

FLUTTERSHY LEANS IN

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Prologue

(Opening shot: fade in to the exterior of Fluttershy's cottage during the day. Zoom in slowly and cut to a floor-level pan across the interior, crowded with cushions and stacks of books. The camera stops on Fluttershy's rabbit Angel, who sets a crash helmet in place to cover his ears and drops into a three-point stance. Across the room, the yellow pegasus stands next to a wind-up phonograph; she sets the needle on the record to start a heroic piece of music, and Angel leaps toward the literary chaos.)

(The action shifts to and from slightly slower than normal speed throughout the following sequence. Clear one tower with ease...zigzag up the narrow vertical gap between another stack and one end of the fireplace...somersault over the top and bounce off a cushion. Fluttershy averts her eyes and raises a hoof to further block out the sight of whatever calamity she fears may occur.)

Fluttershy: Oh...be careful!

(Angel's next bound takes him up to the ceiling, where he works his way paw-over-paw along the vine-hung walkways that connect the birdhouses up here. Reaching the other end, he drops away and pushes off from one book to bounce across a couple of cushions. His momentum carries him to a stack of cans, from which he kicks off in order to power a rise onto a lamp's pole; a quick climb, and he is in range to grab one of the pull cords and swing away again. Fluttershy shudders mightily.)

(Now Angel lands atop a book stack and pushes off, the action shifting to extreme slow motion as he sails across the next gap, leaving a blurry afterimage in his wake. Fluttershy's mouth opens as if to call a warning, just before the white hind legs touch down on one high-altitude tome—and then normal speed resumes as he loses his balance to bring himself and the whole pile crashing down together. The music stops abruptly with a scratch of needle on vinyl, and Fluttershy utters a panicked gasp, races across the room, and frantically digs him out.)

Fluttershy: Are you okay, Angel?

(He strains to pull himself upright; cut to an extreme close-up of his woozy face. A hard shake of

the head brings him back to his senses, and a slight zoom out reveals a hind paw that is now red and throbbing. In short order he bursts into tears, generating gushers from his eyes that a rabbit-sized version of Pinkie Pie would find most impressive.)

Fluttershy: *(picking him up)* I told you that entering the Ponyville Parkour Contest was a dangerous idea. *(setting him on a cushion, crossing behind him)* You just rest here, and I'll have you all fixed up in no time.

(Her steps bring her to a small cabinet mounted on the wall; she opens it and looks over a considerable array of medical supplies—including a mouse-sized wheelchair.)

Fluttershy: Oh, dear. I'm all out of bunny foot braces. *(addressing the o.s. Angel)* I think we need to pay a visit to Dr. Fauna.

(Cut to a close-up of a whimpering Angel, then dissolve an identical shot of him without the helmet. He now rides in a cart being towed through Ponyville; a longer shot shows Fluttershy in the harness and her destination as a building with a sign hanging near the door that depicts a dog's paw print. Food and water dishes are set out on the porch, and a tennis ball and bone lie in the front yard—a veterinarian's office. A slight pan picks out the birdhouses and nest built on a sapling by the steps. Unhitching herself, Fluttershy walks up to the door and tries without success to open it, pushing first with hooves and then with head.)

Fluttershy: Oh, I was sure she would be here today. *(Angel's ears droop; she addresses the door loudly.)* Hello?

(Extreme close-up of the peephole.)

Fluttershy: *(from o.s., knocking)* Is anypony there?

(As the hoof lowers out of view, the small aperture is slid open from inside to expose part of an eye. A mare's voice hitches in a breath, muffled through the wood.)

Voice: *(muffled)* Fluttershy?

(Cut to the speaker's peephole-distorted perspective of the new arrival.)

Voice: *(normal)* Oh, am I glad to see you!

(Outside again; Fluttershy pushes on the door, but still no luck.)

Fluttershy: I wish I could say the same, but the door's stuck, so I, um...*can't* see you.

(The hinges creak in protest before the door swings inward sharply. The place is stuffed full of animals small and large, some of whom come spilling out onto the porch. The speaker is Dr. Fauna, the veterinarian who examined Spike in "Secret of My Excess"; the only changes in her

appearance since then are the use of lavender eyeshadow and some pronounced fatigue lines under her eyes. Cut to Angel, who finds himself getting attention from a few of the animals as the camera zooms out to frame both mares crossing to the cart.)

Fauna: *(gently)* Ohhh! Some-bunny hurt his foot. Let's bandage that up so we can get back home. *(normal tone, to Fluttershy)* I'd like to keep him overnight, but as you can see, *my place is just bursting with animals!* *(composing herself)* I don't think I can take in even one more critter right now.

