**YAKITY-SAX**

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Prologue

(*Opening shot: fade in to a bird in flight, silhouetted against the cheery midday sun, and zoom out to ground level. Accompanied by her rabbit Angel, Fluttershy strolls through a wooded glade with the handle of a wicker basket in her mouth. He leads her to a bush freighted with vibrant blooms, and she sets her basket down so she can pluck one in her teeth and add it to the load she has already accumulated. A sprig of leaves is pulled down from a low-hanging branch and dropped in; next Angel targets a flower sprouting from the dirt path. It stoutly resists for several seconds his attempts to pluck it, then pulls loose without any warning to leave him tumbling head-over-paws until he collides with Fluttershy’s legs. Once he comes to his senses, he offers up his find and she shifts her basket closer so he can drop it in. Just as he does so, a sound shatters the tranquility—something like a tuba at the bottom of its range overlaid on a guttural, birdlike screech.*)

**Fluttershy:** Huh?

(*Quite a lot of avians scatter upward in all directions from the treetops, followed in short order by another discordant blat in the same vein. In close-up, Fluttershy peeks out with a gasp from the bushes in which she has taken cover.*)

**Fluttershy:** Some poor creature’s in trouble! We have to help it!

(*The whatever-it-is sounds off again as she jumps clear and breaks into a gallop, with Angel hot on her tail.*)

**Fluttershy:** Oh, listen to that suffering! It must be in horrible agony!

(*She pulls ahead of the little guy while a new element replaces the screeching, this one perhaps resembling an accordion whose keys are being walked on by a hyperactive house cat. Below this and the low-register burps, a series of steady, droning tones begins to underpin the sonic wreckage. When she finally slides to a stop, it takes Angel a moment to catch up and pitch face-first to the ground from imbalance and fatigue. She scans the surrounding terrain quickly before settling on one direction.*)

**Fluttershy:** Oh! It sounds like a herd of injured chimerae!

(*Off she goes at speed, Angel now following with noticeable reluctance.*)

**Fluttershy:** Or…it’s Cerberus with sniffle-itis in two of its heads and kennel cough in his [*sic*] third. Or maybe it’s…

(*She slams on the brakes again, coming to a stop just short of something resting partly in frame and visible from this angle as only a dim silhouette from which several, brass-tipped protrusions jut on one side. A longer shot frames her and the entire source of the cacophony—it is Pinkie Pie, sitting on a log with her back to Fluttershy. There are five of these protuberances, which flare out to various larger diameters at the free ends and which are swept/curved forward to suggest a Mohawk haircut on a giant pony’s head. The light slowly comes up on Pinkie to illuminate her in full and reveal that these pieces are attached to a cloth bag held near the body; she is huddled intently over this portion.*)

**Fluttershy:** Pinkie Pie?

(*As Angel catches up, Pinkie plays one last note and swivels to face them. The bag has a mouthpiece on a long, bent shaft attached to one end, so that the entire contraption somewhat resembles a set of bagpipes.*)

**Pinkie:** Thaaaaaat’s me!

(*She stands up on the log, revealing a few tassels that dangle from the side of the bag away from her body.*)

**Pinkie:** And-a-one, and-a-two, and-a-I know what to do!

(*She sits back down with a wink, takes a deep breath, and launches into a new serenade that sounds exactly as bad as the first one. Cut to Fluttershy, who voices a gagging sound of disgust.*)

**Fluttershy:** At least no animal is suffering… (*looking down behind herself*) …right, Angel?

(*Cut to said bunny, whose facial expression puts the lie to her statement. He rips a tuft of fluff from his tail, divides it into two lumps, and stuffs one into each ear to get some relief from this auditory blitzkrieg. Fluttershy grimaces at his reaction, but works up a sheepish giggle.*)

**Fluttershy:** Well, until now.

(*She aims a very worried glance at Pinkie as the view fades to black.*)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(*Opening shot: fade in to a bustling stretch of park land outside Ponyville proper. The not-too-distant sound of Pinkie’s playing brings the varied goings-on to an abrupt halt and sends the ponies scurrying away; pan to a small gazebo on a nearby stage, where she is doing a number for her friends. Sour notes and botched rhythms crop up with great frequency, prompting reactions of discomfort and unease on the other five faces. A particularly forceful passage actually elicits a few cries of physical pain. Except where noted, all speakers keep their voices down in the following exchange.*)

**Applejack:** (to *Twilight Sparkle*) What *is* that thing?

**Twilight:** It’s called a yovidaphone. (*Angel is now among them, his ears unstopped.*) It’s from Yakyakistan, where it’s actually quite popular.

**Rainbow Dash:** (*normal volume, briefly covering ears*) Is it supposed to sound like that?

(*An accented burst of discord causes all to wince anew; cut to Angel, who upends Fluttershy’s now-empty flower basket and shelters himself bodily underneath it.*)

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) Not exactly. (*The group again.*) It’s known to produce a fairly complicated, melodically rich, and harmonious tone.

(*So “harmonious,” in fact, that a passing bird’s feathers spontaneously eject themselves from its body at high speed in a single instant. The flyer lets out an alarmed squawk, now bare except for one plume atop its head, and flaps madly and futilely to keep aloft before dropping like a rock. Fluttershy is quick to take wing, catch it, and set it safely on the grass; throwing a dirty look toward the stage, it strides away past the gathering. Normal speaking volume resumes at this point.*)

**Rainbow:** Uh, are you sure we’re talking about the same thing?

(*With one final mighty blast, Pinkie ends her performance and leans back from the mouthpiece to catch her breath.*)

**Pinkie:** (*wiping sweat from forehead*) Phew! And that’s with only a few days of practice! (*leaning out toward others*) Can you believe it?

