

APPLEBUCK SEASON

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Prologue

(Opening shot: fade in to a broad stretch of hills marked by tracts of apple trees heavy with fruit—part of Sweet Apple Acres, seen during the day. Pan slowly across the expanse.)

Applejack: *(from o.s.)* Boy howdy. I got my work cut out for me. That there is the biggest bumper crop of apples I ever laid eyes on.

(On the end of this line, stop on her and Big Macintosh; he has a swath of bandages wrapped around his midsection and is chewing on a stalk of wheat. When he speaks, his words come slowly and thoughtfully, delivered in a deep-toned Southern accent.)

Macintosh: Ee-yup. Too big for you to handle on your own.

Applejack: Come on, big brother. You need to rest up and get yourself better. *(nudging the bandaged area; he winces)* I haven't met an apple orchard yet that I can't handle. *(Annoyed glare from him.)* Oops. Sorry. I'll take a bite out of this job by day's end.

(This line establishes the family relationship between the two.)

Macintosh: Biting off more than you can chew is just what I'm afraid of.

Applejack: *(irked)* Are you sayin' my mouth is makin' promises my legs can't keep?

Macintosh: Ee-yup.

Applejack: Why, of all the...this is your sister Applejack, remember? *(getting in his face)* The loyalest of friends and the most dependable of ponies?

Macintosh: But still only *one* pony. And *one* pony plus *hundreds* of apple trees just doesn't add up to—

Applejack: Don't you use your fancy mathematics to muddy the issue! I said I could handle this harvest, and I'm gonna prove it to you!

(Close-up of his worried expression on the end of this, then cut back to her.)

Applejack: I'm gonna get every last apple out of those trees this applebuck season all by myself!

(On these last three words, zoom out to frame the considerable expanse of orchard land before

the two ponies. In close-up, Applejack swallows hard as her expression telegraphs the realization that this will be a big job indeed. Fade to black.)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(Opening shot: fade in to Applejack as she walks through the orchard. One of the trees has several tubs filled with apples at its base. She stops near these and looks around.)

Applejack: Well, I better get kickin'. These apples aren't gonna shake themselves out of the trees.

(On the end of this, zoom out slightly to frame several of them in the overhead branches. In close-up, one drops loose as a tremor shakes the camera; it bounces off her head.)

Applejack: Hey! *(looking backward)* Oh, no!

(She gallops off. Cut to a long shot of Ponyville, which is shaking just as badly, then to Rainbow Dash as she rises to roof level for a look. In the distance, a huge cloud of dust begins to work its way along the road leading into town.)

Rainbow: STAMPEDE!!

(A herd of cattle, to be exact. General pandemonium in town; ponies gallop everywhere, shutters are closed, a welcome mat is yanked inside a house whose front door then slams shut. Amid the chaos, Pinkie Pie stands as still as she can, letting the tremors bounce her along.)

Pinkie: *(giggling, voice vibrating)* Heeey! Thiiis maaakes myyy voiiice souuund siiilly! *(Cut to Twilight Sparkle, also on the street.)*

Twilight: Pinkie Pie, are you crazy? Run! *(She does so. Mayor Mare holds her ground.)*

Mayor Mare: Everypony calm down! There is no need to panic! *(Rarity comes up.)*

Rarity: But, Mayor, whatever shall we do?

(Zoom out slightly; Rainbow, hovering overhead, points off to one side.)

Rainbow: Look there!

(As the cattle continue their mad rush, Applejack charges up next to them. With her is a small brown-and-white dog.)

Applejack: Yee-haa! *(Words of relief from the crowd.)* Other side, Winona!

(The dog, Winona, barks in acknowledgment and drops back. Overhead view of the herd.)

Applejack: Put 'em up, girl!

(More barking from Winona as she pulls into view on the opposite side. In town, Fluttershy has come up alongside Rarity, who turns her head with a scared moan. Pan from them to Pinkie, who has procured a bag of popcorn and is watching with great interest.)

Pinkie: This is the best rodeo show I've ever seen!

(She buries her face in the snack. Zoom out slightly to frame Twilight on her other side; the unicorn turns away with a look of puzzled exasperation. The stampede approaches one of the bridges over the stream bordering Ponyville.)

Applejack: *(nudging the cow next to her)* Come on, little doggies! Turn!

(A whistle; cut to Winona.)

Applejack: *(from o.s.)* Winona, put 'em up!

(The nimble canine leaps up with a bark and makes her way from one broad back to another; her owner is close behind and lets off a laugh. Pan to the front of the herd; Winona is now ahead of the lead cow.)

Applejack: *(from o.s.)* Gotcha!

(Close-up of a twirling lasso; tilt down slightly to show the rope end in Applejack's teeth. She flicks it ahead and drops the loop neatly around the cow's neck; leaping to the ground, she pulls mightily. Cut to Winona and the cow, who gets barked at.)

Applejack: *(from o.s.)* Attagirl!

(In an overhead shot, the cow turns just short of the bridge to run parallel to the stream, with the rest of the herd following.)

Applejack: Yee-haa!

