

THE FAULT IN OUR CUTIE MARKS

Story by Josh Haber, Meghan McCarthy

Written by Ed Valentine

Produced by Devon Cody

Story editing by Josh Haber

Supervising direction by Jim Miller

Directed by Denny Lu, Tim Stuby

Transcribed by Alan Back (ajback@yahoo.com)

Prologue

(Opening shot: fade in to a slow zoom in on a Ponyville house during the day. From here, cut to a close-up of Scootaloo, frantically shifting a toy bucket here and there to catch dollops of sand being flung her way. She miscalculates on the last one, though, and catches it with her face instead. As she shakes herself clean, the camera zooms out slowly to show her sitting in a sandbox, at the center of a fenced-in backyard. Next to her is an earth pony filly: light blue coat; dark blue eyes; wavy, two-tone medium blue mane/tail, the former tied with an orange bow. On her haunch is a cutie mark consisting of a pony skull and two bones, and she is liberally stained with sand kicked up by her enthusiastic use of the toy shovel in her mouth. This is Petunia, who wastes no time in further excavating the considerable hole she has already dug in the sandbox.)

(The zoom out continues through a window until Sweetie Belle comes into view, watching from inside the house.)

Sweetie: So, Scootaloo's keeping Petunia busy like you asked.

(Longer shot of this area, the living room. She and Apple Bloom sit on one of two couches placed near a coffee table, and the yellow filly is sipping a cup of tea. The pot, her saucer, and Sweetie's cup/saucer are on the table. The other couch is occupied by Petunia's parents, both earth ponies, both wearing slightly unnerved grins. Father: cream-colored coat; medium blue eyes; short, tousled, two-tone light blue mane/tail; gray golf shirt with a dark blue sweater loosely knotted around his shoulders; wristwatch on one foreleg. Mother: blue-green coat; pale green eyes; two-tone grayish-blue mane/tail; necklace/earrings/foreleg bracelet all sporting off-white pearls; orange blouse. Her cutie mark is visible as an open oyster with a pearl nestled inside, but his cannot be seen due to the camera angle and the arm of the couch.)

Sweetie: What did you two want to talk about?

Mother: I'm sure you get these questions all the time. *(Father puts a reassuring foreleg around her shoulders.)* Oh, this is so awkward.

Father: Um, you're the experts, so we thought you'd have some insight into our daughter's new...uh, cutie mark.

Bloom: What's wrong?

Mother: Obviously we're both very proud of her— (*queasily*) —and her cutie mark.

(When Father shifts his hoof to scratch the back of his neck, his mark comes into full view—a pair of crossed fencing swords.)

Father: Despite its, um...unsettling nature. (*The grins go back on.*)

Sweetie: Unsettling?

(Cut to just outside the window as she crosses to it for a good look, then cut to the sandbox. Petunia has ditched the shovel in favor of her hooves, and she keeps right on throwing sand every which way as the camera zooms in to a close-up of her haunch. Back to the window; all four gather at the panes. The next two lines are slightly muffled by the glass.)

Bloom: I don't get what you mean.

Mother: Her mark doesn't...bother you at all?

Scootaloo: (*from o.s.*) Hey! Check out what we found!

(They move off; cut to within the hole, the camera pointing up at Scootaloo as they peek in around her. An excited young voice, that can only belong to Petunia, speaks up next.)

Petunia: (*from o.s.*) Look!

(Overhead close-up of her, standing proudly next to a freshly exposed skull and a scatter of bone fragments.)

Petunia: A spiny-backed ponasaurus! In our own backyard! And I found him on my very own! How cool is that? (*Close-up of her parents.*)

Mother, Father: (*laughing with relief*) Ohhh! She's an archaeologist. (*Cut to the Cutie Mark Crusaders.*)

Scootaloo: Of course! What'd you think she was gonna be, a pirate?

(Mild bewilderment settles in on the three young faces as the camera zooms out. Across from them, the two grown ponies are now holding up the parts of an outfit that might be worn by a high-seas buccaneer; these are thrown aside with big dopey smiles.)

Mother: Pirate? Pffff! Why would we think that?

(They do their best to force out nonchalant chuckles, which the Crusaders absolutely do not buy, and the skull slowly rises into view on Petunia's front hooves. Fade to black.)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(Opening shot: fade in to a close-up of a helmeted Scootaloo advancing into view. The whirring of her scooter's wheels is heard as she moves along a street.)

Scootaloo: Woo-hoo! Another successful cutie intervention! *(Bloom and Sweetie catch up.)* You know, Crusaders, I don't want to toot our own horn, but we've helped a lot of ponies figure out their purpose in life. *(They pass a saxophone-playing stallion.)* Like Blue Note here. *(to him)* Nice saxophone, Blue Note!

