**THE BIG MAC QUESTION**

**Written by Josh Haber, Michael Vogel**

**Produced by Devon Cody**

**Story editing by Josh Haber**

**Supervising direction by Jim Miller**

**Directed by Denny Lu, Mike Myhre**

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

Note: All lines marked with one asterisk (**\***) are spoken directly to the camera.

Prologue

(*Opening shot: fade in to a close-up of a downcast Spike, a patch of bushes serving as a backdrop. A sliver of daytime sky is visible above the leaves.*)

**\* Spike:** (*sighing heavily*) I just wanted everything to be perfect. I mean, this was a big deal. But when Discord insists on being involved…

(*Cut to Discord, backed by a different expanse of greenery and looking a touch put out.*)

**\* Discord:** Regardless of what Spike might say, that little dragon begged me to help. And let me tell you, he can cause plenty of chaos all on his purple lonesome.

(*To Mrs. Cake, similarly disposed.*)

**\* Mrs. Cake:** I pride myself on baking under pressure, but I just…oh, dear.

(*A deflated shake of the blue head; cut to the Cutie Mark Crusaders in yet another spot.*)

**\* Apple Bloom:** You’d think we’d be used to stuff like this in Ponyville.

**\* Sweetie Belle:** I still have nightmares. (*To Spike.*)

**\* Spike:** (*sighing*) It seemed simple when it started.

(*The scene undergoes a wavering dissolve to leave him standing in the same position, but now under a tree in the Sweet Apple Acres orchards A glimmer of light from something just off the bottom edge of the screen causes him to voice an ecstatic shudder.*)

**Spike:** (*eyes widening/shining*) It’s…*beautiful!* (*Close-up of Big Macintosh before him.*)

**Macintosh:** Ee-yup!

(*A healthy degree of concern crosses his face; cut to a longer shot of Spike and the source of the light—a small box balanced on one hoof, open to show a ring set with a sizable diamond. The dragon, now salivating and consumed with thoughts of a very crunchy midday snack, makes a grab for it.*)

**Macintosh:** (*from o.s., yanking it away*) Nope!

**Spike:** (*angrily*) I’m not gonna eat it!

(*Longer shot; the stallion holds it distrustfully out of reach while sitting on his haunches. Discord chooses this moment to appear out of thin air.*)

**Discord:** Eat what?

(*His arrival startles Spike into a face-first meeting with the grass. One beady red eye stretches out from its socket, curves around the back of Macintosh’s head to scope out the jewelry, then retracts as its holder turns away protectively and Spike gets up.*)

**Discord:** (*excitedly, peeking from several different angles*) What is it? I want to see!

**Macintosh:** Nope!

**Discord:** Why not?

**Spike:** Because you have a big mouth.

**Discord:** (*affronted*) Me? (*righting himself*)I keep tons of secrets—like Fluttershy’s secret fear of clowns— (*hovering briefly, then walking in place with forelimbs extended*) —or that time I caught Twilight sleep-trotting through town. Oh! And did you know that Octavia went on a date with Bulk Biceps? Hmph! Talk about an odd couple. I heard that—

(*Cut to Macintosh and Spike trading “I rest my case” glances on the end of this, then back to the now-chastened trickster.*)

**Discord:** Oh. All right. Point taken. (*brightly*) But we’re pals, right? Comrades. Amigos.

(*He suits all three of them up as a mariachi band on this last and scoops them into a bone-mashing hug.*)

**Discord:** Come on!

(*Getting a resigned shrug from Spike, Macintosh pulls out the ring box and gives a moment’s rapt contemplation to its contents—that is, until Discord drops both of them and grabs it up with a big, beaming, shuddery breath.*)

**Discord:** BIG MAC IS GOING TO PROPOSE TO SUGAR BELLE?!?!?

(*These last two words echo from the hilltop on which the three are situated, over the entire grounds, and through Ponyville proper, bringing activity in the streets to a dead stop. One mare peeks fearfully out from an upper-story window of her house, then goes back inside when the world somehow fails to end then and there. Fade to black.*)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(*Opening shot: fade in to a close-up of a confident Spike among the bushes. Based on the events of the prologue, these shots are set in the present time, while the orchard sequence from the prologue was a past event.*)

**\* Spike:** Of course Big Mac asked me to help with his proposal. I’m the most romantic dragon I know.

**\* Discord:** (*groaning*) It really is a curse, having infinite powers. Everypony is always asking you to move a couch or help with a proposal.

(*Wavering dissolve to them and Macintosh under their hilltop apple tree and without the mariachi outfits; Spike has popped into a hover, and Macintosh is on his haunches.*)

**Spike:** Spill it! Every detail! Don’t leave anything out!

**Discord:** (*scoffing*) Do we have to hear all the details? Is that like a “friend” thing?

**Macintosh:** (*sighing, tucking ring box into his hitching collar*) Ee-yup.

(*He stands up as the draconequus summons a recliner, sits, and puts up the footrest to make himself comfortable.*)

**Macintosh:** I don’t talk much, so I want to show Sugar Belle how committed I am. First…

(*Stepping out of view behind the tree for a moment, he tosses a bundle of planks back into view and returns with the handle of a paint can in his teeth. Cut to Spike, who gasps happily as the sound of its being set down drifts to him.*)

**Spike:** (*rapid fire*) You’re making a picnic table that matches the shelf you made Sugar Belle for her shop when you had a crush on her, and you’re setting up a romantic meal overlooking Sweet Apple Acres?