(After a brief, tense silence, the onlookers cheer her success. Pinkie has traded her popcorn for an apple-decorated pennant, which she waves with gusto.)

Applejack: *(digging her hooves in)* Whoa! *(Winona stops, then the herd, and Applejack tosses the rope away.)* Hoo-wee! Now what was *that* all about? *(The lead cow moos, clears her throat, and speaks.)*

Lead cow: *(Minnesota accent)* Oh, my. Begging your pardon, Applejack, but Mooriella here saw one of those nasty snakes.

(On the end of this, pan to an impassive cow next to her. General shudder from the herd.)

Lead cow: And it just gave us all the willies, dontcha know.

Applejack: I completely understand. Just next time, try and steer clear of Ponyville.

Lead cow: *(as herd walks away)* We certainly will, Applejack. So long, Winona!

(The dog barks a farewell, and Applejack's silhouette emerges over a hill in full view of the locals, framed by the setting sun. Cheers erupt as she lifts one foreleg; in close-up, she rears up as Winona joins her.)

Applejack: Yee-haa! *(Both race o.s.)*

Pinkie: *(jumping out of crowd, bucking around)* Yee-haa! Ride 'em, cowpony! *(She no longer carries her pennant.)*

Mayor Mare: *(to Twilight, Rarity)* Applejack was just...just...

Pinkie: *(poking head into view from above)* Apple-tastic! *(She thuds to the ground.)*

Mayor Mare: Exactly! We must do something to thank Applejack for single-hoofedly saving the town. *(Pinkie gets up.)*

Pinkie: I know!

(Wipe to a bunch of balloons and the end of a hanging banner.)

Pinkie: *(from o.s.)* A party!

(Pan/zoom out on these two words to frame these items as part of a celebration being set up in the town square, including the pavilion. Twilight, with Spike on her back, walks up to Rarity as the latter adjusts the bow on a red ribbon tied around a tree.)

Twilight: We all ready?

Rarity: Just one last thing.

(She levitates a banner decorated with the same apple pattern as Pinkie's earlier pennant and hangs it from the third-floor balcony. Zoom out from it to frame the trio on the next line.)

Rarity: Now we're ready.

Twilight: Is Applejack all set? *(Rainbow flies over.)*

Rainbow: Actually, I haven't seen her all week. *(Pinkie joins them.)*

Pinkie: Not since the stampede.

Rainbow: But she'll be here for sure. *(Pan/tilt up to the banner as she continues, putting the group o.s.)* Applejack is never late.

(Zoom out to ground level; now a large crowd has gathered at the pavilion, where a lectern has been set up in front of the doors. Twilight steps up to this and levitates a stack of notes, squaring up their edges and bringing the first page up.)

Twilight: Welcome, everypony! Today we are here to honor a pony we can always count on to help in matters great and small. *(Next page.)* A pony whose contributions to—

(Rainbow barges in, knocking the notes everywhere and forcing Twilight to step aside, much to her annoyance.)

Rainbow: Did you see Applejack's slick moves out there? What an athlete! This week, she's gonna help me with my new flying trick, and I know it's gonna be *so awesome!* *(Twilight shoves her back.)*

Twilight: Exactly. *(Notes up.)* And— *(Pinkie pops up in front of her; the notes fall.)*

Pinkie: This week, I get to run Sugarcube Corner for the first time!

Twilight: What does that have to do with Applejack? *(Brief pause from Pinkie.)*

Pinkie: Oh! Applejack, one of the best bakers ever, is gonna help me. Applejack makes everything great, so free samples for everypony! *(Cheers.)*

Twilight: *(dryly, pushing her aside)* Okay, that's great. *(Notes up, but scrambled.)* Now if I could just make a point without being inter— *(Fluttershy pokes her head up on the end of this.)*

Fluttershy: Twilight?

Twilight: —rupted! *(Notes fall; she moves aside and Fluttershy steps up.)*

Fluttershy: Twilight, I'm so sorry, but I just wanted to mention that Applejack is also helping me this week with the official bunny census, where we count up all the new baby bunnies that were born this season.

(On the latter part of this, cut to a close-up of Twilight as she rolls her eyes wearily at all these breaks in her train of thought. At the end of this line, zoom out to frame both.)

Fluttershy: She's gonna help gather them using her wonderful herding skills. *(Pause.)*

Twilight: *(as Fluttershy cringes and slides away)* Anyone else?... Anyone?

(Cut to the crowd; no response except for a quiet cough.)

Twilight: *(from o.s.)* No? *(Back to her; she brings her notes up yet again.)* Well, then, as I was trying to say—

(Zoom out; now Mayor Mare stands next to her with an expectant grin. After a very long beat, Twilight gives up with a groan and lets her notes go flying in all directions.)

Twilight: *(stalking away)* Never mind! *(Mayor Mare takes her place.)*

Mayor Mare: *(clearing throat, gesturing to her right)* And so, with no further ado, it is my privilege—

(Quick pan to that side, framing the base of a large trophy decorated with a blue ribbon. As she continues, tilt slowly up along its height; it is gold and shaped like a two-handled oil lamp, supported by three pillars, and topped by a rearing filly.)