(*She backs off and hits them with one more “chord” at full volume, nearly blowing all five off their hooves and causing Rarity to plug her ears with hers. Cut to her.*)

**Rarity:** (*icily*) Yes. Yes, I can. (*She takes her hooves down; pan to Applejack.*)

**Applejack:** (*stunned*) I can honestly say I’ve never heard anythin’ like it in my life.

**Pinkie:** Well, if you enjoyed listening to my playing half as much as I enjoyed playing my playing, then I should totally play more! That way we’ll be even.  
**Twilight:** (*smiling hastily*) Oh, I don’t think that’s necessary, Pinkie.

(*A scramble of affirmatives from all five mares gathered before the stage, followed by Rainbow throwing herself beseechingly onto her belly and staring up at Pinkie.*)

**Rainbow:** Please, don’t.

**Pinkie:** There’s a chance I may have missed a note or two here or there. (*hugging instrument; it lets out a few “burps”*) I just love playing so much! (*Sigh.*) You complete me.

(*Rainbow backs up slowly past Twilight, a pain-contorted look never leaving her face.*)

**Twilight:** Well, I for one am glad you’re having so much fun with your new hobby. (*Pinkie is now lying on the stage and caressing the thing lovingly.*)

**Pinkie:** (*distractedly*) Uh-huh. Sure.

**Twilight:** And it’s great that you’re learning a new skill and… (*Words fail her for a moment.*) …and you’re just waiting for me to finish talking so you can start playing again, aren’t you?

**Pinkie:** (*airily*) No! But if you’re done…

(*In no time flat, she is up on her hind legs and positioned the device to play an encore.*)

**Pinkie:** (*winking*) And-a-one, and-a-two, and-a-I know what to do!

(*A deep breath, and she is blowing into the mouthpiece with gusto while hopping off the stage and across the meadowland. The view blacks out briefly as she approaches the camera, then snaps to frame her from behind, headed straight toward Ponyville.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*to Angel, lifting his basket*) Oh! It’s okay. She’s gone.

(*Tipping it away, she finds that the rabbit has pulled his ears down and knotted them under his chin to block out the “music.”*)

**Applejack:** Anypony else think that sounded like an apple core caught up in a pulp grinder?

**Rarity:** Apple-solutely! (*catching herself, sputtering a bit*) Absolutely.

**Twilight:** Okay, so maybe she isn’t good yet. But she’s our friend, and we should be supportive.

**Applejack:** She just started playin’. She’s bound to get better. (*tentatively*) Right?

**Rainbow:** Yeah, we just need to be supportive of her practicing… (*Wince; scratch at one ear.*) …so the “getting better” part happens as fast as possible.

(*A round of hesitant agreement from the five mares as the denuded bird climbs to the gazebo roof constructed above the stage and puts its back crossly to them. Dissolve to Rarity in her upper-story workroom/living area of the Carousel Boutique, running a length of fabric through her sewing machine as the strains of Pinkie’s clumsy playing come through all too loud and clear. The pink mare pops up with her rig at point-blank range behind the seamstress, scaring a brief yelp out of her, then proceeds to parade around the room. A clash of notes, and the seam Rarity was stitching has gone haywire to the sound of her dismayed cry. Finally she stops the machine, rests her head next to it with a vexed sigh, and throws a mildly panicked glance back over her shoulder at the aspiring musician.*)

(*Dissolve to a close-up of several baskets, filled with small animals settled in for a nap, on the floor of the living room in Fluttershy’s cottage. The yovidaphone’s caterwauling fades away as she covers one group with a blanket and eases her way across to check that the birds in the houses up near the ceiling are asleep. Cut to just outside the front door, whose top half is open; she leans out to close it, but stops short with concern at something going on o.s. A cut to just behind her tells the rest of the story: Pinkie is sitting on the bridge that leads to the cottage, waving animatedly to her under the starry night sky. The party pony sucks in a huge breath, utterly ignoring the animal expert’s frantic waving attempt to cut her off, and starts blaring obliviously away at full volume. Birds scatter in every possible direction, and in short order Fluttershy finds herself surrounded by far too many crying animals for her taste—naptime has just been yanked off the schedule. She grimaces at the uproar within and without.*)

(*The music fades away again as the view dissolves to a string of flight-suited Wonderbolts speeding past a bank of clouds during the day. Rainbow is in the lead position, and a zoom out shows them on the cloud racetrack in Canterlot that has appeared from time to time in past episodes. The stands are full of fans, and a few others have congregated at a bend in the path that runs along the adjacent ledge. Cheers rise as Rainbow leads the others through lap after lap—and then Pinkie leans forward through the bleachers with her yovidaphone at the ready. She has donned the horned helmet she received in “Not Asking for Trouble” to mark her as an honorary yak, with tassels and gold bands added to the horns. In addition, she wears a brown blanket trimmed in blue and a large jewel pendant on a gold necklace. A breath, and she is playing her lungs out—and forcing Rainbow to clap hooves to ears. The speedster drifts to a midair stop, allowing Spitfire and Soarin’ to crash into her from behind so that all three tumble o.s. These other two and Fleetfoot have covered their ears as well, the latter wobbling in her flight path, and another Wonderbolt begins to skid out as he flies past. In the stands, Pinkie continues her one-pony pep band show, the other spectators having scooted away and stopped their ears while glaring daggers at her.*)