(Right on cue, a giraffe strides into view and stops behind them, seen from the shoulders up. Both heads crane upward, the camera following to stop on the head at the top of one very long neck. The creature's face gives away its malaise even before it cranks off a hearty sneeze.)

Fluttershy, Fauna: Oh, dear.

(And now a deer goes bounding across the road. Fade to black.)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(Opening shot: fade in to a countertop within Fauna's office. The giraffe has extended its head in through an open window and rested it on a pillow atop a supply cart, a couple of other patients have made themselves comfortable here as well, and a squirrel bounds up to pull the lid off a jar of cotton balls and start eating them. A second one pokes its head up from the open top of a second jar, this one containing swabs that resemble long Q-tips. The chatter of assorted beasts can be heard in the background as the camera pans/zooms out to frame Fluttershy and Fauna amid the mayhem. Angel sits on an examination table, and Fauna moves in for a closer look at his injured paw as the deer from the prologue strolls past again. She nips the end of a bandage roll in her teeth and tears off a length; elsewhere, a young raccoon jumps onto a stool and rides as two others push it across the floor and let go. Fluttershy gasps as it rolls by and o.s., the end of its ride marked by a thump. Meanwhile, Fauna sets to the job of wrapping the hurt limb and does not flinch even as a bird just misses her head.)

Fluttershy: You really have your hooves full here.

Fauna: *(sighing)* This place is like a zoo! *(She ducks to avoid a pass by several small birds.)* Then again, it's normally like that, but still... *(hyperventilating, hooves to temples, hunched over table)* ...I can't keep up!

(Having a length of bandage stolen by a passing avian does remarkably little to soothe her frazzled state of mind; it roosts in a nest built atop a high cabinet, and its mate cheeps happily over the find. Angel gives a "what are you gonna do?" sort of shrug, and Fauna passes a pair of rabbit-sized crutches from her mouth to his paws. He gets them situated just right.)

Fauna: *(baby talk)* Oh, now does my favorite wittle bunny want a carrot pop?

(He just blows an irritated raspberry at her, balances himself on the crutches, and limps away across the table.)

Fauna: *(normal tone, sighing heavily)* That's okay. *(turning to Fluttershy)* I think the goats ate all of them anyway.

(On this second sentence, both mares spot a billy goat chewing something on a stick and an empty jar lying on its side. The filching quadruped belches up its mouthful—one intact carrot lollipop and the denuded sticks of a great many others. After a moment's rumination, it snaps up the uneaten one and starts sucking.)

Fluttershy: I just can't believe all these poor little animals are hurt. What happened?

Fauna: I'm flummoxed! Every day there's more and more animals on my doorstep. Most of them just have minor ailments—hurt wings, stuffy noses, and such. But the trouble is, even after they're all healed up...

(She gestures to one side; pan quickly in that direction to a family of koalas munching on leaves from a plant in a vase, then cut back to her and Fluttershy. A bear plods past, wearing a towel and shower cap and carrying a bath brush.)

Fauna: ...I can't seem to get these comfy critters to leave!

Fluttershy: Oh, dear.

(Cut to a close-up of the resting giraffe's face. Small particles start to fly in from one side and ricochet off the scalp, accompanied by a series of sharp snaps. The giraffe glares toward the disturbance, and a long shot picks out the reason: the bear has perched on a stool and is clipping its claws, having ditched the brush.)

Fluttershy: They do seem to have made themselves right at home here. *(A bird lands on Fauna's head.)*

Fauna: I wonder why they chose to flock to my office. *(sighing)* It just doesn't make sense.

Fluttershy: Don't be silly, Dr. Fauna. You're the best vet pony in Equestria. At least that's what I've been telling everypony.

(By this point, several more fine feathered friends have taken up positions on said vet pony's head.)

Fauna: Uh...you did what? *(She vigorously shakes them off; Fluttershy's eyes widen.)*

Fluttershy: Oh, no! Do you suppose it's my fault? I'm so sorry. I didn't mean for this to happen. I just know animals feel safe and happy under your care.

(A few tiny, insistent chirps float up from ground level, drawing their attention; cut to the floor,

where a duck and its young have gathered between/around Fauna's legs to voice their appreciation. Zoom out to frame both mares as the parent leads the ducklings away.)

Fauna: *(pacing past Fluttershy)* Oh, normally I don't mind if a snake wants to slither in or a raccoon needs a rest— *(reaching giraffe, patting its head)* —but now this place is so full, I have no space to treat any injured animals!

(The bear, still on its stool, has now started to read a magazine. Angel grumpily clumps his way across the floor to Fluttershy.)

Fluttershy: *That is a big problem...* *(She looks down at him and adopts a determined smile.)* ...that I'm going to fix for you! *(The ducklings gather around him.)* I already have the perfect solution that'll make the critters happy— *(Cut to Fauna; she continues o.s.)* —and give you more space. *(Back to her.)* Then you'll have all your ducks in a row.

