

EQUESTRIA GAMES

Written by Dave Polsky

Produced by Sarah Wall, Devon Cody

Story editing by Meghan McCarthy

Supervising direction by Jayson Thiessen

Co-directed by Jim Miller

Transcribed by Alan Back (ajback@yahoo.com)

Prologue

(Opening shot: fade in to a train chugging steadily along an uphill grade during the day. Tilt up to frame the Crystal Empire in the not-too-distant background, then cut to a close-up just outside one window. Rainbow Dash looks out, so keyed up with nerves and anticipation that she might shoot straight up through the ceiling at any moment.)

Rainbow: *(softly)* This just got real.

(Cut to within this train car and pan slowly across. Unlike the other cars that have been seen to date, this one has no seating benches—they have been cleared out to make room for the passengers to exercise. Wing push-ups, dumbbell lifting, and pull-ups on a pair of hanging gymnastics rings are all in progress, and Fluttershy flies a lap over the tableau, right-side up on the way out and upside down on the return. At the far end of the car stands Rainbow at her window, along with the Cutie Mark Crusaders and Spike near a stack of luggage that reaches to the ceiling and serves as Fluttershy's turnaround point. The dragon has a clipboard in hand and is running an eye over it. In close-up, Scootaloo does a couple of moves with the Ponyville pennant whose stick is gripped in her teeth, earning cheers and applause from Apple Bloom and Sweetie Belle; pan from them to Spike. He makes a note on his clipboard, then drops both it and his pencil as the stack begins to totter precariously. A good hard shove gets it vertical again, and he wipes sweat from his brow in relief.)

(Cut to a close-up of Fluttershy, in a sitting position and being raised/lowered on a barbell, then zoom out. Bulk Biceps has put a bench back in place and is lying on it to do a few reps, with the yellow pegasus on the crossbar for added resistance. The two doing the wing push-ups start to trade high fives every time they lift themselves off the floor. Rainbow steps along what would normally be the aisle.)

Rainbow: Listen up, gang! *(She stops at the end; activity stops.)* We're almost there, so I've got a few things to say. First off, who here besides me thinks this is the best Equestria Games delegation in Ponyville history?

(A round of enthusiastic cheering is the group's response. Scootaloo has dropped her pennant.)

Bulk: *(still lifting; Fluttershy is off the barbell)* YEAH!!

Rainbow: And no matter what your sport is, we gotta give it our best— *(hovering)* —because we’ve all got a genuine shot at Ponyville gold!

(More cheers from the bunch, with the camera cutting to a pan across the Crusaders and stopping on Spike. Once this dies down, Rainbow turns to Fluttershy and Bulk, who has stopped lifting.)

Rainbow: *(landing next to them)* With the possible exception of Bulk Biceps, Fluttershy, and me. I mean, we’re good and all, but we’re up against the Wonderbolts in the aerial relay, so gold’s kind of a stretch. Let’s not kid ourselves.

Scotaloo: Don’t feel bad, Rainbow Dash. *(stepping forward)* We have absolutely no shot at winning gold either.

Rainbow: *(crossing to her)* Uh, that’s because you’re carrying the flag for Ponyville in the opening ceremony. There are no winners.

Scotaloo: Winners or not, we still have a chance to be awesome!

Rainbow: That’s the spirit! *(She flies up to address the whole group.)* You hear that, everypony? Winners or not, we all still have the chance to be awesome!

(A fresh round of cheers and hollers, with a hearty “YEAH!!” from Bulk mixed in.)

Rainbow: *(hastily)* But, uh, let’s still try to win lots and lots of stuff too, ’kay?

(After a beat of silence, the ponies return to their exercises with renewed vigor. Even Fluttershy takes a turn with the weights by lifting a small dumbbell of her own. Fade to black.)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(Opening shot: fade in to the Empire station as the train pulls in. Clouds of steam hiss up around it, filling the screen and clearing to give a close-up of one open door. Zoom out as the equine athletes exit onto the platform; Spike and the Crusaders bring up the rear; the former grunting under the weight of an enormous, overstuffed carryall bag on his shoulders. End to end, it measures perhaps twice his own height—or it would, if he could stand up straight. Cut to the top of the pile of the delegation’s luggage, now on the platform; the bag is flung up here, and the camera zooms out to the sound of his relieved sigh. All of the parcels have been loaded onto a flat cart, and the Crusaders stand alongside him.)

Spike: It’s all in there, gang. Leave it to Spike, champion gear carrier, for all your gear-carrying needs.

Bloom: *(worried)* And the Ponyville flag? You sure? And what about the flagpole? *(He touches one bag at the bottom of the stack.)*

Spike: In with the portable ramp.

(Gentle as it might have been, the touch causes the cart to roll ahead a few inches; he thumps to the platform with a yell, having lost his support and balance. Cut to the Crusaders.)

Scootaloo: *(slightly irritated)* Give it a rest, Apple Bloom.

Spike: *(from o.s.)* Aw, she's just nervous, that's all. *(To him, beginning to stand.)* Perfectly understandable. *(He straightens and crosses to them.)* Whenever I'm afraid I'll forget something and I start to panic, I have a simple trick. I count to ten, and by the time I'm done, I've calmed myself enough to get the job done right every time. Easy-peasy, cider squeezey.

(A rumble of approaching hooves is heard just before two crystal pony stallions—both clad in guard armor that glows and sparkles as much as they do—gallop across the platform side by side. Without breaking stride, they dip their heads and scoop him up so that he lands neatly in the seat laid across their backs.)

Spike: Hey! *(They double back.)* Put me down!

Scootaloo: What's going on?

(The answer: a full-speed charge along one of the Empire's glassy roads that gets the baby dragon to staring fearfully around himself and covering his eyes. Once the two guards stop, they bend their forelegs and lower themselves enough to let him belly-flop onto the pavement. Cut to Twilight Sparkle and Princess Cadence, the Crystal Heart whirling behind them between its two anchor points.)

