**NON-COMPETE CLAUSE**

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Prologue

(*Opening shot: fade in to the exterior of the School of Friendship during the day. Rainbow Dash lances into view toward the courtyard above the main entrance; an instant later she is rocketing through this area and straight toward the camera. The view blacks out as her frantic face fills the screen, then snaps to the entrance hall. She slams to a hovering halt above the gathered ponies for the briefest moment before taking off down a side passage where Silverstream and Yona are sharing a laugh. The turbulence stirred up by the blue pegasus dislodges a thick stack of papers from the yak’s grip, turning them into a blizzard.*)

**Silverstream, Yona:** Huh?

(*Rainbow doubles back, re-stacks the fallen pages, and passes them back to Yona with an apologetic smile. As soon as she flies away, though, they go fluttering in every direction all over again. Silverstream voices an incredulous gasp as Rainbow cuts another turn and disappears down the far end of the hall. Cut to a large circular room set up as a teachers’ lounge—bookshelves, couches, tea service, kitchen area with note-covered billboard, and so on in—and zoom in slowly. The School’s crest and an arrangement of nine framed photographs hang on the far wall above a fireplace, and Twilight Sparkle steps up to a lectern in the center of the floor. The rest of her friends have taken seats facing her on couches and the floor, and Spike is present with a camera in hand. Rainbow pulls in to hover near Applejack.*)

**Rainbow:** (*eagerly*) Did I miss the Teacher of the Month announcement?

**Applejack:** You’re just in time— (*smugly*) —but it’s gonna be me.

**Rainbow:** Yeah, right. I got this one nailed. (*Applejack grimaces at her.*)

**Twilight:** And the Friendship School Teacher of the Month is…

(*Cut to the farmer and flyer, eyes shining and mouths grinning with unbridled anticipation.*)

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) …Fluttershy! (*The faces fall; Applejack groans softly.*)

**Applejack:** Again?

**Rainbow:** Come on! (*Cut to Fluttershy.*)

**Fluttershy:** Oh, my! I don’t know how I keep winning.

(*Spike takes advantage of a brief lull to stick his camera in her face and snap, the flash leaving her disoriented. She shakes her head clear as the picture pops out and he backs off.*)

**Rainbow:** (*sarcastically*) Yeah. Me neither.

**Twilight:** (*to Fluttershy*) The award is based on the students’ vote. They must really like you!

(*Pulling the picture of her dazed visage free of the camera, Spike holds it up proudly—but his features shift to an expression of bewilderment as he looks behind himself. Pan quickly to a close-up of the wall over the fireplace; one frame is empty, while the other eight hold photos of the yellow mare that are identical to the one he has just taken.*)

**Twilight:** Congratulations, Fluttershy!

(*She warms up her horn; Applejack and Rainbow can only watch, dismayed, and reach futilely toward a trophy that floats past them from the back of the room. This consists of a gold cup surmounted by a tasseled mortarboard cap, and Fluttershy receives it with a giggle, ignoring the dirty looks from the sky-blue and orange-tan faces.*)

**Twilight:** Next item of business. I’ve been looking into a new activity for our friendship classes. Spike?

(*Having put away his camera, he struggles to move toward her while carrying the backbreaker of a school rulebook she put together in Part Two of “School Daze.” In close-up, it is turned to give her a clear view of the pages once opened; however, with his left hand supporting the weight, he is unable to get his right up over the spine and across the cover to snag the edge. Twilight’s field does the job for him, flipping through several hundred pages so that he can now put both hands under it. Cut back to her on the start of the next line.*)

**Twilight:** (*pointing out a passage*) Section one-forty-seven, paragraph two states that teamwork is a key part of friendship. And section two-two-nine, paragraph nine says outdoor activity reinforces learning. Add that together, and what do you get?

**Pinkie Pie:** (*raising a foreleg*) Ooh, ooh! (*counting on hooves*) Okay, let me see. One-forty-seven, two-twenty-nine, carry the two… (*A bell rings in her mind.*) …three hundred and eighty-seven?

(*Rarity rolls her eyes sadly at this failure to catch on to the point.*)

**Twilight:** (*shaking head*) Hmm-mmm. A teamwork field trip! Leading it is a “Teacher of the Month”-type job, so I thought I’d ask—

(*Her perspective of Fluttershy on the end of this; Applejack leans into view enthusiastically to block the sight line.*)

**Applejack:** I’m your pony, Twilight! Sweet Apple Acres has taught me a thing or two about workin’ together. (*Rainbow barges up to hover beside her.*)

**Rainbow:** Yeah, but being a Wonderbolt’s the definition of teamwork.

**Applejack:** (*to her, chuckling dismissively*) I’m sure you’re not sayin’ fancy flyin’ makes you a better choice than me.

