**THE SUMMER SUN SETBACK**

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Prologue

(*Opening shot: fade in to Grogar pacing the floor in his lair. He is brought up short by the sound of Cozy Glow’s pointed throat-clearing and glares back over his shoulder to find her flying sweetly toward him.*)

**Cozy:** Where you going?

**Grogar:** Since you three were unable to retrieve my bewitching bell, we need another source of great magical power to defeat Twilight and her friends.

(*Referring to the “failed” attempt by Chrysalis, Cozy, and Lord Tirek to recover that article in “Frenemies.” The filly offers a big grin as Grogar exits the area, but lets it drop in favor of a level stare immediately afterward. Cut to the old goat emerging from a side entrance and onto a broken walkway that curves over the swamp in which he has made his base of operations. Cozy peeks out just long enough to confirm that he is in fact leaving; cut to inside as she addresses herself across the cavernous space.*)

**Cozy:** (*singsong*) He’s go-o-one! (*Chrysalis and Tirek emerge from side tunnels.*)

**Tirek:** I don’t trust him.

**Cozy:** None of us do.

**Chrysalis:** (*floating the bell up to eye level*) Which is why double-crossing him with his own bell will be so satisfying.

**Tirek:** *If* we can figure out how to use it.

**Chrysalis:** Hmmm…

(*He grabs it out of the air, shakes vigorously, and shrugs upon getting no result.*)

**Cozy:** Twilight Sparkle may be the worst, but she does know stuff. She once said the archives in Canterlot has [*sic*] a restricted area.

**Tirek:** Celestia and Luna love to hoard information for themselves. If there’s an answer, it’s there. (*Close-up of Chrysalis.*)

**Chrysalis:** My triumphant return to Canterlot? I like the sound of that. (*Zoom out to frame all three on the next line.*)

**Cozy:** (*excitedly*) Oh, my gosh! Road trip!

(*All three revel silently in the prospect as the view fades to black.*)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(*Opening shot: fade in to a long shot of Canterlot at sunset, zooming in slowly, then cut to one of the bedrooms within Canterlot Castle. Books are stacked high on the dresser and on the floor by the bed, and Twilight Sparkle sits on her haunches before a pair of portable bulletin boards covered with tacked-up notes, drawings, and lists. Spike is taking it easy, lounging on the bed to do a bit of light reading. The boss sticks a card onto one board as the doors open to admit Princesses Celestia and Luna.*)

**Celestia:** Sorry to interrupt. We know you’re busy planning the Summer Sun Celebration as we requested, but…

**Luna:** (*caught off guard*) Oh! Things seem, uh, uh, calmer than we would have expected.

**Spike:** No complaints here.

**Twilight:** (*levitating list and pencil, marking an item*) With the exception of the odd trivia night, I’ve made a lot of progress since the Royal Swanifying Ceremony. (*airily, sending items away*) You may not know this about me, but I occasionally freak out.

(*Referring to “A Trivial Pursuit” and “Between Dark and Dawn,” in that order. She offers up a cocky grin as the two sovereigns trade baffled looks.*)

**Twilight:** Uh, that was a joke. (*standing*) I wanted to show you, with the Summer Sun Celebration, how much I’ve improved. So I’ve focused on delegating and trusting others. (*laughing*) It’s been great!

**Luna:** That’s…actually what we came to talk to you about. This may be the last Summer Sun Celebration you’ll need to plan. (*This jolts both Twilight and Spike.*)

**Twilight:** Did I do something wrong?

**Celestia:** Of course not. It’s just that the Celebration has always been about us. My defeat of Luna…

**Luna:** …and, thanks to you and your friends, my reunion with my sister. (*The two nuzzle.*)

**Celestia:** Now that we’re leaving, we don’t see a need for the holiday any longer.

**Twilight:** Now that you’re…?

**Celestia:** My sister and I have decided. (*touching Twilight’s shoulder*) The time for us to retire is upon us. You and your friends have proven you are ready to lead Equestria.

(*Spike hovers off the bead, leaving his book on the blanket, and Luna floats up a circular gold device whose surface depicts a sun. The sight of this item causes the youngest Princes to flop to her haunches on the eldest one’s next words.*)

**Celestia:** So let this be the last Summer Sun Celebration, as Equestria leaves behind the old to embrace the new.

(*A close-up reveals a hinge set into one edge and a yellow-orange gem set into the sun’s center—a replacement for the sun/moon-moving amulet that the sisters left in Twilight’s care during “Between Dark and Dawn,” and which she ultimately broke. She grasps this one, first with magic and then her hoof, and swallows hard as the weight of this responsibility sinks in. Around her, the background dissolves to a corridor elsewhere in Canterlot Castle.*)

**Rarity:** (*from o.s.*) My goodness! (*She leans into view.*) How are you feeling about all this?

(*On the start of the next line, cut to a longer shot that frames the whole gang of six as well as Spike, who hovers next to Rainbow Dash. The sky beyond the windows has darkened into night.*)

**Pinkie Pie:** Something like this could definitely send you into full freaky-outy mode!

**Twilight:** I’m actually fine. But if this is gonna be the last Summer Sun Celebration, I want to make sure it’s the best Celebration ever.

**Rainbow:** (*softly*) Please don’t give us more work, please don’t give us more work, please don’t give us more work…

**Twilight:** (*standing, pacing, vanishing the amulet*) So even though everything was done, I thought of a few last-minute changes I could use your help with.

