

GROWING PAINS

Written by Julia Prescott

Executive producers: Olivier Dumont, Randi Yaffa, Cort Lane

Story editing by Gillian Berrow

Supervising direction by Will Lau

Transcribed by Alan Back (ajback@yahoo.com)

Prologue

(Opening shot: a peaceful early morning on Mane Street in Maretime Bay, punctuated by a bird flying by and ponies setting up shop for the day as Hitch Trailblazer strolls the block.)

Hitch: It's another beautiful day in Maretime Bay, where the sun is shining— *(Two pegasi swoop past.)* —the pegasi are flying— *(He waves to a hat shop owner.)* —and practically nothing could go— *(stopping short)* —wrong?!?

(Cut to a long shot of the front entrance to his office and zoom in slowly. A contrite Dahlia is regarding the doors, which are overgrown with vines.)

Dahlia: Oh, sorry, Hitch. *(He steps up.)* I was actually trying to open the door for you. *(Sheepish giggle.)* I know you don't like magic.

Hitch: *(trying to play it off)* Whaaaat? Me not like magic? Pfffft! I'm totally cool with it now.

(The mollified mare goes on her way, while Kenneth chirps frantically to get the boss's attention.)

Hitch: What, Kenneth?

(A tap of one wing against the other, as if pointing to a nonexistent wristwatch, and Hitch catches on.)

Hitch: *(galloping off)* Oh, you're right! I'm already late for my morning rounds!

(Kenneth flies off in pursuit; after a few steps, a trio of filly voices stops Hitch in his tracks.)

Filly voices: Good morning, Sheriff Hitch!

(Looking in their general direction, he voices a strangled yelp of shock; cut to Glory, Peach Fizz, and Seashell all having run afoul of a fresh bit of oversized plant growth. The first two have been snared by their midsections and are dangling upside down; the third is precariously balanced on the topmost shoot. He addresses this one.)

Hitch: I mean, great job, Seashell! *(reaching up to them)* Here, uh, let me help you! *(A moment later, he has all three on the pavement.)*

Seashell: Thanks! We were actually stuck.

Glory: Magic is pretty wild, huh?

Hitch: *(on the edge of blowing his cool)* Too wild, if you ask me.

Peach: Oh, no! Are you upset?

Hitch: Me? Upset? About magic? Never! *(Expectant smiles on all three young faces.)*

Seashell: So...we can use all the magic we want, then? No rules? No holding back? *(A knowing giggle to her friends.)*

Hitch: *(rattled)* You were holding back? Um...of course!

Fillies: *(voices raised)* Hitch said, use all the magic you want! Don't hold back, everypony!

(These words carry loud and clear to every resident within earshot, as demonstrated by their smiles and gasps when the camera cuts here and there on the end of this line. A quick tilt up shifts the view along the path leading uphill to the Canterlogic factory and stops on a trio of stallions working near the front entrance. Two of them are wearing hard hats, and one of these is also wielding a pushbroom; a close-up frames him as Sprout Cloverleaf, Hitch's deputy who took his assignment just a bit too far in A New Generation. Evidently he has opted for a change of vocation. The other hard hat wearer is holding a clipboard and looking over it with the bareheaded one.)

Sprout: *(boastfully)* My magic's probably the most powerful in the bay. You want to see?

Hard hat stallion: Does it involve sweeping? If not, then no, Sprout!

(Deflated, the red janitor taps a front hoof against the paving stones. Both that appendage and its mate take on a faint green glow, and sparks kindle around the one in contact with the ground. Nothing more happens, though, and his two coworkers throw him derisive smirks and walk off.)

Sprout: Honest! Uh, just need to warm up.

(A few more taps cause a vine to erupt from the grass behind him, weighted down with glimmering purple berries roughly twice his size. He whirls to face this.)

Sprout: Uh-oh. That's a new feature.

(The creaking of one stem prompts him to drop his broom and bug out with a cry of fear, just in time to avoid being crushed by a berry when it breaks loose and rolls downhill after him.)

Sprout: *(shoving past his coworkers, galloping o.s.)* My magic is too powerful!

RUUUUNNNN!! *(They spot the behemoth and race off.)*

Clipboard stallion: IT'S EVERYPONY FOR THEMSELVES!!

(During this line, cut to Hitch as he takes note of the disturbance, then back to all three workers screaming and scrambling to stay ahead. The berry ricochets back and forth off the built-up curbs that line the path, then knocks one barrel off a stack at its base.)

Hitch: *(gasping)* BERRY ATTACK!! This is not a drill!

(Mayhem ensues as the rolling purple mass bounces its way along Mane Street and Hitch gallops just ahead of it. The camera retreats far enough from the hill to show that the factory rooftop has been stripped of the giant replica of Phyllis Cloverleaf's eyeglasses that adorned it in A New Generation.)

Hitch: Out of the way!

(He fails to notice a wheeled bin directly in his path until he has crashed into it and fallen in headfirst, his momentum now carrying him along the trolley tracks. Now it is his turn to yell and veer crazily every which way, sending ponies diving for cover to avoid a collision. The bin hits a dropped book, flinging him out so that he lands spreadeagle on the roadbed, and he yelps upon seeing the berry coming right for him. It runs into the capsized bin, launching itself into a graceless arc, and a now-upright Hitch has time for one terrified yell as he realizes that he is at its terminus.)

(Cut to a couple of ponies nearby. There is the sound of an almighty splat from o.s., and a wave of glittery purple goop washes past to miss them both by a fragment of a fraction. Hitch sits up, having taken a direct and feeling very much out of sorts, as the other bird in his squad—the one not wearing a tin can—perches briefly on his head.)