**Rainbow:** (*ditto*) I wouldn’t say “better,” just a little more qualified. No offense. (*Applejack glowers at her.*)

**Fluttershy:** Maybe you can lead the field trip together.

(*Green and red-violet eyes pop very wide as her words hit like a two-by-four to the backs of both heads. They pivot spluttering toward Fluttershy, but Twilight is all smiles.*)

**Twilight:** Of course! Who better to model the importance of working as a team?

**Pinkie:** Um, Rarity, Fluttershy, me, Spike… (*dryly, holding up a potted plant*) …this flowerpot?

**Twilight:** (*crossing to Applejack/Rainbow*) Both of you are teamwork experts. (*Rainbow settles to the ground.*) If the students see the two of you teaching together, they’ll learn even more. I know you’ve been competitive in the past, but I’m sure you’d never let that get in the way of friendship education.

**Applejack:** Of course!

**Rainbow:** Totally!

(*Their smiles turn to sotto-voce growls once Twilight has turned to go back to her lectern. Realizing that even this might be too much, they offer each other a big forced grin and giggle—but both pairs of eyes are still narrowed in barely concealed hostility. Fade to black.*)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(*Opening shot: fade in to an overhead shot of Twilight leading the six students away from the campus. Smolder is the only airborne member of the group.*)

**Ocellus:** I’ve never been on a field trip before. (*Cut to her, Gallus, and Smolder.*)

**Smolder:** Yeah. What’s the point of this, exactly?

**Gallus:** Getting out of the classroom. Duh! (*Pan back to Sandbar, Silverstream, and Yona on the next line.*)

**Yona:** Yak best at field-tripping!

(*She demonstrates her aptitude by deliberately pitching forward onto her face, drawing smiles from the two classmates.*)

**Silverstream:** (*overjoyed*) That’s what we’re doing?! So fun! (*She copies Yona’s slapstick tumble.*)

**Sandbar:** (*chuckling*) Pretty sure the headmare has something else in mind. (*All stop.*)

**Twilight:** All right, class. Today you’ll learn how important working together is for building a strong friendship. (*She moves aside to make room for Applejack.*)

**Applejack:** Hey, y’all! Ready to get out there and do some learnin’ the Apple family way? (*Rainbow flies in; Applejack leans this way and that to be seen behind her.*)

**Rainbow:** This is basically gonna be the best field trip in the history of ever! With me in charge, that is. (*Applejack shoves her aside.*) Whoa!

**Applejack:** (*chuckling*) With *us* in charge. (*aside, to Rainbow*) Meanin’ mostly me.

**Rainbow:** (*ditto*) Yeah, good one. (*They glare daggers at one another.*)

**Twilight:** And what teamwork activity do you two have planned for today? (*Cut to them.*)

**Applejack, Rainbow:** Shed buildin’! / Canoe racing!

**Silverstream:** (*from o.s.*) No way! (*Cut to her and Yona; she pops briefly into the air.*) We get to do both?

**Twilight:** I bet that’s exactly what your teachers had in mind.

(*Cut to the pair, trading uneasy sidewise glances, and zoom out to frame Twilight on the next line.*)

**Twilight:** Why don’t you start with shed building first? (*Applejack shoots a cocky look to Rainbow.*)

**Applejack:** Heh. Don’t mind if I do! Everycreature, follow the leader!

(*She leads the way across the meadow for the students, Rainbow rising to a hover and letting her eyes broadcast her discontent.*)

**Twilight:** I’ll check in later to see how it’s going. Remember to work together!

(*The needled pegasus wings slowly after the rest of the group. Dissolve to an extreme close-up profile of Applejack, who pulls in a long lungful of air while walking through the Sweet Apple Acres orchards.*)

**Applejack:** Now take a good deep breath. What do you smell?

(*Longer shot; Rainbow is flying alongside her as they lead the outing. Gallus follows instructions, but immediately voices a sound of mild revulsion and covers his beak.*)

**Gallus:** Yak? (*He shoots a glare to Yona, his immediate neighbor; she sniffs at her own fur.*)

**Yona:** Mmm-hmm!

**Applejack:** Nope. Try again.

**Ocellus:** Um, apples? (*All stop on a rise.*)

**Applejack:** Aaaaand…? Anyone? Anyone? No? (*Ear-to-ear grin.*) The promise of… (*gesturing to one side*) …teamwork!

(*On this last word, pan quickly in that direction and stop on a nearby outbuilding that resemble a chicken coop, but with a full-sized door for ponies’ use. Next to it is a pile of lumber and tools, lying under a tree that has had a pulley attached to one branch.*)

**Applejack:** (*now o.s.*) That there’s an apple shed! (*trotting to materials*) And this here is what we’re gonna use to build it! (*The others gather in.*) Nothin’ brings friends together like a little hard work and honest sweat.