**Macintosh:** Ee-yup.

(*The first half of Spike’s spiel is a reference to “Hard to Say Anything,” and the whole thing leave Discord more than a bit confused.*)

**Discord:** (*to Spike*) Uh, how did you figure that out?

**Spike:** If you were a hopeless romantic, you’d know that was the only logical choice.

**Macintosh:** Then…

(*His next step away is followed by the pushing into view of a basket brimming with apples, each with a tag tied to its stem. Spike picks one up for a close look, finding its skin—and that of every other fruit in the batch—marked with a pink or red heart.*)

**Spike:** You painted apples to leave around Ponyville with little riddles tied to the stem that will lead her up here to meet you?

**Macintosh:** Ee-yup.

**Discord:** Seriously?

**Macintosh:** Now…

**Spike:** Y—

(*He trails off into mumbles and drops the apple once Discord claps a taloned palm over his mouth.*)

**Discord:** Oh, I know!

(*The little guy manages to pull free, but the appendage pops loose and maintains its grip, wrist and all.*)

**Discord:** You need a giant rhino named Dolores who can knit a romantic sweater for two.

(*During this line, Spike drops o.s. while trying to uncover his mouth and Discord magicks up a sweater with two neck holes and a puckered-up Macintosh and Sugar Belle within a heart on the front.*)

**Macintosh:** Uh…nope.

(*A lion-paw snap banishes the garment; now Spike rises into the air, carrying the disconnected hand by its wrist. It points at Discord for emphasis on the following.*)

**Spike:** Come on! He needs food for the picnic. That was a gimme. (*Discord, unimpressed, grabs and reattaches it.*)

**Discord:** I do not get this game.

**Spike:** (*to Macintosh*) Okay. You finish you table, I’ll pick up whatever you need to eat, and Discord will put all the apples in place.

**Discord:** (*surprised*) I will?

**Macintosh:** Ee-yup.

(*He pulls a scroll from his collar and passes it to Spike, who opens it to reveal a map of Ponyville on which several locations are marked with apples. One, at Sweet Apple Acres, has been circled. Still not looking too enthused about the whole scheme, Discord looks it over and snaps to vanish himself, Spike, the apples, and his chair. Wipe to a goat pulling a carrot into its mouth from one of the town’s market stalls and chomping placidly away. Both it and the chicken resting on its back get spooked into a bleating, squawking retreat by the instantaneous arrival of Spike, Discord, and the apples. Throwing a puzzled look after the livestock, he pulls out a pair of pince-nez spectacles on a chain, dons them, and picks up one apple to study its tag. Spike still has the map in hand.*)

**Discord:** (*reading*) “From the Sugarcube Corner, look for your next clue.

Red, delicious, sweet like you.

Find it, you’ll know what to do.”

(*He trails off into a disgusted mutter and lets it drop into the basket.*)

**Discord:** He should stick to bucking apples.

**Spike:** Sugar Belle’s gonna love it!

(*He has stashed the map by this point. Both of them head toward the nearby Sugarcube Corner, an eyewear-free Discord hauling the basket and setting it down for Spike to pluck one apple. This is taken from him and dropped to land on one corner of the doorstep.*)

**Spike:** I’ll get the food. How long will it take you to place all the apples?

(*One snap later, the basket contains nothing but air; two slit-pupiled eyes peer skeptically within, then shift to the joker.*)

**Spike:** Are you sure you put them in the right spots?

**Discord:** Those terrible riddles on the apples were very clear on the location. I’m sure that they were placed properly. (*He quails under Spike’s glower.*) I-I-I think. Maybe. (*scoffing*) It doesn’t matter. (*A cocked eyebrow joins the fight.*) Oh, okay, fine! I’ll double-check.

(*Before he can do so, both halves of the front door burst open and the Crusaders charge out, Sweetie carrying a pie in her magic. They are followed closely by Sugar with saddlebags on, and all four faces show highly preoccupied expressions. The apple rolls off the step and onto the cobblestones, having gone totally unnoticed by its intended recipient, and Spike picks it up and hovers to show it to Discord.*)

**Spike:** She didn’t see the apple! What are we gonna do?

**Discord:** Well, we could just give it to her.

**Spike:** That’s not romantic! She needs to discover it!

**Discord:** Don’t be such a drama dragon. I’ve precipitated liquid cocoa on Equestria and herded long-limbed *Leporidae*. (*taking apple from Spike*) I can certainly make a pony see an apple!

[*Note: “Leporidae” is the Latin term for the family of animals that includes rabbits and hares—a reference to part of the mayhem he unleashed during “The Return of Harmony.*”]

(*He snaps it, himself, and the empty basket away, leaving Spike to voice a heavy sigh. Cut to the kitchen at the height of a messy, full-tilt baking session by Mrs. Cake. As Spike peeks in over the batwing doors, the ring of a timer draws her away from a counter littered with ingredients and baked goods to remove a pie from the oven. Baskets of apples stand ready on the floor.*)

**Spike:** Hey, Mrs. Cake. (*flying in*) I need to pick up a few things.

**Mrs. Cake:** (*flustered, stirring a bowl*) Oh, I-I’m afraid you’ll have to wait. I’m a bit busy at the moment. (*checking another one*) Oh, is this sour cream or sweet cream?