(Angel has become slightly freaked out by the little waterfowl and hustles away as quickly as he can, only for them to fall neatly in line behind him. Two full-grown ducks—their parents—are quick to follow, but one trips and falls on its face in the process. Fauna smiles gratefully in close-up, but shifts to a grimace as the camera zooms out. The bear is now standing on its hind legs and drying itself with the towel it wore.)

Fauna: The sooner you fix it, the better!

(The massive ursine strolls off, dropping the used linen over her so that it covers her entire form.)

Fluttershy: *(pulling it away)* I'm on it.

(Exit one yellow pegasus as a bird comes to rest on the head of the rattled vet, who sighs resignedly. Dissolve to the living room of Fluttershy's cottage, where she and her friends have gathered, and zoom in slowly as she paces among them. The place has had a few non-pony occupants added to it—surplus from Fauna's overcrowded office—and a rather surly Angel sits in a basket off to one side. Among the crowd is the bear, which no longer wears its shower cap.)

Fluttershy: I want to thank you all for rushing right over when I called.

(The little guy shakes a fist and shouts unprintable bunny curses at a squirrel as it leaps over him.)

Fluttershy: Dr. Fauna needs my help with a serious problem.

Twilight Sparkle: A friendship problem?

Fluttershy: No, her vet clinic is a bit, maybe, um...overrun with adorable critters in dire need of a safe place to lay their heads and...they don't have anywhere to go!

Rarity: Oh, that's just awful!

Fluttershy: I know!

Applejack: Yeah. Dr. Fauna's always fixin' Winona up when she ain't feelin' too fine, so helpin' her out is A-okay by me.

Rainbow Dash: Huh, yeah! *(Next three lines overlap.)*

Pinkie Pie: Okey-dokey-lokey!

Rarity: You can count on us, darling.

Twilight: Okay. *(Cut to Fluttershy.)*

Fluttershy: Oh, that's great news, because it means you'll all be helping me with something special too—something that's been a dream of mine for a long time. *(Pinkie shoves her head over toward Fluttershy.)*

Pinkie: Oh, goody!

(Zoom out; she is standing on a chair.)

Pinkie: *(sitting on her haunches, spreading forelegs wide)* Is your dream to make a bouncy castle shaped like a gigantic Bundt cake?

Fluttershy: *(pacing away from her)* Um, no, not exactly.

Pinkie: *(jumping down)* Ah. Just me, then.

Rainbow: So, what is it, Fluttershy? Spill! *(Cut to Fluttershy.)*

Fluttershy: My dream is to build a real animal sanctuary.

(A bird lands on her upraised front hoof and twitters happily. Zoom out to show the new arrivals and several longtime residents gathered around her.)

Fluttershy: A beautiful habitat where every animal, whether sick or scared, or even just lonely, feathered or furry, scaly or slimy, every critter would be welcome.

(Her descriptions are punctuated by the following: "Sick or scared": cut to Angel and zoom out slightly as he notices the small ones sharing his basket and softens his attitude. "Even just lonely": the bear behind her growls in a self-conscious sort of way. "Feathered or furry": cut to a slow pan across her five friends, all smiling warmly; Rainbow even has to wipe her brimming eyes dry. After Fluttershy finishes, cut back to her and pan slowly across.)

Fluttershy: My sanctuary can be the one place in Equestria they call home, 'til they feel ready to take on the world.

(Cut to a knot of small animals gathered at the bear's feet; they cheer wildly as the camera tilts up to the great brown lummo, blowing his nose into a handkerchief.)

Twilight: *(from o.s.)* Wow, Fluttershy! *(The group again; the others cross to Fluttershy.)* I've never heard you speak with such conviction.

Rarity: Oh, that was exquisite!

Rainbow: Pretty awesome.

Fluttershy: Oh, thank you, everypony. You've all taught me so much about building my confidence over the years. *(Her perspective, panning slowly across the five faces.)* It's because of your friendship that I finally feel able to make my dream project a reality. *(Back to her.)* But I

can't build the sanctuary alone. Will you join me?

(A round of hearty agreement follows.)

Applejack: I'm happy to offer my extra hooves to you. *(An idea crosses her mind.)* Huh...but come to think of it, I actually know a filly who'd be more help than I would. She's a friend of mine from Winona's sheep-herdin' competition—Wrangler! *(Chuckle.)* She's an expert in animal enclosures.

[Note: She is referring to the events of the book Fluttershy and the Fine Furry Friends Fair.]

Fluttershy: How lovely!