Hitch: *(flopping down wearily)* Yep. Just another beautiful day in Maretime Bay.

(Snap to black.)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(Cut from the title card directly to Sunny Starcount's smoothie stand. The side panel flips upward to open the serving window and expose her at the counter within as Hitch trudges past. She stifles a giggle as he crosses to his vine-choked office doors; cut to his reflection in the glass panes as hers appears alongside. The hour is somewhat later than it was in the prologue, based on the blue sky.)

Sunny: Oh, wish I'd been around earlier! Sounds like you made a real impact! *(Laugh; zoom out to frame both.)*

Hitch: *(dryly)* Ha, ha. Laugh all you want, Sunny, but fruit juice funk can stay in your mane for weeks.

Sunny: *(nudging a tendril)* This plant-powered magic is something special. Growing stuff at the stomp of a hoof? Incredible! *(Hitch groans and starts to pull them loose.)*

Hitch: More like incredibly unpredictable. *(Close-up.)* I mean, we don't even know all that it can do yet. *(The bird perches on his head.)*

Sunny: *(from o.s.)* Well, we know enough, like... *(It pecks at the mush on one ear.)* ...you seem to be the only pony who can talk to animals.

(On the end of this line, it flies off and the camera cuts to a long shot of the pair as it roosts atop the stand.)

Sunny: But have you tried to grow anything yet?

Hitch: To be honest, I'm afraid to after this morning.

Sunny: Come on. You can't judge all earth pony magic on one little mishap.

(A particularly tenacious vine snaps under Hitch's sustained pulling so that he topples backward, yelling all the way to Sunny's stand. The impact jolts the side panel loose to swing down and conk him squarely in the brain bucket; she utters a cry of surprise, and he pushes the panel up with a pained sigh while the bird flutters clear.)

Hitch: Maybe you just need to see the scene of the slime for yourself.

(The avian lands on his head and gets to pecking at the juicy goodness mashed into his mane. Cut to a close-up of a warning sign planted on the Canterlogic grounds—a pony about to be crushed by a giant falling berry—and zoom out on the next line to frame it next to the vine Sprout raised, which has now been fenced off. The camera motion brings him, Sunny, and Hitch into view on the walk.)

Sprout: I swear, I don't know what happened! All I did was stomp like this.

(He clomps a front hoof against the stone a few times, kindling green light in all four. The vine suddenly becomes wreathed in dark green smoke and begins to expand, cracking the timbers of the fence.)

Hitch: Stop the stomping! *(Sprout does so.)* First, Maretime Bay was shook up with magic and I said nothing. *(Long shot of them during this sentence, then back afterward; he nudges a leaf.)*

Sunny: Uh, that's not true. You actually said a lot.

Hitch: Then earth pony magic came. *(pacing)* Now I'm saying something. *(gazing over the town; close-up)* I keep this place safe, and it's too dangerous without rules. *(Back to Sunny on the following; she prods a berry.)*

Sunny: But if our magic can produce produce this perfect, there might be no limit to what we can do. We can't cut off a whole planet of possibilities.

Hitch: More like a cosmos of calamities!

Sunny: *(groaning, rolling eyes)* But how are the earth ponies gonna grow and learn, and learn to grow, with restrictions?

(As she finishes, there is a clatter from o.s. and the camera cuts to Sprout, who has been rooting in a nearby barrel. The action has stirred up a puff of dust, which triggers a sneeze and a fresh burst of green energy in his hooves; magic vines snake along the stones of the front walk and into his berry plant, causing it to grow another size or three and break through its fence. Sunny lets

off a yelp, and she and Hitch duck to avoid catching a flying wood fragment with their heads. Sprout is not so lucky, but his hard hat spares him from getting the back of his skull caved in.)

Sunny: *(laughing sheepishly)* Uh, just consider what I'm saying before you jump to any conclusions.

Hitch: *(sighing heavily)* I'll think about it. *(as she wipes goop off his chest)* But the safety of ponies in Maretime Bay is my top priority.

(She licks her hoof as he strides resolutely away, leaving smudges on her lips.)

Sunny: Mmmm!

(Now she sits and pulls out the compact that Misty left for her in "Izzy Does It." Flipping open the lid, she uses its mirror to get a good look at herself so she can go after the last spots with her tongue. Cut to a close-up projection of her face above the pool within Opaline's throne room.)

Opaline: *(gasping, hurrying into view)* Misty, quick! *(The young unicorn joins her.)* That alicorn is using the mirror we gave her! Soon her magic will be—

(Sunny finishes her grooming and closes the lid, blacking out the image; it instantly shifts to present an overhead view of her leaving Canterlogic.)

Opaline: *(vexed)* —teasing us as it trots away! *(The projection vanishes; she paces a bit.)* Why has she barely used it? If it was me, I'd have checked my pout every minute, on the minute.

Misty: And what a pout it is, Opaline! Equal parts chilling and charming.

Opaline: Don't pander to me, Misty—*(regarding her reflection in the pool)* —even though you are right. *(She ignites her horn.)* Well, now it's time for me to tell you to do something else.

Misty: *(fearfully)* Uhhh...

(Cut to five index cards attached to a bulletin board with thumbtacks. Each depicts a different aspect of pony magic—wings, horn, growing vines, hooves glued to the ground, and one that is obscured by Hitch's hoof as he shifts its position. Cut to him in his office, holding a stack of additional cards and now clean of berry pulp.)

Hitch: *(tacking up some of these)* Creating an inventory of all magic types...limiting magic to the magic hour of dusk... *(The next one has a bite taken from one corner.)* ...a card that's bit in half... *(noticing this)* ...hey!