(*A lick at the contents causes her eyes to pop, and she wastes no time in shoveling this lot into the first bowl.*)

**Spike:** Oh, it’s kind of important. Maybe I could take some of these off your hooves?

(*Close-up of several plated treats on the countertop as he reaches for them.*)

**Mrs. Cake:** (*from o.s., slapping his hands away*) No! (*Both again.*) Those are for…uh, something important too. (*Back to mixing.*)

**Spike:** All of ’em? (*counting items*) There’s…one, two, three, four—

**Mrs. Cake:** Twenty-one! And yes, all of them.

**Spike:** Who needs twenty-one desserts?

**Mrs. Cake:** (*hastily*) I can’t tell you! It’s a secret! (*calmer*) Come by later.

**Spike:** Later won’t work!

**Mrs. Cake:** Why not? (*She carries the bowl away.*)

**Spike:** I can’t tell you. It’s a secret.

**Mrs. Cake:** (*moving o.s., to herself*) Put the vanilla in…uh, everything…

(*Spike sneaks a taste from a plated slice of cake and voices his disgust loudly as a clatter of cooking implements is heard.*)

**Spike:** Did somepony else bake these? (*Mrs. Cake is now at the oven, loading in a tray of muffins.*)

**Mrs. Cake:** No. (*suspiciously, closing door*) Why?

**Spike:** (*trying to play it off*) No reason.

(*Wipe to a zoom in on an outdoor stall at which Rose is selling flowers. Sugar trots up, her mood now much improved, and points to a particular bouquet. Rose nods approvingly and turns away toward the back as Discord poofs in behind the customer. His lion paw detaches itself, holding the apple she missed.*)

**Discord:** (*to it, talon to lips*) Shhh!

(*The rest of him vanishes, and the paw sets the produce on the display counter and whisks out of sight an instant before Rose returns carrying the sort of bouquet Sugar requested. A bit of horn-power opens one saddlebag and extracts a few coins.*)

**Sugar:** Thank you! These are perfect!

(*The money goes to Rose, the flowers into Sugar’s bag by way of her field, and the two part ways—leaving the apple untouched once again. An irate Discord teleports in to glare after Sugar, his paw back where it belongs; he picks up the item and addresses it.*)

**Discord:** You know, if she’s too busy to read the horribly written clues, maybe you should just tell her.

(*A smile, a snap, and spindly, stem-like arms and legs are punching their way out through the red skin. A mouth forms as well and emits a jabbering noise. Next Discord produces the basket that had contained all the others and snaps; they appear in midair and tumble into the container, one bouncing loose to the pavement, and a third snap brings them to life. As they climb out, the grumbling gremlins find themselves being stared down at by a Discord who has outfitted himself as a military general, complete with sunglasses and corncob pipe. He adopts a gruff, commanding tone.*)

**Discord:** Listen up! (*They form ranks.*) Each of you has a job to do. Take a look at your stems.

(*They do so, reading the attached tags, and are less than thrilled at what they find. During the next line, he conjures a roll-up chart and pulls it down like a windowshade to present the map Spike showed him.*)

**Discord:** Oh, tell me about it. But regardless, go to your designated location, deliver your messages, and make me proud. (*saluting*) Dismissed!

(*The troops return the gesture and begin to fan out, and a snap banishes the map and returns him to civilian life.*)

**Discord:** (*sighing, satisfied*) I just have to say, Big Mac is really lucky to have me as a friend.

(*Wipe to a close-up of a bowl filled with paper slips on the kitchen counter in Sugarcube Corner. Mrs. Cake lifts one away in her teeth, lays it on an unoccupied spot—now the writing it bears can be discerned—and rolls it into a tiny scroll. The teeth nip it up, and nervous sweat runs down the baker’s face as she very carefully pokes it into the crust of a finished pie.*)

**Mrs. Cake:** (*pushing it in fully, sliding pie to a queasy Spike*) Ooooo-kay. (*She backs o.s.*) One down, twenty to go.

(*The baby dragon winces and claps hands to face at the prospect of anything as horrible as what he tasted earlier being released on a large scale. Cut to frame both.*)

**Mrs. Cake:** Then I can help you.

**Spike:** (*smiling*) Maybe *I* can help *you*.

(*Taking the bowl from her, he hovers over the loaded counter.*)

**Spike:** Delivering parchments is my thing. A little dragon breath, and foosh! We deliver each scroll into each dessert. Then you can help me. Watch.

(*She utters a panicked yelp and tries to grab him, but he shifts position to stay out of her reach; in close-up, he inhales deeply and sends out a small burst of green fire. The slips vanish instantly, while the bowl is left charred and smoking.*)

**Spike:** Ta-da!

(*His self-satisfaction evaporates in the very short time it takes for many more flames in this same color to start licking up from below. A longer shot discloses that the papers have all hit their marks but also set the desserts ablaze; the fires die away to leave only a mess of blackened sweets. Mrs. Cake looks as if ready to tear a strip off the well-meaning dragon, but a sudden commotion from outside makes her think better of it and gets both of them moving toward the front door. Spike drops the ruined bowl during the hasty exit. Out in the street, ponies are fleeing before the advance of one of Discord’s bewitched apples.*)

**Apple 1:** Hurry, there’s no need to sneak.

(*A second one pops up from a stack of hay bales, scaring off a mare.*)

**Apple 2:** (*running after her*) The next apple is at the boutique!

(*The mobile fruits are raising a ruckus all over Ponyville: harassing locals in the streets, spooking a mare who has opened her shutters into slamming them closed again, even popping up from a cake made by old Grand Pear. This one addresses him.*)

**Apple 3:** At Twilight’s castle, take a right.

The next apple sits in plain sight.

