

HARD TO SAY ANYTHING

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Prologue

(Opening shot: fade in to the barnyard of Sweet Apple Acres during the day. Apple Bloom is painting the white trim around the barn's main door, and a cart loaded with baskets of apples stands off to one side, its tailgate down. Zoom in slowly then cut to a close-up; she lets the brush drop into the paint can and wipes her sweaty brow as Scootaloo and Sweetie Belle cross the yard to her. Sweetie is levitating a cardboard box overhead.)

Sweetie: Hey, Apple Bloom! *(She sets it down—full of clothing oddments.)* Rarity's reorganizing her shop, and look what she found!

(Cut to inside the box, the camera pointing up at the three young faces.)

Sweetie: Old costumes from the talent show!

(Scootaloo reaches in to grab something bushy and rainbow-striped, pulling it across the lens to fill the screen. Back to the trio, Sweetie with head already pulled out and horn glowing. Bloom is the first of the other two to make her way up to daylight, a pirate's hat settled firmly over the red mane, and Scootaloo comes up with a fluffy, multicolored clown wig on her own head. For her part, Sweetie's magic brings a set of Groucho Marx joke glasses and places them on her face.)

Scootaloo: We thought they'd come in handy in case we ever help a pony put on a play, or need to make a quick escape disguised as clowns.

(A loose apple tumbles across the ground and bounces back from one of Bloom's rear hooves before stopping. Red-gold eyes flick in the direction from which it came, the green and violet eyes doing likewise, and the camera pans quickly to Big Macintosh easing a basket of apples into place on the cart with his head. One fruit drops loose, but he nips the stem in his teeth and replaces it as the Cutie Mark Crusaders cross to him without their goofy accoutrements. Bloom has the first dropped apple balanced on her nose.)

Bloom: Here you go, Big Mac.

(She shifts it to an upraised hoof so he can take it in his mouth.)

Scootaloo: Whoa! That sure is a lot of apples.

Bloom: Are you makin' another delivery to Starlight's old village? *(He puts it in the cart.)*

Macintosh: Ee-yup.

Sweetie: That's an awful long way for a pony to go, isn't it?

Macintosh: *(nudging basket with his hooves)* Ee-yup.

Bloom: You've been goin' there a lot lately. What is this, your fifth trip this week?

(That inquiry catches him off guard as he closes the tailgate with his head.)

Macintosh: *(blushing, chuckling bashfully, moving to harness)* Yup.

Bloom: Okay, well, have fun! *(turning away)* So, what other costumes did you bring, Sweetie Belle?

Scootaloo: Are you crazy? We can't talk about costumes at a time like this!

Bloom: *(puzzled)* Time like what?

Scootaloo: Your brother is hiding something. Did you see the way he was acting?

Sweetie: *(catching on)* Yeah! *(Sit on haunches.)* He totally blushed when you brought up how often he's been going to Starlight's old village!

Scootaloo: Something is definitely going on. There can only be one reason a pony would travel so far, so often.

(All three lean in toward each other, their next lines overlapping.)

Bloom: I've been cookin' a lot of broccoli and he wants to get away from the smell!

Scootaloo: He's training for the marathon!

Sweetie: He's taking private singing lessons!

(The first of these lines extends well past the end of the other two, and Bloom's eyes widen slightly at the embarrassing bit of trivia she has just let slip. All three are quick to find the humor in it, though, and they laugh heartily as the camera zooms out and the view fades to black.)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(Opening shot: fade in to an extreme close-up of the full baskets in one corner of Macintosh's loaded cart. A tarp is thrown over the lot; cut to him pulling one corner into place and zoom out. The Crusaders have taken cover behind some hay bales.)

Scootaloo: Maybe he's a spy on a mission to thwart an evil villain with a secret weapon.

(Close-up of her and Sweetie.) An apple cannon! *(Pan to Bloom, putting Sweetie out of view.)*

Bloom: No, that's crazy. I think it's my broccoli thing. *(All three again on the next line.)*

Sweetie: Why don't we just ask him?

Scootaloo: You saw how shifty he was acting earlier. There's no way he'll tell us what he's doing. Plus, I really want to go undercover. (*pointing to box*) We already have costumes.

(*A quick duck of her head, and she has the varicolored wig back on.*)

Scootaloo: Call me Agent Rainbow-Head.

(*Pan quickly to Sweetie, facing away from the camera; she turns to face it as she speaks, revealing the joke glasses she now wears.*)

Sweetie: I'll be Shimmering Spectacles, a librarian with a mysterious past.

(*One more pan shifts the focus to Bloom, clad in the pirate hat.*)

Bloom: And I'll be a pirate spy! Arrgh! A spy-rate!

(*Zoom out to frame all three striking dramatic poses, Scootaloo sitting on a bale. The screech of a needle being yanked off a record shakes them out of their fantasy, and the camera pans quickly across the barnyard to frame Macintosh and his cart now on the move. Bloom gasps and points after it.*)

Bloom: Avast! Our ship be leavin' port!

Scootaloo: Huh?

Bloom: Big Mac's leavin'!

(*Another quick pan shows him even farther down the road.*)

Bloom: If we're gonna be spies, we gotta go—now!

