle of mud, and the half-lidded eyes in the emotionless face are green. Head-on view of Pinkie, the camera aimed at her over the cashier’s shoulder.*)

**Pinkie:** (*hushed*) I’ve gotta get very important ingredients for a very important pony’s cake, and it’s gotta be tippy-top super-duper-secret.

(*Pan slightly to frame Mudbriar now standing alongside her. His voice is that of the archetypical pedant who will stand his ground on any and every minor point of fact until the world ends or his opponent gives up, whichever comes first.*)

**Mudbriar:** Technically, it’s not your turn yet.

**Pinkie:** (*normal volume*) Oh! I’m sorry. Didn’t mean to cut in front of anypony.

(*She backs off a step to leave him facing the cashier across the counter. No words are exchanged for a very long beat.*)

**Pinkie:** (*puzzled*) Um, whatcha doin’?

**Mudbriar:** I am currently speaking to a pony at a baking supply shop two minutes before it closes for lunch.

**Pinkie:** Riiight. Okay. Just that I’m trying to plan a party here, and the clock is ticking while you, um…what *are* you doing, anyway?

(*This line is punctuated by her peeking out from behind him to alternate sides, briefly pointing to a wristwatch on one hoof at the right moment to make her point.*)

**Mudbriar:** (*slightly slower/louder*) I am currently speaking to a—

**Pinkie:** (*hoof to face*) I mean, can I help you move this along? What are you looking for? (*juggling items as she names them*) Rolling pins, cupcake tins, cookie cutters with tails and fins?

(*This display of legerdemain only gets her only two long stares, one confused and one flat—no points for guessing which is whose.*)

**Mudbriar:** (*to cashier*) Goodbye.

(*A flabbergasted Pinkie whips up to the counter before the items can hit the ground.*)

**Pinkie:** *That’s* what you’ve been standing here all this time to say?

**Mudbriar:** I was deciding between “goodbye” and “see you later.”

**Pinkie:** (*sputtering*) But they’re the same thing! (*Profile close-up of Mudbriar.*)

**Mudbriar:** Technically, they’re very different. (*He starts to move slowly toward the door; sound of hooves grating on wood.*) “See you later” implies an event in the near future wherein we see each other. (*Longer shot; she is bulldozing him along with her head.*) “Goodbye” expresses good wishes where parting or at the end of a conversation.

**Pinkie:** Yyyeah, same thing.

(*Now at the door, he takes a step of his own and leaves Pinkie to topple forward so that her chin meets the floor first.*)

**Mudbriar:** I will not apologize for speaking with precision.

**Pinkie:** (*standing up, needled*) In that case, apology not accepted. Goodbye later, see you, same thing! (*Slam door in his face; glance toward counter.*) Ugh! Can you believe that guy? (*Eyes pop wide.*) Huh?

(*The cashier has vacated the shop, a note settling onto the counter in her stead; Pinkie whisks over to glare at it from point-blank range.*)

**Pinkie:** (*reading*) “Out to lunch”? *Oh, come on!*

(*The exterior of the shop; she opens the door and emerges.*)

**Pinkie:** Ugh! No Maud, no cake, no anything! And how annoying was that pony? Who takes so long to say goodbye—or was it “see you later”? UGH! Now he’s got me doing it!

(*Completely wrapped up in her stewing, she fails to notice Maud’s approach from the opposite direction and collides head-on, falling to her haunches.*)

**Maud:** Hello, Pinkie Pie.

**Pinkie:** (*instantly brightening, hugging her*) Maud! Found you! My turn to hide!

(*She bounds away, a giggle drifting back, but Maud clamps teeth around the end of the fluffy magenta tail to reel her back in. The two stand face to face on the start of the next line.*)

**Maud:** I’m sorry I wasn’t around this morning.

**Pinkie:** Oh, pssh! What are you apologizing to me for? I’m not upset, you silly willy.

**Maud:** The reason is, I met somepony—

**Pinkie:** Want to hang out right now? (*foreleg across Maud’s shoulders*) I mean, I can see you’re not doing anything with anypony else. (*puzzled, backing off a bit*) Unless they’re invisible or reeeeally small.