(*He bugs out, chased by the apple. Cut to a slow pan across the street, now filled with a scramble of wrecked stalls/goods and freaked-out ponies. Mrs. Cake and a hovering Spike take it all in, their minds completely blown.*)

**Mrs. Cake:** What in the blazes is going on?

**Spike:** (*softly, venomously*) Discord.

(*He appears right on cue—stretched out in his recliner, glasses on, reading a book, taking a sip from a hovering cup of tea. It takes him a second to register their presence and put the reading material down.*)

**Discord:** Ohhhh! Are you finally finished? I’ve been done for a while.

(*Spike throws a hard glare from the reigning madness to the one who set it off. A pie carried by Lily gets ruined in a blink when one of the apples lands in it, snarling; she drops the remains and gallops for her life.*)

**Discord:** You know, thinking back, I probably could have been clearer which pony to deliver the messages to.

**Spike:** (*very snarky*) You think?

(*A casual snap from the lion paw dispels all the animated produce, and he stands up from his recliner and lays his book on one armrest. The teacup is gone now, as are all the other ponies.*)

**Discord:** (*removing/pocketing glasses*) I sent them back to Sweet Apple Acres. Apples are terrible at taking directions. Couldn’t even manage to stay in one location. Now, bananas— (*chuckling richly*) —are much better at listening.

**Sugar:** (*from o.s.*) What’s going on?

(*The camera shifts to frame her at a distance down the block, without her saddlebags.*)

**Spike:** (*to Discord, exasperatedly*) Apples running everywhere, and she didn’t see the poem to get to the hilltop?!

**Discord:** Getting her to the hilltop is easy. (*smiling, poking Spike’s nose*) Not seeing the poems is actually a blessing when you think about it.

(*He snaps, teleporting himself and Sugar away; they emerge on the hilltop in the Sweet Apple Acres orchards an instant later. Macintosh’s construction supplies have been cleared out, and a freshly constructed picnic table stands in their place. Sugar does not immediately spot this item since her back is turned to it, and Discord magicks a blindfold over her eyes to keep her from getting wise to it. Back among the trashed stalls, Mrs. Cake decides to shift back to the excoriation she was about to deliver to Spike as they walk/fly down the street.*)

**Mrs. Cake:** Why would you think sending flaming messages into my desserts would work?!? You’ve ruined all of them!

**Spike:** To be honest, I tasted some, and burning them might have been an improvement.

**Mrs. Cake:** What?! I never!

**Macintosh:** (*from o.s.*) Spike?

(*Both stop short, he with a cry of surprise, and meet him out in front of Sugarcube Corner on the start of the next line.*)

**Spike:** (*stammering*) Oh! Uh, hey there, Big Mac. Heh. I bet you’re wondering what—

(*Discord zaps in, accompanied by…*)

**Macintosh:** Sugar Belle!

**Sugar:** Uh, Big Mac? (*Discord snaps the blindfold away.*)

**Macintosh:** (*with rising anger*) Discord!

**Discord:** (*brightly*) Mrs. Cake!

**Mrs. Cake:** What did I do?

**Discord:** Nothing. I thought we were just saying each other’s names.

**Spike:** I guess this can’t get any worse.

**Discord:** As the Lord of Chaos, I’d advise against saying things like that.

(*A babel of young and old voices draws all ten eyes up the block; cut to Granny Smith and the Crusaders screaming at the top of their lungs and galloping as if live grenades were tied to their tails. Sweetie is no longer carrying the pie she took from Sugarcube Corner earlier.*)

**Granny:** It’s coming! Save yourselves!

(*Thundering footfalls begin to shake the entire town as they bolt down the street, and flocks of birds hurriedly take flight from the orchards. An immense, growling, rumbling male voice easily makes itself heard even from this distance.*)

**Voice:** SUGAR BELLE!

(*Something very large and lumpy begins to climb the last rise in the path before the stream that borders Ponyville. Its shadow falls over Sugarcube Corner, Granny and the fillies having joined up with the other five here, and opens a broad, jagged mouth.*)

**Voice:** SUGAR BELLE!

(*Fade to black.*)

Act Two

(*Opening shot: fade in to the Crusaders in the present, contrition stenciled across every face.*)

**\* Bloom:** We have a bit of a reputation for gettin’ carried away.

**\* Sweetie:** Especially when romance is involved. Heh.

**\* Scootaloo:** But that wasn’t the case with this. We were just helping Sugar Belle with her plan.

(*Wavering dissolve to the Sugarcube Corner kitchen. As Mrs. Cake keeps her cooking groove going, Bloom and Sweetie sit at the counter to work on a batch of paper slips. The unicorn writes with a quill held in her aura, while the earth pony minds the bowl of finished missives. Scootaloo sits on a stool off to one side, and Sugar keeps an eye on the state of things.*)

**Sugar:** And the last one should just say “Ee-yup.”

(*Mrs. Cake mumbles to herself a bit and stirs a bowl feverishly before speaking up.*)

**Mrs. Cake:** So you’re saying you want to put each one of *those* inside a dessert.

**Sugar:** Well, since Big Mac’s plan to send me a Hearts and Hooves Day pie with a message inside didn’t go so well, I thought it’d be fun to do it right.

**Sweetie:** Awww, that’s so romantic! (*Close-up of Sugar.*)

**Sugar:** He’s a pony of few words. I love that about him. So I thought I’d use as many words as possible to propose to him. All he has to say is— (*Zoom out to frame Bloom/Sweetie on the following.*)

**Bloom:** “—Ee-yup!” (*Giggle; Sugar blushes.*) I can’t wait for you to be a part of the family!

**Sugar:** (*as Scootaloo hops off her stool*) You three played such a big part in Big Mac and I getting together. I’m glad you could help with this.

