Heyo, ponynet! It's me, Pony Priest, and it's pony time to pony pony! Or, what I meant to say was, it's me, Alicorn Priest, and it's time to rewatch the series! In honor of season 4, I'm gonna watch every episode one by one and analyze/describe/talk about random stuff I find interesting! I have no idea what's going to happen, so let's just have fun and go nuts! (I guess I'll have to focus on friendship moments a tad, just to tie it in to my last post.)

So, anywho, let's go all the way back to the beginning, to episode 1: Friendship is Magic, part 1. Pretty straightforward title. It's a pilot, whaddya expect? But let's consider what this episode means. Remember what it was like to go back and watch this episode for the very first time. You may have been a 4channer on October 10, ready to rip into the latest debacle of the pony universe. Maybe you were a pony fanatic, all the way back from G1, ready to see what Hasbro wants to sell you now. Maybe you were like me, and this was your episode to convince you that all the hoopla you'd heard online was sincere appreciation and not a massive in-joke. In any case, you turn on your TV, Youtube, or stream, and get ready to watch a show that will change your life forever.

“Once upon a time, in the magical land of Equestria...”

Cold Open:

...You know, I have no idea how I made it past this opening. Okay, the storybook opening is kind of neat, and the creation of Night Mare Moon is actually kind of awesome, but the rest? “Equestria?” “Unicorn powers?” “Living together in harmony?” Gag. If there was one thing I could definitively place as the one thing that convinced me to continue watching, it would be Nicole Oliver as the narrator/Celestia (Celestia worship will probably be a running theme in these reviews, bear in mind). She is really selling these ideas, especially the ones that are less girly, more adventure-y. And then Twilight comes on, asks a simple question, and, well... that's it! That's their hook. It's got a little bit of everything floating around in it, and it's hidden just enough mystique in there to keep the plot going, so... yeah. It works.

Theme Song:

I won't mention the theme song from now on, but again, imagine yourself watching this for the very first time. You might remember the old theme, you might not, but you do know, “Oh no, this is going to be so girly...” And then BAM! Rainbow Dash swoops in and saves the day! The song gets a drum beat in the back, the tempo picks up, and the lyrics suddenly get, well, interesting! We see all of our characters doing stuff, but it kind of flies past really quickly, so we don't get too much of them other than their basic ideas, what they do, what they're like. It's sort of a micro-version of these first two episodes, interestingly enough. Oh, and this opening also totally ruins the reveal of who Celestia is and what she looks like in the second part, but it's okay because Celestia is awesome-looking in the opening. Man, she looks so majestic and regal and okay I'll stop now.

Part 1:

Oh noez, Purple Smart isn't a good friend! I wonder if she'll learn a lesson about friendship when this whole thing is over? Honestly, I think the Moondancer idea goes a *liiiittle* too long, but... eh. We need it to show that Twilight's a loner. Anyhow, Twilight does some

research. Interesting research, although it's... kind of stuff we already know. Just need to get the line about the stars aiding in her escape that they couldn't get in the opening.

Heh-heh, Spike can't spell precipice. I forgot that joke was funny. Oh, and the Night Mare Moon in the hourglass. That's pretty neat, and very subtle. Although... Twilight's kind of awful in this whole section. Thank Celestia for roughing off the edges in the episodes to come. And Spike's firebreathing is actually kind of intriguing. Wouldn't have expected that.

Ugh, I'm all over the place. Twilight landing in Ponyville! Aaaaannd... here comes Pinkie Pie. As we'll see throughout the series, Pinkie Pie is stupidly difficult to write for. Most of the time, she comes off as just grating, although now and then we get glimpses of true genius. Here, she's just kind of... eh. A little-over-the-top, but not obtrusively so. You know, it might have been interesting if we had no idea that Pinkie was important, and that this was just random Ponyville citizen #43, only later discovering that she's a critical player just like the others. Again, this was ruined in the theme song. Couldn't they have saved it for after the pilot? Ah well, we wouldn't have had the “BAM!” moment I mentioned before.

Next up is Applejack. Now, here's something interesting about Applejack. The first two times we see her (here and in the theme song), she's doing the same thing: working really hard, i.e. being awesome. Seriously, I think it's pretty interesting that Applejack's scene 1 is her being a workaholic. I could almost imagine them deciding to introduce her with the family scene later instead of with this, and it just seems... lesser to me. She's Southern, and by Southern, I mean “HOWDY Y'ALL!” Southern. It's... really overdone. To paraphrase Yahtzee Croshaw, “If you find the South offensive, then you will find Applejack offensively Southern.” I'll admit, I've learned about more types of apple dishes from here than I have anywhere else.

Hold on, I have an important point to make. This is the first in a series of scenes I'll call, “Hey, stranger! Wanna be friends?” scenes. There's this one scene from the Persona 4 comics by Hiimdaisy, where it says, “You've made friends with Yosuke! Yosuke will now **die for you**.” That's sort of how this comes off to me. I mean, really? You've known her for all of 30 seconds, she's shown no interest in you, your family, or your work, other than that it's done, and you're willing to add her to your family? Uhh... okay. Apparently ponies are super-duper friendly, cuz that wouldn't fly at all in the real world.