**Rainbow:** (*laughing derisively*) Sweat? Seriously? That’s supposed to be part of friendship?

**Applejack:** Not everypony would know that, Rainbow Dash. Just “Teacher of the Month” kinda ponies.

**Rainbow:** Whatever. Let’s just get this done so we can move on to *my* activity.

(*The six scholars watch the blue smirk and orange scowl with varied puzzlement and irritation. Dissolve to an extreme close-up of a nail behind held against the end of a plank by Gallus so Yona can pound it in with her hoof. A longer shot shows that the griffon and yak have both donned hard hats, the latter’s cut to accommodate her horns, and she grins at his satisfied nod. Cut to Silverstream pulling a rope taut with her beak to secure a load of boards on Ocellus’s back, then zoom out. She has a bundle of her own, and the two move off as Sandbar paints one board and Smolder saws another. All four are now wearing hard hats as well, and Ocellus and Silverstream deliver and drop their cargo during the following.*)

**Applejack:** That’s it! Measure twice and cut once! Haste makes waste! (*Close-up.*) Slow and steady! (*Zoom out to frame the hovering Rainbow, carrying planks under both forelegs, on the next line.*)

**Rainbow:** Emphasis on the “slow”!

(*She darts away in a rainbow blur that blows Applejack’s mane/tail sideways, lets fly with the lumber, and kicks a hoof-load of nails after them. Timbers drop into place, nails punch in and are struck home, and Applejack gapes at the construction frenzy unfolding before her in midair.*)

**Applejack:** (*annoyed*) Rainbow Dash, you can’t build an apple shed like that! (*Rainbow drops to her level with a faint scoff.*)

**Rainbow:** Oh, yeah? I just did!

(*The corner of something very heavy, large, and wooden slams to the turf in the foreground. Even the small fraction of it in frame points to a haphazard method of assembly.*)

**Gallus:** (*walking into view*) Whoa! No way!

(*A longer shot confirms the Wonderbolt’s less-than-methodical approach to construction. The front wall and roof are missing, but this does not stop the students from gathering in to run an eye over it.*)

**Other students:** (*awed*) Whoa…

**Gallus:** Impressive—if you can call an apple shed impressive.

**Applejack:** Just ’cause it’s fast don’t mean it’s good.

**Rainbow:** (*mockingly*) Oh, sorry, can’t hear you. Too busy practicing my “Teacher of the Month” pose.

(*She proceeds to test out a few mid-hover, adding a grunt or two for good measure and working the remainder of Applejack’s good nerves.*)

**Applejack:** Don’t count your pictures before they’re snapped, Rainbow Dash.

**Rainbow:** Oh, come on! These students are totally gonna vote for a teacher who gets things done!

**Applejack:** No, they’re gonna vote for a teacher who gets things done *right!*

(*Now nose to nose, the two do their best to bore through each other’s skulls with the sheer vitriol of their glares.*)

**Smolder:** (*dryly*) Yeah, this isn’t awkward at all.

(*Her discontent rapidly spreads to the other five. Dissolve to an extreme close-up of Rainbow’s sloppily built shed and zoom out as Ocellus, Sandbar, and Silverstream raise a neatly assembled front wall—whose door is missing—into place under Applejack’s supervision. The two with wings quickly nail it to the frame; cut to Yona standing under the tree, one end of a rope clamped in her teeth.*)

**Applejack:** (*from o.s.*) Steady…steady…

(*Up above, the other end runs over the pulley on the tree branch and is looped around the shed’s roof, which Gallus and Smolder are maneuvering into position.*)

**Applejack:** (*from o.s.*) Take her nice and slow… (*They ease it down; cut to her.*) L-Little to the left… (*They do so at her gesture.*) Uh, uh, a hair to the right…

(*Swing it back; now the entire structure is in view. She is standing atop the frame, Rainbow hovering nearby and getting fed up with the whole process.*)

**Applejack:** Now a hoof shavin’ higher… (*The roof is raised; Rainbow growls through her teeth and zips over to Yona.*)

**Rainbow:** JUST BRING IT DOWN ALREADY!!

(*The outburst spooks Yona into letting go of the rope with a gasp; the weight of the roof drags Gallus and Smolder down with a yell until they too release their grip. All others scatter, Applejack jumping clear and voicing a shout of her own just before the roof crashes down squarely on the shed. Dust boils up to fill the screen and clears to reveal the front wall as the only piece still standing. As the students and teachers congregate around the wreckage, Rainbow offers a weak chuckle while finding herself on the wrong end of puzzled/accusing looks.*)

**Applejack:** I’ll give you one guess whose side is still standin’.

**Yona:** (*thumping wall*) Yak side!

(*She grunts in triumph as it topples forward to land flat on the grass, falling so that a rather startled Sandbar finds himself standing within the perimeter of its doorframe. Yona can only offer a sheepish chuckle for her role in the calamity; Applejack uncorks a big-league groan as Rainbow descends to her.*)

**Ocellus:** Um, Professors? I’m a little confused about teamwork now.

**Rainbow:** That’s because *you* need a different teacher. Follow me! Last one to the stream is a rotten apple shed!

(*She flashes away, leaving Applejack to growl and send out a glare that could burn through a foot of concrete. Dissolve to a patch of peaceful sky, against which Rainbow rises into view, wearing a life vest and crash helmet; a stopwatch hangs around her neck.*)