(*In close-up, the orange filly climbs up to sit next to her two friends and starts leafing through the slips in the bowl.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*reading*) “I-love-you-Big-Mac-would-you-like-to-spend-the-rest-of-our-lives-together-I-hope-you-say-ee-yup.” And each word has to go into a dessert? That’s… (*counting*) …one, two, three, four, five, six, seven…w-whoa! (*Zoom out to frame Mrs. Cake on the next line.*)

**Mrs. Cake:** Twenty-one! I know!

**Sugar:** Actually, it’s twenty-two.

(*She turns away from the counter; cut to the oven as her power opens it, lifts out a freshly baked pie, and shuts it again.*)

**Sugar:** Mrs. Cake was kind enough to help me bake all the apple-flavored treats I made to get Big Mac to visit me in my old shop.

(*She crosses the floor on the end of this, after which the camera cuts to the Crusaders as the pie is set down before them.*)

**Sugar:** (*from o.s., pointing to it*) That one has the invitation for him to come here.

(*Back to her and Mrs. Cake as she finishes.*)

**Mrs. Cake:** Oh, it’s—it’s no bother. I do love a challenge. (*pondering two bowls*) Did I add the sugar to this one or to that one?

(*With a shrug, she hefts a bag of this staple from the floor and starts pouring into the first one.*)

**Scootaloo:** I think I’ve seen her add sugar to that bowl six times so far.

**Sugar:** Now you three go deliver that pie.

(*She exits to the shop floor, the Crusaders right behind and Sweetie holding the item with her telekinesis.*)

**Sugar:** I have to get some flowers to spruce the place up.

(*Opening the front door with her own magic, she is greeted with the sight of a hovering Spike and a standing Discord arguing on the step; she slams it shut with an unnerved gasp.*)

**Sugar:** Uh-oh. Spike and Discord are outside. If they figure out what we’re up to, they’ll spill the beans, and I want this to be a surprise!

(*Grins come across all three young faces as they put their eyes on the pie. Outside, the door bursts open and the three fillies charge out, followed by Sugar with her saddlebags on. The apple that Discord placed on the step rolls unnoticed to the ground. It should now be clear that the events of this act have been unfolding simultaneously with those of Act One. Sugar and the Crusaders part ways after a few dozen yards, the trio taking cover with the pie behind a produce stand.*)

**Sweetie:** I don’t think they suspect anything! (*Big grin from Bloom.*)

**Scootaloo:** Why would they suspect that we’re holding an invitation pie and that Mrs. Cake is baking a twenty-one-dessert proposal?

**Bloom:** I CAN’T BELIEVE I’M GONNA HAVE A SISTER-IN-LAW!!

(*Just as with Discord’s exclamation in the prologue, the end of hers echoes all over Ponyville, brings passersby to a very sudden stop. The mare who looked out from her window with trepidation does so again, but chooses not to go back inside this time. Scootaloo and Sweetie clap their front hooves over Bloom’s mouth to shut her up.*)

**Scootaloo, Sweetie:** Shhh! (*All three duck out of sight with the pie.*)

**Sweetie:** This is our shot to make up for all the trouble we caused when Big Mac first asked Sugar Belle out! (*She and Scootaloo each lower one hoof.*)

**Scootaloo:** We *can’t* give away the surprise. You need to play it cool. (*Bloom pushes the other ones down.*)

**Bloom:** Right, right. (*She crosses to a tub of apples.*) Uh, how’s this?

(*The pose she strikes—up on her hind legs, leaving insouciantly against the wood, a cocky smirking grin across the yellow face—does very little to set the two observers at ease.*)

**Scootaloo:** (*hesitantly*) Better?

**Sweetie:** (*levitating pie*) Come on. Let’s go find your brother!

(*They set off. Wipe to the hilltop, where Macintosh is in the process of putting together the picnic table with the help of a wagonload of tools and materials. Close-up of this lot.*)

**Macintosh:** (*from o.s., poking around*) Screwdriver… (*Cut to him.*) …nope.

(*He turns his steps toward the main barn, the camera panning to frame it and the Crusaders approaching its entrance. Inside, they push one door open and put their heads in.*)

**Bloom:** (*voice raised*) Big Mac? (*normal volume*) He ain’t here. Let’s go.

**Scootaloo:** (*walking in*) Hold on.

(*She spots a blueprint for the picnic table tacked up on the side of some stacked hay bales.*)

**Scootaloo:** That looks just like the shelf Big Mac made for Sugar Belle. Weird.

**Sweetie:** Maybe we should wait here for him. He’s bound to show up soon.

**Bloom:** You know, when I’m lookin’ for somethin’, Granny says it’s best to check the least likely place. Come on!

(*She leads the others in a gallop across the barn, pie and all; they pass o.s. just before Macintosh ambles in. A look around tells him where the wayward tool has ended up—right next to that blueprint.*)

**Macintosh:** Screwdriver!

(*Teeth grip the handle and carry it away. Dissolve to the interior of the town bowling alley; one stallion steps up to the line, ball at the ready, as a second polishes his and a third lounges about on the floor cushions behind the scoring desks. Scootaloo lets herself in.*)

**Scootaloo:** BIG MAAAAC!

(*His concentration shattered, the bowler inadvertently heaves the sphere toward the ceiling, knocking a suspended light fixture loose to smash a hole through the lane surface. All three stallions aim baleful looks at the filly, who offers a supremely embarrassed grin while fumbling to open the door and get gone. From here, wipe to a close-up of a monkey napping among the leaves of a palm tree and tilt down to Fluttershy at ground level, tucking a blanket in over a family of snoozing raccoons in a hammock. The scene has shifted to Sweet Feather Sanctuary, at the top of whose waterfall Bloom steps into view.*)