(*Dissolve to a treetop-level view of a stretch of trees in the Sweet Apple Acres orchards, ready for harvest, as the cacophony dies away. Tilt down to an overhead shot of all four members of the Apple family getting themselves and their baskets into position at four adjacent trees, then cut to ground level. Applejack bucks her tree first, releasing enough fruit to fill her basket; before Big Macintosh can follow suit, Pinkie’s yovidaphone makes itself heard in the distance. An alarmed Applejack spots the mare hopping into view over a rise in the path, blanket, helmet, and all. As she passes each laden tree, the fruits on the branches explode into gobbets of pulp and peel in reaction to the inhospitable sound waves. Next to go is the load in Applejack’s basket, splattering her from one end to the other; she wipes the mess from her eyes just in time to see Pinkie travel past the other three Apples, detonating their harvests and mucking them up in like manner. Tilt up slowly into the sky as the traveling minstrel goes on her way, popping every apple within earshot; the view stops on the sun, the music fading away.*)

(*From here, pan/tilt down quickly to a close-up of Twilight sitting placidly on a bench in Ponyville. She ignites her horn while putting her forelegs behind her head and leaning back.*)

**Twilight:** (*sighing blissfully*) You’re absolutely right, Spike. Sometimes it *is* nice to get out of the library and be in the sun.

(*Her field brings up an open book to eye level for her reading enjoyment. A longer shot picks out the dozens of others stacked up all around the bench, and the one held by Spike.*)

**Spike:** (*cocked eyebrow, adding it to a stack*) Especially when you take the library with you.

(*The Princess closes hers and settles it onto a pile with a giggle as a flap of his wings brings him up to sit next to her. Applejack skids into view and stops, shaking herself clean, and is soon accompanied by Fluttershy, Rainbow, and Rarity. The blue flyer is still in her flight suit, but with her goggles up on her forehead, and the yellow mare almost immediately goes to sleep on her hooves, snoring softly with mane badly rumpled.*)

**Applejack:** We need to do somethin’ about Pinkie Pie’s playin’!

**Rainbow:** Like, now! (*Cut to Twilight.*)

**Twilight:** Is it really that bad?

**Rainbow:** (*from o.s., shoving a silver trophy into view*) Does *this* answer your question?

**Twilight:** Uh, a trophy? (*It is yanked away; cut to frame her and Rainbow.*)

**Rainbow:** For second place. (*Toss it aside.*) *Second place!* All because of Pinkie’s playing!

**Rarity:** (*crossing to Twilight*) And I wanted to turn heads with my new fall line…

(*As she finishes, she levitates a dress into view—made from the cloth she was sewing, with blue ruffled trim at the waist and crazily stitched seams that run every which way.*)

**Rarity:** (*sobbing, resting it on bench*) …but not like this!

**Applejack:** And thanks to her fruit-blastin’ melodies, I got an orchard fulla nothin’ but applesauce! And it ain’t even saucin’ season!

**Rarity:** (*gesturing toward Fluttershy*) And just look what her playing did to poor Fluttershy!

(*Only a nudge by Rainbow to the side of the sleeper’s head wakes her up.*)

**Fluttershy:** What?…Oh. So very tired. (*yawning*) It practically took me all night to get the nursery back to sleep. (*She dozes off again.*)

**Applejack:** I mean, I know we said we should all be supportive, but Pinkie’s been playin’ for moons now and she’s not gettin’ any better.

**Rainbow:** Yeah. If anything, she’s gotten worse.

**Twilight:** (*floating up a book, flipping through it*) Okay. Maybe we can just pretend she’s really good, and then I’ll find a spell that will— (*Applejack plops a hoof on the pages to stop her.*)

**Applejack:** Oh, no, no, no. We’re not goin’ through that again. Remember how well it worked out when you weren’t honest with Celestia about her actin’ ability?

(*Referring to the near-wipeout of the play Twilight wrote in “Horse Play.” Cut to her on the end of this line, ears wilting as a chastened expression takes hold.*)

**Twilight:** (*moaning*) You’re right. (*setting book aside*) We’ll just have to tell Pinkie Pie she’s not very good at the yovidaphone.

(*Said instrument makes itself heard in the distance and is immediately accompanied by a stampede of shrieking mares that wakes Fluttershy up in a very big hurry. The epicenter proves to be Sugarcube Corner, in front of which Pinkie has set up to do a little rehearsing, and the vicinity is cleared out within seconds.*)

**Rarity:** Well, there’s no time like the present.

(*A round of determined nods passes between all seven, and they make a beeline for the inept soloist, who stops after a few last eruptions.*)

**Pinkie:** Phew! (*Catch breath, then look around puzzled.*) Huh.

(*Only now does she notice that the street is completely bare of pony life.*)

**Pinkie:** That’s weird. I coulda sworn this place was packed a second ago. (*The others fly/gallop over to her.*) Hey, guys! Can I favor you all with a tune? (*slyly*) I take requests.   
**Applejack:** Actually, we do have a request, and yeah, it involves your yovidaphone.

**Pinkie:** You mean the thing I love more than anything else in Equestria? (*hugging it*) My sun…my moon…my stars…my everything? Ooh! Tell me, tell me, tell me!

**Applejack:** All right. In all honesty…

(*Her mind locks up as Pinkie strokes the instrument’s bag fondly, and only starts working again at an uneasy stare from Rarity.*)

**Applejack:** …uh…in all honesty… (*Eyes flick from side to side; she hastily shoves the unicorn forward, sparking a surprised gasp.*) …Rarity has somethin’ to say!

(*Another low-register hug to the yovidaphone.*)

**Rarity:** Pinkie, please…listen to Rainbow Dash!

(*Pan/tilt up quickly to the Wonderbolt, caught very much off guard at having the buck passed to her so abruptly.*)

**Rainbow:** Ugh, fine! (*She lands in front of Pinkie.*) So, Pinkie, remember when we were all shocked to discover Princess Celestia wasn’t so good at acting?