(*All three get their hooves in gear. Sweetie is first to reach the cart, hanging off the tailgate and lifting the edge of the tarp so that first Scootaloo and then Bloom can leap aboard; she worms in after them and pulls the cloth back down. The great crimson stallion does not notice their stowaway act.*)

(*Dissolve to a close-up of the Crusaders hunkered down among the cargo, their "disguises" lying scattered around them. Bloom is asleep, Scootaloo just looks bored, and Sweetie is reading a book and turning pages with her magic. The rumbling of the cart stops after a few seconds and is replaced by a snatch of idle whistling that snaps all three to attention.*)

Bloom: Big Mac's a-comin'! Quick, act like apples!

Scootaloo: What?

Sweetie: How?

(*Cut to the cart as Macintosh, now unhitched, pulls the tarp away with his teeth. He has parked on the main—and only—road that runs through the village Starlight Glimmer once ruled. A*

moment later, he has the tailgate down and is biting on the rope handle of one basket to drag it off. Behind it are the Crusaders with apples piled on their heads. Bloom and Sweetie sit frozen with fear, the latter showing a big dopey grin, while Scootaloo has curled into a terrified little ball. They manage to limit their reactions to a round of blinks when one piece of produce rolls off Bloom's head—but Macintosh utterly fails to take notice. Instead, pink hearts replace the irises/pupils of his eyes and burst in the air around his head, and he steps tranquilly away from the cart. Three young heads poke up among the loaded containers to stare after him, the apples falling away, and Sweetie levitates a pair of binoculars up and grabs them for a better look. Cut to her perspective, panning across the fronts of a couple of houses and stopping on Macintosh, who has brought the fruit to Sugar Belle. He grins at her words and laughter, eyes back to normal; back to Scootaloo and Sweetie. The latter lowers her lenses with visible confusion.)

Sweetie: Who's that pony?

Scootaloo: Let me see!

(The binocs are floated over to her. Cut to her perspective through them, the lively exchange continuing between the two adult ponies, then back to the pair.)

Scootaloo: I don't know. *(Sweetie levitates them back into the cart.)* I shouldn't have taken the binoculars. I don't know anypony here. *(Zoom out slightly to frame Bloom on Sweetie's other side.)*

Bloom: That must be Sugar Belle. Applejack told me about her bakery. Obviously she's just been ordering a lotta apples.

(All three face front and spot Sugar turning back toward her front door, giving Macintosh an over-shoulder glance that has a decent bit of "come hither" mixed in. She pushes it open and steps in, with him following.)

Sweetie: So nothing fishy's going on. *(Scootaloo shoves her.)*

Scootaloo: No way! We came here to be spies, and no spy I know has ever solved a case that quick.

Sweetie: Mmm—how many spies do you know?

Scootaloo: *(dismissively)* That's not important. *(smiling fiercely)* What's important is that we do more recon!

(She ducks her head down and comes up wearing the clown wig.)

Scootaloo: Follow my lead!

(The other two are quick to don their silly disguises and nod, adding sounds of assent. Looking warily around herself, Scootaloo jumps over the side of the cart and lands on a table set up below a window. Cut to the interior side of the panes as she stares intently through, then to her perspective. Kitchen cabinets and implements are visible behind Macintosh and Sugar, he proudly emptying the apples from the basket he has brought in; a mountain of them has already accumulated behind her, some in baskets and others loose. The view shifts back to just inside the

window; now Bloom pops up into view, raising Scootaloo on her head. The next two lines are slightly muffled by the glass.)

Bloom: Whoa! She sure likes her apples! *(Sweetie lifts both of them on her cranium.)*

Sweetie: What is she doing? Making the biggest apple pie in Equestria?

(Cut to the baker and delivery stallion, the camera now inside. He has set down the basket.)

Sugar: Thanks for coming all this way, Big Mac. *(He blushes and laughs sappily.)* It sure is nice seeing you again so soon.

(She touches the edge of his hitching collar as she says this, after which the camera shifts to soft focus and sparkles pop in the air as she grins brightly up at him. Pink hearts burst around the blushing red face, normal focus resuming.)

Macintosh: Ee-yup. *(Dopey laugh; soft focus again.)*

Sugar: All I used to bake were boring old muffins. *(Cut to the window; zoom in slowly on the Crusaders, normal focus. She continues o.s.)* But thanks to your apple deliveries, I get to bake all kinds of delicious treats.

(Back to the bakery interior on the end of this; she begins to pace the floor. Now one of the counters can be seen in full, packed from end to end with yummys.)

Sugar: Apple pies, apple fritters, apple turnovers... *(Close-up of the counter; she points out items and continues o.s.)* ...caramel apples, caramel apple cakes... *(Dejected sigh; back to the pair.)* ...I just wish I had more room to display it all. My shelves only hold so much.

(The window again; the next lines are muffled by the glass as before.)

Bloom: I'm tellin' you, this pony *really* likes her apples.

Sweetie: *(gasping sharply)* Or Big Mac!

Bloom, Scootaloo: Huh?

Sweetie: Just look!

(Inside, Sugar picks up a pie and inadvertently bumps her nose against Macintosh's.)

Sugar: Ooh! Uh...

(He responds to her giggle with one of his own and raises with a blush. At the window, Bloom shades her eyes for a closer look.)

Bloom: *(muffled by glass)* Sweetie Belle, I...I think you're right!

(Outside again; a pegasus mare walks past.)

Bloom: *(animatedly)* I think my brother has a crush!

(She pops out of the three-pony totem pole, leaving the others to drop onto the table. The passerby freezes, spooked, as Bloom hangs in midair.)

Sweetie: Shhh!