**Bloom:** (*echoing*) BIG MAAAAC!

(*The monkey snaps awake and jumps out of the tree with a screech, landing squarely on Fluttershy so that she, it, and the raccoons become no more than a whirling blur of fabric and eyes. The blanket ends up on the stone plateau beneath them, and all five peek warily out from the folds of the hammock. Bloom’s eyes pop at the blunder she has committed, and she slaps on a big stupid grin. Wipe to the interior of a steam-filled sauna room at the Ponyville Spa; the door swings open to put Sweetie on the threshold, still hauling that pie.*)

**Sweetie:** BIG MAAAAC!

(*She is met with a shrill scream and a towel flung into her face. Cut to the corridor as the door slams shut and she groans in frustration. A passing Aloe takes notice of the intrusion; cut to just outside the front door as it opens and she bulldozes the filly out, now free of the towel. Sweetie ends up sitting on the step, and her apologetic grin goes unacknowledged as Aloe retreats into the building and shuts her out. Here come Bloom and Scootaloo; the earth pony puts a hoof to her forehead with a weary sigh, the unicorn gets up, and all three trudge away.*)

(*Wipe to a long shot of them approaching Sugarcube Corner.*)

**Bloom:** How is Sugar Belle supposed to propose to Big Mac if we can’t even find him?!

(*One by one, they hop over a low hedge on the end of this; next, Scootaloo climbs up to peek in through a window and spots Mrs. Cake working in the kitchen with Spike watching.*)

**Scootaloo:** Mrs. Cake isn’t finished yet! We still have time! (*She drops to the ground.*)

**Bloom:** You know, when I’m lookin’ for somepony, Granny says it’s best to just stay in one place. Let’s head back to the farm and wait. Big Mac is sure to show up soon.

(*The other two stare flatly at each other, then at her.*)

**Bloom:** Well, don’t just stand there! Come on!

(*Seeing no percentage in any other course of action for the moment, the other two follow her pelting departure. Not a one of them sees the Discord-affected apple that scrambles past the corner of the building—or the one that pops out of a windowsill planter and jumps down onto it. The collision is marked by a flare of light, which subsides to show that they have merged into a larger specimen: red, with smaller apples in different shades protruding here and there. This one speaks in a male voice clearer than the others.*)

**Bigger apple:** Love is in the air!

(*But it goes back to the same gibbering patter as it runs off. Dissolve to a slow pan across the grounds of Sweet Apple Acres and stop on the hilltop. Macintosh sits contentedly at the now-completed/painted picnic table, tapping his front hooves idly, and has cleared away all his equipment.*)

**Macintosh:** Yup.

(*Nothing immediately happens, so he taps a few more times.*)

**Macintosh:** Ee-yup.

(*A faint chittering catches his ear; the source turns out to be a squirrel climbing the tree, and he quits his seat to survey the orchards with a measure of irritation and dismay. Wipe to Granny, asleep and snoring/mumbling in a rocking chair by the now-closed doors of the Sweet Apple Acres barn, then cut to a close-up as the Crusaders lunge into view toward her.*)

**Crusaders:** Granny!

(*The elderly green mare jolts awake in one swift instant.*)

**Granny:** Who goes there?

**Bloom:** Granny! Have you seen Big Mac?

**Granny:** Oh! Hey there, little dumplin’. I just had the most peculiar dream.

**Scootaloo:** (*hastily*) That’s nice, Granny, but we really need to find Big Mac, so—

**Granny:** It was about Grand Pear, but it wasn’t. And we were in outer space, on some kinda mission to explore strange new worlds.

**Sweetie:** (*hushed, to Scootaloo*) If we get stuck listening to Granny, we’ll never find Big Mac!

**Granny:** And Mudbriar was there, bein’ as logical as ever. (*stretching ears upward briefly*) But his ears was all pointy-like. And then Discord showed up, and—well, you know, he was purty much the same.

(*Cut to Bloom/Scootaloo; she continues indistinctly under the next line.*)

**Bloom:** (*hushed*) Once she gets goin’, there’s nothin’ in Equestria that can stop her.

(*A series of thunderous, slowly approaching impacts causes the water in a nearby bucket to quake and ripple and brings the rambling dream account to a halt.*)

**Scootaloo:** You sure about that?

(*The trees start trying to do the cha-cha, and all four boggle as a massive shadow envelops them, accompanied by a grating roar. Wipe to the front of Sugarcube Corner, at the meeting of Macintosh, Mrs. Cake, and Spike near the end of Act One.*)

**Macintosh:** Spike?

**Spike:** (*stammering*) Oh! Uh, hey there, Big Mac. Heh. I bet you’re wondering what— (*Discord teleports in with a blindfolded Sugar, her saddlebags gone.*)

**Macintosh:** Sugar Belle!

**Sugar:** Uh, Big Mac? (*Discord snaps the blindfold away.*)

**Macintosh:** (*with rising anger*) Discord!

**Discord:** (*brightly*) Mrs. Cake!

**Mrs. Cake:** What did I do?

**Discord:** Nothing. I thought we were just saying each other’s names.

**Spike:** I guess this can’t get any worse.

**Discord:** As the Lord of Chaos, I’d advise against saying things like that.

(*The screams of Granny and the Crusaders cut in, and the camera shifts to them zeroing in on the bakery, Sweetie no longer carrying the pie.*)

**Granny:** It’s coming! Save yourselves!

(*The mighty footfalls begin to shake the town and send birds into spooked flight, and the same rumbling voice from the end of Act One asserts itself.*)

**Voice:** SUGAR BELLE!

(*Now the owner of that voice and the foreboding shadow comes up over a rise in the path: an overgrown conglomeration of apples with gnarled, branch-like arms and legs and a badly formed mouth. This horror is roughly apple-shaped in its overall contour. Its shadow falls over the party of nine.*)

**Apple monster:** (*from o.s.*) SUGAR BELLE!

**Macintosh:** (*with rising anger*) Discord!

(*It stops its advance just short of them, now showing itself to be several times the size of the average pony in all directions.*)

**Discord:** Why does everypony immediately assume that this has something to do with me?

(*Now it speaks again, sending out sprays of pulp and juice and opening a smaller mouth on one of the side protuberances as well.*)

**Apple monster:** I love you! You love me!

Our love will grow like an apple tree!