(The sound of chomping is heard close by, and the camera shifts and re-focuses to pick out Sparky Sparkeroni on the floor. Having eaten part of another card, he drops it and waddles over to a table set with two coffee mugs; these are promptly knocked over as soon as he climbs up, and Hitch hurries over to him while one clatters to the tiles. The board rests on an easel.)

Hitch: Sparky, careful!

(The dragon makes his way to the board; now the fifth card can be clearly seen—a wave of energy.)

Hitch: Sparky, come here. You won't be in trouble, I promise.

(Sparky immediately puts those words to the test by upending the easel; Hitch voices a yell of surprise and scrambles after him.)

Hitch: Sparky, wait! *(scooping him up)* Sparky, no dragon fire!

(This last comes just as the little guy exhales a burst of flame that disintegrates into a shower of sparks. He gurgles happily as Hitch sighs with relief and smiles.)

Hitch: *(nuzzling him)* Aw, I can't be mad at you, Mr. Sparkeroni. You're just too cute!

(The affectionate moment is interrupted by the sound of the opening door and an electronic chime. Sparky jumps free with an enthusiastic gabble and zeroes in on a trash bin next to Hitch's desk; the Sheriff makes a grab for him, but is a hair too slow. Cut to Sparky's perspective, approaching the bin.)

Hitch: Oh, no, no, Sparky, don't!

(Cut to him on the end of this, then to the container being flung into the air. Too stunned to move, Hitch can only gasp as the refuse rains down over the office and the bin lands upside-down on his head.)

Hitch: *(sourly, reverberating slightly)* Love being a dragon dad.

(Pan slightly to fully frame the open doors; the overgrowth has been cleared away, and Izzy Moonbow stands at the threshold.)

Izzy: Whoa. That was *so funny!* *(Sparky waves the receiver from the desk telephone.)* And also, you may need some help? *(Hitch pulls the bin off his head.)*

Hitch: *(coughing)* Whatever gave you that idea? *(He shakes trash out of his mane and sets the phone back in place as Sparky wanders off.)* Sparky's been excitable lately. *(Replace the receiver.)* He was a hoof-ful already... *(Show her a gnawed length of wood.)* ...but he's literally chomped through my desk.

(Izzy fires up her horn and levitates the stool on which Sparky is now chewing.)

Izzy: Awww, he's just adding his flair to the furniture. Aren't you, Sparky? *(floating it to Hitch; he pulls Sparky free)* You know, if you ever needed a dragon-sitter, I'd be happy to look after him.

Hitch: Wow! Really, Izzy? That'd be great!

(Kenneth, just outside, voices his opinion .A few ponies have begun to gather here, and a lectern with microphone has been set up.)

Hitch: Kenneth, I know. I know. It's already time for my town hall. *(Pass Sparky to Izzy.)*
Thanks, Izzy. You're the best. And this helps me out a lot. If you need anything for Sparky, there's a comprehensive list of do's, don'ts, and potential threats and dangers. *(exiting)* See you later! I'll be outside.

Izzy: *(puzzled)* Potential threats and dangers? *(to Sparky)* What's so dangerous about you?

(He proceeds to burp up another sparkly little gout of flame. Meanwhile, the crowd outside the office has grown a notch and now includes Sunny, Pipp Petals, and Zipp Storm. Hitch steps up to the lectern and speaks into the microphone, his next four lines amplified and underscored by a couple of feedback squeals.)

Hitch: Hello! I know we started the day with a pretty disastrous—I mean, magical morning. *(Clear throat; consult some notes.)* After surveying the recent magical changes in Maretime Bay and the messy ways they've disrupted our daily lives, I have decided there will be...

(Cut here and there among the crowd during his last sentence, then back to him.)

Hitch: ...no use of earth pony magic! *(A collective stunned gasp; he slams down his notes.)*
Whatsoever! *(A louder gasp; back to him as he continues.)* Until I've collected enough data from all of you to form proper regulations and guidelines.

(A third, still louder gasp, accompanied by the fainting of one audience member; back to him on the next line.)

Hitch: I assure you, this is all for your own safety. We don't know what's possible with earth pony magic yet. Until I've taken proper inventory of every flight, float, flora, and fauna power...

(Cut to an eye-rolling, disgustingly groaning Sunny on the end of this, then back to him.)

Hitch: ...magic is off limits! That is all.

(The crowd disperses amid a wave of disappointed/resentful grumbling, leaving Sunny and the two Zephyr Heights royals alone in the street. Sunny summarizes her opinion of this new edict with a snarl that is one step away from a full-blown roar of rage as the camera zooms in slowly.)

Act Two

(Extreme close-up of an apple core on the ground. On the start of the next line, cut to frame Hitch picking it up as the three mares cross to him.)

Sunny: I thought you said you weren't gonna do anything drastic!

Hitch: (*angrily throwing it into a trash can*) No, I said I would think it over. (*pacing*) And my thoughts are telling me it's bad and it's only gonna get worse if I don't step up!

Sunny: (*groaning*) But earth pony magic is powerful!

Hitch: Exactly! (*They pass a stallion stacking boxes.*) What's gonna happen if we have more mishaps? (*The topmost one slides free; he catches it and flips it back into place.*) It's my job to make sure everypony is safe!

Sunny: Earth ponies need to practice, like th-the pegasi and unicorns had to.

(They stop upon reaching Glory, Peach, and Seashell caught up in a new bit of wild vine growth. This time, the unicorn is up top while the earth pony and pegasus are hanging upside down. A beach ball, radio, and set of headphones have also been snagged alongside the three giggling youngsters. Hitch is not amused in the slightest.)

Sunny: Growing pains. They'll get it.