**Pinkie:** Yeah! She was awful! But that’s kind of a random thing to bring up. I thought you wanted to talk about my yovidaphone playing.

**Rainbow:** (*grinning fixedly, backing away*) Well, it’s, uh…it’s just…you need to know the… (*nudging Twilight*) …Twilight?

(*The resident Princess heaves a deep sigh at finding that buck resting squarely at her position.*)

**Twilight:** (*stepping forward*) Pinkie, we all support you, but we’re afraid you’re just not good at the yovidaphone.

(*Head-on view of Pinkie, stunned into silence; zoom in slowly as the scenery behind her recedes.*)

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) And none of us want you to waste your time on something you can’t do well. (*The camera/scenery motions stop.*)

**Pinkie:** (*softly*) Oh. (*She smiles after a long beat of silence.*) Why didn’t you just say so?

(*The contraption is tossed aside, deflating with a flatulent outrush of air when it hits the cobbles and bringing smiles to the six onlookers’ faces. Rainbow is firs to respond, voicing a sigh of relief.*)

**Rainbow:** We were all really nervous to tell you.

**Pinkie:** Why? It’s just a silly instrument. (*removing horned helmet*) Well, lunch break’s over. Gotta get back to the bakery. (*singsong*) Those apple turnovers aren’t gonna apple themselves!

(*She hops through an open door and into Sugarcube Corner, carrying the headgear and whistling a merry tune, then pokes her head out again.*)

**Pinkie:** (*singsong*) No more yovidaphone playing for me! (*In she goes, pulling the door to.*)

**Fluttershy:** Wow! She took that so much better than I thought.

(*All others nod. Clock wipe to the yovidaphone lying where Pinkie chucked it; the streets have darkened into nighttime and all the windows of Sugarcube Corner glow a warm yellow. A trash can on wheels is pushed slowly into view by a pegasus stallion on janitorial duty who is using his head for the job. With barely a pause, he scoops up the rig and stuffs it in with the other gathered refuse. Tilt up to Pinkie’s upper-story living space; she huddles at one open window, having shed her blanket and necklace in favor of the quilt from her bed, wrapped in it as if for warmth. A close-up tells of the despondency that has taken hold of her normally bubbly mind.*)

**Pinkie:** No more yovidaphone playing for me. (*dully, tearing up*) And-a-one, and-a-two, and I don’t know what to do.

(*She begins to sob quietly, laying her head on the windowsill. Fade to black.*)

Act Two

(*Opening shot: fade in to a long overhead shot of the town square the next day and cut to Twilight and Spike walking along a busy street lined with market stalls. All are at peace again, and she underscores the general good feeling with a contented sigh; Spike, though, shifts his mood to one of concern when he looks off to one side.*)

**Twilight:** Another beautiful day in Ponyville.

**Spike:** Uh, Twilight, when was the last time you saw Pinkie Pie?

**Twilight:** Hmmm…not since we told her to stop playing the yovidaphone. I’m still surprised with how well she took it. (*Both stop.*)

**Spike:** I don’t think she took it as well as you think she took it.

(*One clawed digit points across the street, drawing the boss’s attention. Cut to Pinkie plodding past the stalls on this side—good cheer gone without a trace, mane/tail completely straight as when she temporarily flipped out in “Party of One,” coloration somewhat muted. Having shed her bed’s quilt, she approaches a flower stand manned by Daisy and stops at the latter’s greeting.*)

**Daisy:** Top of the morning to you!

**Pinkie:** Is it morning? I hadn’t noticed.

**Twilight:** (*to Spike*) *That’s* not good. (*Sound of approaching hoofbeats.*)

**Rainbow:** (*from o.s.*) There you are! (*arriving with Applejack/Fluttershy/Rarity*) We’ve been looking all over for you!

(*She has shed her flight suit, and Fluttershy has properly groomed her mane.*)

**Rarity:** It turns out Pinkie may not have taken our critique of her yovidaphone playing in the spirit with which it was intended.

**Twilight:** I saw.

(*She and Spike look over their shoulders toward Daisy’s stall, every single one of whose blooms crumples into a blackened, withered mess as Pinkie trudges past. The proprietor shoots a flat look after her and pulls down a giant screen like a windowshade to close the stall off from public view—no more fresh flowers today. Cut to Twilight and Spike.*)

**Spike:** There’s gotta be something we can do!

**Twilight:** I’m sure there is, Spike. We just have to figure out what. (*Cut to Rainbow on the next line.*)

**Rainbow:** (*sighing*) I don’t get it. So she’s no good at playing the yovidaphone. What’s the big deal? There’s *sooooo* many other things she’s really good at doing.

**Applejack:** Yeah! Not bein’ able to play the yovidaphone is nothin’ compared to all the things she *can* do well.

**Twilight:** And that’s exactly what we’ll show her. I bet if we get her to do the stuff she likes *and* is good at doing, she’ll cheer right back up and forget all about the yovidaphone.