(*She accompanies this last by holding up her front hooves and easing them very close together as if to point up the minuscule scale of this hypothetical pony. Cut to her perspective, the hooves gradually blocking her view of everything beyond the sides of Maud’s face.*)

**Maud:** Pinkie, the reason I’ve been so busy is that I have a boyfriend now. (*Back to Pinkie, who puts her forelegs down.*)

**Pinkie:** (*aghast*) A whaaa—?

**Maud:** A boyfriend.

**Pinkie:** (*smiling*) *A whaaaaa—?*

**Maud:** A boyfriend.

**Pinkie:** (*beaming, hanging upside down from a tree*) *A whaaaaaat?*

**Maud:** A boyfriend.

**Pinkie:** (*back on ground, trotting in place*) That’s so exciting! My sister, in love!

**Maud:** Technically, we’re “in like.”

**Pinkie:** (*jumping in place*) Tell me everything! (*She flashes over to Maud.*) Who is he? What’s his favorite color? Does he like ice cream? If he were a bird, what kind of bird would he be?

(*These questions are fired off from several different angles in quick succession, culminating in Pinkie sitting on Maud’s head and bending forward to look her upside-down in the face.*)

**Pinkie:** Wait. (*She jumps off.*) Is he actually a bird? Oh! (*dropping to haunches*) I don’t know, ’cause you haven’t told me anything yet!

**Maud:** You’ll like him. We have a lot in common. (*Pinkie stands up.*)

**Pinkie:** Well, I love you, so I know I’m gonna love your boyfriend! Oh, I can’t wait to meet him!

**Maud:** (*glancing behind herself*) You don’t have to.

(*Her perspective—a rock jutting up from the grass adjacent to the path they are on—then back to the sisters.*)

**Pinkie:** (*gasping happily*) He’s a rock! And you love rocks, so it’s perfect! (*Gasp; hushed tone.*) Is Boulder jealous?

**Maud:** No, behind the rock. (*raising voice slightly*) Mudbriar? Are you back there?

(*Not having heard the gray stallion referred to by name in the shop, Pinkie is completely unprepared to see him step out into full view.*)

**Mudbriar:** Technically, not anymore.

**Pinkie:** (*gasping, aloud*) A wha-*whaaaaa—?!?*

(*Fade to black.*)

Act Two

(*Opening shot: fade in to Pinkie and Maud, the stunned younger sister’s jaw hanging full open.*)

**Maud:** Pinkie Pie… (*Mudbriar crosses to them.*) …meet Mudbriar.

**Mudbriar:** Technically, we’ve already met. (*Pinkie snaps back to herself.*)

**Pinkie:** *You?*

**Mudbriar:** Yes.

**Pinkie:** (*slightly deflated*) You…?

**Mudbriar:** Yes.

**Pinkie:** (*more deflated*) You…

**Mudbriar:** Yes.

**Pinkie:** (*forcing a smile/laugh*) I mean, you! You, you, you!

**Mudbriar:** Yes, yes, yes.

**Pinkie:** I’m sorry. Let’s start over. (*holding out a foreleg to shake*) Hi! I’m Maud’s sister, Pinkie Pie! (*He glances incuriously at it.*)

**Mudbriar:** I know.

(*She withdraws the limb, confusion stenciling itself on her face.*)

**Pinkie:** (*hesitantly*) Soooo…how did you two meet?

**Maud:** At a rock show.

**Pinkie:** (*to Mudbriar*) Oh! You’re into rocks too?

**Mudbriar:** No. I like sticks.

**Pinkie:** Then why were you at a rock show?

**Mudbriar:** It was a petrified wood show, which technically makes it a stick show.

**Maud:** (*as both share a smile*) Except that in the permineralization process of petrification, all organic material is replaced with silicates. i.e., rocks.