Hitch: (*to the fillies*) Guessing you ponies were too *tied up* for the town hall earlier? (*He pulls out some stickers.*) Just a little reminder...

(Close-up of each one's foreleg in turn as he slaps one onto it—a stylized white leaf on a blue background, covered by a red circle-and-slash.)

Hitch: (*from o.s.*) ...of the new rules.

(A tripartite groan of disappointment.)

Zipp: Sunny has a point, Hitch. (*The fillies, now freed, depart.*) It's too early to know if earth pony magic is anything to worry about.

Hitch: Look. (*crossing to a dropped soda can*) I'm part of the reason earth pony magic is here now. What if I become the reason earth ponies get hurt? (*resolutely, picking up can*) As Sheriff, I can't let that happen.

(It is dropped into a trash can. Cut to the refilled bin in his office, from which Sparky cheerfully bursts upward to scatter the contents anew. It flips onto its side, dumping him out as well, and Izzy pivots to watch him running about the place.)

Izzy: Oh, come on, Sparky! Hey, you hungry? (*Gasp.*) What about food? (*slyly*) Will that calm you down?

(Cut to him on this last, the mere mention bringing him to a halt, then back to the pair.)

Izzy: Whoa! Guess that's a yes. (*She leads him toward a coffee maker.*) I am great at this!

(A celebratory hoot escapes her lips as she opens the cabinets, finding no food right away but uncovering a hoof-written list taped to a small television set under the counter.)

Izzy: (*reading*) "Play me." Well, I have never said no to a talking TV before. Sure.

(When it is switched on, an image of Sparky's face fills the screen and is quickly replaced by one of Hitch.)

Hitch: If you're watching this, then you are dragon-sitting Sparky. *(Cut to Izzy, scooping Sparky up; he is heard on speaker.)* Here's some important things to know.

(Back to the screen on the following; now Hitch stands by an image of Sparky that cycles through the various activities he names, with a red circle-and-slash backdrop for the latter.)

Hitch: *(rapid fire)* Sparky is prone to grunting, grubbing, grabbing things that aren't his, running, racing, wilding out around the office until you've exhausted all reasons for why he could be running in the first place, and by that time he's already resting in a dragon nap.

(During this spiel, the camera cuts to a now-befuddled Izzy, then back to Hitch for its end; Sparky ends up snoozing on a stuffed McSnips-a-Lot doll and the circle/slash is gone. The next shot frames the Sheriff alone.)

Hitch: Experiencing drowsiness while dragon-sitting is normal, though if fire-breathing occurs, consult the list of foods, fire safety, and fun suggestions as well as Sparky's safety schedule, located in the cabinet to your left.

(Accompanied by a gesture in that direction. Back to Izzy and Sparky, the former shaking her head clear.)

Izzy: Food list! That sounds like a good start. *(approaching camera)* Now, where's that cabinet? *(Setting Sparky on the counter, she fishes up a rolled document.)*

Hitch: *(on speaker)* Be careful not to cross out any items on the Sparky schedule. *(The little fellow climbs down.)* It's important he does everything *in order*.

(When unfurled, the sheet proves to reach from Izzy's shoulder height all the way to the floor, to her consternation. Back to the TV on the next line.)

Hitch: Don't let him eat before sleeping. Don't let him sleep before eating. *(Izzy again; he is heard on speaker.)* Don't let him do this all unsupervised.

Izzy: Huh? Even if he asks me to? *(The screen.)*

Hitch: *Especially* if he asks you to! He's a baby dragon. He doesn't know any better. You're the one in charge.

(That assertion is immediately challenged when the unicorn glances down and finds her ward chomping into some cookies he has procured.)

Izzy: Well...you seem happy and nothing bad has happened. *(sitting, reading over list)* I'm sure this is nothing to worry about.

(Zoom in quickly on Sparky, who cranks off a fiery little belch that turns his last cookie into three large blue-violet feathers. These disintegrate into clouds of sparks upon touching the ground, leaving him with no more treats and lowering his mood somewhat.)

(Cut to Sunny, Hitch, and Zipp on the front walk of a house with a nautical décor theme, including a seashell-decorated garden and a boat anchor standing upright on the lawn. The fact that Dahlia is with them marks it as hers. Zoom in slowly; Zipp hovers above the others.)

Zipp: This is a controlled magic experiment to collect data, Dahlia.

(Head-on view as she finishes; she has her cell phone at the ready, while Hitch has sat down with notepad and pencil in hoof.)

Zipp: Just muster your magic in a little burst.

(Dahlia's hooves glow green, and she exhales slowly and touches one to a patch of stone in the walk. A flash of light in this same color forces the three observers to shield their eyes for a moment as the camera cuts back to them.)

Hitch: Whoa! Dahlia? Where'd you go?

(A small pillar of flowers in various hues now stands directly in front of them, about their height and with one of Dahlia's widened eyes peeking out from within. Enough of the blooms fall away to expose her face—she has managed to cover herself with them.)

Dahlia: *(slightly congested)* Is now the time I mention I'm allergic to gardenias?

(A hearty sneeze sends a few rocketing toward them; shaking his head, Hitch steps forward and pastes a "no magic" sticker on her uncovered foreleg. Sunny rolls her eyes and voices a fed-up groan in response. Cut to the exterior of Hitch's office, seen from across the street; zoom in slowly to the sound of Sparky's gleeful babbling, then cut to him jumping off a desk inside and crashing into an o.s. trash can. Junk once again ends up strewn across the floor as he races across, laughing all the while. One step knocks over a pushbroom, whose handle comes down on a file folder at the edge of a counter; a stapler resting on this is catapulted into the air and falls onto the light housing of a fluorescent desk lamp. The housing spins on its pivot as the entire lamp swings around, allowing several pencils and markers to be knocked out of the mug in which they are held. The writing implements sail through space and bounce off a binder at one end of a row stored on a bookshelf; the whole lot tips over, and the one at the other end falls into a bowl of fruits and vegetables on the floor. The impact flings the contents every which way, mostly toward Izzy, and she has just enough time to gasp and lower her head before one tomato impales itself on her horn.)