Twilight: Spike! Are you all right? *(The guards lift their eyes.)*

Guard: A thousand pardons, O Great and Honorable Spike, the Brave and Glorious. *(Spike stands up.)*

Spike: Huh? *(scratching head)* Who the what, now?

Cadence: Thanks for bringing Spike to us. *(The guards back away; she leans down and puts a foreleg around his shoulders.)* It's okay, Spike. *(ushering him away)* We'll have our hoof-ponies go back for your bags.

(Longer shot: she and Twilight are now walking ahead, leading him past the Heart toward an entrance to the Crystal Castle.)

Spike: Uh...can they hang back a sec and tell me what's going on first?

(Dissolve to a close-up of him lounging on a couch and looking considerably more at ease—relaxed from head to toe, in fact, with tongue lolling idly out of one side of his mouth. The jaws open wide just in time for a gem to drop neatly in and get noisily chewed and swallowed.)

Spike: Mmm...mmm-hmm! So the ponies here think I'm some kind of hero, huh?

(Zoom out. His head is up against one armrest, behind which a crystal pony mare is standing with a bowl of gems on a stand. She has one in hoof, ready to feed to him.)

Spike: More of the green ones, please? *(She bobbles it, suddenly panicked.)* I like the green ones.

(The stone is quickly returned to the bowl, and she fishes up a green one and drops it to him with a placating grin.)

Twilight: *(from o.s.)* Last time you were here...

(Longer shot of the area. The couch stands in one of the Crystal Castle's rooms, and a crystal pony stallion is fanning Spike with a large palm leaf whose stem is in his teeth. Twilight and Cadence are in the room as well.)

Twilight: ...you got the Crystal Heart to Princess Cadence in time to save this entire empire from destruction!

Cadence: You are known throughout my empire as "Great and Honorable." *(Close-up of Spike, sucking on a gem; she continues o.s.)* "Spike, the Brave and Glorious." *(Back to her and Twilight.)*

Twilight: Isn't that awesome? *(walking through a doorway onto a balcony)* You're a big shot here, Spike.

(Outside, he joins her at the railing.)

Twilight: *(pointing over the edge)* See that? *(Zoom out/tilt down quickly toward ground level.)* That's you!

(Down below, three spectators have gathered around a large crystal statue of the little guy proudly holding up the Heart. One pony snaps pictures of the work, which stands about three times as tall as the trio. Back to Twilight and Spike.)

Spike: *(Brooklyn accent)* Hello, gorgeous. *(Zoom out to frame Cadence, walking up, on the start of the following.)*

Cadence: This is why we all hope you'd do us the honor of lighting the torch at the opening ceremony. *(The fan-waver steps out as well behind her.)* You'd be the very first dragon in the history of the Equestria Games to do so.

Spike: *(normal accent)* Of course I'll do it! *(Close-up.)* And, bonus, I can do it with my fire breath.

(He demonstrates with a quick jet of flame and a grin—but a longer shot reveals that he has inadvertently incinerated the giant palm leaf. Smugness turns into chagrin when he finally takes note of the boo-boo, and he lets go with a sheepish laugh.)

(Dissolve to a long overhead shot of the stadium outside the Crystal Castle, packed with cheering spectators in all three tiers of its seating, and zoom in slowly. The hexagonal grass playing field has been set up with equipment for various events, and a broad semicircular balcony projects from the bottom edge of the highest tier. Resting on this is a giant metal caldron on a pedestal, with a framework of spiraling metal rods projecting upward from it. An entrance tunnel empties onto the field; cut to its mouth. Ponies carrying flags of many hues and designs wait in here, rank on rank, with Scootaloo at the front; she has donned her crash helmet and is standing on her scooter; the Ponyville flag planted on the rear end. Shining Armor, wearing the full purple/gold armor he last used in “A Canterlot Wedding,” paces in front of the assembly.)

Shining: Places for the procession, everypony! Two minutes!

(His departure reveals Bloom and Sweetie right up next to their friend. Cut to a set of box seats at the highest level of the top tier, populated by a double row of dignitaries and dominated by thrones for the four Princesses. Left to right: Twilight, Celestia, Luna, Cadence—each appropriately colored and decorated with a stylized version of its occupant’s cutie mark on the high back. Twilight’s seat is the only one empty for the moment; she emerges from a rear entrance, wearing her small gold tiara. After a slightly puzzled look around, she spots the other three royals. She bows to them, smiling with relief and briefly spreading her wings, and Celestia nods gently and motions toward the empty throne. Suddenly self-conscious again, the late arrival steps over and takes her seat; just as quickly, she breaks into a grin and the camera follows her eyes to the other end of the row. Cadence grins and waves, and Twilight returns the gesture before peering intently ahead and downward. Zoom out and tilt down quickly to frame Applejack, Pinkie Pie, and Rarity sitting just past the bottom edge of the box seats. The pink bundle of energy laughs and cheers while bouncing in place, and the other two smile at each other and turn their eyes toward the field.)

(Cut to Spike and Ms. Harshwhinny—Ms. H for short—walking along an interior corridor. She has a badge pinned to her blazer.)

Ms. H: And you’re quite certain you also understand exactly what you’re supposed to do?
(Close-up of him.)

Spike: I stand where you tell me until you give me the signal, and then I walk over and light the torch. *(Pan/tilt up to her.)*

Ms. H: Mmm. Couldn’t be simpler.

(Cut to just behind the pair; they are approaching the corridor’s end, which gives onto the balcony on which the caldron stands. The screen fills with the bright light washing in from outside and gradually fades to white, then fades in to the balcony itself. The camera is positioned in the mouth of the corridor, pointed directly at the torch, and zooms in slowly on it. Ms. H stands a distance back, and a ladder has been positioned to allow access to the top section. Cut to Spike, a couple of guards on duty at the corridor exit behind him, and zoom in slowly on his dumbfounded expression. His face falls with sudden panic, and he pulls in a shallow breath and utters a couple of terrified little noises, shaking where he stands as the background lighting dims behind him.)