**Rainbow:** (*groaning loudly*) I knew it!

**Voice of Discord:** (*echoing slightly; zoom out slowly*) Ohhh! The end of a beloved holiday? Last-minute changes to a celebration?

(*One flash later, the trickster is standing before them in all his haphazard glory.*)

**Discord:** That sounds positively chaotic!

**Applejack:** What are *you* doin’ here?

**Discord:** I’ve known Celestia and Luna longer than any of you. I terrorized them, they turned me into stone…

(*He emphasizes his point by petrifying himself and immediately crumbling to pieces on the red carpet—but this does not stop him from continuing to speak and gesture.*)

**Discord:** If this is the last Summer Sun Situation, I simply can’t miss it.

(*He stands up, whole and organic, and faces Twilight and the bulletin boards and files she has brought in.*)

**Discord:** Well, I see I’ve arrived just in time for the “Twilight gives her friends an impossibly long and overly detailed list” predicament.

**Twilight:** (*smugly, levitating six note cards*) I guess some draconequus isn’t the know-it-all he thinks he is.

(*One makes its way to the dragon and each of the other five mares, leaving a whole lot of nothing in Discord’s outstretched, expectant palm. All are left more than a bit puzzled.*)

**Rainbow:** This is it?

**Twilight:** What?

**Rainbow:** We were kinda with Discord on this one.

**Twilight:** No more crazy lists. No more freaking out. With your help, I know we’ve got this.

**Discord:** (*petulantly*) Oh, character growth is so boring. Do I at least get my own note card?

(*The slightly put-out planner obliges him by magically bringing up a card and pencil, writing a quick line on the former, and sending it over to him while dropping the latter. Cut to him, grinning as he snaps it out of the air and earning a funny look from Rainbow.*)

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) There. (*All eight again.*) Now I need to go rewrite my speech. But if you all look at your cards, you’ll see—

**Discord:** Can’t talk now. Have so much to get done before sunrise.

(*A snap of his lion-paw digits clears away all but Twilight, who has to sidestep quickly in order to avoid being hit by one of her boards when it topples over. She smiles, taking it in stride, and the view wipes to a tilt down from the upper reaches of Canterlot Castle to stop on festival preparations underway in the courtyard. The giant fans that were set up on rooftops as part of Shining Armor’s security overhaul in “Sparkle’s Seven” are running in top gear. Cut to a side alley, the camera aimed at its intersection with a main road and framing a few ponies tending to their jobs, and zoom out quickly on the following to frame Chrysalis, Cozy, and Tirek keeping watch from behind a scatter of barrels. They keep their voices down for the next five lines, Tirek no longer carrying the bell as in the prologue.*)

**Tirek:** Why are so many ponies up in the middle of the night?

**Cozy:** It’s that silly sun holiday.

**Chrysalis:** How many holidays do you ponies have? No matter. Getting into the castle won’t be a problem.

**Tirek:** Are you sure about that?

(*He points up and ahead, the camera panning/tilting up quickly to stop on those huge fans and a bird being thrown violently off course by the wind they generate. It comes in for a hard landing on his palm and, after a moment to clear its head, flies away as he stares flatly down at it. Pan from him to Chrysalis/Cozy.*)

**Chrysalis:** Oh. Those are new. But even so…

(*A flare of green magic washes over her form and subsides to reveal her as a gray pegasus mare in gold Royal Guard armor. Wipe to her trotting purposefully across the courtyard toward the doors, where two white-coated, gold-armored pegasus stallions are standing watch. She pushes at the doors but is unable to budge them. Her next three lines are delivered in a slightly higher, scratchier tone than her natural speaking voice.*)

**Chrysalis:** Transfer. Have to head inside. Open up.

(*A third guard, this one a pale blue unicorn mare in dark gray armor, steps up and telekinetically detaches the star crest from the front of her rig. This is pressed to the doors, triggering one of them to open—another of Shining’s security upgrades—and then reattached as she enters. Chrysalis hustles after her, but gets only a faceful of wood when the door closes behind the guard.*)

**Chrysalis:** Right, of course.

(*Chuckling, she plucks the star from her own armor and taps it against the doors a few times. Nothing doing.*)

**Chrysalis:** (*to stallions*) Uh, do yours get glitchy too? (*casually, walking past them*) More medallions, more problems, am I right?

(*She is wearing her star again by this point, and the two sentries send odd looks after her and to each other. In the alley’s hiding place, Cozy and Tirek are deep into a game of chess as she plods back to them and resumes her natural voice.*)

**Chrysalis:** (*hushed*) They’ve increased security into the castle. This is going to be more challenging than I thought.