Izzy: *(sternly, shaking it off)* Sparky! Don't do that again.

(He whimpers a bit; she instantly brightens and pulls out her phone.)

Izzy: Unless I'm around to film it! *(He burbles joyfully.)* Now, do it again, but wilder. *(She follows his darting away.)* Let your freaky fun flag fly, Sparky! Fly!

(A few pieces of trash do exactly that. Cut to an extreme close-up of a watermelon seed on a table; on the next line, zoom out to frame Sunny, Hitch, and Zipp regarding both it and a slice of the fruit with some puzzlement. They are back on Mane Street, and Hitch has stowed his pad and pencil.)

Zipp: And what's your magic?

(The next shot reveals that she is addressing an earth pony stallion on the other side of the table. He lights a hoof and touches the seed; an instant later, it has transformed into a whole melon. Zipp lowers her phone and takes the slice being offered to her, a bit of magic causing it to become several more melons that fly in all directions. Hitch is so thrown off by this display of split-second agriculture that he topples over with a yell and needs a moment to pull himself back up to the table.)

Hitch: *(dryly)* Perfect. Great.

(Cut to the stallion, who gets a sticker gummed onto his forehead.)

Hitch: *(from o.s.)* Don't do it again.

(Cut to a close-up of Sparky, whooping but then becoming noticeably queasy as he sits on an office chair whirling in place at absurd speed.)

Izzy: *(from o.s.)* That's the spirit! *(Cut to her, phone put away; he barrels past, scattering drawings.)* Abandon all order! Dazzle with destruction! *(Extreme close-up of her mouth, zoom out to an overhead shot.)* Express yourself to the extreme!

(Close-up of a hapless earth pony mare who has found herself caught in a rearing position by the vines that have grown up from the sidewalk.)

Mare 1: I...

(Zoom out; the three investigators are watching, and she manages an embarrassed little giggle before Hitch brings up one of his stickers.)

Hitch: Don't do it again.

(Before he can apply it to her, a rather thicker tendril snakes in and begins to wrap itself around one of his hind legs.)

Hitch: Huh?

(He shakes it away and puts the sticker on her foreleg. The appendages of two other locals are given the same treatment in close-up, the second one glowing and sparking.)

Zipp: *(from o.s.)* Look at their hooves!

(Zoom out quickly; the owner of said hoof turns out to be Posey, and the block is littered with jumbo produce. Sunny and Zipp throw concerned glances past the camera.)

Sunny: They're all glowing!

(Cut to a meadow on this line; one pony sprouts a vine, while another touches a tree and causes it to begin cycling through a number of vivid colors.)

Sunny: *(voice over)* And...fizzing? *(Pan to bring Pipp and Jazz Hooves into view.)*

Jazz: *(confusedly)* O...kay? This is officially getting weird.

(Pipp breaks out her phone to record the incident, but a flare of green draws both mares' attention to the ground. They find themselves being raised a considerable distance up from it in close-up; the stylist cries out and shakes a foreleg in a vain attempt to dispel its magic.)

Jazz: I didn't even want to do that!

(A longer shot on this line discloses that they are now balanced atop a bush. However, the odd situation does not stop her from making a silly face right alongside Pipp as the latter snaps a "selfie" photo of them both. Sunny, Hitch, and Zipp gather at the bottom of the hill leading up to Canterlogic, Zipp checks her phone, while Hitch pulls out his notepad.)

Hitch: See? I just need to plan and plot out a perfectly thought-out list of precautions, all before you ponies can say "presto."

(Cut to the two mares during this line, trading a look that might best be translated as "is he serious?", then back to him as he finishes. Zipp has stashed her phone. Behind him, Mayflower and Posey inadvertently raise a giant flower and a vine, respectively.)

Sunny, Zipp: *(hastily)* Presto! Presto! *(Hitch has put his pad away.)*

Hitch: Ha, ha. I didn't mean literally.

Sunny: *(pointing past him)* No, Hitch, the ponies! They're—

Hitch: —safe and protected, now that we've put a stop to this. You'll see.

Jazz: *(from o.s.)* MAGIC IS OUT OF CONTROL AGAIN!!

(On the latter part of this line, cut to her galloping wildly through the street toward the three, with Pipp flying alongside. A massive tomato rolls past in the background, ignoring all traffic regulations. The two stop, the Princess landing and proffering her phone.)

Pipp: And I have video proof!

(Its screen shows the color-changing tree, with a pair of low-resolution sunglasses superimposed on it and jittering back and forth.)

Pipp: In a sassy sparkle filter, too. I know, the sunglasses are a great touch, right? The Pipp squeaks made it just for me. *(Cut to Sunny/Hitch/Zipp.)*

Hitch: Why didn't you try to tell me?!

Zipp: *(pointing toward Jazz)* I think it has something to do with the glowing hooves. *(Back to the two new arrivals on this last; Jazz's hooves have fired up again.)*

Pipp: Not a good look, Jazz!

(Hitch raises a front hoof and taps his chin thoughtfully, but it takes a nudge from Sunny before he realizes that the effect has reached him as well. He screams in fright.)

Hitch: What does this mean?

Zipp: It's gotta be the built-up earth pony magic. *(Cut to him eyeing his hoof; she continues o.s.)* I don't think you're supposed to keep it all in!