(Cut to Ms. H, now walking along the balcony; the light returns to normal, and she throws an annoyed glance over her shoulder and stops.)

Ms. H: Mr. The Dragon! *(Back to him; she continues o.s.)* Are you coming? *(Her again; she voices a barely audible snort.)* Honestly. Would somepony help him walk?

(Lowering their heads, the guards bulldoze the stricken dragon across the floor. Cut to the ground-level tunnel, where the Cloudsdale aerial relay team flies in—Spitfire, Soarin', Fleetfoot, preceded by one of their cheerleaders as seen in "Rainbow Falls" with the city's flag flying from a pole in her teeth. The three are wearing sleeveless blue logo-marked jerseys and white shorts with rainbow striping around each leg, and Fleetfoot also sports the sunglasses she used during the qualifying rounds in that earlier episode.)

Shining: Now, please welcome the delegation from Ponyville!

(Bloom and Sweetie hold up a hoop covered with paper that shows the town's logo of a heart and two rearing fillies.)

Bloom, Sweetie: PONYVILLE FOREVER! YAAAAY!

(Right on cue, the third member of the crew bursts through the hoop on her scooter. Behind her come Rainbow, Fluttershy, and Bulk in time with the next three lines; each wears a sleeveless yellow jersey emblazoned with the Ponyville logo and a pair of white shorts.)

Rainbow: Awesome!

Fluttershy: Yay.

Bulk: *(flexing)* YEAH!!

(One more pegasus emerges onto the field—Derpy Hooves, kitted out like the others. Applejack, Pinkie, and Rarity cheer wildly for their entrance, as does Twilight in her elevated seat. The display of gusto surprises Celestia a good bit, but she smiles gently at it as her faithful student settles down. On the field, Scootaloo motors to the edge of a small hill on which the other delegations' flags have been planted; she now has hers in her teeth, and she sticks it in among them. Pan away from her to frame all the other standards on display, then cut back to the entire Ponyville contingent now on the grass. She zooms back to stop alongside Bloom and Sweetie.)

(Cut to a long shot behind all the assembled squads and tilt slowly up toward the torch, then cut to Spike and Ms. H near the base of its ladder. She stomps a hoof twice, but he is too freaked out to notice. Long pause, capped by a withering glare.)

Ms. H: This is the signal!

(Two more stomps fail to snap him out of his teeth-chattering freeze.)

Ms. H: *(deliberately, stomping three times)* I'm giving you the signal now! *(He starts sweating now; she leans into his face.)* Mr. The Dragon!

(At long last, he gets his limbs moving and begins to climb the ladder. Cut to the top end; he gains the last rungs and his eyes pop all over again, the camera zooming out to frame the spiraling framework mounted before him. He stands up to full height, inhales to get every last molecule of oxygen his lungs will hold—and then comes over with a violent coughing fit the moment he begins to blow it out. No fire, only a few feeble wisps of smoke.)

Spike: Come on, Spike! Calm yourself!

(Close-up; he straightens up again, the camera tracking slowly around as he pivots slowly to take in the extent of the crowd.)

Spike: Count to ten! One...two...three... thousand... *(slowly building panic)* ...fourteen thousand...twenty thousand...*thirty thousand!*

(Sweat begins to run down the scaly violet countenance; up in the box seats, trepidation has begun to take hold on the nobles' faces. Among them are Prince Blueblood and the stallion and mare from Saddle Arabia who appeared at the end of "Magic Duel.")

Cadence: What's wrong?

(The unstrung dragon pulls in another breath and blows, but all he gets is another little puff of smoke that dissipates before his eyes.)

Spike: Tell me this isn't happening!

(One stallion in the crowd starts chewing his hooves; Applejack grimaces; Pinkie hunkers down and covers her eyes; Rarity just stares with clear concern. As the sweat pours down Spike's face, his teeth chatter even more uncontrollably and his eyes dart all over the place as if hoping that the torch might spontaneously combust. Cut to Twilight and zoom in slowly.)

Twilight: Equestria, we have a problem.

(Snap to black.)

Act Two

(Opening shot: fade in to a long shot of Spike and Ms. H at the still-cold torch, panning slowly away from the balcony. An ominous silence has settled over the crowd. Cut to an extreme close-up of Spike's frantic, jittering eyes and sweaty temples, then zoom out to frame all of him. For the third time, he hitches in a monster breath; for the second time, it comes out as a coughing jag.)

Ms. H: *(from o.s.)* Mr. The Dragon! *(Pan slightly to frame her at base level.)* Would you light the torch already? *(Focus shifts to him.)*

Spike: I don't know what it is, but I-I just don't have the stuff today! Did you bring a match?

Ms. H: You're a fire-breathing dragon.

Spike: *(coughing, hoarsely)* And some cough drops, maybe?

(She aims her narrowed blue eyes upward in an icy glare, accompanied by a frightening little growl.)

Spike: *(small voice, sweating)* Never mind. I'll keep trying.

(Suck in the air. Blow. Fall on face with no result. Luna hides a very bored yawn behind a front hoof; Cadence turns to address a unicorn guard stallion posted at the entrance next to her end of the row.)

Cadence: Somepony go down and help him!

(As the guard hurries out, Twilight grimaces at the unfolding debacle. Back to Spike, who plants a hand on his spines and flicks his own head back three times as if he were trying to ignite a cigarette lighter. The move is the same one that Applejack used on him in "Apple Family Reunion," but unlike then, it yields only a fizz of sparks.)

Spike: Light! Light!