**Mudbriar:** While retaining the original structural elements of wood. QED, it was a stick show.

**Pinkie:** (*forcing a smile*) I’m…really into sticks too!

(*As she continues, an upward flick of one foreleg causes a sun-shaped piñata to drop into view on the end of a rope and she pulls out a length of wood to use as a club.*)

**Pinkie:** They’re great for hitting piñatas!

(*As she winds up for a swing the humorless stallion’s eyes shrink to panicked green points.*)

**Maud:** Pinkie… (*Who checks herself.*)

**Pinkie:** Oh! (*offering branch to Mudbriar*) Oh, you want to go first?

**Mudbriar:** (*disapprovingly*) That is stick abuse.

**Pinkie:** It is?

(*Her next move is to yank the piñata off its rope and toss both it and the improvised bludgeon out of sight.*)

**Pinkie:** I’m sorry. Oh, this is awful! I am not being a very good sister. (*smiling*) Let’s start over. (*holding out front hoof to shake*) I’m Pinkie Pie. Nice to meet you. (*Cut to Mudbriar.*)

**Mudbriar:** Technically, we’ve already met. (*Pan to Maud on the next line.*)

**Maud:** (*to him*) You should introduce Pinkie to your pet.

(*Her beau proceeds to fish a small twig from a hidden pocket and offer it to Pinkie for inspection.*)

**Pinkie:** Oh! Your pet likes fetch!

**Mudbriar:** This *is* my pet, so no.

(*It is set on the grass, Maud placing her pet rock Boulder with it, and both “owners” smile.*)

**Maud:** Aw, look at Twiggy and Boulder playing together.

**Mudbriar:** They’re adorable.

(*Pinkie drops into a crouch so she can train the full power of two skeptical blue eyes on them from inches away; once done, she stands up.*)

**Pinkie:** (*to Maud, whispering*) It’s just a stick!

**Maud:** Don’t be rude.

**Pinkie:** (*aloud, sighing*) I’m sorry, I’m sorry! (*smiling*) One more time. I’m Pinkie Pie. (*through gritted teeth, offering hoof to shake*) Nice to meet you.

**Mudbriar:** Technically, we’ve already met.

(*A supremely fed-up growl and huff escape her lips as she claps a hoof to her forehead and pulls it down her face. Dissolve to a long shot of the Castle and School of Friendship, zooming in slowly; the sky shows off the muted violets and pink-oranges of approaching dusk. Inside, Pinkie steams in Starlight’s room, finally voicing a yell and clapping hooves to temples.*)

**Pinkie:** I don’t get this guy! (*She begins to pace; exposing Starlight seated on her bed just behind.*)

**Starlight:** Wow. Maud has a boyfriend?

(*The seething pink pony flops back first to the floor and lets off a long, loud groan.*)

**Pinkie:** How could she like someone so weird? (*She pushes herself across with her hind legs.*) He has an inanimate object for a pet!

**Starlight:** So does Maud.

**Pinkie:** Boulder has ten times the personality of some random stick! (*under her breath*) Mudbriar too, for that matter. (*aloud*) He’s not like Maud at all! (*standing, pacing*) Maud is hilarious, friendly, caring, and easy to talk to!

**Starlight:** (*humoring her*) Yep, that’s Maud.

**Pinkie:** But this guy is awkward, quiet, and kind of… (*A moment’s strained thought.*) …strange! (*Starlight crosses to her.*)

**Starlight:** Uh, that also sounds like Maud. (*Close-up of Pinkie.*)

**Pinkie:** (*laughing*) You’re so funny, Starlight! Maud is nothing like Mudbriar. If she were, then we wouldn’t be Best Sister Friends Forever! (*Pan to Starlight.*)

**Starlight:** Well, Maud obviously likes something about him.

(*To which the party expert respond with an indignant grumble, turning away and crossing her forelegs.*)

**Starlight:** Maybe you just need to spend more time with him—find out what you have in common. (*Pinkie turns back to her.*)

**Pinkie:** That’s easy! *Nothing!* (*She resumes her pacing.*)

**Starlight:** You both care about Maud. (*smiling*) I know! He could help you with her party!

**Pinkie:** (*reluctantly*) I guess.

**Starlight:** And I’ll keep Maud busy while you and Mudbriar plan the best surprise birthday ever. (*Pinkie pivots to her with a smile.*)

**Pinkie:** That, I can do!

(*Dissolve to the exterior of Sugarcube Corner, seen from down the block during the following day, and zoom in slowly. Inside, Pinkie leads Mudbriar across her bedroom to the base of the stairs that lead up to its balcony.*)

**Pinkie:** Listen. Maud’s birthday is tomorrow and there’s no time to waste. You’re not afraid of slides, are you?

**Mudbriar:** No. WhyyyyYYYY—

(*His abrupt change in tone is caused by falling through the trapdoor that has just opened under his hooves, triggered by Pinkie pressing on the stairs’ ice-cream-cone newel post. She grins at the sound of his fading yell and the camera-shaking crash that issues from far below the floor—he has just landed in her party-planning cave.*)