Hitch: *(ruefully)* I was wrong. I shouldn't have put a pause on earth pony magic.

Sunny: Oh, I'm so happy to hear you say that! I-I've been trying to tell you—

Hitch: I should have gone straight to the Unity Crystals! When ponies united and the Unity Crystals were created, everypony got their magic! Maybe if we remove the earth pony one—

Sunny: *What?!* No! That's *not* what I meant.

Hitch: You were right, Sunny. Earth pony magic *is* powerful! *Too* powerful! We never had it before! Why do we need it now? Come on!

(He gallops off; a helpless glance passes between Sunny and Zipp before they give chase. Sunny is first to catch up to the single-minded stallion.)

Sunny: The Crystals aren't the problem! But maybe if we interviewed everypony again, we could figure it out!

Hitch: There's nothing left to figure out! This is the only way to keep Maretime Bay safe!

Sunny: *(growling)* Rash decisions don't keep anypony safe!

(A mare shrieks and peels out after creating a mass of giant flowers, but Sunny and Hitch continue their charge, Hitch coughing and sneezing to clear his lungs of the ensuing pollen cloud. Pipp and Zipp have both gone airborne and pulled even, the former with phone at the ready.)

Hitch: Look around! We have to try and reset those crystals soon, or else... I don't want to know "or else"!

(Cut to the bars of the holding cell in his office. Sparky leaps into view and grabs on, then vaults away to a shelf and knocks all its binders off before somersaulting onto a desk right in front of Izzy.)

Izzy: Ah! Did Zipp teach you that, Sparky? *(Rumble from outside.)* Huh?

(She turns toward the source as Sparky burps fire over the phone, turning it into an ice cream cone that he eagerly begins to devour. Lifting one of the windowshades on the front doors, his temporary caretaker is met with a vista of plant-based chaos up and down Mane Street—and her four friends galloping/flying toward the Crystal Bighthouse in the far distance.)

Izzy: Hmm...that looked more serious than a simple trot through town. *(She opens one door and calls after them.)* Hey, friends! Wait up!

(Before she can start after them, here comes an exhausted Sparky to hug one foreleg.)

Izzy: *(baby talk)* Awww, looks like you got all your energy out— *(normal tone)* —and right on time! Izzy has to pop out real quick, but if you're good while I'm gone, I'll...

(Inspiration strikes; she gaps deeply and picks up a little McSnips-a-Lot squeaky toy.)

Izzy: ...uni-cycle your very own racetrack.

(Sparky coos at the thought and squeezes the rubber crab once she passes it to him. Now Kenneth waddles into the office.)

Izzy: Thought you'd like that. Okay, Kenneth— *(Her perspective, pushing him closer to Sparky.)* —you're in charge! *(Back to her.)* Watch Sparky for just a moment.

(Her perspective again on this last; the feathered "deputy" salutes.)

Izzy: Okay. *(To her, backing out the door.)* Good dragon. Stay right there. BRB!

("Be right back," that is; she turns and bolts down the street, the door swinging shut behind her. Cut to a long shot of the Bighthouse, tilting slowly up to its lantern room; on the start of the next line, cut to a slow pan across Hitch watching the Unity Crystals up here.)

Hitch: Taking the Earth Pony Crystal out is the only way to keep everypony safe from this mayhem! *(The motion brings Zipp into view; he reaches for them.)*

Zipp: Whoa, whoa! Slow your roll. *(He stops.)* You don't know that.

(The next shot frames Sunny and Pipp across the room, Pipp having put her phone away.)

Sunny: Removing a crystal is not like flipping a switch! We could lose everything! *(To Hitch as she finishes.)*

Hitch: But if we don't try something, we could still lose everything!

(To the newly arrived Izzy and Pipp on the end of this, then back to him, once again reaching for the assembly.)

Sunny: *(pleadingly)* Hitch...no.

(His hoof edges closer...closer still...and then a shock wave ripples through the multi-hued radiance surrounding the Crystals and he freezes in place. Long pause.)

Hitch: What am I doing? *(withdrawing the hoof)* You're...right. This isn't me. *(Relieved/exasperated sigh from Sunny.)* Guess I'm just... *(backing off; the Crystals rise)* ...scared and unsure. Magic doesn't operate by any rules. Rules are what I know! What if I can't be the Sheriff everypony needs now?

Sunny: You'll always be a strong sheriff, Hitch, because you care.

Hitch: I'm sorry, everypony. I just love Maretime Bay so much. But maybe having less magic isn't the answer.

Zipp: But we're gonna find out what *is* the answer, right?

Hitch: *(smiling)* Yeah! *(Next three lines overlap.)*

Sunny: Of course!

Izzy: Yep!

Pipp: You bet.

(The five ponies find their cutie marks glowing and ribbons of energy in pastel shades of their coat colors snaking up toward the Crystals.)

Sunny: *(flabbergasted)* Our cutie mark magic is...combining?

(Cut to the Crystals at their elevated height, behind which an enlarged, translucent image of Twilight Sparkle is forming above the central lift platform of the lantern room. Five gasps float up from the o.s. friends as they take in the spectacle; cut to them.)

Pipp: What filter is *that*?

Zipp: It's not a filter. It's...

(Cut to the image, rippling with static, then to Sunny on the start of the next line.)

Sunny: *(mind completely blown)* Twilight Sparkle!

Act Three

(Twilight's voice reverberates slightly in the space.)

Twilight: If you're seeing this, magic is now more powerful than it's ever been— *(Sunny and Hitch; he eyes his glowing hoof as the mare continues o.s.)* —and earth pony magic has been activated for the first time in the history of Equestria.

(Back to her.)