(*She reverts to her normal appearance an instant before Discord, Spike, and Twilight’s friends materialize in the alley several yards away. All except the draconequus have their note cards in hoof or field.*)

**Rainbow:** (*to Discord*) Could you go not popping us all over the place, please?

**Discord:** Time is of the essence. Let’s…

(*A flash puts him in a sparkly cheerleader’s uniform done out in the colors of the School of Friendship—pink, violet, pale green—as seen in “2, 4, 6, Greaaat.” He has even procured a pair of pompoms that fit over his talons and paw.*)

**Discord:** (*waving them*) …go, team!

**Fluttershy:** We need to know what we’re doing before we go and do it. (*Cut to frame all but Rainbow and Spike; Discord has shed the outfit.*)

**Applejack:** Pinkie, you and I are givin’ Braeburn and the Appleloosan ponies some adjustments to the menu. (*Cut to Fluttershy/Rainbow/Rarity on the next line.*)

**Rainbow:** Fluttershy and I are meeting the pegasi from Cloudsdale, to give them changes to the weather.

**Rarity:** Spike, we’re going to update the Flaming Sky Firework Unicorn Troupe with Twilight’s new vision.

**Discord:** And I’m supposed to…

(*Donning a pair of gold-framed pince-nez spectacles on a chain, he finally brings out his own card.*)

**Discord:** (*reading*) “…make sure Discord doesn’t do anything Discord-y”? Well, that’s annoyingly specific.

(*The seven split up, having taken no notice of the three eavesdropping villains. The next two lines are delivered sotto voce.*)

**Tirek:** Increased security on a crowded holiday, with Twilight and her friends bumbling around? This is impossible.

**Chrysalis:** Oh, no. This is perfect. We need a distraction, and those ridiculous ponies just gave it to us. Now, do exactly as I tell you.

(*Nasty smiles spread across the faces of Cozy and Tirek as they lean in to hear her whisper behind a hoof. Fade to black.*)

Act Two

(*Opening shot: fade in to a lawn crowded with snack stands, loads of treats and the ingredients to make more, and earth ponies bustling here and there to set everything up. The presence of Applejack’s cousin Braeburn and the prevalence of Western-themed clothing items mark this bunch as being from Appleloosa. Pinkie sparks a moment’s panic—and at least one dropped pie—by popping up from a parked cart filled with desserts. She is no longer carrying her note card.*)

**Pinkie:** Step away from the wagons! (*The nearest ponies scramble back.*) Official food tasters here on official food-tasting business!

(*One stallion aims a dirty look at her and trots off as she proceeds to eat her way to the bottom of the cart. He passes Applejack and Braeburn, the latter sighing as he studies the former’s note card.*)

**Braeburn:** Well, it ain’t gonna be easy, but I think we can whip up these new cookies Twilight wants before sunrise.

**Applejack:** If anypony can handle some last-minute bakin’, Braeburn, it’s y’all. (*Pinkie begins to chomp down cupcakes on a shelf.*)

**Braeburn:** We brought plenty for the Celebration, but if she keeps testin’, we might be in trouble.

(*After three have gone down the hatch, Applejack decides that enough is enough and bites down on the fluffy magenta tail to drag Pinkie away.*)

**Pinkie:** But I see a suspicious-looking cookie!

(*None of the three spots a pair of red hands reaching through a bush from behind and parting the leaves so Tirek can get eyes on the situation. Spotting a mare walking by, he swiftly quits the post and peeks over the shrubbery; a spell kindles to life between his horns, and she stops dead as a red-orange glow envelops her and he inhales her magic. She collapses, eyes dulled and all vitality gone, and he grows a size before taking in the last of the energy. Braeburn is first to notice and turn back; cut to Tirek flexing a beefed-up bicep with malicious glee.*)

**Braeburn:** (*from o.s.*) You okay? (*Duck out of sight.*)

**Mare 1:** (*feebly*) I feel…w-weak all of a sudden.

(*As he and another mare tend to the stricken one, a stallion races over and gets the same treatment from the hidden Tirek. Cut to the centaur’s side of the bushes, Braeburn visible through the hole he cleared as he strides past the camera.*)

**Braeburn:** Is somepony back there?

(*He peeks warily in; cut back to the lawn side as he paces along the length of the bushes—and right into Tirek’s spell, which drops him like a load of bricks.*)

**Mare 2:** What is it?

**Braeburn:** (*feebly*) Everypony! Get away from the food, ’til we figure out what’s goin’ on!

(*Murmurs give way to a screaming, stampeding panic and quite a lot of edibles being flung to the ground. Once the lawn is empty, Tirek emerges from the bushes and voices a rich laugh, having bulked up a bit farther; he steals a pie from the nearest wagon and ducks back the way he came. Wipe to another lawn, this one liberally decorated with lights and banners and filled with pegasi hauling barrels of assorted weather supplies—wind, rainbows, sunshine, and so forth. Their supervisor, Feather Flatterfly, is a bespectacled blue-gray stallion with a frazzled, two-tone blue-green mane/tail, blue-green eyes, a blue-violet necktie with rainbow stripes, and a cutie mark of a weather vane. Fluttershy and Rainbow are addressing him, neither one carrying her card.*)

**Feather Flatterfly:** The Princess wants *what?!?*

**Rainbow:** (*producing/passing her card*) Just what’s on that little card. (*Cut to him; she continues o.s.*) No big deal.