**Applejack:** (*rearing up briefly*) Hoo-wee! That’s a great idea!

(*Spike shifts his gaze in a certain direction, unsettling all to a degree as they follow his lead. Cut to Pinkie as she slogs past a balloon vendor stallion, his wares swiftly deflating and flopping to the ground without bursting.*)

**Rarity:** Let’s get started. Apparently there’s not a moment to lose!

(*A cluster of fully inflated ones drifts past the camera, the view wiping behind them to a long shot of Sweet Feather Sanctuary The camera zooms in slowly on a table abutting the property’s stream, set up for tea and attended by Fluttershy, Pinkie, and several of the animal residents. In close-up, the yellow hooves set a bouquet of flowers in a vase, lay out a plate of cookies, pour tea from a pot into a cup, and set the latter on a saucer before Pinkie. Zoom out quickly from this last to frame the entire gathering: the two mares, Angel, Pinkie’s alligator Gummy, a giraffe, and one chair turned away from the camera so that its occupant cannot be seen. Pinkie’s sullen demeanor stands out in sharp contrast to the others’ upbeat moods, and her color has faded another step. The last chair proves to be occupied by a the bird that lost its feathers to Pinkie’s concerto, now wrapped in a scarf. Fluttershy sips from her cup, while a balloon tied to Gummy’s tail lifts his hindquarters off his chair so that his snout tilts forward to blow bubbles in his tea. This bit of beverage buffoonery thoroughly fails to get a rise out of Pinkie, who flops bonelessly forward to plant her face in her cup and dump its contents all over the tablecloth. Fluttershy grimaces slightly at the big downer.*)

(*A splash of tea washes over the screen, the view wiping behind it to a long overhead shot of the barnyard at Sweet Apple Acres, fully tricked out for a foal’s birthday party. Young and full-grown ponies enjoy the day as the camera cuts to a ground-level view, one unicorn mare levitating a cake as she crosses the yard, and Applejack pushes Pinkie into view. The dour mare is sitting on her haunches and making no effort at self-propelled motion, and she has gone still grayer. In no time flat, her party cannon is wheeled over to her breech-first, and the pull-string trigger is wrapped around one front hoof. Applejack bails out and covers her ears along with the nearest group of foals, fully prepared for a merrymaking fusillade; when Pinkie finally deigns to set off the cannon, though, all they get is an anemic puff of streamers/confetti that barely clears the muzzle. Dismay plays across the observers’ faces as Applejack goes to investigate. Cut briefly to within the cannon, the camera pointing out the muzzle as she leans in for a close look, then back to her. Now it discharges at full force, blowing her hat off and depositing confetti all over her instantly scrambled mane/tail. Pinkie sighs quietly, her expression never changing.*)

(*A deflating balloon arcs wildly around her and toward the camera; as it settles out of sight, the view wipes to an extreme close-up of her hoof being guided by Rainbow’s to mix a bowl of batter at a counter within Sugarcube Corner. Zoom out to frame the apprehensive, hovering pegasus and the apathetic earth pony, whose color has diminished once more. Rainbow shifts Pinkie’s grip to pour the batter sloppily into a waiting cupcake/muffin tin, taking a few eggshell fragments with it, and then load the tin into a preheated oven to bake. Cut to a platter set with delectable-looking cupcakes, each bearing a freight of icing/sprinkles and topped with a cherry. This proves to be only an illustration in a book, however, and it is lowered out of view to frame the actual result—hopelessly burnt and mangled amid a ruin of spilled ingredients. Rainbow laughs heartily at the foul-up, but her mirth quickly fades upon seeing the lack of any positive emotion on her friend’s slack face. She pulls the corners of the mouth up and back to simulate a grin, opens the faded blue eyes wide, perks the ears up, and fluffs the mane. What she ends up with, though, is a disturbing near-monochrome parody of Pinkie’s usual appearance—and it proves to be a moot point anyway, as all the changes swiftly undo themselves before Rainbow’s eyes. The sky-blue mare groans through her teeth and pulls her face downward at her crash-and-burn.*)

(*A gout of batter rains down past the camera; behind it, wipe to an extreme close-up of a hair curler held in a magic field and being wrapped tightly around a lock of Pinkie’s mane, now with only a faint hint of pink mixed in with the gray. It pops loose after a long moment’s tension, and a longer shot puts her and Rarity in the ground-floor showroom of the Carousel Boutique. Pinkie stands on a platform as the designer deftly shifts curlers and hair/makeup accessories through every conceivable angle for some seconds. Once Rarity decides the job is done, she levitates a hand mirror to show Pinkie the end result and is even a bit surprised herself to see it in full. She has managed to restore the mare’s normal appearance, color, curls, and all—with two glaring exceptions: the mouth does not smile, and the eyes are still a lifeless gray. One final touch of a powder puff around the nose and mouth fills in a still-visible spot of gray but sets off a sneeze that blows particulates everywhere. Rarity finds the mirror’s glass cracking and falling apart from the force of it, and she grimaces at the sight of all her hard work having been undone in that split-second. Pinkie stands before her, mane/tail a stringy disaster, coat having gone almost totally gray, all trace of the makeover gone except for a few random smudges of cosmetics around the mouth and eyes. Rarity hangs her head in defeat, letting her lush purple mane flop forward to hide her face.*)

(*Dissolve to a long shot of the main entrance to Town Hall and zoom in slowly. The four thwarted cheer-up-Pinkie specialists have gathered here in very low spirits and voice a collective sigh. Applejack has cleaned up and put her hat on in the wake of the party cannon misfire. Twilight and Spike join them after a moment.*)

**Twilight:** So I’m guessing nopony had any success? (*Cut to Applejack.*)

**Applejack:** (*sighing*) My party cannon idea was a real dud. (*Zoom out to frame Rainbow.*)

**Rainbow:** Don’t blame yourself. None of us did any better.

**Twilight:** Well, not to worry. I came up with the perfect solution. Instead of trying to remind her what she’s *good* at, we’ll remind her what she’s *best* at. And that’s being our friend. We’re gonna throw her a Pinkie Pie appreciation party!