(He strains forward over the top of the ladder, grunting with the exertion. Twilight cuts her eyes from side to side; apparently satisfying herself that the coast is clear, she puts a front hoof to her horn and warms up. The baby dragon's eyes are squeezed shut, so that he does not see the magic field building inside the caldron—at least not until it erupts in a gush of yellow flame that reaches nearly to the top of the spiral framework. The camera zooms out quickly to frame the entire torch, the fire subsiding to the caldron's lip and turning pale blue. Spike is left wearing a scatter of soot stains and a totally dumbfounded expression as the crowd breaks into wild cheering. He just stares at the display, the flames' reflection playing across his pupils, and Luna snaps to and takes notice as Celestia and Cadence smile at each other.)

Twilight: *(wiping her forehead)* Phew!

(Cut to the base of the ladder. The unicorn guard dispatched by Cadence now stands here alongside an incredulous Ms. H, who lets off a small sigh as Spike slides down.)

Ms. H: How did you do that?

Spike: I'm...not sure.

Ms. H: Oh, well... *(laughing nervously, walking off with guard)* ...better late than never. *(Cut to Shining and the delegations.)*

Shining: Let the Games begin!

(Cut to a close-up of the flaming torch, seen from overhead, and pan slightly to frame an enthralled Spike watching it. In close-up, an idea sets him to scratching his chin thoughtfully. Dissolve to the exterior of the stadium; ponies are making their way out from the main entrance, while Applejack, Pinkie, Rainbow, and Rarity watch from across the street. A close-up of the quartet picks out the Ponyville pennant in Pinkie's teeth.)

Rarity: *(pointing)* Ooh! There are our little superstars! *(Pinkie hops in place as Sweetie gallops up to the unicorn.)* You were fabulous! *(Bloom races over to Applejack.)*

Applejack: Made me sit up proud like a cornstalk in August. *(Scootaloo gallops to Rainbow, having shed her helmet and scooter.)*

Rainbow: *(giving her a noogie)* You done good, squirt.

Twilight: *(from o.s.)* You three really were wonderful.

(Cut to her in midair, descending slowly toward them and no longer wearing her tiara.)

Twilight: But does anypony know what was going on with Spike?

Applejack: He sure seemed to be havin' a tough time of it out there. *(Touch down on the end of this.)*

Rarity: He put things right in time, though.

Twilight: Actually, i-it was me. I didn't want him to be embarrassed, so I cast a secret spell to light it for him. *(Wince.)*

Rarity: Oh, dear. Have you told him?

Twilight: No, but he might have figured it out on his own.

Applejack: You gotta tell him, just in case. *(Close-up of Twilight.)*

Twilight: I know. I'm just afraid of how he'll take it. I know what pride he takes in a job well done.

Rainbow: *(from o.s., softly)* Psst! *(Cut to frame all eight.)* Here he comes now! Act casual!

(Twilight backs up toward the others as Spike trudges into view toward them, scrubbed clean and with head hung low. Rainbow whips out her favorite black sunglasses and puts them on, crossing her forelegs and dropping to her haunches.)

Rainbow: *(normal volume)* 'Sup?

Twilight: *(smiling)* Spike! *(He stops.)* Is everything okay?

Spike: I-I guess. I don't know. The weirdest thing happened down there. *(Cut to Twilight.)*

Twilight: Yeah. About that. I—

Spike: *(from o.s.)* I mean— *(Back to him.)* —there I was, trying to light the torch with all of Equestria watching, and feeling like the hugest failure ever, and then the thing just... *(snapping fingers; a spark flies)* ...lit! It was amazing.

Twilight: *(relieved)* Oh! *(Rainbow takes off her shades.)* Phew! I was afraid you'd be upset.

Spike: Upset? Are you kidding? Why would I be upset to discover I can light fire... *(dramatically, fingers to temples)* ...with my mind?

Twilight, Applejack, Rainbow, Rarity: Huh?What?

(A stallion's voice interrupts; during the next line, cut to the speaker and a mare, both crystal ponies, walking up to the scene.)

Stallion 1: Look, look, it's the Great and Honorable Spike, the Brave and Glorious!

Mare: Can we get your autograph?

Spike: Sure!

(He is given a sheet of paper, pulls out a pencil, and gets to writing.)

Stallion 1: How you saved our empire last time you were here was really amazing!

Spike: *(tucking pencil behind ear)* Aw, you know what else is amazing? *(holding page at arm's length)* Watch this!

(He fixes it with a full-intensity glare, dead silent, as the two trade a perplexed look. After perhaps four seconds, he squeezes his eyes shut and lets a prolonged groan of effort escape his gritted teeth. Three seconds later, he relaxes himself and regards the sheet with a fierce smile—even though it has shown no sign whatever of kindling a flame from his mental push.)

Spike: Don't worry.

(He lowers the page, giving a view of its front side for the first time: a picture of himself, freshly autographed.)

Spike: Once it bursts into flames through brainpower, I-I'll send another one for you. Promise.

(He lays it across his forehead, concentrating and grunting again, and the camera pans from him to a flummoxed Applejack and Rarity and their sisters. Twilight, Rainbow, and Scootaloo are equally at a loss; back to an extreme close-up of the sweating, straining face.)

Twilight: *(from o.s., whispering)* Spike. *(Zoom out to frame her bending down to him.)* May I have a word with you a moment? *(She walks off.)*

Spike: *(smiling, passing photo to Stallion 1's mouth)* Uh, you better be careful with that. *(following Twilight away)* Might burst into flames later! *(Chuckle; he leans back into view.)* Delayed reaction.

(Off he goes at a run, leaving the stallion and mare to try and wrap their heads around this string of events, and catches up to Twilight standing farther down the block. He has disposed of his pencil.)

Spike: Hey, Twi. What is it? *(He cuts her off before she can speak.)* Hold on, hold on. *(fingers to temples)* Gimme a second. *(Zoom in slowly.)* If I can set fire to stuff with my mind, mind-reading must be just around the corner! *(dramatically)* And I predict that you are about to ask me to set fire to something *with my mind!* *(She taps him, bringing him out of his reverie.)*

Twilight: No! Because you can't.