**Feather Flatterfly:** “No big de—” (*stammering badly*) —it’s a much more aggressive weather pattern than what was originally ordered! (*dropping to haunches*) This—this is very irregular. (*standing, dropping card, pacing*) We’ll need to—no! Uh, first we must—wait! We could…

(*He trails off into a panicked wail, crumpling back to his haunches, but Fluttershy crosses serenely to him and lays a gentle hoof on his shoulder.*)

**Fluttershy:** Take a breath… (*He does so, cheeks bulging out.*) …let it out slowly. (*Exhale.*)

**Feather Flatterfly:** (*more calmly*) Tell the Princess we will do our best.

**Fluttershy:** We’re sure you’re doing an excellent job.

**Rainbow:** Oh, yeah, totally! You’re not gonna panic and screw it up at all.

(*Exeunt the two mares; the boss starts to shiver as his nerves kick in all over again.*)

**Feather Flatterfly:** I-I-I’m not built for high-pressure situations!

**Cozy:** (*from o.s.*) Golly!

(*A glance to one side tells him that she is standing by him.*)

**Cozy:** Sounds like you need some help.

**Feather Flatterfly:** Who are you?

**Cozy:** (*hovering*) Somepony who’s organized enough to handle the small stuff, so you can focus on the big picture.

**Feather Flatterfly:** The big… (*nodding enthusiastically*) Yes! That sounds right!

(*The little megalomaniac scoops up the dropped card, runs an eye over it with a predatory little giggle, and is all smiles for the high-strung stallion in a blink.*)

**Cozy:** This kind of weather has to be handled delicately. (*foreleg around his shoulders*) Good thing I’m here. (*grinning slyly*) I’ll take care of everything.

(*Wipe to the moon hanging low in the sky and tilt down to ground level as fireworks fly up to burst in showers of vivid sparks. They are being launched by a quartet of unicorns on a stage set up in an amphitheater. Speakers and spotlights have been installed, and the curtains have been drawn back to expose a large gold frame of a merged sun and crescent moon on a stand. The whole display is framed by a proscenium arch shaped as a giant, upside-down horseshoe topped by a bright yellow son. Rarity and Spike approach using the broad central aisle, both with their cards tucked away. From this distance, three of the four unicorns can be discerned wearing white vests and pants trimmed in blue; the fourth wears only the vest.*)

**Spike:** Wow!

**Rarity:** The Flaming Sky Firework Troupe is a marvel.

(*Cut to the stage. The vest-only unicorn is a tall mare, with pink flames across the front of her garment and at the collar—Fire Flare, the leader of this group. Her mane/tail are mostly red, with stripes of yellow and orange, and the former is short and swept back. Pale brown coat, light orange eyes with dark red shadow, cutie mark of a deep red flower with a yellow spark at its center. Two of the other members send up fresh pyrotechnics, showing small pink fireballs at the hems of their vests.*)

**Fire:** We take pride in what we do.

**Spike:** (*pulling out his card*) These last-minute changes aren’t too challenging, are they? (*Her field pulls it close for a read.*)

**Fire:** Ha! (*stomping*) The more challenging, the better! We aim to astound. (*sending it back*) Now if you don’t mind, we do have a new routine to prepare.

(*Back to Spike, who catches it, then cut to all four performers on the start of the next line.*)

**Fire:** Horns at the ready!

(*Rarity and Spike hustle away, watched by Chrysalis from a hidden corner behind the stage. A bit of magic turns the changeling into a light greenish-gray unicorn mare with two-tone red-brown mane/tail, medium green eyes, and a cutie mark of a ladybug and a scatter of seeds—the same disguise she assumed to pass herself off as a photographer at the start of “The Mean 6.” She strolls confidently out from her nook and circles to face the stage, using a voice very close to her usual haughty one and assuming the identity of one Crackle Cosette.*)

**Cosette:** Very impressive.

**Fire:** Thank you. Unfortunately, we have no room for anypony else at this time. (*Clear throat; gesture toward Cosette.*) I’m sorry…?

**Cosette:** Crackle Cosette. And I don’t want to join your silly little troupe.

**Fire:** (*needled*) Pardon me?

**Cosette:** Oh, I meant no offense. (*slowly moving closer*) It just seems a pity for unicorns to waste their talents on something so…inconsequential.

(*Murmurs ripple among the other three performers as she ascends the steps toward the stage.*)

**Cosette:** Unicorns wield magic. We are the most powerful ponies in the land. (*pacing around Fire*) Don’t you ever feel you’re destined for more than…performances?

(*She departs, leaving the foursome to think very carefully about her words. Wipe to the Canterlot Castle corridor in which Twilight and company first assembled in Act One. Her boards and files have been cleared away, and all eight have gathered at the end opposite the open doors leading to the throne room. Twilight and Rainbow are the only ones hovering, and Discord has shed the pince-nez glasses he used to read his “instructions” at the end of Act One. Any who had been carrying their cards have pocketed them now.*)

**Twilight:** It’s all coming together. (*Land.*) I really think this is gonna be the best Summer Sun Celebration ever!

**Rarity:** You’ve done an outstanding job. (*Seven-way group hug, excluding Discord.*)

**Twilight:** We’ve all done an outstanding job!

**Discord:** And what about me? You’ll be happy to know that I have been watching myself all night, and I have yet to do one Discord-y thing.

(*He demonstrates in close-up by picking up a pair of binoculars, peering through them so that the objective lenses magnify his eyes, and swiveling to put half their length off the left side of the screen. This portion immediately extends into view from the right, the lenses aimed at the back of his own head.*)

**Luna:** (*from o.s.*) Now *that* truly is amazing.

(*The anatomical hodgepodge lowers the binocs and turns to find both royal sisters entering the corridor.*)

**Celestia:** Twilight, we know you had, uh… (*Chuckle.*) …uh, difficulties using the amulet to raise the sun and moon. (*as she and Luna cross to Twilight*) We thought perhaps a practice session before the festivities might be in order.