Pinkie: *(waving a foreleg; cut to her)* Ooh, ooh, ooh! I know somepony too! Hard Hat is the best construction pony in Ponyville. *(shaking head quickly)* He can build anything you could ever, ever, ever want!

(Zoom out to put Twilight and Rarity in the fore on the start of the next line.)

Rarity: *(pacing past others)* Hearing you all mention these experts, I am reminded that I too have the perfect pony to help capture the essence of your vision. *(Stop before Fluttershy.)* To give it some style, some flair. *(Chuckle.)*

Fluttershy: Is it you, Rarity?

Rarity: *(laughing)* No, no. Um, I was referring to the premier interior designer of the Canterlot elite, Dandy Grandeur. He helped me when I was setting up my Canterlot boutique. *(touching Fluttershy's chest)* I know he'd be thrilled to work with you.

Fluttershy: Wow, everypony! Thank you! I can't wait to meet all of them and hear their ideas. *(Zoom out slowly from the group.)* We're right on track to building the most wonderful sanctuary in Equestria!

(Dissolve to a profile close-up of the face of a somewhat perplexed, dark blue-gray stallion. Short, untidy grayish-green mane, dark blue eyes, pencil tucked behind one ear, yellow hard hat which he adjusts slightly before shifting to a confident smile. A longer shot shows Hard Hat to be sitting on the couch in Fluttershy's living room and reveals more details: earth pony, cutie mark to match his name, orange work vest. He is facing Wrangler, a light pink earth pony mare with a two-tone light gray mane/tail, medium blue eyes, and a cutie mark of a lasso. She wears a brown cowboy hat and a matching jacket over a white shirt edged in dark gray, and she is none too thrilled at being on the receiving end of his smile. However, she gets a tentative one of her own in place just as a tray of sandwiches rises into view before them, lifted on a length of a snake's body and accompanied by its hiss. Zoom out slightly; the reptile in question wears a bow tie, and it slithers away once they have each taken a snack in their mouths. Cut to a light green unicorn stallion lounging indolently in a chair with a teacup and saucer in his magic. This is Dandy Grandeur: short, well-coiffed purple mane and mustache, the former with one white curl near his horn; darker purple shirt with thick white fur collar; magenta bow tie. As he sips his tea, he opens his eyes to reveal them as medium blue, floats a sandwich off the snake's tray, and eats. His cutie mark is hidden by the arms of the chair for the moment. The serpentine waiter crosses

to Fluttershy.)

Fluttershy: Thank you, Rupert.

(He bows and takes his leave; she steps over to something tall and covered by a cloth and clears her throat for attention.)

Fluttershy: It's wonderful that you all could join me to discuss the Ponyville sanctuary project. My friends have so many nice things to say about each of your talents. This is a big project, so I'm happy to have such experienced ponies working on it with me. *(Cut to said ponies on the end of this.)*

Dandy: Rarity has impeccable taste in design *and* friends, so I can't wait to work with you, you know?

Fluttershy: Uh, I think so.

Wrangler: *(briefly pulling hat off)* Yee-haa! I'm just lookin' forward to helpin' you out, ma'am—and the animals. *(Saddlebags stuffed with tools are now seen across Hard's back.)*

Fluttershy: Of course.

Hard: So, uh, Pinkie Pie said you drew up some blueprints?

(Accents, in order: posh upper class, Western twang, slow deep Midwestern.)

Fluttershy: Um, not exactly. It's more of a dream board.

(Grabbing a fold of the cloth in her teeth, she whisks it away to expose an easel holding a sizable bulletin board. A close-up and tilt down from the top edge clearly picks out the assorted notes, photos, drawings, and samples of plant life and building materials that have been haphazardly stuck all over the surface. The three experts move in for a look, Hard peering the most closely.)

Hard: Mmm—that sure doesn't look like an animal hospital.

Fluttershy: Well, that's because it's not. *(Butterflies flit down and cluster around her.)* It's a sanctuary. A place that is safe, but not restrictive. Cozy, but natural. A place where the animals can come and go as they please.

(They disperse again; the experts look confusedly to her, then to the board—just in time to see a mouse scamper out of a tacked-on bird's nest and up to the top of the frame. Dandy scratches his chin as Fluttershy turns to them.)

Fluttershy: So, can you build it?

(She trains her most endearing smile and biggest eyes on them while a butterfly wings past. The three respond with a round of nervous laughter and avert their eyes, Wrangler scratching the back of her head before all three shift to grins that still fail to cover up their unease. Fade to black.)

Act Two

(Opening shot: fade in to an extreme close-up of one of the board's drawings: a waterfall cascading down among stone ledges to form a stream that runs through a tree-lined meadow. A small plank bridge connects the two banks.)

Fluttershy: *(from o.s., pointing at it)* I want the sanctuary to have an open floor plan.