**Rainbow:** Who’s ready to smash the all-time Equestria speed record for river canoeing?

(*Longer shot. All eight have gathered at a riverbank and donned vests and helmets, an elongated canoe standing grounded before them. Both Smolder’s and Yona’s headgear is cut to let their horns protrude. Attached to the prow is a carving of a unicorn mare’s head. Rainbow proudly gestures toward the craft during a long silence.*)

**Gallus:** (*to Sandbar*) Is that even a thing?

**Sandbar:** First I’ve heard of it.

**Rainbow:** (*flying to them, showing stopwatch*) We need to get to the finish line before *this* alarm goes off. That means you gotta move fast!

(*In a blink, she has flashed over to the canoe and pulled out half a dozen oars, which she throws to the students. Each catches one except for Ocellus, but Smolder snags two and passes one over to her.*)

**Rainbow:** Any questions?

**Yona:** Um, Yona have questions.

**Rainbow:** No time for ’em. Get in the boat! (*All six do so, Applejack bringing up the rear.*)

**Applejack:** You really think winnin’ some canoein’ record is gonna get you that Teacher of the Month trophy?

**Rainbow:** Um, pretty sure everycreature’s gonna like it a lot better than pounding nails and cutting wood.

(*Her self-satisfied smile draws an incredibly dirty look from her opposite number. Cut to an extreme close-up of river water coursing past the canoe’s hull; Ocellus’s hooves splash through it to climb aboard, followed by Yona fretfully considering her own reflection in the surface.*)

**Yona:** Yak not like water. (*Cut to frame both on the start of the next line.*)

**Ocellus:** Sometimes, when I’m scared to try something new, I whistle.

(*After mulling over this suggestion for a moment, the hirsute friendship student blows a few tentative notes and starts climbing in, only to get stuck on the edge. Sandbar and Silverstream have now taken their seats in addition to Ocellus; when Yona gets stuck on the edge, Sandbar begins to pull her in as Gallus and Smolder fall in on the shore.*)

**Gallus:** We got you, Yona.

(*She lets out a surprised yelp as the trio’s combined efforts topple her in among the seats.*)

**Applejack:** (*to Rainbow*) Way I see it, Twilight’s gonna give that teachin’ trophy to a teacher, not a racer.

**Rainbow:** We’ll see about that.

(*Dissolve to a close-up of the daredevil, now sitting at the bow and facing astern as water sprays around her.*)

**Rainbow:** Stroke! Stroke! Stroke! (*Cut to Gallus/Smolder/Yona facing front and struggling to paddle; she continues o.s.*) Harder! Put your back into it, newbies!

**Applejack:** (*from o.s., slowly*) Strooooke… (*Cut to her.*) …strooooke…

(*Longer shot; she sits in the stern and addresses Ocellus/Sandbar/Silverstream, who sit facing her and are considerably more relaxed as they cycle their oars.*)

**Applejack:** …strooooke…slower…focus on your paddle technique, y’all. (*Close-up of Silverstream.*)

**Silverstream:** Woo-hoo! We’re really going now!

(*Pan from her to Rainbow’s end of the boat and stop on Smolder.*)

**Smolder:** So…when do we get to the part when we move?

(*Cut to a shot that frames the entire canoe. They have pulled away from the shore, but the two trios—facing their respective coxswains and away from each other—are paddling in opposite directions so that their efforts cancel each other out.*)

**Rainbow:** When everycreature starts listening to me! The leader of *my* activity, Applejack!

(*The three on Applejack’s end hastily shift to face front.*)

**Rainbow:** Now, STROKE!!

(*Paddles cut through the current and the canoe begins to move. Wipe to a close-up of Rainbow facing confidently ahead, a hoof raised to shade her eyes, and zoom out. All six rowers are giving it everything they have; close-up of the stopwatch being raised to check the time.*)

**Rainbow:** (*from o.s.*) Dig in, team! (*Back to her.*) We can still beat that record! (*Pan back to Applejack.*)

**Applejack:** Stop!

(*They are bearing down on a cluster of large rocky outcroppings that splits the river into two paths.*)

**Rainbow:** Go!

**Ocellus:** Which way do we go?

**Rainbow:** Left!

**Applejack:** Right!

**Silverstream:** Aye-aye, captains! (*Pause.*) Wait. What?

**Rainbow:** Left! I can see the finish line from here!

(*Her perspective, zooming in quickly past her pointed hoof to stop on a checkered flag planted on the bank just beyond the rocks on the left side. The water is broken up by several smallish fish sporting bat wings and overlarge mouths filled with deadly pointed teeth, and one leaps snarling from the water. Cut back to the canoe.*)