**Twilight:** That’s a good idea. (*to the others*) Thank you all so much.

(*She follows Celestia and Luna into the throne room, the doors booming shut behind them.*)

**Applejack:** I sure am proud of her. (*All start for the exit.*)

**Spike:** Yeah! She finally realizes things’ll turn out fine, even when she isn’t micromanaging every little detail.

(*All stop short when Braeburn steps into view in the foreground, framed to present only his forelegs and the edge of his vest.*)

**Applejack:** Braeburn? W-What’s wrong?

(*A head-on shot tells that he has not recovered one bit from having his magic consumed by Tirek; it is all he can do to keep himself upright.*)

**Braeburn:** (*feebly*) Earth ponies…sick…food missin’…can’t…bake…anything…

(*He comes unstrung and passes out as a Royal Guard pegasus stallion flies in, not wearing his helmet.*)

**Guard:** Something is wrong with the weather! Storms, hurricanes, fog! (*Here come Fire and her troupe.*) You name it! It’s a disaster out there!

**Fire:** Rarity! Please inform Her Highness that we will not be performing. A simple fireworks show is beneath us! (*leading others away*) We’re better than that!

**Applejack:** What the…? Everything was fine a minute ago.

(*Fluttershy turns to the nearest window; cut to just outside it, framing the seven.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*muffled by glass*) Apparently a lot can change in a minute.

(*The others hurry over for a look. Down on the lawn, Appleloosa ponies who have lost their magic are either fetching up against any solid surface for support or being dragged away by their still-healthy compatriots. Rain begins to fall, going from drizzle to downpour in seconds as pegasi fight their way through the unfriendly clouds and strong winds. Back to the window.*)

**Rainbow:** (*muffled by glass*) It’s total chaos out there! (*Twelve eyes bore into Discord.*)

**Discord:** (*muffled*) Don’t look at me!

(*Inside again; close-up of Fluttershy and Spike.*)

**Fluttershy:** What are we gonna do?

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) Do about what?

(*Here she comes, in good spirits and levitating a stack of note cards; except for Applejack, the others waste no time in adopting the best casual poses and tones of voice they can.*)

**Spike:** (*laughing*) Uh, what are you doing here?

**Twilight:** I forgot these. You guys okay?

**Applejack:** Twilight, w-we’re sorry, but—

**Rainbow:** —but, uh, we don’t know what to do now that everything’s all ready. (*Big fake laugh.*)

**Twilight:** I guess I was too organized. (*walking off*) I’ll try to come up with a few last-minute errands for you before sunrise. (*The others revert to their normal tones.*)

**Rainbow:** Well, that’s a relief!

**Applejack:** (*to Rarity*) Explain to me why we didn’t tell her the truth?

**Rarity:** Well, Twilight is finally learning not to let her stress get the better of her. If she finds out everything went wrong, it could be devastating!

**Fluttershy:** Oh, she’ll be so upset.

**Rainbow:** She’ll totally freak out! (*Close-up of Applejack.*)

**Applejack:** Well, w-what do y’all suggest?

**Pinkie:** (*from o.s., waving a hoof into view*) Ooh, ooh, ooh! (*She slides in and drapes a foreleg across Applejack’s shoulders.*) Let’s just fix it all before she notices. (*poking her nose*) No lying necessary.

**Applejack:** (*reluctantly*) I guess. (*Cut to Fluttershy/Rainbow/Spike.*)

**Spike:** We’d need a miracle.

**Rainbow:** We *have* a miracle! (*addressing herself o.s.*) Don’t we?

(*The sound of spellcasting drifts toward the trio; cut to one window. Discord stands up within a glowing white nimbus, wearing angelic robes and a halo attached to a wire that stands up from the back of his head.*)

**Discord:** I suppose I could fix everything. (*pulling out a small lyre, strumming it*) But isn’t the real miracle here the miracle of teamwork and character growth?

(*The light fades and he poofs out, leaving only a scatter of feathers to tumble toward the group.*)

**Rainbow:** (*supremely exasperated*) Oh, come on!

**Fluttershy:** Discord is right. Twilight needs us. Whatever happened, we can fix this.

(*Lightning rips the sky, sapping her resolve; cut to just outside one window as the remaining six gather for a better look.*)

**Spike:** (*muffled by glass*) What *did* happen?

(*Tilt down quickly to the Appleloosa crew’s area, now littered with ruined treats, tumbled boxes, and ponies who are either panicking or have barely the strength to move on their own. The driving rain has stopped, but lightning still crackles through the air as a few stray pegasi break for cover. Chrysalis, Cozy, and Tirek poke their heads up from a pile of crates to watch the bedlam, Chrysalis having reverted to her natural form.*)

**Cozy:** Best road trip ever!

(*Her mouth curves into a savage smile, another flash throwing Tirek’s shadow over her. Fade to black.*)

Act Three

(*Opening shot: fade in to a slow pan across the wrecked snack area and the ponies strewn about it under a blanket of threatening black clouds. Pinkie, now wearing a doctor’s white coat, stethoscope, and forehead reflector, leans down to one drained victim and reels out a length of his tongue. After a moment’s close inspection, she lets it snap back into his mouth and stands up, clipboard in hoof. Behind her, Applejack is running a worried eye over a display of pies.*)

**Pinkie:** Even if I was an actual doctor, I would have no idea what’s wrong.

**Applejack:** There’s gotta be a reason. Something got ’em all sick. (*Pinkie starts on a cupcake.*) Maybe the food? (*Blue eyes pop; slam down the clipboard.*)