Spike: Oh, really? So how do you explain what happened down there in front of thousands and thousands of—

Twilight: I did it, Spike. I cast a spell to do it for you.

Spike: *(suddenly deflated)* In front of...thousands and...thousands... *(His whole body droops toward the street.)*

Twilight: I'm sorry, Spike. I-I just couldn't stand to see you stuck like that. *(lifting his chin)* You understand, don't you? *(The reptilian eyes start to fill with tears.)*

Spike: I...I... *(walking away)* ...I-I need to be alone right now.

Twilight: *(calling after him)* Spike?

(As he plods down the street, a passing crystal pony stallion notices and doubles back to him.)

Stallion 2: O Great and Honorable Spike, the Brave and Glorious, can I get your autograph? *(Close-up of the glum little guy.)*

Spike: Sorry. You should probably ask somebody special instead.

(Pan/tilt up to frame the sparkling pony, who stops dead and fixes a disappointed gaze toward the retreating back. Wipe to the stadium's athletic field, set with an obstacle course of hoops and other challenges, and pan to frame several pegasi—and one griffon—ready at the starting line. Strung above their heads is a blue banner decorated with a gold-tinted pegasus in flight, leaving a bright yellow contrail. The presence of Fluttershy, Rainbow, and Bulk tells right away which event this is.)

Shining: *(from o.s.)* Our next event...

(One hovering stallion descends among the others; cut to within the stadium lobby. Applejack and Rarity are among the spectators walking in.)

Shining: *(from field)* ...the aerial relay!

(Pinkie hops in behind the pair, no longer carrying her pennant. Zoom in on the three.)

Applejack: That's Dash and Fluttershy! *(Lyra Heartstrings crosses the lobby.)*

Pinkie: Oh, no! *(galloping head)* We can't be late for that!

(The others head after her, passing a uniformed security-guard stallion: gray coat, short blue beard and tail, dark gray overcoat with red/gold trim, white shirt, blue tie, blue hat with red stripe and gold badge hiding his mane, sunglasses, radio earpiece. He lets Applejack pass, but stops Rarity.)

Security guard 1: Miss, step right over here.

(Zoom out slightly. Nearby are two arches for ponies to walk through, not unlike metal detectors used at airports. Lyra walks through one, the camera panning to follow her and put the stallion out of frame. As she exits, a curtain of blue-green magic billows out around her and a wisp of it

comes loose, absorbing into her horn. Another guard stallion, this one with a yellow beard, keeps watch at this end. Applejack is bypassing the entire assembly.)

Security guard 1: *(from o.s.)* Unicorns will no longer be admitted without a disabling spell... *(Back to him and Rarity; she walks ahead, glowering.)* ...to prevent cheating. And make sure you don't even try casting a spell, or we'll know it.

(On the end of this, cut to the exit side of the arches, the magic present as a shimmering sheet that takes her a little effort to push through. Just as with Lyra, a bit of the energy soaks into her horn.)

Rarity: Hmph!

(Off she goes. Cut to the field, the camera positioned behind some of the cheering, pennant-waving crowd on the lowest tier. Pegasi are zooming through the aerial relay course; overhead, five racers, including Soarin' and Fluttershy, are lined up and ready to take the horseshoe baton from their teammates. Soarin' is first to get moving once a visibly winded Fleetfoot passes off to him, and Fluttershy is last, having to wait some seconds for Bulk's tiny wings to bring him close enough to make the transfer. Fleetfoot is no longer wearing the shades she used in the opening ceremony. Cut to Applejack, Pinkie, and Rainbow in the stands; the pink mare has procured a bag of popcorn and is gleefully munching away. Close-up of her.)

Pinkie: If Ponyville medals here, we'll have eight medals so far, putting us tied for the lead with Cloudsdale!

(She gestures widely on this line, scattering popcorn everywhere, and the camera zooms out on the end of it as she plants the bag upside down onto the head of a stallion in the next row. Two mares sitting near him aim dirty looks up at Pinkie, having borne the collateral damage of her snack attack.)

Pinkie: *(suddenly worried)* Unless Cloudsdale medals here too.

(She mopes at the thought. Cut to another set of five hovering racers, Rainbow and Soarin' among them. The latter's presence indicates that he has already passed off to Spitfire for the anchor leg; as soon as Rainbow gets the baton from Fluttershy, she is off in a Technicolor blur. Tilt down from the course to frame Spike walking at the edge of the field.)

Spike: Ms. Harshwhinny?

(He finds her at the mouth of a corridor, marking a checklist on a clipboard held in the mouth of the security guard who was manning the unicorn-disabling spell station.)

Spike: I know you're really busy, but—

Ms. H: *(annoyed)* What is it?

Spike: Maybe there's something else I can do for the Games—you know, something really worthy of the Crystal Empire's admiration? *(She wheels around to him.)*

Ms. H: What are you talking about? You lit the torch for the whole thing!

Spike: *(kicking at dirt)* Uh, well, actually... *(stammering a bit)* ...that wasn't really—

Ms. H: *That wasn't worthy enough for you? (rolling eyes)* Oh, for pony's sake! *(walking away along corridor)* Next thing you know, you'll be asking to put on a rock concert. *(Groan.)* Celebrities. *(Spike has a brainstorm.)*

Spike: Wait. That's it!

(He hurries away, Rainbow and Spitfire hurtling through a hoop and staying neck and neck through a hairpin turn. Neither can gain more than a few inches on the other as they charge down a straightaway, but the Wonderbolt captain picks up a little distance on the final upward turn and is first through the center of the floating finish-line hoop that has a checkered-flag barrier strung over it. Wild cheering from the multitude, up in the stands, Pinkie has acquired a new bag of popcorn. The next three lines overlap slightly.)

Pinkie: *(scattering a few kernels)* Yaaay! Whee!