**Applejack:** If we go left, we’ll be headin’ straight into the bite-acuda fish!

**Rainbow:** Who cares about a few fish? (*Cut to Sandbar.*)

**Sandbar:** (*uneasily*) Uh, Professors? (*To Applejack on the start of the next line.*)

**Applejack:** (*ignoring him*) You’ll care plenty when they bite you!

**Sandbar:** Guys? (*The canoe is closing in on the rocks.*)

**Rainbow:** (*ignoring him*) We’ll just go around them!

**Sandbar:** *ROOOCK!!*

(*The camera shifts to ride alongside the bow, just above the churning water surface, as they close in on the outcroppings. Screams ring out over the roar and foam, the camera cutting back to the canoe as they disappear from sight and a sickening crash drifts back, accompanied by random bits of smashed wood and snapped oars. Fade to black.*)

Act Two

(*Opening shot: fade in to the wreckage of the canoe, most of which is being swept around to the right side of the outcroppings. Eight dark spots appear under the water and soon sprout into the heads of the coughing, spluttering canoeists, among them a laughing Silverstream and a whistling Yona. The latter’s attempt at a diversion comes to an abrupt end when her life vest becomes snagged on a jutting branch and tears loose from her body, popping away on its own a moment later. Soon they are floating past the rocks and into calmer waters.*)

**Silverstream:** I love field trips!

(*Both Rainbow and her stopwatch—knocked loose in the crash—drift to a stop near an acerbic Applejack in close-up.*)

**Applejack:** I hope you’re happy. (*Rainbow checks the watch and scoffs; here comes Yona’s vest.*)

**Rainbow:** Obviously not, because there goes our new speed record!

(*The end of this is underscored by flurry of splashes and short, panicked breaths from o.s.; cut to the source—the young yak, flailing to keep her head above water but slowly going down.*)

**Yona:** HEEEEEELP!! Yak not swim!

(*When she finally submerges, a look of fierce determination passes between Ocellus and Silverstream. Both throw off their helmets, activate their respective magics, and dive—a pair of finned tails plunging out of view as Applejack and Rainbow stare popeyed. Underwater, the natural sea pony and her changeling equivalent lance down after their slowly sinking classmate. Ocellus’s mane/tail/dorsal fins have the same translucent pink color and sparkle as her wings, her ears and the fins on her forelegs are a darker pink, and her eyes have the appearance of a pony’s, with dark blue-green irises. She and Silverstream have shed their life vests now.*)

**Ocellus:** That’s okay. (*They pull Yona up.*) Your friends can change into creatures that do.

(*As soon as the three heads break the surface, Yona comes to in a paroxysm of waterlogged coughing and pulls Ocellus and Silverstream into a grateful hug.*)

**Twilight:** (*from o.s., brightly*) How’s the canoeing… (*Cut to her on the bank, surprise deflating her.*) …going?

**Smolder:** (*sourly*) About as good as the apple shed building.

(*The castaways wade/fly to shore; Rainbow is now wearing her stopwatch again.*)

**Rainbow:** I totally had things under control— (*Her, Twilight, and Applejack.*) —until *Applejack* messed ’em up. (*Sound of a magic change under the end of this.*)

**Applejack:** I did not!

(*Long overhead shot: Ocellus and Silverstream are back to their original forms and wearing the vests and helmets.*)

**Rainbow:** Did too!

**Applejack:** Did not! (*Ground level: Twilight/Gallus/Smolder.*)

**Gallus:** (*dryly, to Twilight*) Yep, it’s been like this all day. (*Pan to frame Sandbar on the following.*)

**Sandbar:** I wouldn’t say *all* day, just…ninety-nine percent of it.

(*Close-up of Twilight, turning a venomous, narrow-eyed glare toward the camera, then dissolve to a long shot of her leading Applejack and Rainbow away for a little talk farther along the bank. The two instructors have ditched their safety gear, as have the students watching in the fore.*)

**Twilight:** I can’t believe this! You’re not teaching teamwork! You’re competing with each other! I thought you were past that.

**Rainbow:** We are! (*Applejack gives her a funny look.*) Mostly.

**Applejack:** We got carried away with wantin’ to be the Teacher of the Month, is all.

**Twilight:** The Teacher of the Month wouldn’t care about being the Teacher of the Month. I know Fluttershy would be thrilled to see another pony win. That’s it! (*leaning into their faces*) I’m taking over this field trip!

(*She puts her back to them and walks away, leaving them to trade looks of purest panic.*)

**Applejack:** Hold up, Twilight! (*Twilight stops.*) Don’t count out Rainbow Dash for the award just yet. You shoulda seen her fire up those students to build a shed.

**Rainbow:** (*to Applejack*) No way! *You’re* the one the students listen to. Besides, you saved us from those pony-eating fish.