Next is Rainbow Dash's scene. Rainbow Dash is kind of fun. She gets dirty, she pulls pranks, she's lazy. She's probably the one I'd empathize with, were Twilight not me in purple and pink. Oh Twilight, you're such a snarker in this scene. It's wonderful, music to my ears. So, yeah. Rainbow Dash is cool. And I'd say Rainbow's is probably one of the better befriending scenes of the five.

When the hay is the next break?!

Anyway, Rarity scene time. She's sooooo girly! But you know what, I really don't consider it offensively so. You know why? Because there's just enough comedy in here to keep it from being “a day out in the mall with that female friend of yours who has to go into every fashion store you find.” Spike's precocious crush (Ooh, look at me, using my TVTropes words!) gives us some levity, along with Tabitha St. Germain's stellar delivery. While Rarity isn't, wasn't, and won't be my favorite character, she proves from scene 1 that she's gonna be a character of weight. In fact, in my “friendship moments” analysis, she's the only that gets a point: the Canterlot scene at the end. So... yeah. Rarity's pretty great.

Man, Fluttershy's in this part, too? Okay, let's talk about Fluttershy. Now, here's my beef with Fluttershy: she doesn't make an impact. In fact, her entire scene is specifically about how she doesn't make an impact. So, to me, until we get to the next episode, she's basically a non-entity. I know quite a few people love the *moe* blob that just exists to be cute, but I want my characters to have heft, quirks, charm, punch... stuff like that. And Fluttershy just... doesn't go there. So I'm just gonna point out a random thing I noticed on the rewatch and move on to the Pinkie Party. I like how, as Twilight's talking, you can watch her eyes track Fluttershy landing. It's at 14:17, for anyone watching. I just think that's kind of neat.

Okay, one more point. I have to admit, I tend to skim fiction when I absorb it. How did I never, not once, hear Fluttershy say the line, “That's just so incredibly wonderful, I just don't know what to say?” Oh yeah, it's because I gloss over this scene. But it ends with Twilight being snarkmaster general, so... fun times. Carry on.

Bam! There actually is a break! One. Pfthth. XD

Part 2:

Okay, so now we have Pinkie Pie. Pinkie Pie is... kind of annoying. I don't fully remember whether she's tolerable or not, so... give me a second. I'm writing this spur-of-the-moment, so bear with me. ...Ugh, Pinkie Pie, shut up! :P Okay, so having watched it all... she's kind of really annoying, but the fact that she thought about all of that in the 15 seconds she saw Twilight is actually pretty intriguing, so it works for the moment. And there's... something about Andrea Libman's delivery of Pinkie Pie that... doesn't feel like the old style of “super-annoying funmeister” that works pretty well. No, she's still annoying. She won't be an enjoyable character until... hmm, Griffon the Brush Off? And then Swarm of the Century, Winter Wrap-Up, and Fall Weather Friends? I guess I might even be willing to say she's good in Applebuck Season, too. But here, at least her annoyingness is serving the plot and making the episode more interesting. ...Which is more than I can say for most of the next episode.

Okay, 5 minutes left. Let's get this done. “Now you have lots and lots of friends!” No, she has Rainbow Dash, kind of, Rarity, a little, and Pinkie Pie, who only counts because her bar for “being friends” is set at the center of the earth. Or maybe that's just the way I see friendship leaking into my view of that idea. Don't get me started on that; we've got enough episode left to talk about without getting on personal tangents.

“Aww, she's so happy she's crying!” No she's not Pinkie shut up you're not funny.

Hmm. You know, we're kind of supposed to be rooting for the other five ponies at this point in the story. You know, the ones who are standing for love and harmony, who want to help Twilight solve the more important goal of making friends. But look at this from Twilight's point of view. She knows that Night Mare Moon is coming, and she desperately needs to find some kind of answer to the problem. But the only book she can use, *The Elements of Harmony: A Reference Guide*, is currently in the party that she can't go join! And now, as the stars align and make the Mare in the Moon disappear, she is truly afraid that she has failed. And we all know (or will know a year later, anyway) what happens when she thinks she's failed.

And then, BAM! Enter Night Mare Moon! Remember, this is the first pony thing anyone has seen since 3.5, and what do we get? Smooth-talking, sinister, creepy Night Mare Moon. Tabitha St. Germain giving it all she's got, Twilight realizing the world is doomed, and all the

ponies powerless to stop the darkness. “From this moment on, The Night. Will Last. FOREVER! AHAHAHAHA!” Twilight freaks out, music crescendos like crazy, and then, the clincher. With all that going on, the one thing that hooked me onto this show like nothing else.

“To be continued...”

Hoh yes. I had promised myself, “All right, let's just watch one episode, and see if it's any good.” I could have put it down right there. “Eh, Twilight's pretty cool, and there's some neat ideas floating around, but... eh. This isn't worth my time.” But I just had to say to myself, “Just one more. I have to know how this plays out.” Just one more. And here I am, two years and 64 episodes later, and ponies still fill my life with sunshine. Join me next time as I take on the episode that got me for good. It's... probably not that great, actually, but hey, it's got songs, Shadowbolts, and magical girl poses, so why not?