(Zoom out. It is held aloft by two birds, which carry it away to expose the self-same meadow—no waterfall or ledges, though the stream is very much in place.)

Fluttershy: *(from o.s.)* No walls. *(Cut to her, Pinkie, and Hard on a hilltop.)* More like an enclosure that melts into the trees, with a gate in the back. That way, the animals can return to the forest right when they feel ready.

Pinkie: Sneaky! I like it.

Hard: *(crossing to Fluttershy)* You know, I designed the Ponyville hospital. I could do the exact same thing right here. *(gesturing to saddlebags)* I still have the blueprints. Though it'll take a while to clear all these trees.

Fluttershy: But I don't want to clear the trees. I want to *use* them.

Hard: Are you sure? *(scratching head)* What you're talkin' about doesn't really seem like a cohesive structure, or any structure I'm familiar with.

(The animal lover watches a rabbit hop across the grass to its family in a burrow.)

Fluttershy: Critters don't live the same way ponies do. *(They pop inside.)* I know this is unconventional, but that's because we're trying to do something that's never been done before. And I really believe it'll work.

(A burst of chirping pulls their eyes across the meadow in time to see two birds flying lazily through the clear air.)

Hard: *(scratching head)* Hmm? All right, then. *(Pinkie approaches Fluttershy.)* I'll see what I can do. *(He exits.)*

Pinkie: See, Fluttershy? Whatever you want.

Fluttershy: Good.

(Cut to a distance behind them and pan away to an area behind the hilltop; Hard and two other construction worker stallions have gathered around a picnic table.)

Hard: I know she thinks she knows what's best—

(Close-up of the tabletop; a rolled blueprint is slapped down and opened to show the plans for Ponyville General.)

Hard: *(from o.s.)* —but once she sees how much better it works with these plans— *(The three*

stallions again.) —she'll thank us.

(The other two voice their agreement. Wipe to the exterior of the Carousel Boutique, zooming in slowly, then cut to the ground-floor showroom. Fluttershy and Rarity are sitting on a couch along with Rarity's cat Opalescence, and Dandy stands before them, levitating a couple of fabric samples for their consideration. His cutie mark can now be seen as a top hat and gold star.)

Dandy: Which one do you like for the window treatments?

Rarity: *(pointing to one)* Ooh, loving the print on those!

Fluttershy: Um, not to be rude, but there must be some mistake. We have no need for curtains at the sanctuary.

Dandy: *(slightly needled)* And whyever not?

Fluttershy: *(pulling out her sketch; Opal jumps off couch)* Everything is gonna look natural in the animal habitats— *(Dandy leans in.)* —not like it was made for ponies.

Dandy: All those shades of brown and green? *(straightening up)* But they're so...drab, you know? *(Dismissive chuckle.)*

Fluttershy: Drab? You're calling the colors of beautiful trees drab?

Dandy: Exactly! *(floating up the swatch Rarity liked)* The natural look is not in right now. This is better, trust me.

(She gives it a careful inspection before continuing.)

Fluttershy: I appreciate your input— *(It drifts away.)* —but I just know the animals would be happiest with dirt-brown pillows and leaf-green accents.

Dandy: *(slightly deflated)* I'll...look into it.

Fluttershy: Thank you. *(She hops off the couch and exits.)*

Rarity: *(to Dandy)* When a client has a vision... *(Laugh; follow Fluttershy out.)*

Dandy: *(to himself)* ...sometimes they need me to steer them away from it. *(contemptuously, eyeing fabric again)* Especially if it's dirt-brown.

(Clock wipe to the yard behind one of the buildings on the grounds of Sweet Apple Acres. A cart is parked back here, loaded with a pile of wicker baskets and a stack of cages in assorted sizes and dimensions. Applejack, Fluttershy, and Wrangler approach the lot, Fluttershy looking rather more worried than either of the other two mares.)

Wrangler: And right there we got your standard sheep travelin' cage. Fits two critters, dependin' on size.

Fluttershy: Mmm...

Applejack: Uh, what is it, sugar cube?

Fluttershy: *(pacing)* I'm looking for something less like a cage and more like a nice hug. *(pointing at a cage door)* Maybe if we lose that part.

Wrangler: Uh...well, then, it wouldn't be a cage.

Fluttershy: Exactly! *(noticing baskets)* Ooh! *(Close-up of one; she continues o.s., pointing at it.)* This is the perfect base for a little nest.

(All three again.)

Fluttershy: I'll take a bunch of these, and anything else the animals can burrow into.

Wrangler: You sure you don't want somethin' more secure for the critters?

Applejack: *(to Fluttershy)* She does have a point there. You wouldn't want a bunny wanderin' into the wrong cage, would you?