(Bloom drops to the ground, the other two climbing down after her, as Macintosh emerges from the bakery with his mind as fully besotted as when he first arrived. Close-up.)

Bloom: *(from o.s.)* Psst! Big Mac!

(He shakes his head clear and spots her waving alongside the other two fillies.)

Bloom: *(whispering, to Scootaloo/Sweetie)* Now remember, my brother's super-shy, so he's probably gonna be embarrassed about his crush. Just try and make him feel comfortable.

(They nod; now Macintosh approaches.)

Bloom: *(slightly stilted)* Hey, Big Mac! It's me, Apple Bloom! *(All three remove their gear.)*

Macintosh: *(puzzled)* Yup.

Scootaloo, Sweetie: We're here too!

Macintosh: *(nodding)* Mmm-hmm.

Bloom: *(normal tone, slowly)* I'm gonna ask you a very personal question, and I want you to answer honestly.

(At her beckoning gesture, he bends down and presents an ear.)

Bloom: Do you have a crush on Sugar Belle?

Macintosh: *(blushing)* Yup. *(Hearts float up around him.)*

Scootaloo: Well, that was easy.

Bloom: *(normal cadence)* This is so excitin'! *(jumping up)* My big brother has his very first crush!

Scootaloo: First crush? *(to Sweetie)* What about Cheerilee?

Sweetie: It doesn't really count when you trick a pony into drinking a love potion, does it?

Macintosh: *(firmly)* Nn-nope!

(A reference to the Crusaders' matchmaking mishap in "Hearts and Hooves Day." Bloom pops up between the stallion and the filly.)

Bloom: *(singsong, hugging Macintosh)* My brother has a crush! *(Zip over to a pony reading a magazine, startling him.)* My brother has a crush! *(Walk backwards past two mares.)* My brother has a crush!

(She stops just short of tripping over a rock in the street and sidles up to said brother.)

Bloom: Wait! Does Sugar Belle even know you like her?

Macintosh: *(shaking head)* Uh-uh.

Bloom: *(pushing him)* Then you gotta tell her!

(The big guy stammers and swallows hard, a drop or two of nervous sweat slithering down his face.)

Sweetie: We're pretty sure she likes you. I mean, she keeps ordering apples just so she can see you again.

Macintosh: Ee-you think so?

Scotaloo: Totally! But you'll never know if you don't try!

(The elder Apple finds encouragement in the younger one's eyes and puts on a determined smile.)

Macintosh: Okay.

(A few flowers are growing in a tuft of grass at the base of a building wall. He plucks one of these in his teeth and heads for Sugar's door.)

Scotaloo: Go get her, Big Mac!

(She and Sweetie trade a high five; in short order he is at the threshold and sweating mightily. He gets himself under control by snorting out a lungful of steam and running a hoof through his mane, then knocks three times. The door is opened by a smiling Sugar, and the view shifts to soft focus as she grins warmly and sparkles dance in the surrounding air. Macintosh is smitten all over again, a goofy smile on his face and hearts popping around him.)

(And then, in one crashing instant, he is slammed out of sight and normal focus resumes. The new arrival is a suavely grinning earth pony stallion: light brown coat, short, medium brown mane/tail, medium green eyes. The mane is styled in an untidy layered cut, with tips bleached almost to the point of being white, and his cutie mark is hidden by his tail. This is Feather Bangs. He tosses his head before speaking with an accent that falls somewhere between "Southern dandy" and "teen trying just a bit too hard to sound urban and hip.")

Feather: Hey, girl. *(Chuckle.)* I was writin' poetry by the pond when I saw these flowers. *(He raises a bouquet of roses shaped into a heart.)* I thought I'd show them how pretty you are.

Sugar: *(taking them)* Oh! Thanks, Feather Bangs!

(The half-capsized Macintosh can manage only a crushed little huff before standing up and walking off past the Crusaders, his head nearly dragging the ground.)

Scotaloo: Um, is it possible to have two crushes at once? *(pointing toward Feather/Sugar)* Because it looks like Big Mac may not be the only pony Sugar Belle likes.

(Worried looks pass among the trio as the view fades to black.)

Act Two

(Opening shot: fade in to a long overhead shot of the street tableau, then cut to the Crusaders. After a long, pensive moment, they gallop off after Macintosh.)

Bloom: Hey, Big Mac! *(They catch up to him...)* Where you goin'? *(...and set themselves in his way to stop him.)*

Macintosh: Home!

Sweetie: You can't let that Feather fellow get in the way of your one true love!

Scootaloo: *(stomping)* You've gotta take him down!

Bloom: What can he do that you can't?

Macintosh: *(pointing back)* That!

(Namely, a juggling act, with Feather sitting on his haunches and cycling three balls through his front hooves. His cutie mark is fully revealed: a pink feather flanked by two red hearts.)

Feather: Whoops! *(Chuckle.)* These balls are like you. I'll always catch you if you fall.

(By the time he finishes this bit of flirting, three mares have taken notice of him—one each of earth pony, pegasus, and unicorn. They sigh dreamily, pink hearts floating up around them, as he catches the balls on one hoof and grins to Sugar.)

Scootaloo: Seriously? That line worked?

Macintosh: *(glumly)* She'll never pick me.

Bloom: Sure she will, 'cause we're gonna help you!

Macintosh: NO LOVE POTIONS! *(They burst out laughing at his rancor.)*

Bloom: Don't worry, Big Mac. We learned our lesson the hard way.

Scootaloo: Yeah. We're never gonna do that again.