Mayor Mare: —to give the “Prize Pony of Ponyville” Award to our beloved guest of honor...

(Back to her as she continues.) ...a pony of the utmost trustworthiness, reliability, and integrity...Ponyville's most capable and dependable friend... (gesturing to her left) ...Applejack!

(Pan to that side as cheers from the crowd are heard. There is a curtain here, which opens to expose absolutely nothing; the cheers give way to gasps and silence, with the exception of Spike.)

Spike: Way to go, Applejack, that was awesome! I mean...

(He falls quiet upon finding himself on the wrong end of quizzical glances from Fluttershy, Pinkie, and Rarity and an angry one from Twilight. Mayor Mare, at a total loss, clears her throat.)

Spike: *(under his breath)* Awkward.

Applejack: *(from o.s.)* I'm here!

(A blond mane, brown cowboy hat, part of an orange-tan head, and pile of apples make their way through the crowd.)

Applejack: I'm here!

(Yawn; apples fall loose and some ponies react with shock as she passes. Ground level; her legs are seen passing and leaving fruit in their wake.)

Applejack: Sorry I'm late, whoa...I was just...

(Back to Twilight, Fluttershy, Pinkie, Rarity, and Spike. Applejack is heard stumbling over something.)

Applejack: *(from o.s.)* Did I get your tail?

(At the lectern, she thrusts her face into Mayor Mare's, with two full apple baskets slung on her back. The bags developing under her eyes betray the fact that her harvesting work has cut deeply into her sleep time.)

Applejack: *(pushing Mayor Mare o.s.)* Miss Mayor, thank you kindly for this here, uh, award thingie. *(She steps over to look at it and yawns.)* It's so bright and shiny, and...

(Close-up of the trophy's body, which affords a distorted reflection of her face.)

Applejack: *(laughing drowsily)* I sure do look funny.

(Camera shifts to frame her and the trophy; she pushes her head forward and pulls it back, making high-pitched "whoo-ooo" noises. Pinkie joins her after a moment; zoom out to frame a truly confused Twilight on the other side of the trophy.)

Twilight: Oo-kay...well, thank you, Applejack, for saving us from that scary stampede, and always being there for everypony.

Applejack: *(yawning)* Yeah, I like helpin' the pony folks and...and stuff.

(She dozes off and begins to snore; a moment later she shakes herself awake.)

Applejack: Oh, uh...yeah, uh, thanks!

(Gripping one of the trophy's handles in her teeth, she drags it backward off the stage and through the crowd.)

Twilight: Was it just me, or did Applejack seem a little— *(Zoom out/shift to frame each in turn.)*

Rainbow: Tired?

Fluttershy: Dizzy?

Rarity: Messy? *(Puzzled looks from Twilight and Rainbow.)* Well, did you see her mane? *(Pinkie jumps onto the stage.)*

Pinkie: She seemed fine to me.

(She does as she did with Applejack while looking at the trophy. Zoom in on Twilight.)

Twilight: Hmmm...

(Snap to black.)

Act Two

(Opening shot: fade in to three empty tubs on the ground around a tree. Applejack backs up partially into view and fetches the trunk a solid buck with her hind legs, as she did during her first appearance in "Mare in the Moon." Now, as then, so many apples fall loose that the tubs are filled in a heartbeat. She does the same to two other trees; the landscape indicating that she has already tended to several others in the same way. If anything, she is even more tired than she was at the award ceremony.)

Applejack: Phew!

(Her head droops for a moment, but she shakes out of it and squints behind herself, rearing up for another go. This time, she is too far away from a tree and hits nothing but air—and the tree has already been cleaned off to boot. Zoom out to frame Twilight watching her from a short distance.)

Twilight: *(to herself)* What on earth is that pony doing?

(Applejack repositions herself and tries again, but kicks over an apple tub instead of hitting the

tree.)

Applejack: Whoops. (*Close-up of the fruit and her slowly moving hooves.*)

Twilight: (*from o.s.*) Hey, Applejack! (*Cut to Applejack, who dozes off, then to Twilight.*)
Applejack!

(*The harvester pays no mind as the camera cuts back to her.*)

Twilight: (*from o.s.*) Applejack!

(*Still nothing, so the unicorn fires up her horn and teleports over to stand right in front of Applejack.*)

Twilight: APPLEJACK! (*She wakes up with a start.*)

Applejack: Howdy, Twilight. (*Zoom out slightly, framing more trees.*)

Twilight: What *is* all this?

Applejack: (*walking past*) It's applebuck season.

(*Twilight teleports over to her as she bucks another tree.*)

Applejack: (*surprised*) Whoa.

Twilight: Apple-what season?

Applejack: (*moving again*) It's what the Apple family calls harvestin' time. (*Teleport.*) We gather all the apples from the trees so we can sell 'em.

Twilight: But why are you doing it all alone?