(*The toothy grins that split both faces do very little to shift Twilight out of her profound skepticism, if a single raised eyebrow is any indication.*)

**Rainbow:** Uh, long story. But Applejack should definitely be Teacher of the Month.

**Twilight:** Hmmm…maybe you two *have* learned something after all.

**Applejack:** Does that mean you’ll give us another chance at the Teacher of the— (*Rainbow claps a hoof over her mouth.*)

**Rainbow:** —field trip?

**Twilight:** Well…

**Rainbow:** Come on, Twilight! We get it! (*Applejack nods.*) No more arguing. Right, Applejack?

**Applejack:** Right as rain and twice as fresh.

(*They trade a high five and smile brightly at Twilight.*)

**Twilight:** Fine. But *I’m* picking the next activity you two lead—a nature walk. Nopony could possibly argue over that. (*pointedly*) Right?

**Applejack, Rainbow:** Right!

**Applejack:** See? (*Rainbow nods.*) We’re agreein’ already!

(*The boss trots away with a satisfied nod as both grin and wave after her. Dissolve to an overhead shot of a forest path and pan slowly ahead to frame the eight-member excursion following it. Cut to ground level as they reach a fork in the trail. Applejack and Rainbow both adopt a tone of exaggerated courtesy bordering on obsequiousness throughout the next nine lines.*)

**Applejack:** Well, look at that. The path splits up ahead. (*pointing to each choice in turn*) Left, or right? (*She ponders; Smolder puts a hand to her face and groans softly.*)

**Smolder:** Here we go again.

**Applejack:** Where to, Rainbow Dash?

**Rainbow:** I was thinking right—unless you want to go left, because what makes you happy makes me happy.

**Applejack:** Aw, heck. Forget about me.

(*Cut to the mildly irked students, who begin turning their heads to follow the conversation as if watching a tennis match.*)

**Applejack:** (*from o.s.*) You want to go right, we’ll go right.

**Rainbow:** (*from o.s.*) But teamwork means listening to other ponies, so it’s up to you.

**Applejack:** (*from o.s.*) Well, aren’t you as sweet as sugar apple pie? But it’s up to *you*. (*Yona grumbles to herself before speaking up.*)

**Yona:** Follow me! Yak know best way!

(*She clomps resolutely ahead along the left fork, the other students taking their cue from her before either mare can react.*)

**Applejack:** Hey, where y’all goin’?

(*She and Rainbow break into a gallop to catch up. Dissolve to the group on the move through the forest and not looking too thrilled about it, Applejack and Rainbow bringing up the rear as they pass a boulder covered with moss and vines. Another dissolve brings them to a stop at a pair of trees growing on opposite sides of the path, partly uprooted, they have toppled toward each other to form an X that leaves only a small space to squeeze through underneath. Rainbow makes an “after you” gesture to Applejack, who shakes her head and returns it. When Rainbow repeats her offer, Applejack nods and they move ahead together, only to end up wedged side by side in the gap under the trees. Gallus’s tap at one of Yona’s horns brings a big grin to the latter’s face; she paws at the ground and charges, knocking both teachers loose, then ushers the other students on ahead.*)

(*Dissolve to the group continuing their walk past the same boulder seen a few moments ago, Sandbar pausing briefly to take note of it with some confusion, then to a stretch of a path that adjoins theirs to form a T-junction. Applejack and Rainbow emerge into view in the background, following the straightaway portion of the T, and agree to continue along it. All eight charge along this path and o.s., then cross the screen again much closer to the camera. Within seconds they are racing/flying back and forth in all directions, finally gathering for one massed rush past the camera in the fore.*)

(*Dissolve to the boulder as they pass it for a third time; now, Ocellus stops with Sandbar and he points it out to her with genuine worry before they carry on. One last dissolve brings the students to the edge of a cliff; zoom out to a long shot as Applejack and Rainbow catch up.*)

**Ocellus:** I think we’ve gone in the same circle five times. (*Close-up of the six.*)

**Sandbar:** (*acidly, over shoulder*) Only because *someponies* won’t make up their minds about which way to go.

(*Pan slightly to frame Applejack/Rainbow as more nasty looks come their way. Strained polite grins appear on both faces.*)

**Rainbow:** Do you want to keep going in a circle, Applejack?

**Applejack:** Up to you, Rainbow Dash. I insist.

**Rainbow:** (*chuckling*) No, no. *I* insist.

**Applejack:** (*chuckling, scowling*) But *I* insisted first. (*Rainbow copies her expression.*)

**Silverstream:** Are we still on a field trip? ’Cause this just feels like being lost.

(*Putting a hand to her face with a disgusted groan, Smolder lifts off to do a quick bit of aerial recon. Cut to the uppermost reaches of the Castle and School of Friendship jutting through the forest canopy and pan/zoom out to frame the group in a long shot some distance away.*)

**Smolder:** (*landing*) We can still get back to school before dark if we cross that ravine and stop doubling back.

(*A mildly panicked glance between Applejack and Rainbow gives way to casual grins.*)

**Rainbow:** We knew that. All part of our plan. (*poking Applejack*) Right, Applejack?

**Applejack:** Uh…yep! All we have to do is, uh…

(*Cut to a long shot of the next plateau over on the end of this; she moves into view to survey the gap between it and the cliff.*)

**Applejack:** …build a bridge ’cross that, uh, giant canyon, and we’re home free! That is, if…if you think a bridge is a good idea.