**Pinkie:** I ate the food too! (*Throw the snack aside.*) Does that mean I’m sick? (*sobbing*) Oh, no!

(*She manages one ragged cough before pitching sideways to the turf—and then bounces upright, healthy as ever.*)

**Pinkie:** Nope, I feel fine.

(*And she proves it by digging a fresh cupcake from her mane and wolfing it down, leaving residue on her cheeks and vexing Applejack no end. Wipe to the Canterlot Castle entrance as a dark gray unicorn Royal Guard stallion in gold armor approaches through a slowly thickening layer of fog. He stops short, turning to find Cozy a few feet back; she just offers up an innocent grin that keeps him distracted as Tirek’s shadow falls over both of them. The stallion catches on, but too late to stop the massive centaur from siphoning his magic and sending him down in an unconscious heap. Now Chrysalis steps in to grasp the star crest from his armor in her power and wrench it loose; the doors unlock at its touch, and the camera cuts to just inside as they swing open to frame the three miscreants. Fade to black as they approach, having discarded the crest.*)

(*Snap to Rainbow and four other flight-suited Wonderbults straining to power through the relentless winds of the storm Cozy tricked the pegasi into creating. She and two of the others are carrying barrels to catch every cloud they can grab. Down below, Fluttershy sits with the Feather Flatterfly, who is rocking back and forth on the very edge of a full nervous breakdown.*)

**Feather Flatterfly:** I don’t know how this happened! I’m gonna be fired for—for sure!

**Fluttershy:** (*patting his shoulder*) Rainbow Dash and the Wonderbolts will have all the weather rounded up any minute.

(*She almost immediately has to eat her words when one screaming blue pegasus plummets out of the sky and goes headfirst into a bush, her coat/mane/tail badly singed and her barrel gone.*)

**Rainbow:** Or not!

(*The supervisor proceeds to topple backward in a dead faint. Wipe to the entrance to the throne room as the three villains approach. The doors are closed; cut to just inside as Cozy opens one and hovers just over the threshold.*)

**Cozy:** Not here.

(*Long overhead shot of her—and the snoozing geese that have roosted atop the pillars, another of Shining’s security add-ons from “Sparkle’s Seven.”*)

**Cozy:** The archives are in a different part of the castle.

(*She backs away as one of the birds comes to with an irritated little hunk. Cut to the corridor, the trio leaving without bothering to close the door; the wakened goose peeks out and begins to creep stealthily after them. Wipe to the amphitheater stage, where Fire is hauling a load of fireworks with horn-power; Rarity and Spike are hurrying to catch up.*)

**Rarity:** What about aiming for perfection?

**Fire:** (*descending steps*) We’ve set our sights higher.

**Spike:** Higher than perfection? (*Fire sets the cargo in a wagon.*)

**Fire:** Higher than putting on a silly little show for the other ponies.

**Rarity:** But you were so excited before. What changed?

(*Wipe to the loosed goose flapping to the corner of a passage within Canterlot Castle, then pan quickly ahead a short distance to frame a second one waiting. The first honks to the second, gets a reply, and flies off—message received and understood, whatever it is. Once the coast is clear, the second goose transforms into Chrysalis, who ambles away and soon finds Cozy and Tirek outside a locked gate made from a grid of steel bars—the entrance to the Canterlot Archives, as seen in “It’s About Time.” As the big bruiser stands there looking bored, the devious youngster picks the lock with a paper clip and opens the way for all three to enter.*)

(*Wipe to the courtyard. The fog has cleared here, the sky partly so, and things have at least calmed down somewhat on the food preparation front. Twilight leads Celestia and Luna through the area.*)

**Twilight:** You two just enjoy the festivities. I have a few surprises in store for—

(*Before she can finish the sentence, Discord floats lazily into view on his back, having ditched the angel getup he wore at the end of Act Two and slapped on a smarmy smile.*)

**Twilight:** (*annoyed*) Yes, Discord?

**Discord:** Oh, well, don’t mind me. I’m just here for the chaos.

(*By the time he finishes this line, he has drifted ahead, seated himself at a table, put on a garish flowered shirt and sunglasses, and begun to peruse a menu. A thunderclap and the glare of a lightning strike bring a merry giggle from his throat.*)

**Discord:** (*propping shades on forehead*) And here we go! (*Rainbow flies past, the singe marks gone from coat/mane/tail.*)

**Twilight:** What is Rainbow Dash doing?

(*She starts to take wing after the pegasus, but immediately pulls up short to avoid running into a large, sloshing caldron that Pinkie is sliding into place. The earth pony has shed the medical outfit she sported at the start of this act. Upon spotting Twilight, she blocks as much of the vessel from sight with her body and forelegs as possible—that is to say, not much. A clamor of angry voices begins to make itself heard from o.s.*)

**Twilight:** Pinkie, is this soup?

**Pinkie:** (*thinking fast*) Yes! I…was really hungry?

(*On the start of the next line, cut to Rarity and Spike standing on a refreshment table before a knot of hacked-off unicorns—the source of the commotion.*)

**Rarity:** Nopony understands wanting to take pride in your work more than I do! (*They fall silent.*)

**Troupe member:** (*stomping*) You could do more with your magic than make frilly dresses!

**Rarity:** Oh, pfft! Nopony makes frills anymore. (*The muttering resumes.*) Uh, this season’s actually all about simplicity and—

**Spike:** *Not the point, Rarity!*

(*Twilight’s aerial approach to this budding civil unrest is cut off when Feather Flatterfly desperately launches himself into her path.*)

**Feather Flatterfly:** Princess! (*Drop pleadingly to haunches.*) I beg your forgiveness! It’s entirely my fault!

**Twilight:** What is? (*Lightning, accompanied by instant heavy rain.*)

**Feather Flatterfly:** THAT!!

**Fluttershy:** (*sliding him away*) Oh, um, just a slight hiccup in the weather.

(*Her placating giggle leaves the young Princess at a loss, as does the split-second clearing of the sky. Now Applejack barrels across the grass, towing a cart loaded with baking ingredients; close-up of her face.*)

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) Applejack— (*Stop; cut to frame both.*) —what is going on?