Fluttershy: *(resolutely)* No! No cages. *(A butterfly lights on a front hoof.)* I want to give the animals the freedom to come and go. It's the only way they'll feel comfortable.

(Wrangler is having a very hard time wrapping her mind around this concept.)

Applejack: *(to her)* Well, she's the boss.

(Clock wipe to a construction site, where Hard's crew—now expanded to four—is putting up the wooden frame for a building as he watches their progress. Part of a stone-lined doorframe is visible at the right edge of the screen. Here comes Dandy, magically towing a length of the fabric that Rarity pointed out earlier, the camera panning slightly to bring the rest of the entrance into view. From the opposite direction, Wrangler pulls her cartload of cages to a stop. A long shot of the entire area establishes the site as being on the bank of the stream running through the meadow Fluttershy chose; however, the grass immediately surrounding the project has been ripped out to leave bare earth. Fluttershy arrives on the scene, only to suck in a popeyed gasp of shock and trot over to Hard once she gets a load of it. Wrangler has unhitched herself by the time she reaches him.)

Hard: Hey! What do you think, Fluttershy? I told you we'd be fast. Almost finished with the building already.

(Pan/tilt up quickly to Dandy, now with some of his material hung on an upper-story window frame.)

Dandy: The color just pops, you know?

(Down to Wrangler, who has set up a large vertical cage, slid its door all the way up, and put a pillow on the floor inside.)

Wrangler: Quite roomy inside, really, and very safe. *(Dandy leans toward Fluttershy.)*

Dandy: Don't keep us waiting, Fluttershy. *(The others do likewise.)* Do you love it or do you love it?

Fluttershy: *(very timidly)* I...I... *(with sudden anger)* ...I don't love it! This is not going to work at all!

(All three are taken aback by her outburst. She indicates each feature in turn on the next line.)

Fluttershy: A giraffe can't fit through this door! With these curtains blocking the light, how are the birds gonna sing in the sunshine? *(Close-up of the cage pillow, zooming out to frame her)*

pointing at is as she continues; others are similarly arranged.) And this is the opposite of a nice hug! *(crossing to them)* I know you all worked hard, but none of you did anything I asked for.

(Hard hurries across to a pile of planks with an irked huff.)

Hard: That's not true. *(tapping them)* We used the trees just like you asked!

Dandy: And that curtain fabric is organic! It's got natural fibers!

Wrangler: And I added pillows inside my cages. That should count as feelin' like a hug.

Fluttershy: I may not know much about construction or interior design or wrangling, but I *am* an expert at one thing— *(Zoom in on her.)* —*the care of animals!* And what animals need is a sanctuary... *(pointing at structure)* ...*not this!*

(A beat of very uncomfortable silence passes before Dandy speaks up.)

Dandy: Maybe your "vision" wasn't all it was cracked up to be, you know?

Fluttershy: My vision isn't the problem here. I told you all exactly what I wanted— *(stomping for emphasis)* —and none of you listened to me! *(gently, but firmly)* So while I appreciate your efforts, I no longer require your services.

(She punctuates the end of this dismissal by pointing away from the site, and the three sour-faced experts waste no time in clearing out, an instant before Fauna and quite a lot of her patients arrive.)

Fauna: Helloooo? Oh, the animals have been so excited for the sanctuary! *(Cut to Fluttershy, surprised; she continues o.s.)* They couldn't wait any longer. *(She reaches Fluttershy with a laugh.)* Can we take a look inside?

Fluttershy: Oh! Um, actually, it's, uh, not ready and...

(Instead of fumbling out any more words, she trails off into a gasp—and here come all the future residents at top speed. Just she predicted, the giraffe conks its head on the doorframe; next the raccoons start clawing the curtain fabric with gusto and a woodpecker goes to work on one of the ground-floor support beams. The noise causes a goat to start bleating in alarm, which in turn sends a duck and a couple of rabbits scattering. The bear lopes into the open cage, whose door promptly slides down to pen it in; angered, it shakes back and forth and overturns the cage, knocking over a row of empty ones and causing the door to reopen. One of the wicker baskets lodges itself on the great furry head; the bear tries to shake it off but cannot, and it charges toward the structure. Fluttershy and Fauna cry out in alarm and race across the grass in a desperate bid to intercept, but the behemoth rams into a post, knocking itself silly and losing the basket. The hit sets the entire framework to vibrating and then collapsing in a thick cloud of dust.)

(Cut to a dumbstruck Fluttershy and Fauna, the former uttering a soft gasp, then to a slow pan across the wreckage of the dismissed experts' attempt at building the animal sanctuary. The would-be occupants are scattered up and down through the piles of smashed timbers and shattered masonry.)

Fauna: *(touching Fluttershy's wing)* Oh, I'm so sorry, Fluttershy.