Applejack: 'Cause Big Macintosh hurt himself. (*Teleport; she stops.*)

Twilight: What about all those relatives I met when I first came to Ponyville? Can't they help?

(*Referring to the family members who had gathered at Sweet Apple Acres during "Mare in the Moon."*)

Applejack: (*sighing, moving past her o.s.*) They were just here for the Apple family reunion. They actually live all over Equestria and are busy harvestin' their own orchards. (*Horn warm-up; cut to Applejack.*) So, uh, I'm on my own. (*Teleport, blocking her path.*) Which means I should really get back to work.

(*Twilight holds her ground, leaving her and Applejack to stare each other down for a moment.*)

Applejack: (*clearing throat*) Hint, hint? (*Cut to Twilight; she continues o.s.*) Get back to work?

Twilight: Fine.

(*She walks off. Back to Applejack, who begins to sway from side to side.*)

Applejack: Could you step aside, Twilight?

(As she speaks, zoom out slightly to show that Twilight has in fact moved out of her way.)

Twilight: I just did.

(Cut to Applejack's perspective of her; the image blurs and shifts, and her words have a distinct echo to them. This is how the bleary-eyed farmer is seeing and hearing the world at the moment.)

Twilight: Applejack, you don't look so good. *(Back to the pair; Applejack shakes her head and moves on.)*

Applejack: Don't none of you three worry none, I'm just fine and dandy. *(She tries to buck another tree but misses.)* Whoa! *(Teleport.)*

Twilight: Do you...want some help?

Applejack: Help? *(shaking head emphatically)* No way, no how!

Twilight: But there's no way you can do it all on your own. *(Applejack gets in her face.)*

Applejack: Is that a challenge?

Twilight: Um...no.

Applejack: Well, I'm gonna prove to you that I can do it! *(walking past)* Now if you'll excuse me... *(Close-up of Twilight; she continues o.s.)* ...I've got apples to buck.

(The one who actually got a good night's sleep bites her lower lip nervously and looks after her. Dissolve to a fence in Ponyville, with Rainbow balanced atop one post on all four hooves. She is looking a bit out of sorts and glances behind her as the sound of galloping steps is heard; zoom out slightly as Applejack skids to a stop.)

Rainbow: There you are!

Applejack: *(yawning)* I'm a mite sorry, Rainbow. I was busy applebuckin' and I guess I...I closed my eyes for a second, and when I woke up, I was late. Now what's this new trick of yours?

Rainbow: *(pointing o.s.)* See this contraption?

(Quick pan in that direction. The contraption in question is a seesaw placed in front of a platform on a scaffold. The high end, marked with an X, is the one closer to the scaffold.)

Applejack: *(from o.s.)* Uh...yeah.

Rainbow: *(from o.s.)* Well, I'm gonna stand on one end. Then you're gonna jump down from that platform, launching me into the air faster than I can take off on my own. Once I'm in the air, I'm gonna do some *amazing* flips and spins that are sure to impress the Wonderbolts.

(The following happens during this description. One, zoom in on the low end, with a blue circle being drawn around it as if a Telestrator were being used to diagram a football play. Two, pan/tilt up to the platform, which also gets a circle; a dotted line traces a path down to the high end and another one marks the launch trajectory into the sky. Three, as the camera follows the second line, it traces a jumble of loops and squiggles.)

(Back to Applejack, whose sleep-deprived brain has found the right gear for a moment.)

Applejack: Isn't that a mite dangerous? (*Rainbow flies over to her.*)

Rainbow: (*laughing*) Not for a pony who can fly! (*She zips o.s.*)

Applejack: (*following*) Well, all righty, then.

(Cut to the base of the scaffold and tilt up to the platform, where Applejack steps into position and looks down over the edge. Her blurred perspective of the seesaw, with Rainbow standing on the lower end.)

Applejack: (*uneasily*) Oh, my. (*Cut to Rainbow, ground level.*)

Rainbow: Ready? (*Zoom out.*) One...two...three!

(Her assistant plunges into view—and completely misses the seesaw to belly-flop in the grass.)

Rainbow: (*crossing to her*) Um...maybe I wasn't clear. You're supposed to land *on* the other end. (*Applejack peels herself up.*)

Applejack: (*woozily*) Got it.

(Three more jumps see her land rump first, then on her back, then headfirst—much to the would-be stunt flyer's annoyance.)

Rainbow: Applejack, what the hay is going on? I mean, I thought I was working with Ponyville's best athlete! (*Close-up of said athlete on the end of this; she shakes her head clear.*)

Applejack: You are! I'm okay, really. I have an idea. Watch this.

(She grabs the high end of the seesaw and pulls it down.)

Applejack: Ta-da!

(Needless to say, this effort does not please Rainbow in the slightest; close-up of her face.)

Applejack: (*from o.s.*) Oh...maybe not. (*Back to her.*) Okay, one more try. (*turning to the tower*) I'm sure to get it this time.

(Rainbow's end thuds to the ground, collapsing her onto the seesaw when her knees and hocks give out. As she groans woozily, Applejack resumes her spot on the platform and squints to try and bring the rig into focus, seen from her perspective. The image resolves itself and she laughs a bit; back to her.)