**Applejack:** (*pointing at Fluttershy/Pinkie/Feather Flatterfly, removing/throwing down hat*) I told y’all this was a bad idea, but nopony ever listens to me!

**Twilight:** *That’s it!*

(*A few flaps and a bit of magic later, she has gathered up her friends and number-one assistant and dumped them gracelessly in one pile. Applejack has her hat back on.*)

**Twilight:** I thought everything was fine! (*They start to get up.*) What is going on? (*Slow pan across the group.*)

**Applejack:** Everythin’ *was* goin’ fine…

**Pinkie:** …until it totally wasn’t.

**Fluttershy:** We tried to fix it ourselves.

**Twilight:** Why didn’t you tell me?

**Rainbow:** W-We didn’t want you to freak out.

**Twilight**: And you thought *not* telling me everything was a total disaster would avoid a freak-out?!?

**Spike:** When you say it like that, it sounds like a really bad plan.

(*Close-up of Twilight talking a deep breath to compose herself, the camera zooming out to frame her as through a pair of binoculars, and cut to Discord watching from his table with the help of these instruments. As before, his eyes are magnified by the lenses.*)

**Discord:** (*eagerly*) Here it comes… (*Back to Twilight.*)

**Twilight:** I know how I used to react— (*smiling*) —but I really have changed. Panicking won’t solve anything.

(*The joker lowers his binocs, disappointed and a trifle disgusted at having missed out on a sure laugh, as Celestia and Luna pass behind him. Back to the Ponyville bunch.*)

**Twilight:** But we can handle whatever problems come our way, as long as we handle them together.

**Celestia:** (*from o.s.*) Spoken like a true leader. (*All eyes and heads turn to the sisters.*) How can we help?

**Twilight:** (*floating/opening a scroll*) I love a good to-do list. (*Overhead shot; zoom out slowly. The fog is creeping back in.*) So tell me exactly what happened so we can figure out exactly what to do to fix it.

(*Wipe to a pan through the Appleloosa crew’s area. They have regained their magic, and Celestia and Fluttershy are looking after some who are still unsteady on their hooves. Applejack waves a brace of pegasi in for a landing, and they get their marching orders from Feather Flatterfly before lifting off again. Ascending with another pair, Rainbow flies several tight circles around a storm cloud to wrap it with her contrail; one last hard pull breaks the whole thing in half, and her two assistants push the pieces away. Luna puts her horn in drive to shove another cloud from the sky, whereupon Discord pops in—without his flowered shirt and sunglasses—and gets rid of a small one in a most unconventional way. Namely: he pulls up the bottom edge of the screen as if it were a curtain, exposing a mass of television static beyond, and shoves the offending thunderhead through before letting the image snap back into place. Luna’s bewilderment at his tactics shifts into a mildly peeved eye roll once he snaps himself away.*)

(*Tilt down to ground level, where Twilight and Rarity are conferring with Fire and her colleagues. All six trail off into hopelessly confused stares at the sight of Spike in flight, hauling Pinkie by her tail and followed by two ponies wheeling the fluffy-maned nut’s party cannon along. A pegasus stallion wings past the camera, the view wiping behind him to one set of shelves within the Archives. Chrysalis walks past, giving them only a cursory glance, and Tirek does not even bother with that much as he goes by. Cozy, though, pauses in mid-flight to give the tomes a serious look; her eyes widen in close-up, and a longer shot picks out the focus of her attention—a book, held in place by heavy chains and with an image of Grogar’s bell on its cover. She squeezes through one set of shelves to get to it, knocking a few books loose in the process, and tries for some moments to yank it free. Meeting with no success in this effort, she glares at the restraints, then smiles as she hefts a volume marked with a key. One good swing shatters the chains, and she tosses the improvised bludgeon aside and grabs the now-unbound book. The other two gather in, drawn by her return, and all three grin menacingly over the find.*)

(*Wipe to a close-up of Feather Flatterfly’s legs advancing through the ground-level fog and zoom out/tilt up to frame him intently watching the skies over the amphitheater. A firm nod and signal to Rainbow and her two helpers on the stage, and all three are on the move to break up and bulldoze the clouds. The daredevil loops back down, nearly blowing the boss’s mane/tail/tie off but making him very happy, and in short order ponies are taking their seats before the stage as Twilight paces behind its microphone, amulet held in her magic. The fog has now entirely dissipated. Fire and her troupe are standing at the back of the crowd, and she smiles firmly to the others as the pegasi shift the last obstructions out of the sky. Four horns send up an incendiary salvo whose rounds spiral together before detonating in front of the moon, temporarily casting a pattern of sparks across its surface that replicates the craters of Luna’s millennium-long imprisonment.*)