Fluttershy: No, I'm the one who should be sorry. This didn't go at all like I had imagined.

(Zoom in to a close-up of her crushed expression as Fauna lays a comforting hoof on her shoulder; then snap to black.)

Act Three

(Opening shot: fade in to a close-up of an otter lying in an open-topped box, a bandage plastered across the top of its head. Fluttershy lays a blanket over it, and the camera zooms out to show her in Fauna's office again—along with all the animals who were supposed to move into the sanctuary.)

Fluttershy: Sleep tight, little one.

(At the window, the giraffe has put its head in to rest on a pillow as in Act One. Beyond it, the sky has darkened into night. The pegasus sets an ice bag above the gloomy eyes.)

Fluttershy: It's going to be okay. I promise.

(Squeaks from the floor disclose the presence of three mice at her hooves.)

Fluttershy: *(scooping them up, crossing room)* Now, now, every mouse has gotta wait their turn.

(They are carried to a grass-filled box and nestle happily into it.)

Fluttershy: *(sighing)* I'm so sorry. I thought I'd have a beautiful sanctuary for you all to stay in by now, but I put my trust in the wrong ponies.

Fauna: *(crossing to her)* It's okay, Fluttershy. I know you did your best. But we can make this work here. I-It'll be a bit, uh...tight, heh. But with your help, we'll have these patients back on their paws in no time, even without a sanctuary.

Fluttershy: *(with sudden anger)* No!

(A round of surprised muttering from the house guests; close-up of her.)

Fluttershy: I won't give up! These animals need me, and I'm gonna solve this once and for all!

(The camera zooms out at the sound of a soft rustling to reveal that a sloth has blissfully wrapped all four of its legs around her right hind one.)

Fluttershy: If this little lady can crawl all the way here from western Equestria— *(stomping for emphasis)* —I can find a way to build her a safe place to rest!

(The other animals make an energetic “hear, hear” sound, and Fauna adds a nervous-happy giggle.)

Fluttershy: Oh! *(giggling)* Oops. Everyone back to sleep, now.

(Dissolve to her living room. It is now the following morning, and all six mares have gathered here with a few of the animals. The sloth is still firmly latched onto Fluttershy’s leg, and her bulletin board is set up—much more organized, with most of the random material samples gone. Twilight and Rarity levitate cups of tea for themselves in easy reach, and Rainbow holds one of her own.)

Fluttershy: Thanks for coming, everypony. *(Rarity sips, then Rainbow.)* As you know, building the sanctuary didn’t go quite as planned. *(Close-up of Pinkie and Rarity.)*

Pinkie: I know, right? Who woulda guessed that Hard Hat *wouldn’t* build whatever you want?

Rarity: I never would’ve invited Dandy to help if I thought he’d act in such a manner. *(A sigh from the o.s. Applejack; pan to her, a cup on the table by her chair.)*

Applejack: And Wrangler sure made a fool outta me too. I’m sorry, Fluttershy.

Fluttershy: It’s okay. You were all just trying to help. But I know that letting all the experts go was the right call.

Twilight: So what are you gonna do now?

Fluttershy: Try again. I’m going to rebuild the sanctuary and do it my way this time. *(Next three lines overlap.)*

Applejack: You said it, filly!

Pinkie: All right, Fluttershy!

Rarity: That’s the spirit.

(Cut to the board. Rainbow flies over, no longer holding her cup; as she speaks, Fluttershy backs worriedly out of view.)

Rainbow: *(pointing at one spot)* How about putting an awesome flying course for the birds right there? *(Pinkie peeks out from behind the board to point with a carrot.)*

Pinkie: And a carrot cake stand here! *(Twilight and Rarity cross to it, cups gone.)*

Twilight: Ooh! A library cave?

Fluttershy: *(boiling over)* Everypony STOP!!

(The other five are instantly shocked into silence, Applejack having joined them, and Fluttershy resumes her normal tone of voice.)

Fluttershy: I appreciate your sharing your thoughts, but I need everypony to respect mine. Other ponies may be experts in their fields, but animals are *my* field of expertise.

(Close-up of the concept sketch she showed to Dandy, Hard, and Wrangler at the beginning of Act Two.)

Fluttershy: *(from o.s., pointing to it)* And if I say this is what I want— *(Pan to her, all*

confidence.) —then this is what needs to happen! *(laughing demurely)* Oh, for the animals, of course.

Pinkie: Wow! We should call you *Flutterbold* now!

(That gets a laugh from the other four mares in the audience.)

Fluttershy: To get things back on track, I called in a favor from an old friend. He'll be here any minute.

Twilight: I thought you said “no more experts.”

Fluttershy: This is one expert I know I can trust to put the animals first. Plus, there's nopony better at building.