Applejack: Here I go!

(She backs up a bit and gallops off the edge, throwing Rainbow into a hoof-flailing panic.)

Rainbow: WAIT!!

(Too late; gravity does its thing, and the apple-farming pony comes down full force to hurl Rainbow into the distance.)

Rainbow: *(fading out)* APPLEJAAAACK!!

Applejack: *(calling after her)* YOU'RE WELCOME!!

(Wipe to the exterior of the library and zoom in the lower balcony, where Twilight is reading. In close-up, she is shaken out of it by Rainbow's approaching scream and a crash that marks one very rough landing. Zoom out slightly; the pegasus is hanging over the railing.)

Twilight: *(puzzled)* Can I help you?

Rainbow: *(weakly)* I think somepony else needs your help.

Twilight: Applejack?

Rainbow: Yep.

(She passes out and Twilight mulls the situation over for a second. Dissolve to Applejack at work in the orchard, with full apple baskets slung on her back. She bucks a tree, ducks down to grab an apple by its stem in her teeth, and bangs her head on a low branch as she straightens up. The hit sets her entire skull vibrating before Twilight walks up.)

Twilight: Applejack, can we talk?

(Applejack scratches at an ear, trying to clear it; close-up of Twilight, zooming in on her mouth as she repeats the previous line. The words are nearly lost beneath the ringing in Applejack's ears.)

Applejack: CAN BEES SQUAWK? I DON'T THINK SO!

Twilight: No. Can we talk?

Applejack: TWENTY STALKS? BEAN OR CELERY?

Twilight: NO! I NEED TO TALK TO YOU!

Applejack: YOU NEED TO WALK TO THE ZOO? WELL, WHO'S STOPPIN' YOU?

Twilight: I NEED TO TALK TO YOU!

(Cut to Applejack and pan from one speaker to the other in turn.)

Applejack: OH! WELL, WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY SO? WHAT YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT?

Twilight: RAINBOW DASH DROPPED IN TO SEE ME TODAY!

Applejack: THAT'S QUITE NEIGHBORLY OF HER!

Twilight: YES, EXCEPT THAT SHE CRASHED ONTO MY BALCONY AFTER YOU LAUNCHED HER INTO THE AIR!

(Back to Applejack; the pans and the shouting both stop at this point.)

Applejack: Oh...yeah. *(dropping her head)* I wasn't feelin' quite myself this mornin'.

Twilight: Because you're working too hard and you need help!

Applejack: What? Kelp? I don't need kelp. I don't even like seaweed.

Twilight: HELP!! YOU NEED HELP!!

Applejack: Nothin' doin', Twilight. I'm gonna prove to you, to everypony, that I can do this on my own!

(Walking away, she clunks her head on the same branch; this hit knocks her eyes out of focus.)

Applejack: Ow! Now if you'll excuse me, I gotta go help Pinkie Pie!

(She stumbles away, nearly dumping her freight of fruit and leaving Twilight to groan wearily to herself. Dissolve to the exterior of Sugarcube Corner and zoom in as an older female voice is heard. This shot, a longer one than that displayed in "The Ticket Master," reveals more details about the building. Weather vane styled as a rearing pony holding a candy cane at one end of the roof, near a set of brick chimneys painted violet and decorated to resemble a heavily iced hunk of rock candy; nest of birds' eggs at the other end; two upper stories decorated to resemble a pair of stacked cupcakes, with candles on the topmost one.)

Voice: Now, Pinkie Pie...

(On the start of the next line, cut to the shop floor inside, where the speaker—a light blue, violet-eyed earth pony mare—is stacking packages at a display case. Her two-tone, rose-colored mane and tail are carefully styled to resemble cupcake frosting, and she wears an apron and small pink earrings. Cutie mark: three cupcakes. Behind her, an earth pony stallion of about the same age comes down the stairs, carrying a bag in his teeth. Yellow-orange coat; short, deep orange-brown mane and tail; square jaw; apron; red/white bow tie and low-crowned cap; birdcatcher spots around his nose; cutie mark of three cake slices. These are Mr. and Mrs. Cake, the bakery owners.)

Mrs. Cake: ...are you sure you're up for baking the muffins and running the store this afternoon?

(On the end of this, zoom out to frame Pinkie in the foreground, then shift to show Applejack next to her.)

Pinkie: Yes-sirree-bob, Mrs. Cake! *(Zoom out; Applejack needs a nap.)* Plus, I have Ponyville's prize pony to help me out. Why, she's the best baker ever! *(Hard head shake from the other.)* Right, Applejack?

(Applejack's perspective of the pink pony—the last two words still scrambled—then back to her as she shakes her head again.)

Mr. Cake: *(from o.s.)* No? *(Cut to him.)* You're not the best baker ever?

(This shot shows his fully open eyes, which are light green.)

Applejack: WHAT? OH, NO! (*catching herself*) I mean...don't you fret. I can bake anything from fritters to pies in the blink of an eye.