(*Fire whistles to the next hilltop over, where Pinkie stuffs a load of pyrotechnics into a launcher before hopping away. A longer shot picks out no fewer than five of these rigs, whose attendants fire off their charges at her signal for a dazzling display. Celestia and Luna watch from the courtyard, the older sister wiping away a happy tear and receiving a pat on the hoof from the younger, and both fly to the stage and land on either side of Twilight. She brings up the amulet, whose surface now shows a crescent moon and stars around a purple central gem, and gives it a twist; the graphic shifts to the sun it displayed in Act One, and the gem goes yellow-orange. Framed by the sun/moon frame, the moon dips below the horizon and is replaced by the rising sun, whose brilliance bathes all three winged unicorns and draws a hearty round of cheers from the spectators. Then the mare steps right up to the microphone, amulet put away, and levitates it off its stand as she speaks.*)

**Twilight:** (*amplified*) This celebration has always been a reminder not to fear the night, for there is always a new day to look forward to. (*solemnly, pacing*) But as we look towards Equestria’s future, I am sad to say that today will be the last Summer Sun Celebration. (*Stunned gasps from the audience; she continues with a smile.*) Because there is something even more important to celebrate.

(*This pronouncement catches Celestia and Luna off guard.*)

**Twilight:** (*amplified*) There are two ponies who have watched over us, night and day, for as long as we can remember. (*Her friends and Spike smile from their spot off to one side.*) We will no longer commemorate their battle or their reunion. Instead, we will take this day to celebrate how much they mean to all of us. From this day forward, today will be known as…the Festival of the Two Sisters!

(*This one hits said siblings like a cinderblock upside the head, but sets off a chorus of wild cheers among the spectators.*)

**Celestia:** (*deeply touched*) We don’t know what to say.

(*So she sweeps her faithful former student into a long hug. Twilight then heads toward her friends, having returned the microphone to its stand, as Celestia and Luna wave gratefully to the multitude. Pinkie hops up to meet her with a giggle in close-up.*)

**Pinkie:** A brand-new holiday? (*hugging her tightly*) You’re my kinda princess!

**Twilight:** I’m just glad we pulled it off.

**Applejack:** (*from o.s.*) About that. (*Zoom out to frame her.*) We just wanted to say… (*doffing hat*) …we’re real sorry.

**Rarity:** You did tell us you’d changed.

**Fluttershy:** As your friends, we should’ve trusted you. (*Rainbow flies up to Twilight.*)

**Rainbow:** (*nudging her; both wink*) Next time you say you’re not gonna freak out, we’ll believe you.

**Twilight:** Good. (*She flies down; Applejack has her hat on.*) Because I’m sure there’s gonna be plenty of things I’ll need my best friends’ help with.

(*Cut to a close-up of her, Applejack, Fluttershy, Rainbow, and Rarity as they come together for a group hug.*)

**Pinkie:** (*from o.s.*) Whee-hee!

(*These five yell as she launches herself off the stage and plows into them, leaving a pile of ponies and one hovering dragon to share a good laugh. Zoom out slowly overhead to bring Discord into view, lounging on a cloud and seen from behind.*)

**Discord:** You know… (*Head-on shot; he is holding a frosted crescent-moon cookie.*) …it really does seem like you just might be ready for whatever comes next, Your Majesty.

(*He tosses the sweet into his mouth and crunches away. Dissolve to the interior of Grogar’s lair; he paces the floor grumpily, only to be brought up short by a hovering Cozy.*)

**Cozy:** Sooooo? Did you find what you’re looking for?

(*Sweeping the little pest aside with a hoof, he enters the meeting room seen in “Frenemies” and finds Chrysalis and Tirek lounging in two of the three rude chairs. The centaur’s reduced stature indicates that he has given up the magic he stole from the Appleloosa ponies.*)

**Grogar:** Once again, I’ve found success where you all find failure! (*Stomp for emphasis on this last word.*) I have located what I sought, and tomorrow I will set out to retrieve it. (*pacing away*) When I return, Equestria will finally be ours for the taking.

**Tirek:** (*grumpily*) Hmph!

**Chrysalis:** (*to him*) Oh, stop pouting. (*Cozy flies backwards to them, lounging on her back.*)

**Cozy:** You knew you couldn’t stay that buff. (*settling into Tirek’s crossed arms*) You had to return all the life force to those earth ponies so Grogar doesn’t suspect anything.

**Tirek:** (*dropping her*) I don’t have to like it.

**Cozy:** Well, I don’t like that we worked so hard to destroy their party and they still pulled it off. (*grinning, stretching cheeks*) But you don’t see me complaining. (*She drops into a sullen pout.*)

**Chrysalis:** (*pacing*) Our goal wasn’t to destroy, it was to distract.

(*Channeling power through her horn, she lifts the book Cozy found in the Archives from behind Tirek—he has been sitting on it—and brings to herself as he stands.*)

**Chrysalis:** And now we have exactly what we need. (*Cozy hovers up from the floor.*)

**Tirek:** (*socking fist into palm*) And no time to waste. We have to master the bell before Grogar returns.

**Chrysalis:** We’ve managed to stay one step ahead of everypony so far. (*Cozy flies to her.*)

**Cozy:** You know, it really was super-easy to get all those earth ponies and pegasi and unicorns to turn on each other. (*Chrysalis directs the book across the room during this line.*)

**Chrysalis:** It was, wasn’t it? Now *that* is something to think about.

(*It drifts past in the foreground, the view wiping to black behind it.*)