**Pinkie:** No reason. (*jumping in after him*) Wheeeeee!

(*Cut to the pedantic stallion, lying on his belly at the base of the slide that leads down to this area. Stars whirl above his head for a moment before he recovers his senses and stands upright, only for Pinkie to barrel down the chute with enough speed to plow him out of view. The camera shudders to the tune of a second o.s. crash; cut an extreme close-up of his woozy face on the floor, his brown mane covered by a shock of magenta strands. When he gets up this time, he finds that Pinkie is lying face-up on his back, tail covering his mane and head on his rump.*)

**Pinkie:** Welcome to my party-planning cave! (*She hops off.*)

**Mudbriar:** (*pacing, eyeing ceiling*) Technically, due to the speleothems growing from the ceiling, this is more of a cavern than a cave. Maud taught me that.

**Pinkie:** (*dryly, opening a file cabinet drawer*) Yeah, okay.

(*After a deep dive among the contents, she extracts and opens a particular folder.*)

**Pinkie:** Here’s what I’m thinking for her surprise party. (*showing off items as she names them*) Edible rock candy plates, gem-shaped ice cubes, a pebble piñata…

(*Cut to Mudbriar as this last is exhibited, surprise registering on his face, then back to her as she remembers his poor reaction to the one she brought out earlier.*)

**Pinkie:** (*tossing it over shoulder*) Uh…oh, skip that one. (*She reads the folder’s contents as he leans in close.*)

**Mudbriar:** Might I make some suggestions?

**Pinkie:** (*smiling weakly*) Oh! Suggest away! (*Lower the folder.*) That’s why you’re here. You and me, planning together! (*rubbing hooves against each other*) Friends!

**Mudbriar:** I have a vision board of everything Maud loves, and none of those things are on it.

**Pinkie:** (*skeptically*) Hmph. Let me see this vision board.

**Mudbriar:** It’s not a physical thing. (*hoof to temple, eyes closing*) I’m envisioning it.

(*A wave of that same foreleg summons up row on row of small translucent windows that begin to orbit him, presenting various aspects of rocks/gems/crystals.*)

**Mudbriar:** (*quiet monotone*) Mmm—I enter through the large door of my mind palace and enter to the back, where I have all of my books and possessions, and what do I encounter? (*The motion freezes.*) The Maud Room. None of those things are there.

(*A gesture sets the windows whirling in the opposite direction and banishes them, and he opens his eyes.*)

**Mudbriar:** (*aloud*) Just as I thought. Maud doesn’t like surprises.

(*He holds his emotionless pose as Pinkie stalks across to stare intently across his back, from first one side and then the other.*)

**Pinkie:** Where does it say that? (*She ducks out of sight and comes up to one side.*) She never told me that! (*Pace away.*)

**Mudbriar:** Mmm… (*Cut to her; he continues o.s.*) …it sounds like she was protecting your feelings. (*This gives her pause; back to him.*) She’s very caring that way. (*She leans hard into his face, up on her hind legs.*)

**Pinkie:** (*poking him in the chest*) Stop acting like you know my sister better than me! (*Back to all fours.*)

**Mudbriar:** Technically, I never said that.

(*The pink face contorts into an almighty grimace before its wearer summons up more words.*)

**Pinkie:** Well, technically, I don’t care! (*crossing to slide*) And since I’ve been Best Sister Friends Forever with Maud my entire life, I think *I’m* the expert here! (*Return to Mudbriar.*) Oh, but fine. If you don’t believe me, let’s *ask her!* (*whispering, foreleg across his shoulders*) But we have to be super-sneaky!

**Mudbriar:** Can you be more specific?

**Pinkie:** NO!!

(*The view dissolves from his impassive expression and her supremely hacked-off one to a long overhead shot of Maud and Starlight standing side by side on a grassy hilltop. The camera points at them from between the kites they are flying; Maud has her spool of twine pinned under a hoof, while Starlight’s is held in her field. Here come Pinkie and Mudbriar; cut to the two pairs at ground level.*)

**Starlight:** Huh. You must be Mudbriar. (*Grin; long pause.*) I’m Starlight Glimmer. Nice to meet you. I’ve heard great things. (*Cut to Pinkie and Mudbriar; she continues o.s.*) I’m so glad the two of you are spending time together.