Rarity: Second place!

Applejack: Woo-hoo! We got silver!

(Up in the air, Rainbow flies up to Spitfire; the two smile and trade a high five to congratulate each other for a race well run. Dissolve to field level, where the course has been cleared off and a three-level medal podium now stands. Cloudsdale's team of Wonderbolts stands at the gold position in the center; Ponyville at silver to their left, a team of griffons at bronze on Cloudsdale's right. Shining paces in front of the podium. The griffons are wearing their team logos on bands around their forelegs. All three teams have their respective medals around their necks.)

Shining: Congratulations to all our medalists. And now, the anthem of— *(Zoom out quickly to put Spike in the fore, a short distance away.)*

Spike: And I shall do the honor of singing!

(Cheers from the crowd; Shining crosses to him as he happily acknowledges their adulation.)

Shining: *(softly)* Spike, what are you doing?

Spike: You know how they always just play the music? *(loudly, so all can hear)* Well, I know all the words to our anthem and will sing them for you now, loud and proud, to the enjoyment of all!

(Redoubled cheering; the lights on the field dim and a pegasus mare flies in, carrying a spotlight which she trains on Shining. A hush falls as he speaks.)

Shining: And now...um...the Cloudsdale anthem as sung by...Spike!

(The beam shifts to the dragon, to the sound of fresh cheers. Shining's words hit him like a baseball bat to the kidneys—clearly he was expecting to hear Ponyville mentioned instead.)

Spike: Wait! The *Cloudsdale* anthem? (*Shining leans down to him.*)

Shining: (*whispering*) They only play the anthem for the winner, Spike. The Wonderbolts are from Cloudsdale. (*He backs off.*)

Spike: But...but I don't know the words to the Cloudsdale anthem! I've never even heard it!

(*Too late, if the popping flashbulbs are any indication. Cut to behind him and pan slowly across the fully packed house.*)

Mare voice: Sing for us, O Great and Honorable Spike, the Brave and Glorious!

(*Close-up; he clears his throat.*)

Stately orchestral march, moderate 4 (D major)

Spike sings with plenty of fear and very little regard for pitch, often falling out of time, stuffing extra syllables into a line, or stretching too few of them out to fill one

Spike: Oh, we're the Wonderbolts and we're super-fast
And we're from Cloudsdale, which is a part of Equestria

(*Nervous laugh.*)

That we like best, and we're proud and we're fast

And we like it because it really has nice trees

(*Cut to a slow pan through the audience, whose reactions range from muted horror to disgust to barely contained fury.*)

Yeah, uh, we love the town because it's so cool

And-and we like to fly really fast and everything like that

(*Applejack and Rarity stare aghast; Pinkie grins, bobbing her head back and forth and no longer holding her popcorn. Spike sighs.*)

I kinda wish this was over

'Cause it is...n't...yet

(*Back to him, sweating profusely.*)

Over...now

(*Twilight, in her box seat and wearing her tiara, puts a hoof to her face; elsewhere, a mare covers a filly's ears. Pan to her neighbor, a stallion in formal dress that includes a top hat.*)

Oh, we're the Wonderbolts and we're super-fast

And we're Cloud—from Cloudsdale

(*He yanks the hat down to cover his entire head; the Wonderbolt trio can only stare pop-eyed at this musical disaster.*)

We like it there 'cause it's really nice and the trees are cool

(*Back to him.*)

And I hope this is over now

(*Now Fluttershy and Rainbow—both born and raised in the sky city, recall—respectively cringe and gape at the mess he is making of the anthem. Fluttershy turns her head aside and shifts half her mane to block out the sight.*)

And...it keeps going on, la-la-la

(Long overhead shot of him and the podium.)

And we really love the town
(Close-up.) So I wish that this song
Was over now...over...now
Over...now

Song ends

(As the music finally and mercifully comes to a stop, he sketches out a halfhearted attempt at a bow. The spotlight flicks off and the lights come up on the field—and a baby's strident cry can easily be heard over the crowd's murmurs of disapproval. Cut to a long shot of the tableau, zooming out slowly.)

Pinkie: *(from far back in crowd)* Nailed it!

(Snap to black.)

Act Three

(Opening shot: fade in to the interior of a room whose door stands open. The Crusaders poke their heads into view around the frame; a wardrobe stands near the door.)

Bloom: Spike! You comin'?

(Zoom out to frame the entire room—hotel accommodations, judging from the twin beds, couch, and dresser at which the dragon stands gloomily.)

Spike: Nah. *(Cut to just behind him; clothes and an open suitcase are scattered on the floor.)* I got this stuff to pack up. *(The fillies step inside.)*

Scootaloo: But you've been moping in here for almost the entire Games!

Sweetie: And tonight's the closing ceremony!

Spike: *(sighing, carrying folded clothes across)* Which means we leave tomorrow. *(Set them in the suitcase.)* Ergo, the packing.

(Red-gold, violet, and green eyes flick to each other for a concerned moment, then aim straight ahead again, and their owners turn and slowly plod out the door. Dissolve to a long shot of the stadium exterior at night, zooming in slowly; the crowd's cheering can be clearly heard even at this distance. Cut to a long overhead shot of Shining walking to center field, then to a close-up.)

Shining: And so the Games conclude as they always do—with the ice archery finals!

(As he finishes, he gestures to one side and the camera pans in that direction to frame four round targets set up in front of a blue crystal backdrop. Each target is painted blue, marked off radially in six sections, and emblazoned with a large six-pointed snowflake at its center. The field has

been scored from side to side with white lines to divide it into lanes, with each target standing at the end of one. Cut to the opposite side and pan along the four ponies taking their positions. On the ground in front of each are two items: a basket of arrows and a bow standing vertically on a support post. Two of the four, a stallion and mare, are wearing Cloudsdale colors.)