**Rainbow:** Only if *you* want to build a bridge.

**Gallus:** *STOOOOOOP!!* (*calmer*) Listen. We can just fly everyone over and be done.

**Applejack:** Nope. There’s still plenty of time to teach y’all a lesson in teamwork.

**Rainbow:** Cooperation!

**Applejack:** Togetherness!

**Rainbow:** You are so right.

**Applejack:** Only as right as you are. (*Smolder pops up between them.*)

**Smolder:** Okay! We’ll build a bridge! What do we use?

**Applejack:** Branches!

**Rainbow:** Vines!

(*The ersatz camaraderie instantly turns into squinting hairy eyeballs. A pause.*)

**Applejack:** Vines!

**Rainbow:** Branches!

(*Again a bit of silent, unfriendly scrutiny.*)

**Applejack:** I’m goin’ with your idea. Vines! No buts about it.

**Rainbow:** I-I’m building with your idea! Branches! End of story!

(*Dissolve to the six students, watching in complete bewilderment as the two barrel back and forth. Applejack is depositing lengths of vine in one pile, while Rainbow gathers branches in another. After several passes, the camera cuts to the blue flyer setting a piece in place on a crude framework, then to the apple farmer slinging a vine lasso ahead of herself to catch on a rock. Meanwhile, the students are becoming increasingly bored, with Ocellus adding a yawn for emphasis.*)

(*Cut to Applejack, putting the finishing touches on a very droopy vine bridge, and zoom out. It is strung between rocks on opposite sides of the ravine, and Rainbow adds one last bit to an equally rickety span constructed from branches. Applejack pulls in the slack on one vine, the free end clamped in her teeth.*)

**Applejack:** Why use a branch when you can use a vine? (*It snaps, sending her flying.*) Whoa!

(*The students have just enough time for one shocked gasp before she ends up hanging on for dear life by her forelegs. Having spat out the piece in her mouth, she manages to haul herself up to a slightly more stable position that brings relieved sighs from the onlookers. Rainbow fits a branch into her tottering bridge, only for it to begin splintering almost immediately.*)

**Rainbow:** Why didn’t I think of branches to begin with? They’re so—

(*She trails off into a yell of fright as a fair portion crumbles around her, dumping her onto her belly.*)

**Rainbow:** (*deflated*) —easy to work with.

(*The students gasp again as both teachers sway in the wind, Applejack having stood up, looped vines around a couple of legs, and grabbed another in her teeth.*)

**Applejack:** (*amid grunts*) Now these here vines are just the thing, Rainbow Dash! (*Rainbow nudges a couple of branches back into place.*)

**Rainbow:** Not to disagree, but these here branches are the way—

(*This time, the whole thing gives way to drop her with a yell. Applejack echoes it, releasing the vine in her jaws, just before Rainbow and a shower of wooden debris come right down on top of her. The vine bridge disintegrates, and both mares and materials plunge out of sight. They wind up entangled in a mass of vines and branches and swinging precariously through empty air; Applejack no longer has one in her teeth.*)

**Applejack, Rainbow:** HEEEEEELP!!

(*During this, the camera cuts to a longer shot that points up just how much of a fix they are in. The bits have tangled together to form a sort of cable that stretches from one side of the ravine to the other; they are dangling from its midpoint, several yards above the river in which they were canoeing in Act One. The students edge cautiously up to peer in after them.*)

**Ocellus:** (*timidly*) But at least now they’re agreeing on something.

(*Fade to black.*)

Act Three

(*Opening shot: fade in to the trapped pair, the vines creaking ominously as they swing gently back and forth. Rainbow struggles to break loose, to no avail.*)

**Rainbow:** I can’t get out!

**Applejack:** Let me try.

(*She manages to poke one foreleg out, wrapped in several turns of vine that she knots into a lasso. This is flung upward, but proves too short to reach the top of the cliff; her face falls at the miss, and it winds up dangling just above the surface of the river. Right on cue, up come a couple of the bite-acuda fish that menaced the group in Act One to chomp it apart.*)

**Rainbow:** Let me guess. (*Others start leaping and screeching.*) Bite-acudas?

**Applejack:** (*nodding sadly*) Mmm-hmm. And they look mighty hungry.

(*Cut to the students’ clifftop.*)

**Sandbar:** We gotta get our professors out of there! Anycreature have a plan?

**Gallus:** Leave ’em hanging?

**Silverstream:** *What?!?*

**Gallus:** (*smiling*) I’m kidding! (*Pause.*) Kinda. (*The bite-acudas’ splashes drift up; cut to Ocellus.*)

**Ocellus:** We need to work fast, and together! (*The clamor is joined by a creak of the supporting vines.*) But mainly fast.