So let me ask, “Will you marry me?”

(*There follows a very long pause, during which Discord takes his time wiping himself clean as nearly all of the others try to bore holes through his skull with their eyes. The lone exception is Sugar, who is too scared for anything resembling a rational thought at the moment.*)

**Discord:** Okay, but to be fair, the message did get to Sugar Belle.

(*The not-quite-engaged ponies trade worried looks, and Macintosh puts a hoof to his face while Sugar lets her head droop dejectedly. Fade to black.*)

Act Three

(*Opening shot: fade in to an annoyed Discord in the present.*)

**\* Discord:** This whole story is being twisted to make it seem like it was all my fault—which it wasn’t!

(*Wavering dissolve to him, Macintosh, Mrs. Cake, Sugar, and Spike. The baker is the first to regain her power of speech.*)

**Mrs. Cake:** (*to Discord/Spike*) Wait. So you two were orchestrating a proposal? That’s what I was doing!

**Discord:** Who were you proposing to? (*Pan to Granny and the Crusaders on the following.*)

**Bloom:** (*crossly*) Discord!

**Discord:** Me?

(*His obtuseness earns three young forelegs and a wrinkled green one being jabbed impatiently toward the overgrown piece of produce.*)

**Apple monster:** I love you! I love you! I love you!

(*Back to Discord on the end of this; he snaps his lion-paw digits, and the behemoth falls apart into its component fruits—all thankfully immobile and insensate.*)

**Spike:** So the messages that were in the desserts—

**Mrs. Cake:** —were Sugar Belle’s proposal to Big Mac, before Spike set them on fire!

(*The winged flamethrower tacks on a silly grin that does nothing to quell her silent rancor.*)

**Discord:** Ohhh! So I’m not the only one who messes things up, am I, Mr. High and Mighty Dragon?

**Spike:** Hey! Those desserts were ruined way before I ruined them!

**Mrs. Cake:** They were not! (*A moment’s thought.*) Well, I may have mixed up a—a few ingredients. It was such a rush. (*Cut to Discord.*)

**Discord:** You should both be very disappointed in yourselves. (*Pan/tilt down to Granny and the Crusaders on the next line.*)

**Scootaloo:** What about *you* and your apple monster?

**Discord:** Yes, but you all expect that of me. (*Close-up of the Crusaders.*)

**Bloom:** All we wanted to do was make up for messin’ things up the last time. Sugar Belle, Big Mac, we’re really—

(*Eyes widen in mild shock, and a longer shot reveals that the couple have vacated the premises.*)

**Sweetie:** Where’d they go? (*Six borderline-murderous glares fix themselves on Discord.*)

**Discord:** Okay, this time it really wasn’t me!

(*Wavering dissolve to Mrs. Cake in the present.*)

**\* Mrs. Cake:** I shouldn’t have taken all those desserts at once. It’s just, how can you say no to such a sweet idea? (*Eyes widen.*) Oh! (*laughing*) Sweet! (*Wipe a tear away.*) Oh, I made a joke. (*Cut to Spike.*)

**\* Spike:** In retrospect, a dragon flame and baked goods aren’t the best combo. (*To the Crusaders, on their haunches.*)

**\* Bloom:** We felt like it was all our fault.

**\* Scootaloo:** Except for the apple monster. That was Discord. (*Unamused stares from the other two.*) And Mrs. Cake messing up those recipes, and Spike burning the messed-up recipes, and—

**\* Sweetie:** The point is, we all felt bad for ruining Big Mac and Sugar Belle’s proposals. (*Cut to Granny.*)

**\* Granny:** It was all green, and then Grand Pear looked at me all dramatical and says, “Where nopony has gone before!” And, whoosh! Away we flew!

(*She has evidently been finishing the interrupted description of her dream from Act Two. Wavering dissolve to Macintosh and Sugar walking glumly side by side down a path through the Sweet Apple Acres orchards.*)

**Sugar:** Today was… (*laughing weakly*) …interesting.

**Macintosh:** Ee-yup. (*They stop; above them, the sky is slowly darkening into sunset.*)

**Sugar:** (*touching his foreleg*) You okay?

**Macintosh:** I…

(*Cut to just behind them and tilt up slowly. They have arrived in the clearing with the intertwined apple and pear trees that grew from the seeds planted by Bright Macintosh and Pear Butter on their wedding day in “The Perfect Pear.”*)

**Macintosh:** I’m sorry, Sugar Belle. I wanted everything to go right today. I wanted our love to be as perfect as my parents’ was when they planted these two trees together. Instead, it turned into a mess, just like when I asked you out, just like Hearts and Hooves Day. (*sitting on haunches*) No matter how hard I try, I always seem to mess up when it comes to you. (*Sugar sits and smiles gently.*)

**Sugar:** I think you’ve got things backwards.

**Macintosh:** What do you mean?

**Sugar:** From everything you told me about your parents, they had to deal with things a lot tougher than some burnt desserts and an apple monster. (*She stands and paces toward the trees.*)

**Macintosh:** I…guess that’s true.

(*A few more steps bring her to the massive trunks and the rock on which Bright carved his cutie mark and Butter’s, within a heart and joined by a plus sign. Zoom out to frame the entire double tree as she speaks.*)

**Sugar:** This apple tree and pear tree are stronger together. They’ll survive whatever comes because they don’t have to do it alone. (*turning to Macintosh, raising his front hooves in hers*) They belong together, like your parents— (*hugging him*) —and like us.