Mrs. Cake: (*chuckling a bit, as the couple leaves*) Oh, right. Well, see you later, girls!

(*Zoom in as Applejack shakes her head once more, only to have Pinkie reach into view and stop her.*)

Pinkie: (*from o.s.*) Stop with the shakin'... (*popping into view*) ...it's time to get bakin'!

(*Wipe to the kitchen, where she is eyeing a cookbook in a stand on the counter.*)

Pinkie: All righty. I'll get the sugar and the eggs. Can you get me some chocolate chips?

(*Pan to Applejack on the end of this, she has dozed off with her head on the counter, but snaps awake.*)

Applejack: (*stammering a bit*) Eh...what was that?

(*Her perspective as Pinkie repeats the last two words—now her ears and eyes are both working at half speed—then back to her.*)

Applejack: Chips. (*brightening*) Got it.

(*At the pantry shelves, she eyes the foodstuffs before noticing several bags of...*)

Applejack: Tater chips. All salty and dry. Okey-dokey.

(*She grabs a bag in her teeth; close-up of a mixing bowl as the contents are dumped in.*)

Applejack: (*from o.s.*) What next?

Pinkie: (*half speed*) Baking soda.

Applejack: Soda...perfect! (*She crosses to an open refrigerator stocked with it.*) That'll get the tater chips nice and wet.

(*The bowl again as a bottle of soda is poured in.*)

Applejack: (*from o.s.*) NOW WHAT? (*Back to her.*)

Pinkie: (*from o.s.*) A cup of flour.

Applejack: (*puzzled*) A cup o' sour? Well, lemons are sure sour.

(*Now a bowl of lemons has been put on the counter, one sliced in half and oozing juice.*)

Applejack: (*from o.s.*) One cup o' sour, comin' up.

(She extends her head into frame and empties a measuring cup filled with lemon juice into the bowl. Back to her.)

Applejack: Anythin' else, Pinkie?

Pinkie: *(from o.s.)* One last thing—wheat germ.

Applejack: *(grimacing)* Wheat worms? Oh! That must be fancy talk for earthworms.

(Outside, she trots from the front door to a patch of dirt and scratches at it; inside, she spits a mouthful of worms into the bowl. Back to Pinkie, who has taken no notice.)

Pinkie: Now that's gonna be delicious! *(Pan to Applejack on the end of this and cut to the bowl.)*

Applejack: *(from o.s., unconvinced)* If you say so.

(The misguided recipe has left a thoroughly unappetizing, mud-colored mulch as batter; studded with plenty of wriggly fish bait. Dissolve to racks of freshly baked muffins atop the display case on the shop floor.)

Pinkie: *(popping up behind them)* Free muffin sample spectacular!

(Zoom out quickly to frame a considerable crowd of onlookers, then pan through them as they lick their chops and voice anticipation.)

Applejack: *(as ponies help themselves)* Yeah! Muffin spectacles! Get 'em while they're hot!

(Clock wipe to a curtain, which is pulled aside by a somewhat frazzled-looking white earth pony mare—Nurse Redheart—when she steps into view. Light blue eyes, light pink mane and tail with the former gathered in a bun; red-cross cutie mark with a small pink heart tucked into each outer corner. This design is repeated on the white nurse's cap she wears. Behind the curtain, Twilight and Spike are framed against a stretch of Ponyville's buildings in late afternoon.)

Twilight: We came as soon as we heard.

Redheart: *(sighing)* Thank you, Twilight. We need all the help we can get.

(On the second half of this, pan across the area: an open-air tent filled with hospital beds, every one of which is occupied by a groaning pony, with others lying on the floor. A second nurse is on duty, and some of the patients' faces have gone green; one is vomiting into a bucket.)

Twilight: Oh, no! What happened?

(Close-up of a half-eaten muffin on the floor; Spike picks it up and is surprised to see a worm poke out of it.)

Redheart: *(from o.s.)* It was a mishap with some of the baked goods. *(Cut to Pinkie, green-faced in a bed.)*

Pinkie: *(weakly)* No...not baked goods...baked bads!

(She fights to keep from blowing chunks; Twilight recoils for a moment, then regains her nerve.)

Twilight: Applejack!

(Sounds of eager chomping are heard, surprising her; zoom out to frame Spike—scarfing down the muffin he found—at her hooves. He has gathered up an armload.)

Spike: Want one?

(Snap to black.)

Act Three

(Opening shot: fade in to Applejack and a cart on opposite sides of an apple tree. She falls asleep as soon as she bucks it, but an apple bouncing off her head wakes her up.)

Applejack: Wha—? Huh?

(She trudges off toward the cart. A dissolve shows her in its harness, backing the load toward a tub that rests in a depression between two hillocks. Gravity quickly asserts itself, flipping the whole rig up to vertical so that the fruit tumbles out and Applejack is left on the high end, where she nods off again as her hat falls off. Twilight approaches.)

Twilight: Applejack, we need to talk:

Applejack: Wha—? Huh?...Oh. It's you, Twilight. *(Yawn.)* I know what you're gonna say, but the answer is still no.