Sweetie: *(floating her book out)* Besides, I know exactly what to do. When I was younger, I read all the fairy tales.

Scootaloo: *(dryly, but smiling)* When you were younger, huh?

Sweetie: Well, I was younger on the way here. *(Long pause; she leans into Scootaloo's face.)* It was a long ride! *(Back off.)* Anyway, as long as we do what the book says— *(Take it in hooves.)*—you're pretty much guaranteed a happy ending.

(This is the same one she was reading during the trip. Now she takes it in her field, opens it, and begins to leaf through. Close-up of the pages; she stops on one that depicts a pegasus stallion fending off a dragon's fire breath with a shield as a unicorn mare frets over him.)

Sweetie: *(from o.s., pointing to it)* Well, how about this one? Rescuing a damsel pony in distress. *(Cut to the Crusaders.)* That's perfect! *(Book closes/lowers.)* Of course, we'll have to improvise without a dragon.

Bloom: Huh. Too bad Spike isn't here. *(smiling)* Not that he's very threatening. *(All giggle.)*

Scotaloo: So what should we do? Wait around for Sugar Belle to get herself into a scary situation?

Bloom: *(slyly)* Or... *(Extreme close-up.)* ...we bring the danger to her.

(The calculating smile on her face prompts her brother to swallow very hard and grimace fearfully at the thought of whatever the three might be cooking up. Dissolve to Sugar closing her door and setting off down the street, saddlebags on back, and zoom out to the mouth of an alley across the street. Macintosh, Bloom, and Sweetie are watching from here.)

Bloom: *(whispering, to Macintosh)* All right. Scotaloo's gonna pretend to take Sugar Belle's things, then you swoop in and stop her. Ready?

Macintosh: *(smiling, nodding head)* Nn-nope.

Sweetie: Come on! You're gonna be her hero! *(She brings out the book in her field and gets a hoof on it.)* In fairy tales, the knight in shining armor always gets the girl.

Macintosh: *(uncertainly, but nodding)* Mmm...mmm-hmm. *(Grin.)*

(Cut to just outside the mouth of the alley. Bloom steps up and waves; zoom out quickly to frame Sugar approaching the camera and Scotaloo hiding behind a planter just ahead and off to one side. She has donned both the clown wig and Sweetie's Groucho glasses, and she nods acknowledgment before stepping into the open. Within only a few feet, she has reached a full gallop—now Bloom's pirate hat can be seen balanced atop the wig—and she swipes Sugar's saddlebags and races off, their strap in her teeth. The unicorn baker stops short.)

Sugar: *(shrilly)* Oh! *(Drop to haunches.)* Somepony, HEELLP!!

(The garishly garbed, galloping thief continues her getaway. Here comes Macintosh, his face the very picture of unyielding righteous anger, standing in the middle of the street and putting out a hoof to stop Scotaloo cold. She slams on the brakes, but trips over a rock that sends her tumbling out of control toward him. The three beefy legs still on the ground do bring an end to her escape, and Sugar's saddlebags go flying straight up. The action shifts to slow motion as they describe a high arc and plummet back toward earth, leaving a faint afterimage behind themselves—and then normal speed resumes at the moment that Feather's hoof lances into view to snatch them before Macintosh can make the save. The grinning stallion carries them away as the scarlet one grimaces over the botched day-saving.)

Feather: *(placing them on Sugar's back)* Here's your sugar, Sugar. Though it is not as sweet... *(Chuckle.)* ...as you.

(A head toss sets the previous three mares to sighing and mooning over him again, hearts and all.)

Sugar: Oh, thank you, Feather.

(She walks off and he follows, the mares trailing them both. All three Crusaders are now

gathered around the glaring Macintosh; Scootaloo has shed her three-layer disguise, and Sweetie has stowed her book.)

Bloom: That smooth-talkin' pony stole our rescue, and it totally would've worked!

Macintosh: *(needled)* Yup!

Sweetie: We're just gonna have to keep trying! Big Mac, are you ready to take it up a notch?
(Zoom in on him.)

Macintosh: Oh, yup!

(Dissolve to a close-up of him outfitted in a blue-plumed, blue-green cap and white neck ruff, the sort of garb commonly worn in the Elizabethan era, and looking not a bit at ease. A sliver of dark blue cloth is visible below the ruff.)

Macintosh: *(small voice)* Oh, nope.

(Longer shot: the cloth is marked with lighter blue dots and buttons, and is part of a sleeveless tunic that matches the cap. The foreleg holes and hem are set with white lace and blue bands that match the cap's plume. He and the Crusaders are gathered behind a house.)

Sweetie: Trust us!

(Cut to a close-up of Sugar snoozing in a hammock strung between two trees and zoom out to frame Macintosh and Sweetie looking on. Sugar is no longer wearing her saddlebags.)

Sweetie: *(floating her book up, flipping pages)* There's nothing more romantic than waking your special pony from a sleeping spell with a magical kiss.

(Close-up of one illustration as she finishes: the stallion who fought the dragon in the last picture now kisses the cheek of that mare, who lies sleeping on a bed within a castle. After this last, the page turns to show them walking side by side as the sun sets behind the horizon.)

Sweetie: *(from o.s., pointing)* See? They rode off into the sunset.

(Back to the four plotters; all but the oldest sigh blissfully and let hearts float and pop around them for a moment.)

Bloom: *(to Scootaloo)* Any sign of Feather Bangs?