(*The big lug comes around to a smile at long last and folds his forelegs gently around her back.*)

**Macintosh:** Ee-yup.

(*The sun descends to just the right angle to fill the heart-shaped gap between the two sets of branches with blazing gold. Pan slowly across the clearing.*)

**Sugar:** And today was a disaster, but today was also the last day we’re ever gonna have to do anything apart. From here on out, we’ll be together, and we’ll make sure everything always works out just right.

(*They nuzzle contentedly as a gust of wind plays through the leaves, then abruptly speak up at once.*)

**Macintosh, Sugar:** Sugar Belle, will you— / Big Mac, will you— (*blushing*) Sorry. / No, I’m sorry.

**Macintosh:** (*offering a hoof*) On three?

**Sugar:** (*placing hers on it*) Sure. One…

**Macintosh:** …two…

**Macintosh, Sugar:** Will you marry me? (*Just the briefest pause.*) Ee-yup!

(*He pulls the ring box he had shown off to Discord and Spike and flips it open. Sugar can only stare enraptured with cheeks ablaze as he fastens the ring around her neck on a thin gold chain, and they share a quick kiss.*)

**Sugar:** We’ll have to thank our friends for messing up so bad that they made it all work out perfectly.

(*A rustle from the bushes and a bit of angry blabbering mark the emergence of one of Discord’s enchanted apples—having apparently been too well hidden to be affected by his dispelling magic. It runs across the grass in close-up, the camera zooming out on the start of the next line to frame the seven “interview subjects” around a table loaded with fresh desserts. With the exception of Discord and Granny, who is asleep in a rocking chair, all of them are trying to keep their cool in the presence of the other charmed fruits running free about the place. Sweetie is once again holding the pie entrusted to her by Sugar.*)

**Discord:** (*catching the late arrival as it jumps to his paw*) Well! We’ve all made up and we’re here for a do-over, and this time—thanks to me—we’ve got it right. So why don’t you two…you know…

(*Macintosh and Sugar nozzle into each other without a care in the world; Spike hovers up to Discord.*)

**Spike:** Uh, I think they did okay without us.

(*Wavering dissolve to three very happy Crusaders in the present.*)

**\* Bloom:** And that’s how we were responsible for the perfect proposal! (*Chuckle.*) Or should I say “pear-posal”?

**\* Sweetie:** If we hadn’t messed up so bad—

**\* Scootaloo:** —it wouldn’t have worked out the way it did! (*Zoom out to frame each speaker in turn.*)

**\* Mrs. Cake:** It’s just like baking. Sometimes it’s the mistakes that help you discover something truly special. (*Spike is in a short-sleeved blazer, white dress shirt, and loose bow tie.*)

**\* Spike:** And when all the planning and grand gestures go wrong— (*knotting tie*) —it reminds you the most romantic things are usually the simplest. (*Discord sports a white shirt collar and black bow tie.*)

**\* Discord:** Which is what I knew all along. (*He bends his neck to present his face upside down.*) You’re welcome.

(*And now, at long last, the camera shifts to reveal exactly who it is that has been on the receiving end of this convoluted tale—Applejack, dressed in country-formal attire and with her mane braided. She wipes away some of the joyful tears brimming in her eyes, and all turn their attention to the clearing with the paired trees under the peaceful daytime sky. Bunting and lanterns have been hung up as decoration, snack tables and tubs of apples are present in abundance, and friends and relations from both the bride’s and groom’s sides have turned out for the big day. Mayor Mare stands at the trees, a book of officiating instructions at the ready, and waits for the approach of Macintosh and Sugar. He is in a dark gray suit jacket, lighter gray vest, off-white shirt with a string tie secured by a clasp shaped as his cutie mark, and a dark gray cowboy hat. Sugar is in a white gown with light blue hem edging and a translucent under-layer to the skirt, her ring on its chain, and a pale blue sash that matches the ribbon tying back her mane. Double Diamond, Night Glider, and Party Favor have nothing but proud smiles for her, and Party even has to dab at his eyes with a handkerchief.*)

(*Macintosh and Sugar reach Mayor Mare and turn to face one another as their friends and fellow conspirators gather in, along with Applejack.*)

**Mayor Mare:** It is my sincere pleasure to say— (*Cut to Sugar and Macintosh in turn; she continues o.s.*) —for my second Apple family wedding— (*The entire gathering.*) —that I now pronounce you husband and wife. (*to Macintosh*) You may kiss the bride.

(*Cheers erupt from all sides as the newlyweds readily do as instructed, and leaky waterworks become the special of the day among all the guests. Macintosh and Sugar turn proudly to face Applejack.*)

**Discord:** (*addressing himself upward*) That’s your cue!

(*Down come a plethora of enchanted apples to dangle from strings among the branches of the apple/pear trees. They have been decked out in bow ties for the occasion.*)

**Apples:** (*singing tunelessly*) Happy marriage, happy Apples

Happy marriage, happy Apples

**Spike:** Discord!

**Discord:** Oh, just let me have this one. (*He produces a hanky to dry his eyes.*)

**Apples:** Happy marriage, happy Apples

Happy marriage, happy Apples

(*“Iris out” to black, centered on one of them; the aperture pauses briefly before closing altogether.*)