**Fluttershy:** That’s a wonderful idea! If anypony needs to know how much she’s appreciated, it’s Pinkie Pie. (*Rainbow pops up into a hover.*)

**Rainbow:** We can get the whole town involved, just so she can see what a good friend she is to everypony!

**Twilight:** Then I hereby officially declare today Pinkie Pie Appreciation Day!

(*Cheers and laughter from all six, after which the view dissolves to a couple of Pinkie-shaped balloon sculptures floating near a row of paper hearts strung in a tree. Tilt down to ground level to frame a happy filly holding the balloons, then cut to a slow pan across a long shot of the town square. Every vertical and horizontal inch has been filled with decorations of all sorts in the pink pony’s likeness, and shades of pink naturally dominate the overall color scheme. Ponies blow noisemakers, wave signs, wear Pinkie-themed articles of clothing; Twilight finishes tacking up a banner above the doors of Town Hall while her friends and Spike gather at the steps. An enormous cake in Pinkie’s likeness is towed past on a wagon as Twilight drops to their level.*)

**Rarity:** Now *this* is perfection!

**Rainbow:** Yeah! If anything can help Pinkie cheer up and make her forget about her yovidaphone, this is definitely it.

**Applejack:** Sure is. Okay. Who’s gonna get her?

**Twilight:** No need. Gummy’s on it. (*pointing*) In fact, there he is now!

(*The alligator in question arrives by keeping his jaws clamped around the string of a balloon and letting himself be dragged along the ground on his belly as the wind blows it. He lets go at just the right moment, prompting smiles at his arrival and then puzzled looks when he proceeds to say and do absolutely nothing. Applejack cautiously approaches him across the confetti-strewn square.*)

**Applejack:** Uh, Gummy? (*She puts a hoof on his tail to flip him upright.*) You were supposed to bring Pinkie Pie. What happened?

(*His only response is an out-of-sync blinking; now Rainbow and Rarity close in.*)

**Rarity:** Is she still coming? (*Still nothing; Rainbow shrugs.*)

**Twilight:** Fluttershy, can you understand what he’s saying?

**Fluttershy:** I could, if he was talking. (*Here comes Spike.*)

**Spike:** Let me try something. (*slowly, yelling into Gummy’s ear*) GUMMY! WHERE IS PINKIE PIE?

(*All he gets is the sight of a long forked tongue that snakes out to lick one vacant, blue-violet eye. Spike aims a “beats me” shrug at Twilight.*)

**Twilight:** Maybe we should just go and get her.

(*Dissolve to a section of a room marked by an open wardrobe and a clutter of random junk and cardboard boxes. The five mares materialize here thanks to Twilight’s teleportation, Rarity blowing a noisemaker, but grins give way to puzzlement as the camera zooms out. They have arrived at Pinkie’s living quarters in Sugarcube Corner, but all the furniture and personal effects are gone to leave a recently-vacated appearance.*)

**Applejack:** What in tarnation is goin’ on here? (*Rarity looks around, sans party favor.*)

**Rarity:** This décor is dreadful. (*Rainbow flies over her head.*)

**Rainbow:** And all of Pinkie’s stuff is…gone? (*Close-up of Rarity.*)

**Rarity:** It *is* a puzzle.

**Maud Pie:** (*from o.s.*) Excuse me.

(*Surprised blue eyes turn in the direction of that stoic voice; cut to a longer shot. Maud has arrived and is focused on a box against which Rarity is leaning.*)

**Rarity:** (*shifting away from it*) Oh, yes, of course.

(*The gray mare dips her head to get the box balanced on it and heads downstairs, paying no mind to the bemused looks coming her way from the other five. As they begin to follow, the camera cuts to just outside the building’s front door, where Maud transfers the box to a cart stacked improbably high with Pinkie’s belongings. The others hurry out to her.*)

**Twilight:** Um, Maud, can I ask you a question?

**Maud:** You just did.

**Applejack:** Well, can *I* ask you a question?

**Maud:** You just did.

**Rainbow:** Ugh! Fine! How about if *I* ask you a— (*She spots Rarity’s disgusted reaction and cuts herself off.*) —wait.

**Rarity:** (*crossing to Maud*) Oh, for goodness’ sakes. Maud! All of your sister’s things are gone. Explain.

**Maud:** (*pointing to cart*) No, they’re not. They’re right here.

(*A few stray balloons drift out of a box she has touched and float away.*)

**Fluttershy:** Have you seen Pinkie Pie? (*Maud harnesses herself to the cart.*)

**Maud:** Lots of times. I grew up with her.

(*Away she goes, leaving five very confused mares in her wake who soon hustle to catch up.*)

**Twilight:** Okay, let’s try this a different way. Why did you pack up all of Pinkie’s things?

**Maud:** She asked me to.

**Other five:** What?

**Maud:** Pinkie told me to pack up her room and take everything to the rock farm.

**Other five:** *What?!?*

**Maud:** She said she wouldn’t need them since she’s moving to Yakyakistan. (*She goes on; the others stop short.*)

**Other five:** *WHAT?!?!?*

(*Fade to black.*)

Act Three

(*Opening shot: fade in to Maud hauling the laden cart through the grasslands outside Ponyville proper. The other five quickly close the distance, Rarity taking the lead.*)

**Rarity:** Terribly sorry, Maud. Must have misheard you. (*laughing airily*) It almost sounded like you said Pinkie moved to Yakyakistan. (*Applejack pulls up.*)

**Applejack:** Uh, Rarity? (*She and Rarity stop.*) She did say that.

**Rarity:** Uh…terribly sorry, Applejack. Must have misheard you. (*laughing airily, as Twilight/Rainbow fly past*) It almost sounded like you said she did say that.