(This is the pegasus' cue to pull out the binoculars they were using in Act One and peer intently through them. Cut to her perspective, panning from one side of the somnolent Sugar to the other and back, then to her.)

Scootaloo: *(lowering them)* Negative. Coast is clear. *(Sweetie has stowed her book.)*

Bloom: It's now or never, Big Mac.

(He forces his throat to swallow and his hooves to move out, but the drawn-out, jittery moan escaping his teeth and the sweat trickling down his face give away his extreme case of nerves. All too soon, he is alongside the hammock and stopped dead; Bloom races up to give a good hard shove to his hindquarters and tip him toward the hammock. Slowly, ever so slowly, he leans down over Sugar, his shadow enveloping her form inch by inch, and now the overly helpful little sister pushes on the back of his head to get him within striking distance. The red lips pucker up...Sugar drowsily stirs and lifts her head in his general direction...and the camera cuts to her eye-opening, slowly focusing perspective of the big lug zeroing in to plant one on her. After a couple of seconds that feel like an hour, the view shifts back to her, now snapping to full consciousness with a terrified yelp. Bloom has now climbed off Macintosh. Sugar sits up in her hammock just as a pony-drawn chariot pulls in, forcing the would-be Casanova to take a step back in order to avoid being hit broadside. The vehicle is lined with flowers and has Feather as its sole passenger, and she grins in relief at his arrival.)

Feather: *(chuckling)* Oh, girl, you been workin' hard all day. *(touching her shoulder)* Allow me to treat you like the princess... *(Chuckle.)* ...you are.

(Macintosh voices an incredulous little neigh, followed by an indignant huff, but he and the Crusaders can only glare daggers after the chariot once it begins to roll away. The same three mares gaze and sigh dreamily as before, but without the airborne hearts this time. Scootaloo has ditched the binoculars, and Sweetie has put her book away.)

Sweetie: Hey! That's our metaphorical sunset they're riding off into!

Scootaloo: All right! This ends now! *(Stomp on "now.")* Feather Bangs may have good timing... *(Sweetie smiles.)* ...and a good mane... *(Sweetie nods.)* ...uh, but let's see him compete with a song!

Macintosh: S-Say what, now?

Bloom: Of course! Why didn't we think of it before?

Sweetie: *(floating/opening book)* Every great love story hinges on the romantic musical number.

(Close-up of one page on the end of this: on a picnic blanket under a tree, the pegasus stallion sings for the mare. Back to the scene.)

Sweetie: *(closing book)* Big Mac, you've gotta write a song for Sugar Belle.

Macintosh: Ee-yup.

(Sweetie puts her book away, and all three Crusaders trade a high five before the view dissolves to Sugar in her shop, levitating a pie down to fill a space on her shelves of goodies for sale. She gives it a final nudge as the camera pans to the window behind her, where all four visitors have gathered for a look-see. Macintosh is out of his period costume. The next shot is just outside, the fillies on the window table and the workhorse standing behind them. Bloom jumps down and gestures to the door.)

Bloom: Come on, Big Mac! *(The three mares pass in the foreground.)*

Earth pony: Feather Bangs is so romantic.

Pegasus: When he speaks, I pretend he's talking to me.

(Heavy Valley Girl inflections for both of them. Macintosh sighs heavily, but Bloom is quick to lift his head.)

Bloom: Come on! You can do better than him! Just like we practiced.

(He swallows hard. Cut to Sugar inside, holding up a slice of cake on a plate and running a critical eye over it. Behind her, the door is slightly open and both Apples peek in at her; Macintosh slips inside, followed by the Crusaders, as Sugar telekinetically slides other treats aside and fits the cake into the new gap with a last tweak for good measure. Suddenly all the lights go dim, accompanied by the clunk of a switch being thrown; she looks uneasily around herself, and the camera pans quickly to Macintosh's barely illuminated form standing before a farm/orchard backdrop tacked up on the wall. A haystack stands to either side of him.)

Laid-back country melody with acoustic/electric guitar, bass, drums, leisurely 4 (A major)

Macintosh: We'll take a walk down by the river
(A spotlight picks him out, and a cardboard sun is lowered.)

Watch the sunset from the field

(Bloom, holding the rope, and Sweetie grin from beneath a table off to one side. Scootaloo adjusts the light while hanging from another line tied around her midsection.)

We'll plant the seeds of love together
And water 'em right for a really good yield

(Sugar's unsure expression changes to a warm smile; he leans over and puts a foreleg around her shoulders.)

Backing strings/mandolin in

Macintosh: Sugar Belle, sweet as pie, you're the apple of my eye
(Tilt up to the image of a giant closed eye, which opens to show his cutie mark as its pupil, then dissolve to a close-up of a flower in a field. Pan to the pair, dressed as farmers and walking past a livestock corral and apple orchard; Sugar is visibly flummoxed.)

A cherry blossom in a field of rye

And when the heifer's milked and fed, and the pigs are in the sty

(He turns her to face him; she smiles.)

Won't you be there by my side?

(The pastoral scene and outfits disappear in a puff of smoke to leave them standing in the bakery, pinned by pulsing spotlights in assorted colors. Pan away from them to pick out four silhouettes standing at the far end of a footlight-lined runway; the one out front is Feather. More spots flash on and off, illuminating the others as backup dancer stallions in assorted jerseys/headwear/accessories.)