(A soft knock at the front door is heard under her last words. Cut to a close-up of its handle, Angel leaping nimbly up to pull it open; his paw is still bandaged, but the crutches Fauna gave him are gone. In walks Big Daddy McColt, the diminutive head of one of the two title feuding families in “The Hooffields and McColts.”)

Big Daddy: *(chuckling, stepping in)* I heard somepony needs construction help for them critters!

Twilight: *(rearing up happily)* Big Daddy McColt! *(She gallops over and hugs him, then addresses the room.)* We met each other back when the map called me and Fluttershy to the Smoky Mountains. *(Fluttershy joins them.)*

Fluttershy: And he certainly knows his stuff when it comes to buildings *and* caring for animals.

Big Daddy: Well, shucks. Let's not stand around talkin' about it. Let's build us a sanctuary!

(Cheers from all species and levels of the room; the sloth has let go of Fluttershy's leg now. Dissolve to her and Big Daddy going over a sheet of plans in the meadow; he nods his approval and gestures ahead of the pair. She looks in that direction and finds the stream bank cleared of construction debris and the experts' supplies and replanted with grass. All of her friends are ready to get to work, as are Big Macintosh, Starlight Glimmer, the Cutie Mark Crusaders, and Spike. A few split logs have been placed here and there, dispensed from a cart brought in by Macintosh. He pulls on a set of ropes hitched to one of them, tipping it up to the vertical, and Rainbow stomps the upper end to drive it into the ground. After another quick check of the plans, Twilight and Starlight levitate buckets of water to fill a natural pool; Spike checks its depth with a ruler and gives them a thumbs-up.)

(On a ledge some distance up, a rope has been wrapped around the end of a log that protrudes beyond the edge, so that it dangles down and o.s. Pinkie yanks the free end in her teeth to tighten it, trots calmly away, and suddenly leaps back into view and over the brink. The camera tilts down quickly to show that the other end of the rope is tied to a tire, in whose middle the pink pony wedges herself for a little swinging fun. On a different plateau, Rarity uses her magic to tie the ends of a hammock to two conveniently spaced trees; at ground level, Rainbow checks the height of a coconut tree's leaves, reeling out the end of a tape measure held by Angel.)

(Scootaloo holds the last in a set of split-log steps in place so Apple Bloom can hammer it down, while Sweetie Belle tows in a cartload of materials. The steps lead up to set of platforms attached

to a tree trunk. Elsewhere, Twilight hovers near another such platform and levitates a quantity of leaves into a wicker basket resting on it. Cut to a pan across a patch of flowers and stop on Applejack, who digs a hole in the earth so she can plant one of several she has ready to go. A pillow is floated up to a tree branch and secured there thanks to Rarity's field. Cut to just behind Fluttershy and Big Daddy, gazing out over a completed animal sanctuary that matches her sketch, waterfall and all, and the work crew that has turned out to bring it to life. They trade a high five.)

(Dissolve to Fluttershy leading Fauna, who has a hoof over her eyes, to the hilltop.)

Fluttershy: Are you ready?

Fauna: Oh, I'm more excited than a beaver in a log pile! *(Both stop.)*

Fluttershy: Okay, you can open your eyes.

(The vet's face goes slack with shock almost as soon as she lowers her hoof, then breaks into an ecstatic smile during the next line.)

Fluttershy: Welcome to Sweet Feather Sanctuary!

(Long shot of it, panning slowly across the grounds and the animals that have instantly made themselves at home everywhere.)

Fluttershy: *(from o.s.)* A safe and cozy retreat for every creature.

(The bear has discovered the hammock and is napping away; the otter is enjoying the tire swing; the giraffe finds the coconut tree to be just the right height for standing in the shade of its leaves; the koalas are chowing down at the basket of leaves Twilight set up; the ducks are out for a swim at the base of the waterfall. Fauna gasps in delight.)

Fauna: Oh, Fluttershy, this is amazing!

Fluttershy: Now you should have plenty of room at the clinic, because once you've treated them, they can recover here—with my help, of course.

(A soft rustling in the grass; cut to ground level, where the sloth that had attached itself to her leg at the start of this act is making its way past. She gathers it in for a hug.)

Fluttershy: It's okay, Lola. *(She boosts the sloth up onto her back...)* We all move at our own pace.

(...then moves to lift her onto the pillow that Rarity tied in one of the trees. Lola settles down at a glacial pace and goes to sleep.)

Fluttershy: Sometimes, all we need to do is believe in our dreams. And when we finally reach our goal—*(Fauna crosses to her.)*—we'll know that it was worth what it took to get there, because the view will be even better than you imagined.

(Zoom out to frame the whole sanctuary and the creatures enjoying everything it has to offer, then fade to black.)