Shining: *(from o.s.)* Ice archers, take your places! *(Crowd cheers; close-up of Applejack and Rarity in the stands.)*

Applejack: Too bad Ponyville doesn't have any ice archers competin'. We don't have anyone to root for. *(Pan to frame Pinkie on her other side.)*

Pinkie: It's okay. Ponyville has thirty-seven medals and Cloudsdale, thirty-six. *(hugging Applejack)* So looks like we'll be medal champs of the Games anyway. *(letting go)* Woo-hoo!

(A further pan frames Rainbow now sitting with the trio; she has stripped off her Ponyville jersey/shorts and is not wearing her medal.)

Rainbow: But Cloudsdale has two ice archery finalists down there right now!

(Cut to a slow pan across the four competitors, all furiously grabbing/nocking/firing arrows with their teeth.)

Rainbow: *(from o.s.)* If they both place, Cloudsdale wins the medal count! *(Back to the four; Pinkie leans into her face, suddenly panicked.)*

Pinkie: So you're saying it all comes down to this one event?

Applejack: Pretty much.

(The four-legged bundle of energy claps her front hooves to her cheeks as if trying to keep her face from exploding. Cut to a long shot of the crowd.)

Pinkie: *(jumping in place)* Oh my gosh, oh my gosh, oh my gosh!

(Twilight descends from the box seats, but stops when Pinkie bounds up from her spot and balances on a nearby stallion's head.)

Pinkie: Twilight! Come take this extra seat next to me and freak out over the medal count! I'll show you how. *(jumping everywhere)* Oh my gosh, oh my gosh, oh my gosh, oh my gosh!

Twilight: Actually, I was looking for Spike. Have you seen him? *(Cut to the Crusaders in the seats.)*

Bloom: He wouldn't come.

Sweetie: We tried to talk him into it.

Scotaloo: But he wouldn't listen! *(Close-up of Pinkie.)*

Pinkie: You can have his extra seat, though.

(Surprise registers itself on the pink face, and the camera zooms out to show that she is now the only Ponyville resident in the immediate area. The fact that she has wound up atop the same stallion's head after her gamboling earns her a couple of funny/dirty looks.)

Pinkie: Uh...Twi?

(Cut to an extreme close-up of a feather drifting slowly downward and being blown back up, in time with a series of sharp exhalations. A longer shot frames the cause—Spike, once again stretched out on a couch. This one, though, is the couch in his hotel room, and there are no attendants to fan him or feed him gems.)

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

(He snaps to with a gasp that sucks the feather down his throat. A still-longer shot points out the fully packed suitcase now standing on the floor and the lack of scattered clothing items.)

Twilight: *(from o.s.)* You here? *(He coughs the feather out and jumps down.)*

Spike: Uh, yeah!

(It takes the work of a split-second to pop the latches and send the suitcase contents flying in all directions, most of them settling down in a heap to bury him.)

Spike: I'm super-busy! *(Chuckle; head pokes out.)* Look at all this packing left to do! *(Twilight walks over; he stands up with another chuckle.)* Crazy, right?

Twilight: No more hiding out! You're coming with me—*now*.

Spike: *(sighing)* Okay, fine. I'll come. *(He dons a pair of sunglasses...)* Can I at least wear these?

(...and a hat that has landed within easy reach. Cut to one of the ice archers, still letting go with shot after shot, and zoom out/pan to frame the other three doing likewise. Up in the seats, the Crusaders watch intently as Rainbow leans over to them.)

Rainbow: Those aren't your average arrows.

(Cut to one of the targets, so far unmarked. As she continues, an arrow strikes it and a small patch of ice spreads outward from the point of impact. More hits are scored on all targets as the archers keep up their fusillade.)

Rainbow: *(from o.s.)* They freeze whatever part of the target they hit. Whoever encases their entire target in ice first, wins. *(Another hit; back to the four, panning to the Cloudsdale stallion.)* Keep your eye on number seven from Cloudsdale. He's the favorite.

(On the end of this, cut to his target, which quickly takes a fresh string of hits. The stallion in the next lane stares popeyed for a moment, then readies another arrow. Cut to a close-up of Twilight, walking along.)

Twilight: Honestly, Spike, I don't see why you're being so hard on yourself.

(Pan back from her to frame the little guy, wearing the hat and shades as well as a trenchcoat with flipped-up collar to hide as much of himself as possible.)

Spike: I let everypony down—twice. You never let anypony down, so you have no idea what that's like.

(Cut to a longer shot of the pair on the end of this; they have emerged from the entrance tunnel onto the edge of the field. Twilight stops short, then Spike.)

Twilight: Are you kidding? I've *totally* let ponies down. That's not the point. The torch got lit, the aerial relay teams got their medals, no harm, no foul.

Spike: *(thumbing back over his shoulder)* Can we at least watch 'em inside there? *(walking back)* I'm not sure I'm ready to face crowds in the stands just yet.

(She, meanwhile, turns her attention to the raging shootout. Arrow after arrow whistles down the range, icing over every bit of target wood they touch. The stallion who was previously distracted by #7's shooting stares again for a moment, then gets a fresh arrow—only to upset his basket as he steps forward to nock it. It throws him off balance and he topples backward, pulling the bowstring in his teeth hard enough to angle the bow sharply upward. When he lets go, the projectile flashes into the sky, sailing past the uppermost tiers of seats, and disappears into a gigantic cloud floating over the stadium.)

(Within seconds, jagged hunks of ice have started to protrude from both the upper and lower surfaces, created by the arrow's freezing effect. The whole cloud slowly begins to sink, prompting a round of stunned gasps followed by a general panic and rush for the exits.)

Shining: No!

(Spike stops his retreat and pulls off his sunglasses to get a good look as Twilight's jaw falls open to full extension. In the royal box seats, Celestia and Luna gasp and stand up in their chairs, preparing to go airborne; in short order, they, Fluttershy, Rainbow, and a host of other pegasi zoom up toward the descending cloud, now completely frozen over into an iceberg. Like her teammate, Fluttershy has removed her medal and jersey/shorts. Rainbow gets under it and braces herself against a not-so-jagged patch of the surface.)