Upbeat melody with minimal string accents and drums, lively 4 (B flat major)

Feather: Oh, oh, oh-ah, oh
When you appeared before me, my heart stopped beating
(A shooting star arcs overhead.)
Stars crossed the sky to come see what I was seeing
(He is lifted with forelegs spread as if flying.)
You were the one that made me believe I could fly
(A flock of birds zooms past; behind it, wipe to him on a beach. He walks as others fly past.)
Whoa, whoa, whoa
Birds could not sing a song that's as beautiful
(One passes the camera; behind it, wipe to an extreme close-up of him lying on his belly and zoom out. The dancers are on/near a jutting rock, and he gradually stands.)
I'd do anything, that's irrefutable
(Once fully upright, he traces a bright pink-violet heart around himself with a hoof.)
'Cause you are the sun, painting my heart in the sky
(Back to the bakery: Sugar finds herself being yanked ahead by two dancers.)
Whoa, oh

Additional strings in

(She is tossed up onto a stage and he helps her up. A sizable crowd has turned out for the show, some of them holding up banners.)

Feather, Dancers: Sugar, Sugar Belle, whoa-oh
When will you tell me that you feel the same?
(His three admirers crowd in front of Macintosh and the Crusaders with a sign of their own; now the dancers carry him across the stage and he pulls her up for a twirl.)
Like an angel on a candy cane
Or the sunlight shining through a drain

(He tosses her aside with a chuckle; now Macintosh stomps up to bulldoze him away.)

*Laid-back ballad with electric guitar/bass/drums
Leisurely 4, slightly faster than before*

Macintosh: Sugar Belle, when I look in your eyes
(Clear throat; she rubs her head, dazed and irritated from being slung aside. Bloom holds a pair of tinted lenses over the unicorn's eyes, changing their red-violet coloration to blue.)
I see the color blue
(Sugar glares at the well-meaning filly. Now Macintosh has his farm backdrop behind him again.)

And it reminds me of the sky above
(She stands up and dusts herself off; he fumbles for his next line.)
Uh, which is also...blue

***Different upbeat melody with minimal string accents and drums, slow 4 (B major)
Backing shouts in square brackets; capitalized words are sung by Feather and his dancers***

(Feather's dancers rise into view in the fore to hide him; the wheels of his flowered chariot roll up; the three-mare fan club swoons; he lounges in the seat, eyes hidden behind sunglasses.)

Feather, Dancers: Hey, hey, hey, yeah

(One takes a bite from a dripping watermelon slice.)

Be my sugar plum, I will be your WATERMELON

(He trots down an alley, the shades gone.)

Every time you smile, I can feel my HEART A-SWELLIN' [Whooh!]

(The stage again.)

Blood is rushin' from my head to my hooves, YEAH [Yeah!]

I start movin' when I'm feelin' that GROOVE, YEAH

(Here comes a cart full to bursting with apples, whose tailgate opens to bury him and slide Macintosh down into view. Now his backdrop is tacked up on the stage.)

Bluegrass-tinged ballad with banjo/strings/bass/drums, slow 4

Macintosh: I've been writin' this song for you, searchin' for the perfect rhyme

(Sweat starts to run down the great red face.)

For the words I want to say...

(mumbling; the Crusaders clap hooves to faces as he leans toward Sugar)

...somethin', somethin', somethin', somethin', be mine

Upbeat synth/drum melody with backing vocal accents, triplet feel, lively 4

(The unsettled unicorn finds herself in a fresh spotlight as Feather yanks her bodily away to dance near the door. The set of her features tells just how fed up she is with this musical duel, and she backs up before his sliding/walking advance. The next lines are heavy with electronic distortion.)

Feather, Dancers: Every day I see you, I know you could be the one for me

Feel my heart a-beatin' like the rain upon a bumblebee

(Roses rain down past the camera, the view zooming out to show him and his dancers resting at the centers of giant, slowly rotating daisies.)

Don't you see that I get oh-oh, oh-oh

(He leaps from one flower to the next; they cluster around him.)

Whenever you are near me, I'm so, oh-oh

Country power ballad with banjo/electric guitar/bass/drums/tambourine, slow 4

(The farm backdrop and piles of hay drop from above, forcing them out of view, and Macintosh

lands among the lot to hit the strings of a banjo as if it were an electric guitar.)

Macintosh: Sugar Belle
Roses are red and violets are blue

(A curtain falls across him; now the dancers are onstage, and Feather pushes a chair into view, sits on it, and pulls a rope to dump a torrent of melted cheese over himself.)

Feather, Dancers: Sugar, Sugar
Feather: *(laughing)* My love is burnin' hot like a cheese fondue

(The two shove one another aside with increasing fervor to serenade the very scared mare—one without his banjo, the other clean of dairy products.)

Macintosh: Sugar Belle

Feather: Sugar Belle

C major

Macintosh: *(holding flowers)* Sugar Belle

Feather: *(holding heart-shaped bouquet)* Sugar Belle

D flat major

Macintosh: Sugar Belle

Feather: Sugar Belle

G flat major

(He is now balanced on Macintosh's head with the help of two dancers.)

Macintosh, Feather: Sugar Belle

Song ends

(The final chord trails off into a yell as all four lose their balance and go crashing to the floor—right on top of Sugar. The dust clears to show them all lying insensate among the smashed wreckage of her display shelves, and one of her own pies splats down on her head to add a final insult. Macintosh snaps to, grimacing and sweating mightily, then Feather comes around with his own measure of dread, and Scootaloo and Sweetie can only stare in horror as Bloom claps a disgusted hoof to her face. Finally Sugar extricates herself and stands up near one dessert-splattered wall, nearly mad enough to boil all the apple filling matted into her mane.)