(*Pinkie voices an irritated little huff under the end of this; back to the unicorn, whose grin has become more than a bit strained.*)

**Starlight:** So, how’s it going?

**Pinkie:** (*smiling*) Mudbriar and I have just spent the best time bonding! (*foreleg across his shoulders*) And we’re really starting to make some headway becoming besties— (*crossing to Maud, tapping her chest*) —except for one teensy-weensy disagreement that maybe you could settle, Maud. See, Mudbriar here seems to think that… (*laughing*) …you don’t like surprise parties. (*wheeling to him*) Isn’t it funny how *wrong he is?!?*

**Maud:** I like surprise parties. (*Pinkie rises to her hind legs and throws a foreleg over Mudbriar’s shoulders again.*)

**Pinkie:** (*smugly*) Hmmm!

**Maud:** Because I know they make you happy when you throw them for me.

**Pinkie:** (*to Mudbriar*) See? (*The message sinks in.*) Wait, what?!

**Maud:** I’d rather just do something small with you, Starlight, Boulder, and Mudbriar for my birthday.

(*During this line, both sisters drop to their haunches and she pulls Boulder out of her dress, using it instead of her hoof to weight down her spool as she stands again.*)

**Pinkie:** (*pulling at cheeks*) No party? *No party?!?* (*standing, pointing at Mudbriar*) Did he put you up to this?

**Maud:** (*shaking head*) Mmm-mmm. (*Pinkie stands and leans in close.*)

**Pinkie:** (*whispering*) Maybe you should consider…I don’t know…taking things a little less serious with Mudbriar because he’s kinda-sorta… (*full volume, jumping up*) …*IMPOSSIBLE TO LIKE!!*

(*Once she calms and touches down, Starlight adopts a cheerful demeanor and crosses to Starlight.*)

**Starlight:** (*chuckling*) Hey, Mudbriar, have you ever flown a kite? Let me tell you all about it. See, the first thing you should do is—

**Pinkie:** (*to Maud*) I just can’t believe you would choose sitting around with him over a party with your own sister!

**Maud:** I didn’t choose either of you. Technically, I said I wanted to be with both of you.

**Pinkie:** (*gasping deeply*) “Technically”?!? Ugh! You even like the way he talks?!

**Maud:** (*smiling*) Everything about him makes me happy.

(*After a second colossal gasp, the blue eyes fill with tears.*)

**Pinkie:** (*voice breaking*) Then I guess you don’t need a Best Sister Friend Forever anymore. (*She trudges away.*)

**Maud:** (*reaching after her*) Pinkie…

**Starlight:** (*thinking fast, crossing to Pinkie*) Uh, wait! Let’s all slow down and talk about this.

**Pinkie:** *No!*

(*And with that, she is off like a sobbing pink missile across the meadowlands.*)

**Mudbriar:** (*waving, calling after her*) See you later!

(*Dissolve to another stretch of the dirt paths that run through these tracts as Pinkie slows to a walk and steps onto a bridge that spans the stream bordering Ponyville.*)

**Pinkie:** I don’t understand. (*Stop midway across.*) How could Maud like Mudbriar? (*Flop to haunches.*) Is it Opposite Day? (*crying harder*) Nothing makes sense!

(*Ghostly, translucent caricatures of her friends’ faces tumble into view, one at a time in turn, drifting past as they speak with reverberating voices.*)

**Fluttershy:** I’m not shy, and I hate animals.

**Rarity:** (*taken aback*) Fashion? Not for me, darling.

**Applejack:** (*retching*) An apple a day is downright disgustin’!

**Rainbow Dash:** Slow and steady wins the race.

**Twilight Sparkle:** I never learned to read!

(*Her image sports a small crown. Now Pinkie stuffs hooves in ears as all five effigies orbit her head amid a chorus of mocking laughter. Her tears have stopped by this point.*)

**Pinkie:** *What if I don’t like cupcakes?!?*

(*She peels out through Ponyville proper, a shrill scream hanging over a trail of dust clouds to mark her unhinged exit. Fade to black.*)