(*The two winged mares catch up to Maud.*)

**Twilight:** Maud, I don’t understand. Why would Pinkie leave Ponyville?

**Rainbow:** Yeah. Why would she want to go live with the yaks?

**Maud:** She said without the yovidaphone, her life had no meaning, and at least in Yakyakistan she could listen to the masters play. She hoped that would give her some semblance of happiness.

(*She trundles along the path as a gobsmacked Twilight touches down.*)

**Rarity:** (*resolutely*) Well, no. No, no, no, no, no, no, no. (*Rainbow rejoins the group.*) That will not do.

**Applejack:** (*stomping emphatically*) I say we go to Yakyakistan right now and make her come back home.

**Twilight:** We can’t just march up there and tell Pinkie what to do.

**Fluttershy:** (*voice breaking*) But we didn’t even get a chance to say goodbye. (*Twilight watches Maud round a bend.*)

**Twilight:** Well, we may not be able to go to Yakyakistan and force her to come home— (*smiling*) —but we could go say goodbye. And if we happened to mention how much her friendship means to us, and how much we’d miss her if she were gone forever, and then she decided to come back home on her own… (*The others begin to catch her drift.*)

**Rainbow:** Then what are we waiting around here for? Let’s get going to Yakyakistan!

(*All five cheer their agreement. Dissolve to a broad field of puffy white clouds surrounding a cluster of mountain peaks as the group’s favored hot-air balloon veers drunkenly into view. It bounces off one tuft after another, setting off varied cries of discomfort and fear, before swinging into a patch of clear sky and homing in on the great wooden gates and statues that mark the entrance to Yakyakistan.*)

**Twilight:** We’re almost there.

(*Cut to the center of the walled realm as the balloon touches down. Rainbow is first out of the basket, hovering for a visual search of the vicinity as Applejack ties a mooring rope to a stake driven into the ground. She, Fluttershy, and Twilight have exited, while Rarity stays aboard to check another direction.*)

**Applejack:** Pinkie’s gotta be around here somewhere.

**Fluttershy:** But where?

(*A distant, majestic tune reaches Rarity’s ears—the sound of a well-played yovidaphone.*)

**Rarity:** Is that…?

**Twilight:** The music of the yovidaphone. (*Rainbow zeroes in on a hut, the source of the sound.*)

**Rainbow:** Are you sure? Because that actually sounds kinda…good.

**Twilight:** Oh, I’m sure. Come on.

(*She leads the others toward the blanket-draped entrance. Cut to just inside, the music coming through loud and clear, as her magic pulls the textile aside so they can look in, and zoom out to frame the interior. The player is Yigrid, an elderly female yak performing on a small stage and seated on a stool; her mane and fur have gone gray with age, and she wears a helmet and blanket in shades of purple with pale blue trim. The helmet is decorated with a cluster of gold petals marked by a pale blue pearl; its horns bear gold bands set with these same pearls, and her braids and hooves are ringed with unadorned gold bands. The hut is filled to capacity, the listeners bobbing their heads solemnly from side to side; a tear even runs down from beneath the shaggy fringe covering one set of eyes, the mouth beneath them curving into a serene smile. Rainbow hovers among them.*)

**Rainbow:** Huh. Not what I expected.

**Yaks:** Shhh!

**Rainbow:** Oh, sorry.

**Yaks:** Shhh! (*She darts away to the back.*)

**Rainbow:** (*landing by Fluttershy/Rarity, scoffing/whispering*) I said I was sorry!

(*Fluttershy turns her attention in a new direction; cut to her perspective. Pinkie sits alone at a table by the opposite wall, her back to the camera and a major-league ice cream sundae within easy reach. The stack of empty, dirty bowls at the table’s end suggests that she has been at this for a while. Any last vestiges of color have utterly fled her now.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*gasping, pointing*) There she is!

(*Cut to the table, where the formerly pink mare turns sourly away from the wall and tosses the entire contents of the bowl down her throat in one gulp as if knocking back a shot of whiskey. The makeup residue from Rarity’s failed spruce-up is gone from her face, but smears of ice cream and sprinkles replace it. A tuxedo-clad yak waiter gathers up this bowl and all the other empties as she wipes the mess away.*)

**Pinkie:** Gimme another.

**Waiter:** But pony already had twenty-five ice—

**Pinkie:** (*pounding table*) I SAID, GIMME ANOTHER!!

(*The yak hastily clears off with the dirty dishes as the other five ease across the hut. The next three lines are mixed with exclamations of dismay from the speakers.*)

**Twilight:** Pardon me.

**Applejack:** Excuse us.

**Rainbow:** Sorry!

(*Pinkie turns back to the wall, lost in her depression, and rests her chin on the table as a fresh sundae is served up.*)

**Pinkie:** I feel nothing.

**Twilight:** Maybe we can help with that. (*Pinkie sits up and turns listlessly to face them.*)

**Pinkie:** Oh. Hey. (*turning away again*) What are you guys doing here?

**Applejack:** Just hear us out.

**Rainbow:** We respect your decision to move to Yakyakistan. (*Cut to Twilight.*)

**Twilight:** But we just wanted to remind you how much you mean to us, and how much we’d miss you if you decided to move here for—

**Pinkie:** (*from o.s.*) Fine.

(*The purple eye contract, surprised; cut to frame the other five.*)

**Pinkie:** I’ll move back to Ponyville.

**Rainbow:** (*smiling*) Wow. That was a lot easier than I thought. We’re awesome!

(*Twilight’s approach and silent, grimacing point toward Pinkie cut the celebration short; she moves tentatively toward the expatriate.*)

**Twilight:** Pinkie, what’s wrong?

**Pinkie:** (*pointing toward stage*) *That’s* what’s wrong. (*Cut to Yigrid; she continue o.s.*) I thought coming here and listening to real yovidaphone playing would make me happy.