Sugar: What in Equestria has gotten into you two?!? *(She rounds on them, now upright.)* If you think I'm the kind of pony that likes all this nonsense, then you clearly don't know me at all! I wish everypony would just *leave me alone!*

(The dancers make tracks for the door, and Feather's whole face sags along with the rose in his grip. He whimpers and follows them out, eyes shining with unshed tears, and the Crusaders plod slowly after them. Sugar levitates the pie tin halfheartedly up from the floor, but lets both it and her head drop; zoom out to put Macintosh the fore. He is the last to leave the disaster area before the view fades to black.)

Act Three

(Opening shot: fade in to a long overhead shot of the village, zooming in slowly, then cut to Night Glider and Party Favor at an outdoor table. They smile tenderly into one another's eyes—a romantic outing, perhaps—but are interrupted by Scootaloo lifting the vase of flowers between them and looking beneath. Bloom pops up in the fore.)

Bloom: *(calling out)* Big Mac!

(She deploys the Crusaders' binoculars; cut to Sweetie in the street. She magically lifts a nearby rock, finds no trace of the missing stallion, and lets it drop; off she goes as Bloom and Scootaloo come across, the binocs put away.)

Bloom: *(calling out)* Oh, Big Mac!

Scootaloo: Well, nopony's seen him. *(Sweetie returns.)*

Bloom: *(moaning)* I feel terrible! *(They start walking.)* I've never seen my brother so upset before! *(They emerge from an alley; she calls out.)* Oh, Big Mac! *(Glance to one side; all stop short.)* Big Mac!

(Cut to him, sitting despondently on his haunches under a tree and leafing through Sweetie's book, and zoom out to frame the trio watching him. He closes the cover and pushes it aside as they approach.)

Sweetie: Are you okay?

Macintosh: Nope.

Bloom: *(patting his back)* Sorry it didn't work out with Sugar Belle.

Sweetie: *(magically lifting/opening book)* We don't get it. *(Scootaloo steps up for a look.)* Big grand gestures always work in the fairy tales.

Macintosh: But Sugar Belle's not a fairy-tale princess. She's a real pony. She's kind, and she works hard, and she's sweeter than everything in her bakery. *(Bloom thinks hard and has a brainstorm.)*

Bloom: That's it!

(A few quick strides carry her close enough to smack the book away.)

Bloom: We shoulda been thinkin' about what would mean a lot to Sugar Belle!

Macintosh: Hmmm... *(He snaps to his hooves with a long, happy gasp.)* I know just the thing, but I'm gonna need your help.

Bloom: Really? Even after we messed it up?

Macintosh: Ee-yup. Come on!

(He leads them in a gallop back toward the village proper. Dissolve to a stretch of the road; Scootaloo peeks out from behind a planter near a door, wearing the Groucho glasses. From here, pan quickly to Sugar trotting down the block, saddlebags slung up, clean of pie detritus, and in good spirits. By the time she passes the planter, Scootaloo has ducked out of sight, but the filly

puts her head into view again and darts ahead to cut her off. Until further notice, Scootaloo speaks in a laughably bad attempt at a cultured accent.)

Scootaloo: Hello! My name's Shimmering Spectacles, and I'm a librarian with a mysterious past. *(Chuckle.)*

Sugar: Oh! Okay. I'm— *(Stop short.)* —wait a minute. You look familiar.

Scootaloo: *(nudging glasses up)* I shouldn't. *(pacing around her)* Um...uh, I'm new in town. Mind showing me around?

Sugar: Uh, sure. *(She gestures to the surrounding houses.)* That's the whole town. *(slightly deflated)* It's just the one street.

(She goes on her way, but Scootaloo grimaces in panic and hurries after her. A loose thread hangs from the seam of one saddlebag; this is nipped in teeth and yanked hard, causing that bag to rupture and spill its load of bananas. Sugar stops short.)

Scootaloo: Oh, no! Clumsy me! Here. Let me help you clean it up.

(The fumble has left the unicorn rather out of sorts. Pan quickly to the open door of her bakery, where Sweetie is peeking out, then cut to inside. She pulls her head in and addresses herself across the space, the camera zooming out as she speaks. Macintosh and Bloom are hunched down in the foreground.)

Sweetie: I don't think Scootaloo can hold her off much longer!

(Both Apples straighten up into view, a hammer in the brother's teeth and a paintbrush in the sister's. As Sweetie closes the door, their eyes widen a spasm of silent fear and they dive back to their work. Cut to the street; Sugar moves resolutely along, the loose bananas riding overhead under her power, and Scootaloo backpedals to keep eyes on her.)

Scootaloo: Uh...n-now hold on a minute. Are you sure I can't buy you a new bag?

Sugar: *(smiling)* I'm good. *(scowling a bit)* It's no big deal. *(Close-up of Scootaloo.)*

Scootaloo: But, u-um...um...

(Hooves and tongue stop only when her rump connects solidly with a closed door, and she looks up with visible unease. Zoom out to an overhead shot, revealing that they have arrived at the bakery, then cut back to her. She stands up on her hind legs with a gulp and a big grin, throwing her forelegs out wide to bar entry, but Sugar has had just about all of this she can take.)

Sugar: Okay, what's going on?