Twilight: Not to upset your apple cart, but *you need help.*

Applejack: Har-de-har... *(She tries to flip herself down and fails.)* ...and no, I don't. *(Again.)*

Twilight: Here. Let me help.

Applejack: Help? *(Again.)* No, thanks!

(Close-up of the nonplussed unicorn as the sounds of Applejack's efforts drift over to her.)

Applejack: *(from o.s., grunting)* A little more...little... *(Twilight claps a hoof to her face; a thud.)* There.

(Cut to another tree. Applejack has moved the cart into position and unhooked herself, ready to buck.)

Applejack: I'll prove that this Apple can handle these apples. *(bucking repeatedly)* Come on, apples...fall off!

Twilight: AJ, I think you're beating a dead...

(Back to Applejack, then zoom out to show that this tree's branches have no fruit whatsoever and only a very few leaves.)

Twilight: *(from o.s.)* ...tree. *(One leaf drops loose.)*

Applejack: I knew that. *(She walks off, Twilight following.)*

Twilight: Actually, Applejack, I had something else to talk to you about. I just came back from Ponyville Urgent Care and—

Applejack: You know, I'm a little busy to get lectured right now, Twilight.

Twilight: But if you'd just let me help—

Applejack: Ugh! No, no, *no!* *(Both stop.)* How many times do I gotta say it? *(walking off)* I don't need no help from nopony!

Twilight: *(to herself)* Ugh! That pony is stubborn as a mule! *(Loud braying is heard o.s.; she addresses herself to it.)* No offense.

(Zoom out. A buck-toothed mule is now standing next to her.)

Mule: None taken.

(Dissolve to a stretch of meadow in which several rabbits are cheerfully hopping around and pan across it.)

Fluttershy: *(from o.s.)* Oh, Applejack, thank you *so* much for offering your herding skills for the annual rabbit roundup.

(The two come into view on the end of this line, walking through the scene.)

Applejack: *(groaning impatiently)* Why are we doin' this?

Fluttershy: Well, lots of new baby bunnies have been born, so it's my job to get a count of all the new families.

Applejack: *(passing her)* Fine. Can we just get on with it?

Fluttershy: Certainly. But remember, these are bunnies we're dealing with, not cows. They're a timid bunch and need to be treated gently.

Applejack: I do not need any direction on corrallin' critters. *(addressing herself o.s.)* Right, Winona?

(Pan slightly to show that the dog has come up alongside. She barks, setting the noses of two nearby bunnies twitching. Fluttershy now directs her words to several others.)

Fluttershy: Okay, little bunnies. I need you to all gather here in the middle.

(Ground level on the end of this, whereupon one of Applejack's hooves slams down. She is having no part of the soft-touch approach.)

Applejack: *(from o.s.)* That's right! *(Head-on view.)* Let's go, bunnies! In the center! *(Ground level; she continues o.s.)* Hop to it!

(Several of them, panicked, race past a surprised Fluttershy.)

Applejack: Swell. Just swell.

(She charges off after the bunnies, scattering some in various directions while others do their best to keep ahead.)

Applejack: Put 'em up, Winona!

(The canine herder gets into the action, flushing some out of the bushes.)

Fluttershy: *(from o.s.)* Applejack! *(Cut to her.)* Winona! Stop! You're scaring them!

Applejack: We know what we're doin'! Get along, little bunnies!

(Winona barks and joins Applejack in a fenced enclosure, with a large group of rabbits huddled at one end. The two make a slow advance, Winona growling quietly; zoom in on the terrified animals.)

Fluttershy: *(from o.s.)* Oh, no...

(Every eye in the bunch pops wide open in unison, followed by a massed charge and fade to black.)

(Fade in to the same stretch of Ponyville in which Rainbow got a bird's-eye view of the Act One cattle ruckus. She rises to roof level again, sees the approaching dust cloud, and yells...)

Rainbow: STAMPEDE!!

(...with the same results. Ponies galloping everywhere, shutters closed, welcome mat pulled in and front door slammed—only this time, there is no Mayor Mare to try and calm everyone down. The bunnies hop along at breakneck speed and detour around one earth pony mare who faints in the middle of the street. She is bright pink, with gold eyes, a long blond mane/tail, and a lily blossom tucked behind one ear, and has three of these flowers as her cutie mark—this is Lily. Zoom out overhead and fade to black.)

(Fade in to Twilight, trotting along the street and humming cheerfully to herself. She stops short with a gasp, seeing not one but three unconscious earth pony mares before her. One of the two extras has a two-tone red mane/tail, an off-white coat, and a rose cutie mark; she will later be identified as Rose. The last pony is Daisy. The three come to in turn; when Rose opens her eyes, they are seen to be deep green.)

Rose: The horror! The horror!

Lily: It was awful!

Daisy: A disaster! *(Back to Twilight; she continues o.s.)* A horrible, horrible disaster!

(The cause of which has Twilight mystified, since the street is empty and quiet.)

Twilight: I don't get it.

Lily: *(rushing to ruined vegetable patch)* Our gardens, destroyed!