(*Several of them choose to snap, leaving one intact and dropping the hapless mares closer to a future as fish food. Cut to them.*)

**Applejack:** I hate to admit it, but— (*They lurch downward again.*) —this whole mess is kinda our fault.

**Rainbow:** Yeah. No trophy’s worth getting eaten over.

**Applejack:** (*smiling*) So what do you say? You want to team up and get ourselves outta this here pickle barrel?

**Rainbow:** (*ditto*) I thought you’d never ask.

(*Neither of them notices the giant bite-acuda, nearly their size, with Ocellus’s coloration that eases into view from the side as she speaks. Zoom out slightly; she is using her new bat wings to keep herself aloft, and the two yell in fright upon getting an eyeful of the transformed changeling. She cries out in response, but quickly gets herself under control with a smile.*)

**Ocellus:** Don’t worry. I’m just the distraction.

**Rainbow:** Ocellus?!

**Applejack:** (*sighing*) You nearly scared the cutie marks off us!

(*Ocellus dives back and slowly surfaces into a hover to face down the other fish, starting with a guttural growl that blooms into a full-throated roar and a few chomps of her formidable teeth. They waste no time in peeling out, screeching in terror and skipping across the water as she chases them away. Now the very last vine holding up Applejack and Rainbow gives way; they go into free fall with a doubled scream, only to jerk to a stop with inches to spare. Cut to a few feet above them, Silverstream’s talons extended into view to hold one clump of broken strands.*)

**Silverstream:** (*from o.s.*) Need a lift?

(*Both mares boggle up at her, a longer shot revealing that Gallus is also on the job. Griffon and hippogriff hoist them back up to the clifftop and set them down.*)

**Yona:** (*charging in with Sandbar/Smolder*) Yak smash!

(*Hooves, teeth, and claws make short work of the plant-based prison; Applejack and Rainbow take their time standing up amid its remains with open wonder.*)

**Sandbar:** Welcome back, Professors!

**Rainbow:** Now *that* was a rescue!

**Applejack:** And y’all did it together! (*Cheers from the five students.*)

**Gallus:** No big. Those fish weren’t even a thing.

(*But he quickly changes his tune when he hears Ocellus’s growl and pivots to find her hovering just behind, mouth open far too wide for comfort. His yell of fear draws an embarrassed giggle from her.*)

**Ocellus:** Oops. Sorry. (*She resumes her natural form.*)

**Silverstream:** (*giggling*) Best field trip ever!

(*Dissolve to the exterior of the School and zoom in slowly as they head for the front doors. The sun is beginning to set. Inside, Twilight paces the entrance hall, but stops at the sound of the creaking hinges.*)

**Twilight:** Huh? (*All enter.*) How was the field trip? (*crossing to them*) What did you all learn?

**Applejack, Rainbow:** Uh…

**Yona:** Yak learn ponies smart!

**Silverstream:** Yeah! Professors Applejack and Rainbow Dash were such good teachers!

**Gallus:** It was kinda crazy genius. They showed us what *not* to do so we’d figure out what we *should* do. (*Silverstream nods.*)

**Twilight:** (*puzzled*) Really?

**Sandbar:** It took us a while to get it—

**Smolder:** —especially at the ravine. It woulda been so much easier to just fly home.

**Silverstream:** (*stepping forward, on the verge of giggles*) But instead, our professors built bridges the *wrong* way just to show us how important teamwork is!

**Gallus:** Yeah. That was super-dangerous. (*Cut to Applejack and Rainbow; he continues o.s.*) Talk about commitment!

(*The two grimace at this shower of thoroughly unearned and unjustified praise. Back to him, Ocellus, and Silverstream; Twilight turns to them.*)

**Ocellus:** (*hesitantly*) We know it’s too early to pick the Teacher of the Month, but we’d like you to consider Rainbow Dash and Applejack.

**Twilight:** Thank you for telling me. I’m so glad to hear your field trip was a success. I’ll make sure to schedule another one right away.

(*The students disperse with a chorus of cheers, leaving a visibly disconcerted Applejack and Rainbow in their wake. Twilight turns to them with a sly smile.*)

**Twilight:** You were actually just competing the entire time— (*nudging Applejack*) —weren’t you?

**Applejack:** To tell you the truth…yeah.

**Rainbow:** Well, not *all* the time. (*to Applejack*) I agreed with you for the whole nature walk.

**Applejack:** (*needled*) Only ’cause you were anglin’ for that Teacher of the Month award!

(*Twilight rolls her eyes with a “here we go again” look, sighs, and walks away. The following lines overlap somewhat. Now, a bust of Rockhoof can be seen off to one side of the hall, a detail not previously seen in this area, leaving all six Pillars of Equestria present and accounted for in the entrance hall.*)

**Rainbow:** (*hovering in Applejack’s face*) You were the one doing the angling!

**Applejack:** (*scoffing*) You were more like *fan*-danglin’!

**Rainbow:** What does that even mean? No one here can understand your country-bumpkin talk!

**Applejack:** Look, we all live in the same town here!

(*Fade to black.*)