Twilight: Magic is alive, always changing, growing stronger. *(To Izzy/Zipp; she continues o.s. as Zipp brings up her phone to record video.)* There are evil forces out there who will want to exploit it. *(Back to her.)* Once a pony tried to steal all the magic in Equestria for herself, and

almost succeeded. (*glitching briefly*) I did all that I could to protect from—by summoning all of my magical strength to achieve placing the magic in the Crystals and the—but the spell is broken. You are exposed to the world once again. You must watch out for o—before she—op—I’m with you.

(*The image winks out; Zipp stows her phone.*)

Zipp: No! Come back!

(*An ominous rumbling spooks all five of them back to the here and now; from the balcony, they can all too clearly see the gargantuan vines that are overrunning Maretime Bay proper.*)

Hitch: (*to himself, resolutely*) It’s time, Hitch. You worked hard, researched, tried your best to keep the bay safe. But you’ve got to reverse action. If I wasn’t you, I’d tell you, “You got this.”

Pipp: Um, who are you talking to?

Zipp: And who’s the evil pony?

Misty: (*voice over*) Uh...Opaline?

(*Cut to the winged unicorn in question and her underling, surveying an overhead view of Mane Street projected from the pool in her throne room. It is not much of a stretch to conclude that Twilight was referring to Opaline in the glitched-out portions of the message.*)

Opaline: (*sighing wearily, pacing*) If it’s another compliment on my hooves, Misty, “hoof-tastic” isn’t a word, and I refuse to acknowledge it.

Misty: (*pointing to projection*) No, look. The earth pony magic is getting worse!

Opaline: Magic isn’t getting worse, it’s growing into something it never has before.

Misty: But...if it’s growing this fast, how are we gonna stop it?

Opaline: Oh, no, no, no, no. We won’t be stopping anything, Misty. In fact, we’re gonna let it thrive, so that when we pluck it, it will be the most powerful it has *ever been!*

(*She cuts loose with a crazed, full-throated laugh that Misty tries and thoroughly fails to copy, prompting a contemptuous scoff.*)

Opaline: If you’re going to maniacal-laugh with me, Misty, at least be in sync. (*Cut to Misty; she continues o.s.*) Ready? (*Nod; back to Opaline.*) And...

(*A deep breath, and she gets to cackling all over again as the camera zooms out overhead; Misty tries her best to duplicate it, but again peters out after a few seconds. From here, cut to a stretch of daytime sky through which Windy is flying; a new vine lances upward, barely missing her, and she seizes its end and tries to force it back down onto Mane Street. A pony is hurled down the block from the force of another erupting plant, while another one races to avoid being flattened by a runaway melon and two others try to beat back a mass of flowers with pushbrooms. A pair of mares find the colossal blossoms aimed directly at them.*)

Mare 2: What? I...

(Both of them get a faceful of pollen; now Sunny and her friends pelt/fly into view, Hitch in the lead.)

Hitch: Forget what I said earlier! Use your magic! As much as you can!

Sunny: But also focus! *(front hooves to chest)* And guide your magic.

(As she finishes, cut to a close-up of one of Hitch's stickers being ripped off a foreleg tipped by a shining green hoof and zoom out. This stallion and his companion eye their charged-up limbs, let them go to full power, and touch them to the pavement. Magic vines race along the surface and into the overgrown flowers—but this time, they shrink away to nothing instead of chewing up even more of the architecture and one lets off a whooping laugh of triumph.)

Izzy: Express yourselves! Let your freaky fun flags fly!

(Her words are marked by pony after pony exerting their new power to erase the riot of uncontrolled plants, either wiping them out or bringing them back to a manageable size.)

Hitch: That's right! Listen to Sunny and... Izzy? Where's Sparky?

Izzy: Uh, he's back at the station, dragon-napping.

Hitch: *(relieved)* Oh. Okay, then. *(suddenly panicked)* Wait! Did you say "napping"? He's gonna be up all night now!

(He gallops for his office with a weary groan. Outside Canterlogic, Sprout considers the severely overgrown berry vine he has brought about and rips one of Hitch's stickers off his foreleg. Tossing it aside, he taps a hoof on the walk to power it up, then lets his magic envelop the cellulose-based leviathan and start to reduce it.)

Sprout: Yes!

(He claps that same hoof down with a laugh, sending out a run of magic vines along the stones and making the physical one drop from sight altogether behind the raised curb. Within seconds, however, the ground starts shaking all over again and the magic surges upward. He finds himself in a rapidly expanding shadow, and the view clears to frame this new vine as being almost as tall as the factory itself. The berry hanging directly over his head has a diameter at least four times his length, and the stem creaks under the vast weight and snaps to put it in free fall. Just as in Act One, Sprout yells and gallops for his life while the Brobdingnagian fruit thunders after him.)

(Down on Mane Street, Pipp looks up from her phone.)

Pipp: *(addressing herself o.s.)* Hitch, look! *(A step brings her over to him.)* Giant glimmerberry coming again! Six o'clock!

Hitch: But it's only two-fifteen!

(Sprout's terrified scream rips the air and gets the Sheriff's attention focused in a very big hurry. The cleaner veers off the walk and onto the lawn; down at street level, Glory/Peach/Seashell get

snagged up by a freshly sprouted vine for the third time this episode. They gasp upon finding themselves squarely in the path of the rolling juicy doom.)

Pipp: My Pipp squeaks!

(She takes to the air and rockets ahead, followed closely by the rest of the gang, and all five line up in front of the vine as an equine shield. An innocent lamppost takes a hit and goes from vertical to horizontal.)

Hitch: Link hooves just like we did around the Unity Crystals! Our powers are always stronger together, right?