(Inside, Sweetie stares wide-eyed at the door as if wishing that she could turn it into a brick wall. It bursts open to admit Scootaloo, who drops her bad accent and voices a freaked-out yell.)

Scootaloo: The cupcake has landed! Repeat, the cupcake has landed!

(She rolls away; Sugar enters with the bananas and minus her bags. Sweetie grins widely and trots after her compadre, and the mare looks off to one side and drops the fruit with a glower.)

Sugar: Big Mac!

(Cut to the corner where her display shelves had stood and zoom in slowly. He backs away with a bashful grin to give her a full view of what now rests there: a gleaming new set with not one, not two, but three levels. Indignation melts into a warm smile.)

Sugar: You made me a new display case?

Macintosh: *(blushing)* Ee-yup. *(She crosses to him.)*

Sugar: And you made it bigger! You remembered! *(She looks it over and gasps happily.)* Now I have twice as much room for all my desserts! *(A second, louder gasp.)* Which means... *(beaming)* ...I can make even more! *(A third gasp.)* I've been dying to try baking cream pies, and whoopie pies, and icebox cakes—and of course, more apple treats.

(This last is delivered with a come-hither look, which prompts Macintosh to blush and avert his eyes. She crosses to him.)

Sugar: Oh, Big Mac, thank you so much. This is the sweetest thing anypony's ever done for me.

(With cheeks again flaming, the ace builder can manage only a long string of stammers that has bits of both "ee-yup" and "nope" scrambled into it before a pink hoof corks his mouth.)

Sugar: *(giggling)* I like you too.

(Zoom in slowly on them; he lets go with a contented sigh, disregarding his blush, and they gently press their noses together.)

Crusaders: *(from o.s.)* Awwwww...

(Green and red-violet eyes pop wide open, and the fillies pop up at the wall just behind them. Scootaloo has shed the joke glasses.)

Bloom: That was the most romantic thing ever!

Sugar: Wait a minute. I recognize you fillies! *(addressing Macintosh)* Have they been with you this whole time?

Macintosh: Ee—

Bloom: I'm Big Mac's little sister. *(He scratches the back of his head; she indicates Scootaloo and Sweetie.)* And these are my friends. We're sorry for everything we put you through today, Sugar Belle. Big Mac never woulda gone through with all of those crazy—

Sweetie: —over-the-top—

Scootaloo: —downright ridiculous—

Bloom: —attempts to impress you if we hadn't put him up to it. *(Scootaloo and Sweetie nod.)* But we learned our lesson. Romance isn't about impressin' somepony. It's about doin' somethin'

that means somethin' special to that pony you love...

(Her last two sentences are accompanied by cuts first to a smiling Sugar, then to a smiling/huffing/blushing Macintosh, and back to the Crusaders, Scootaloo and Sweetie nodding again. She trails off with a sheepish laugh and throat-clearing as the two adults step in behind them.)

Bloom: ...like a lot.

Sweetie: Uh, Apple Bloom? *(Zoom out; they are nuzzling happily again.)* I think they get it.

(Only after they pull apart does the blush fade from Macintosh's cheeks—but only for as long as it takes for each to utter a slightly sappy giggle. The Crusaders back slowly up toward the door in order to give the lovebirds a bit of privacy, but a sudden burst of song from the street prompts them to turn around in a very big hurry.)

***Sustained electric guitar chords, alternating slowly between G major and C major
No particular time or meter except for a few cymbal taps***

Feather: *(from outside)* Sugar Belle

(Cut to just behind them, framing him on his hocks and hoisting a wind-up phonograph above his head. He stretches the name into an overlong, overwrought string of vocal flourishes that takes a full ten seconds to wind down in volume and pitch.)

Feather: Oh, yeah

Chords end

(The fillies step out to face him.)

Scootaloo: Sorry, Feather. You're a little too late.

Bloom: *(gesturing toward door)* Yeah. Sugar Belle's already picked her special somepony.

(Cut to the new couple, embracing just inside the doorway as pink hearts float around them, and zoom out to show a crushed Feather now standing and watching.)

Sweetie: But don't worry. *(gesturing to other side)* You've got three not-so-secret admirers right behind you.

(Sure enough, the three-mare fan club is right across the street and easily within his line of sight. They sigh blissfully upon making eye contact, but he blushes and chuckles shakily, all his old suavity gone right out the window.)

Feather: Uh, what should I say to them?

Bloom: *(puzzled)* Uh, you're askin' us for advice?

Feather: *(nodding)* Mmm-hmm. *(tossing head)* Look. I-I can mane-flip, write poetry, and juggle, but actually talkin' to a pony? Oh, it scares me almost as much as loneliness. Will you help me? Please? *(They turn away from him and hunker down.)*

Bloom: *(to Scootaloo, Sweetie)* Gee, I don't know about this.

Scootaloo: He just needs a little nudge in the conversation department. Besides, I don't think Big Mac's ready to leave just yet.

(All three glance toward the bakery; zoom out from them through the doorway to frame Macintosh and Sugar sharing another nuzzle, then cut back to the street.)

Sweetie: Let's do it! *(The Crusaders turn back to Feather.)*

Bloom: Feather Bangs, the Cutie Mark Crusaders are—

Crusaders: —at your service!

(He grins broadly and tosses his head, a gesture that the amateur romance consultants are quick to copy before all four burst into laughter. "Iris out" to black, the aperture taking the shape of a heart and centering on Feather's face. Before closing entirely, it pauses long enough for him to throw the camera a wink.)