(*The piece finishes as she does, followed by a bow and an exit stage right to a round of stomping applause. Back to Twilight and Pinkie as Yigrid lumbers up to the table.*)

**Pinkie:** It makes me feel worse. I’m never gonna sound like that.

**Yigrid:** (*setting her rig next to them*) Yovidaphone fan pony watch instrument while Yigrid visit little yaks’ room?

**Pinkie:** (*as Yigrid walks off*) Eh, if I can’t play it, I might as well do menial chores for those who can.

(*Twilight pivots back to her other friends.*)

**Applejack:** Okay, so Pinkie Pie is obviously still miserable.

**Fluttershy:** Oh, I can’t bear to see her like this.

(*Pinkie rests her head on the yovidaphone, producing a moment’s squawk.*)

**Rarity:** Indeed. (*A faint smile on the grayed-out face.*) But what else can we do? (*Fluttershy starts to get an idea.*)

**Rainbow:** Yeah. We’ve tried everything.

**Fluttershy:** Maybe not. (*pointing toward Pinkie*) Look!

(*A few more pokes at the central bag cause that smile to widen into a silly little grin accompanied by an involuntary giggle under her breath. Realizing that she is being watched, she shoots upright in her seat and instantly drops back into her funk.*)

**Pinkie:** Whoops! Sorry. (*She pushes it off the table.*) I forgot what an awful yovidaphoner I am.

**Twilight:** Playing it makes you so happy. (*Pinkie now stands facing her.*)

**Pinkie:** (*smiling, sighing wistfully*) It sure does. (*dejectedly)*) I mean, it did.

**Twilight:** Then you should never stop.

(*Gray eyes widen at these words; the next three lines overlap slightly.*)

**Rainbow:** Yeah!

**Fluttershy:** Of course.

**Rarity:** So say we all.

**Applejack:** Absolutely.

**Pinkie:** But you were the ones who told me to stop because I wasn’t good.

**Twilight:** And we were wrong.

**Fluttershy:** Playing makes you happy. (*Applejack whisks away the dropped instrument…*)

**Rarity:** And as long as it makes you happy— (*…and brings it back to the group.*) —it doesn’t matter how good you are.

**Applejack:** (*setting it down before Pinkie*) So get up there and show these yaks how it’s done!

**Pinkie:** (*whispering loudly*) I don’t know if you’ve noticed, but the audience are all yaks. And they kinda have issues with things that aren’t perfect, like my playing.

(*She is recalling the disastrous attempts to replicate yak culture in “Party Pooped,” and she adds quotation marks with her hooves on “issues.”*)

**Rainbow:** Pinkie Pie, you get up on that stage and play. If these yaks don’t like it— (*pulling Applejack/Fluttershy close*) —they’ll have to answer to us!

**Pinkie:** (*uncertainly*) Well, okay. If you all say so.

(*Rainbow flies to the front of the hut, hovers above the stage, and clears her throat.*)

**Rainbow:** Ladies and gentle-yaks! Performing for her very first time here, let’s give a big round of stomps for… (*Shift to one side, making room for Pinkie to carry the yovidaphone onstage.*) …Pinkie Pie!

(*She clears off as Pinkie clears her throat and faces the crowd.*)

**Pinkie:** Um…hi! So, uh, any yaks her from outta town?

(*Except for an impatient snort from one in the front row, the room is dead silent.*)

**Pinkie:** O…kay. (*She sits on the provided stool.*) And-a-one, and-a-two, and I kinda remember what to do.

(*A deep breath, and she is into it—just as ham-fisted and raucous and unappealing as in Act One—but her smiling friends ease their way up to the front. As dribbles of saliva spurt from her embouchure and over the edge of the mouthpiece, her natural vibrant colors gradually suffuse her form from the ground up, and a mighty squawking blast causes her mane/tail to pop back into their usual curly disarray as the final touch. Applejack and Fluttershy grin at one another while Pinkie stalks the stage and slides to its front edge on her hocks to play the final notes. She pulls away from the mouthpiece to catch her breath, greeted by stony silence that lasts for an unbearably long moment before shattering into wild cheering from every yak in the joint.*)

**Pinkie:** (*puzzled, to her friends*) Uh, I kinda wasn’t expecting this.

**Rainbow:** Me neither. (*Yigrid steps up and stomps twice.*)

**Yigrid:** Oh! Pony play good set!

**Pinkie:** Do you think so? Even though it wasn’t perfect?

**Yigrid:** Yovidaphone is instrument of happiness. Playing yovidaphone make pony happy. Pony playing *is* perfect!

**Pinkie:** Well, if that’s the case, let me play you this song I just wrote two seconds ago!

(*As she continues, zoom out slowly from the stage to frame her friends joining her on it.*)

**Pinkie:** It’s called “I’ve got the Best, Most Supportive Friends a Pony Could Ever Ask For”! (*aside, to Yigrid*) It’s a working title. (*Cut to Twilight.*)

**Twilight:** And-a-one! (*Pan to Applejack/Rarity.*)

**Applejack, Rarity:** And-a-two! (*Cut to Fluttershy/Rainbow.*)

**Fluttershy, Rainbow:** And-a-you know what to do!

(*Namely, to cut loose with a round of off-track, off-key, off-kilter playing as the view “irises out” to black, centered on Pinkie’s face with cheeks bulging past all reasonable proportions.*)