Rainbow: Steer it towards the field, away from the crowds! *(Pan to Fluttershy following suit on the end of this, then cut to Shining.)*

Shining: Somepony cut the disabling spell! *(Security Guard 1 is at the tunnel, along with another one.)*

Security guard 2: There isn't time!

(The green eyes under the brim of the borrowed hat narrow in sudden angry resolve. Twilight prepares to take off and join the flying squad, but before she can do more than spread her wings, her number-one assistant is rushing past and throwing aside his disguise.)

Spike: Dash! Fluttershy! *(Jump toward Shining.)* Move!

(Landing on the stallion's armored back, he propels himself upward off it like a trampoline. His two winged friends follow orders, as do all the other pegasi in their vicinity, and he hopscotches his way across several flyers' backs before pulling in a mighty inhalation. The pale yellow-green chest inflates to bursting...the cheeks distend to a degree that would make Dizzy Gillespie proud...and this time when he lets it go, he is rewarded with a gusher of yellow/orange fire that quickly spreads to envelop the entire underside of the falling iceberg. Steam boils outward, filling the screen with dense white clouds.)

(Cut to the field, where Spike drops into view to make a commendable two-point landing on both feet. After a quick look upward, he reaches down past the bottom edge of the screen and comes up with an umbrella, which he opens. The field is immediately hit with a short, intense downpour from the melted monster iceberg that leaves him standing in a puddle, but he remains perfectly dry. After he has put the umbrella back where he found it, the crowd lets go with one of its most vociferous cheers of the episode, surprising him considerably as he looks around himself.)

(Dissolve to him walking toward the tunnel mouth; all six Ponyville mares gather here to meet him.)

Rainbow: *(amid others' exclamations)* That was awesome!

(He just stands mute, his mind still jammed up, until Cadence's foreleg touches his shoulder. Looking back toward the source, he finds both that Princess and the two from Canterlot standing right behind him.)

Cadence: I just wanted to thank you personally for saving those ponies and the Games—*(prostrating herself)*—O Great and Honorable Spike, the Brave and Glorious. You must be very proud.

Spike: *(glumly)* I guess.

All others: *You guess?!?!? (Cadence is now standing again.)*

Spike: I just saw what needed to be done and reacted. Just so happens I can breathe fire, and...if any of you could do that, you'd have done the same.

Applejack: *(crossing to him)* Forgive me for bein' blunt, Spike, but you're not makin' a lick of sense. *(He gives an indifferent little grunt.)*

Spike: It's just how I feel. *(Twilight flies over, landing behind him.)*

Twilight: Wait a second. I think I get it! You keep saying you let everypony down, but we all keep saying you didn't. You know who is disappointed in you, Spike? *(Closer shot of the two.)* You. *(Zoom in slowly on him.)* And only you can make it right with you again.

(The camera movement puts her o.s. on the end of this line.)

Twilight: *(now o.s.)* What would that take, Spike? *(He utters an indecisive little grunt.)*

Spike: I don't know. *(Cut to frame both again.)* Can you turn back time? 'Cause I'd sure like a do-over on that opening ceremony.

(This remark sets a couple of wheels turning under the gold tiara and striped dark blue mane.)

Cadence: We can't turn back time, but would you do me the great honor of lighting fireworks in my place at the closing ceremonies tonight? *(Back to Twilight and Spike on the second half of this.)*

Twilight: *(smiling)* Come on, Spike. You saved the Crystal Empire—twice! I think you can light some fireworks.

(Raising his eyes, he is met with a round of serene nods from the other three sovereigns.)

Spike: Mmm—I guess I have to at least give it a shot.

(To which the other nine react with cheers, nods, and assorted words of encouragement. Dissolve to two flags fluttering on poles in the stadium—one for Cloudsdale, another showing a griffon's claw superimposed on a lightning bolt. A third, taller pole extends up and o.s. between them, and the camera tilts up to follow the Ponyville flag as it is raised amid a burst of cheers. Cut to Pinkie in the stands.)

Pinkie: We did it! *(leaning to Applejack, Bloom next to her)* Ponyville won the medal count! And only by one medal!

Rainbow: *(from o.s., smugly)* Hmm!

(Pan quickly down the row, past Rarity and Sweetie, and stop on Fluttershy, Rainbow, and Scootaloo. The two winged mares are wearing their medals from the aerial relay.)

Rainbow: Wonder which medal that was. *(They hold them up; zoom in slightly.)* Bam!

Applejack: *(hugging Bloom, giving her a noogie)* How's it feel to have opened the best Equestria Games in Ponyville history, squirt?

Bloom: Probably as good as it feels to close 'em.

(Down on the field, a formation of flag-carrying crystal pony guard stallions marches past Spike, Cadence, Shining, and Ms. H. The stern inspector leans down toward the dragon with a smile.)

Ms. H: Okay. It's time.

(A few steps bring him to a row of bottle rockets planted in the grass; he stops at one end, glancing nervously around himself.)

Spike: *(voice over, dictating)* "You know, it's kinda weird. No matter how many times others tell you you're great, all the praise in the world means nothing if you don't feel it inside."

(He is planning out an entry for the group's shared journal, evidently. Hesitation gives way to a sudden finding of mojo, and he pulls in a gigantic breath and releases a jet of green flame that

ignites every fuse. The rockets launch in quick succession, leaving their sticks behind, and he watches with a smile as they explode overhead and the flares of color play over his face.)

Spike: *(voice over)* “Sometimes to feel good about yourself, you gotta let go of the past. That way, when the time comes to let your greatness fly...”

(Tilt up into the sky, framing the vivid pyrotechnic display in full swing.)

Spike: *(voice over)* “...you’ll be able to light up the whole sky.”

(Fade to black.)