Act Three

(*Opening shot: fade in to a long shot of the Pie family homestead and the surrounding fields of rocks. The rise of the morning sun is marked by a rooster’s crowing as the camera zooms in slowly and cuts to an extreme close-up of Pinkie asleep in one of the farmhouse’s beds. She awakens with a bright grin almost as soon as the light hits her face; cut to a shot of the entire room as she sits up.*)

**Pinkie:** Good morning! (*Pause; her mood deflates.*) Oh, wait. *Bad* morning.

(*She covers her face with a pillow and flops back onto the mattress, voicing her dejection in a long moan. The door creaks open and her sister Limestone peeks in, trademark scowl firmly in place.*)

**Limestone:** Get out of bed, sis. (*Cut to Pinkie; she continues o.s.*) If you’re gonna be here, you gotta work.

(*After a peek out from under the pillow’s edge, the house guest moans softly and tosses it aside. Once Limestone has exited, the view wipes to her in one of the fields, chipping at a rock with a pickaxe held in her teeth. The sky has blued into morning, and sisters Pinkie and Marble approach the working mare from the direction of the farmhouse.*)

**Pinkie:** You’re probably wondering why I came back to the family farm in the middle of the night.

**Marble:** Mmm-hmm.

**Pinkie:** Well, it all started when— (*Limestone drops her pick.*)

**Limestone:** Less talking, more farming!

(*The middle sister of the three voices a dejected little groan, while her younger twin glares daggers at the oldest.*)

**Pinkie:** It’s just…Maud has a boyfriend. (*Limestone’s eyes pops.*)

**Limestone:** (*hastily*) I’m not jealous. Who said anything about jealous?

**Pinkie:** Don’t be. He’s super-duper-weird! (*crossing to Limestone*) And somehow he tricked Maud into liking him, and now I’ll never get to see her again!

(*She plops onto her haunches, out of breath after this miniature rant, as Marble joins them.*)

**Pinkie:** I came home because you two know her better than anypony. What am I missing? What does she see in him? (*pulling them closer, voice breaking*) What does he have that I don’t?

(*And now she loses it altogether, crying twin gushers of tears that give her sisters’ heads a thorough soaking.*)

**Limestone:** Buck up, Pinkie Pie. You look as miserable as I feel all the time.

(*The waterworks stop, and Pinkie sniffles piteously and pitches onto her face in the puddle her hysterics have left in the dirt.*)

**Pinkie:** It’s just that I love Maud and I want to love Mudbriar, but… (*covering eyes*) …I can’t see anything to *like* about him.

(*Over her prone form, Marble glances across to Limestone and tosses her head meaningfully to one side.*)

**Limestone:** Ugh, fine. (*walking past her*) We’re taking a work break. Come on!

(*Pinkie looks up with no small degree of confusion. Dissolve to a smallish stone resting before Marble’s hooves, atop a cluster of others half-embedded in the soil—no particular distinguishing features to any of them. Zoom out; she has pickaxe in mouth as Pinkie and Limestone approach.*)

**Limestone:** (*glancing at stone*) I’m looking at a sparkling, bright blue-and-white rock. See it?

**Pinkie:** (*puzzled, pointing to it*) You mean that lumpy gray one?

**Limestone:** No! The beautiful blue-and-white one— (*Close-up of it; she points and continues o.s.*) —right there. (*Pinkie leans down to examine it very closely.*)

**Pinkie:** (*gesturing to it*) I would not describe that as beautiful blue or white, but… (*Weak, humoring chuckle and shrug.*) …okay.

**Limestone:** (*to Marble*) Show her.

(*Smiling around her pick handle, the gray mare strikes one blow to crack the mass in two. In close-up, the halves split apart reveal an interior filled with glittering blue crystals around the edges and white ones at the core. Pinkie stares wonderingly at the shiny facets.*)

**Limestone:** (*from o.s.*) It’s a geode. (*She picks up one half; cut to her.*) The outside looks like a regular rock, but the inside is filled with beautiful gems.

(*Pinkie sits on her haunches and puts a hoof to her chin contemplatively; Marble has disposed of her pick.*)

**Pinkie:** So you’re saying— (*whacking one front hoof against other foreleg*) —I should crack open Mudbriar like a rock! (*rearing up gleefully*) It all makes sense! (*Pause.*) No, wait. It doesn’t.