(Down goes another post. Cut to a ground-level close-up of their hooves, panning along the line as one pony touches his/hers to the next—Izzy to Sunny to Hitch to Zipp to Pipp. Hitch's hooves are the only one to light up; he stares down at them in pure wonder. Cut to him and Sunny on the next line.)

Sunny: Relax, Hitch. All you have to do is trust yourself. You've got everything you already need.

(Buoyed by her confidence, the law-pony closes his eyes and centers himself. Close-up of his cutie mark as it lights up, then add a vertical panel for each of the others doing likewise—Izzy, Pipp, Sunny, Zipp. Each new panel pushes in from the right edge of the screen, compressing the others toward the left. From here, cut to a head-on view of the group and zoom out as magic vines flash over the pavement toward the bottom of the hill; a patch of stone disappears in a boil of sparkly, rainbow-hued dust as something thunders up into the light.)

(Pan along the line formed by the quintet, starting at Izzy's end.)

Izzy: Whoa!

Pipp: *(still o.s.)* Whoa!

Sunny: Whoa!

Zipp: Whoa!

(The dust-obscured growth continues...the berry bears down on the spot...and now the view finally begins to clear. They have created a tree easily broad enough and tall enough to stop the thing cold, with a short, thick, gnarled trunk and an assortment of colorful blooms among the profusion of leafy, faintly glowing branches.)

Hitch: The tree's right in the berry's path! We're protected! *(Sunny laughs.)* We're gonna save the ponies! We're actually gonna do it!

(The laws of physics get the last laugh, though, as the berry slams into the tree and ruptures into a tidal wave of juice and pulp. As its shadow falls over the group, the mares voice a frightened gasp and hunker down as best they can.)

Hitch: Oh, no!

(And then the purple tsunami is upon them, and upon Glory/Peach/Seashell, and upon half the block. The fillies are actually quite happy at being thus besmirched.)

Seashell: Ooh!

Sunny: Hey, look! We're a friendship smoothie! *(Laugh.)*

Pipp: *(dryly, smacking her lips)* Mmmm...the perfect blend.

(Sunny and Hitch laugh; the mirth quickly spreads to all ponies in the purple-splotched vicinity, and the camera cuts to a pan that brings Sunny and Hitch into view on the next line.)

Sunny: Told you. Earth pony magic is something else. Who knew you had the power to grow magical trees?

Pipp: *(to Zipp)* Speaking of, have you seen this thing? *(She brings out her phone.)* It's like five sparkle filters combined!

(She takes a picture as Zipp pulls out her own phone and fires it up.)

Zipp: *(dictating)* "Zipp file number three-one-oh. Flowers on magical tree look strangely familiar somehow." *(Her perspective, aiming the phone camera at one of them.)* "Must investigate." *(The group again.)*

Hitch: You were right, Sunny. I shouldn't have tried to control all that magic, especially my own.

(The camera shakes from an o.s. impact.)

Sunny: *(gasping)* What was that? I-It sounds like it was coming straight from the station!

(Long shot of it as she finishes, with a plume of glittering green smoke issuing from the doors.)

Hitch: *(gasping)* Sparky! *(galloping into office, sliding to a stop)* Izzy! I thought I told you not to let Sparky make a mess...

(It takes him a moment to register the fact that the place is spotless—long enough for the other four to enter at a more sedate pace.)

Hitch: *(calming down)* ...that is entirely cleaned up.

(Looking down at the base of his desk, he finds that Kenneth has apparently been quite busy with a small pushbroom. Here comes Sparky from around the corner, blabbering merrily and jumping onto Hitch's back.)

Hitch: Wow! *(to Izzy)* I have never seen Sparky this happy! Did you follow the safety schedule? Feed him before sleeping? Not sleeping before eating? Check all the boxes on the comprehensive list I left?

Izzy: Nope, nope, aaaand nope! I tried that at first, but soon found out that ditching all the rules and letting Sparky run free was just what the dragon ordered. *(to Sparky)* Isn't that right, little cutie?

(Said cutie gurgles his agreement and swings himself forward on Hitch's sash so he can get a bit of cuddling.)

Hitch: Thanks, Izzy. I...may have over-thought it a bit. Trying to work on that. *(sitting)* I mean, he's just a little dragon. What's the worst that could happen?

(He gets an answer in the form of a sneeze that sends a green shock wave over every inch of the office and turns quite a few items into balloons, party hats, and toy balls.)

Hitch: Aaaaand there it is. *(He stands again.)*

Sunny: Whoa! *Sparky* has magic?

(Kenneth sweeps his way across to the group, arriving underneath a balloon just in time for Sparky to sneeze a tiny fireball onto it. The smoke clears to show it replaced by an upside-down trash bin, which thumps neatly down over the bird.)

Izzy: What, you didn't know? *(Hitch bumps a balloon aside with his head.)*

Hitch: *(to Sparky)* We'll clean that up later, buddy.

(Dissolve to the five friends, the dragon, and several other Maretime Bay locals gathering near the tree. The area and all the ponies have been cleaned up, and Sparky utters an intrigued coo and waddles toward it as Hitch's gentle laugh floats down. A soft purr rumbles in his throat as one clawed palm makes contact with the roots, and the spiraling grooves in the surface of his stubby little horns begin to glow greenish-white. A gentle flare of power in this hue washes up from him through the roots and trunk, then another, and then Hitch interrupts.)

Hitch: Okay, Sparky. *(He places Sparky on his back; the light fades off the horns.)* That's enough magic for today.

(Now being carried home, the reptilian critter voices a satisfied little grunt. Cut to his perspective, tilting up along the full height of the flowered branches, then back to him reaching eagerly toward the camera as their reflection plays across both widened pupils.)