Rose: *(racing to denuded flowerpots)* Every last flower, devoured!

Daisy: *(still lying in street)* By...by... *(pointing o.s.)* ...*them!*

(A cut and pan reveals the bunnies chowing down on every bit of greenery in sight.)

Fluttershy: *(from o.s., panicked)* Oh, my...oh, please stop, little bunnies... *(Stop on her.)*
...oh...no, no...please, let's go home... *(chasing a few)* ...no...oh...oh, my goodness!

Twilight: All right. *(Zoom in to extreme close-up.)* Enough is enough!

(Dissolve to Applejack, at the base of a tree and with baskets on her back. Zoom in slowly.)

Applejack: *(bucking weakly)* Must...keep...buckin'...just...a few...more... *(Twilight trots up.)*
...must...finish...harvestin'...

Twilight: All right, Applejack. Your applebucking hasn't just caused *you* problems. It's over-propelled pegasus, practically poisoned plenty of ponies, and terrorized bushels of brand-new bouncing baby bunnies. I don't care what you say, *you need help!*

(One more buck brings down a double basketful of apples.)

Applejack: Hah! No, I don't. *(Cut to Twilight, surprised; she continues o.s.)* Look, I did it!

(Slow pan across the orchard; every visible tree has been cleaned of its fruit.)

Applejack: *(from o.s.)* I harvested the entire Sweet Apple Acres without your help. *(Back to her.)* How d'you like *them* apples?

(Zoom out slightly to frame Macintosh, who has come up next to her.)

Macintosh: *(gesturing with head)* Um...how do *you* like *them* apples?

(A camera shift and pan reveal that on the side he has indicated, half the orchard still has not been worked. Applejack's panicked shudder is heard, back to her on the start of the next line.)

Applejack: *(deliriously)* Where'd all the apple...

(Her speech degenerates into unintelligible mumbling as her eyes go out of focus, and she totters back and forth before finally crashing to the ground. Snap to black.)

Twilight: *(voice over, echoing)* Applejack!

(The black screen splits horizontally in time with this as if it were an opening eye, revealing the unicorn's fuzzy, upside-down image—Applejack's perspective. Normal vision and sound restore themselves quickly.)

Twilight: Applejack!

Applejack: *(weakly)* Huh? *(Cut to both.)*

Twilight: Oh, good. You're okay. Now, Applejack, I completely respect the Apple family ways.

(Overhead close-up of the physically and mentally exhausted pony.)

Twilight: *(from o.s.)* You're always there to help anypony in need, so maybe you can put a little of your stubborn pride aside and allow your friends to help you.

(On the second half of this, Applejack looks nervously off toward the trees that still need harvesting. Long pause after Twilight finishes.)

Applejack: *(quietly)* Okay, Twilight.

Twilight: I am not taking no for an answer. *(realizing what Applejack said)* What?

Applejack: Yes, Twilight. *(putting front hooves together beseechingly)* Yes, please. I could really use your help.

(Smiling, Twilight chuckles to herself and lets off a relieved little sigh.)

(Dissolve to Rainbow and Pinkie at a tree; the former bucks it so that the fruit falls into a cart pulled by the latter. Slow pan across the fields as Twilight narrates. Fluttershy lets apples from another tree drop into baskets on her back, Rarity carries two full ones away, and Twilight levitates apples off a large stretch of trees and moves them to fall into three huge tubs.)

Twilight: *(voice over)* “Dear Princess Celestia: My friend Applejack is the best friend a pony could ever have, and she's always there to help anypony. The only trouble is, when she needs help, she finds it hard to accept it. So while friendship is about giving of ourselves to friends, it's also about accepting what our friends have to offer. Your faithful student, Twilight Sparkle.”

(As she finishes, Applejack—now properly rested—pushes a beverage cart into view; it carries six bottles of apple juice, complete with straws.)

Applejack: How about y'all take a little break? *(Cut to Rainbow/Pinkie, Fluttershy, and Twilight in turn; she continues o.s.)* I got some fine apple juice waitin' for you.

(They gather at a table where she has set up the drinks.)

Applejack: *(sighing)* Girls, I can't thank you enough for this help. I was actin' a bit stubborn.

Twilight: A bit?

Applejack: Okay, a mite stubborn. And I'm awful sorry. Now, I know the town gave me the Prize Pony award, but the real award... *(Her perspective of the other five.)* ...is havin' you five

as my friends. *(Spike walks up as they drink.)*

Rainbow: Phew! That applebucking sure made me hungry. *(Close-up of Spike.)*

Spike: *(holding up the botched, half-eaten muffins)* And I've got the perfect treat!

(Zoom out slightly; Pinkie is next to him, and she recoils at the sight.)

Pinkie: Ewww! Spike, I threw those away! Where'd you get them?

Spike: From the trash!

Ponies: *(Applejack and Fluttershy in frame, others o.s.)* EWWW!! *(They start to leave.)*

Spike: *(following the group)* Just a little nibble? Come on...

(Collective sounds of disgust as the view "irises out" to black.)