**Limestone:** It’s a metaphor, Pinkie! (*holding up a rock in one hoof, half the geode in another*) You see Mudbriar as a rock, but Maud sees him as a gem. Even if you never see past his dullness, you *can* see how happy he makes Maud. And to a sister, that’s all that matters. (*She and Marble smile at one another.*)

**Marble:** (*nodding*) Mmm-hmm.

(*Now it is Pinkie’s turn to pick up and regard the two items discarded by Limestone. After glancing from one to another, she lets a big, wobbly, watery-eyed smile steal across her face and sets them aside.*)

**Pinkie:** Oh, Limestone, Marble! Thank you! (*wiping eyes*) I don’t know what I’d do without you two. (*hurling herself bodily at them*) PIE PILE!!

(*All three hit the hardpan in a billow of dust.*)

**Maud:** Okay, okay. You’re crushing me to gravel, Pinkie.

**Pinkie:** I really owe Mudbriar an apology. (*She stands up with a gasp.*) And I owe Maud a party! (*Another, softer gasp.*) I just hope I’m not too late!

(*Dissolve to the Ponyville town square, in which a couple of tables have been set up near the town hall, and zoom in slowly. Mudbriar stands at one of them, trying and failing to wrap a thick, short log as a present. With one end of the ribbon in his teeth and the other pinned beneath the chunk of wood, he glares at the paper as it comes undone once, twice. The third time, a pink hoof lances into view to hold the paper in place; Mudbriar is so surprised by Pinkie’s sudden return that he lets the ribbon fall free so she can deftly tie it into a bow. With the job done, she pulls a small, leafy twig from her mane and offers it to him.*)

**Pinkie:** I brought you an olive branch to say “sorry.” I was really unfair to you, and I’m ready to listen to your ideas for Maud’s birthday—if you still want to plan it together. (*He peers closely at the bit of foliage.*)

**Mudbriar:** Technically, this isn’t even an olive branch. (*He takes it.*) It’s a *Quercus*, most likely *Castaneifolia*.

**Pinkie:** (*supremely irate*) *OH, COME ON!!* (*calming down, smiling, hushed*) Sorry. Keeping it together.

**Mudbriar:** (*smiling*) And I love a good *Quercus*. (*Her smile becomes genuine as he offers a hoof.*) Friends?

**Pinkie:** (*shaking it*) Friends. Now, do you have any ideas for the party?

**Mudbriar:** There is one.

(*Dissolve to the town square at sunset. The tables have multiplied and been set with cloths and treats, pennants and rock-themed banners/balloons are strung up all heights, and the area is packed with revelers in party hats. The tables are set with boulder centerpieces and one or two stone sculptures of rearing mares. Spike snags a muffin from one and eats it before turning his attention to the town hall’s closed doors with the rest of the crowd. As soon as they swing open, the camera cuts to a close-up and a cardboard panel marked with a crude picture of a smiling Maud floats out under a rain of confetti.*)

**Crowd:** (*from o.s.*) SURPRISE!!

(*It moves ahead, followed by its manipulator—Starlight, who sends it out far enough for Twilight to take it over in her field and pivot it for Spike to show off to the others. Descending the steps, the pinkish-violet unicorn grins toward her fellow conspirators and then directs a wave off into the distance. Cut to a long overhead shot of the town square and pan/zoom out to frame a ridge overlooking the town. Pinkie, Maud, and Mudbriar are seated at the edge and watching the festivities; cut to them as both sisters return the wave. Maud’s mouth has curved up into a small smile, and Mudbriar sits between her and Pinkie.*)

**Maud:** This is my favorite party ever.

**Pinkie:** It was all your amazing boyfriend’s idea. (*Cut to the other two; she continues o.s.*) He said the best present would be me throwing you a surprise party you didn’t have to go to.

**Mudbriar:** Technically, it wasn’t a surprise because she could see the pre-party preparations from up here.

(*Back to all three on the end of this. The grit of Pinkie’s teeth betrays a monumental inner struggle to keep herself under control.*)

**Pinkie:** Technically… (*relaxing, smiling*) …you’re right.

(*She wraps the couple up in a hug and voices a contented little squeal. “Iris out” to black, centered on them.*)