Bloom: Yep. Everywhere you look—

(Cut to a close-up of Bulk Biceps lifting a barbell and zoom out to show two foals matching his feat—one with apples on the bar, the other with cupcakes.)

Bloom: *(from o.s.)* —there's a pony we've helped find a purpose.

(The camera shifts to an extreme close-up of two orange rear hooves tapping out a dance rhythm on a stage. As the Crusaders cruise by, the tempo speeds up considerably and a zoom out frames the dancer as Tender Taps, the colt Bloom helped to find his love of performing in "On Your Marks." A sizable crowd has turned out to watch him do his thing. Next they pull up in front of the town hall.)

Bloom: You've gotta admit, we've had a pretty good effect on everypony since we discovered our destiny.

Scootaloo: And started helping other ponies discover theirs! Could this get any better or what?

(They carry on. Wipe to them traveling along one of the paths at Sweet Apple Acres.)

Sweetie: Now, Scootaloo, you do know there will always be challenges. Someday, somepony might even come to us with a problem that even we can't handle—like, say... *(All stop.)*

Bloom: *(staring ahead)* A griffon?

Sweetie: Hah! Exactly! Like a griffon. *(Scootaloo stares.)* But that's just crazy talk.

Scootaloo: *(pointing ahead)* Or not!

(Now the young unicorn catches on, her green eyes registering their own measure of surprise. Cut to a long shot of the Crusaders' clubhouse, which has had a new addition in the form of a griffon perched on the observatory roof. One set of foreleg talons is raised to shade the eyes for a long-distance scan of the horizon, and the camera zooms in slightly. The new arrival has fur and feathers in four shades of bluish-gray, with the lightest hue under the chin and the darkest on wings and the end of the tail. A close-up picks out the dark blue-green eyes, the strap of a pair of pouches stuffed with envelopes across the back, and the head plumage tied back in a short ponytail. The contour of the eyelashes marks this one as a female.)

(The Crusaders dive into a handy bush for cover as she scratches behind one ear with a hind-leg paw. This shot is close enough to pick out the light markings around the avian eyes and the tied-back feathers. Sweetie is first to risk a look in close-up.)

Sweetie: Is that really a griffon? (*Zoom out; Bloom and Scootaloo put their heads out, Scootaloo without her helmet.*)

Bloom: You're darn tootin' it is. What do you think that griffon wants?

Sweetie: I guess we've gotta ask her, but...

(Close-up of the griffon, again shading her eyes for a searching look.)

Sweetie: (*from o.s.*) ...aren't griffons supposed to be kind of mean and cranky? (*The bush again.*)

Scootaloo: Crusaders, looks like we gotta step carefully.

(They plunge back into the bush and emerge from one side, moving as stealthily as they can, but the visitor gets an eyeful and dives off the roof. An instant later, the feathered head pops up from the bush to scare them into a halt, and the griffon speaks with a young, excited voice. This is Gabriela, or Gabby for short.)

Gabby: The Cutie Mark Crusaders! (*leaping out to stand over them; they fall backward*) I can't believe it's really, really you!

(With a peal of wild laughter, she gathers the fillies up into a bone-crushing hug.)

Scootaloo: (*strained*) This griffon's not cranky!

Bloom: How in the blooming apples did you know who we are?

Gabby: Know who you are? (*Her perspective, shaking them back and forth.*) Know who you are?!?

(She sets them down; cut to her as she pops up to a hover.)

Gabby: Why, I've heard about you from everypony in Ponyville! I'm so excited to meet you, I could just explode!

(For the first time since opening her beak, she actually calms down a bit.)

Gabby: I'm Gabriela. (*Touch down before them.*) But you can call me Gabby since we're friends now. (*grabbing all six of their forelegs*) Pleased to meet you!

(The ensuing shake rattles the equine skulls and leaves their owners badly dazed for a few seconds. Bloom is first to speak once they recover.)

Bloom: Well, howdy, um, Gabby. (*Up goes the visitor with an ecstatic squeal.*)

Gabby: I'm just about the most excited any griffon has ever been about anything!

Sweetie: (*confusedly*) Excited? But... whatever for?

Gabby: What for? *What for?* Everypony in town tells me of your amazing assistance! (*doing a loop-the-loop*) How you help ponies find their place in the world!

Scootaloo: It's a calling. But— (*Gabby swoops down to her.*)

Gabby: And that's why I'm here. I need help too. (*pointing to her haunch*) I want you to give me a cutie mark!

Bloom: (*hushed, to Scootaloo/Sweetie*) Um, can a griffon even get a cutie mark?

Scootaloo: (*hushed*) I don't know, but I think we should probably find out.

(All three slap on huge nervous grins, letting weak little chuckles slip out between their teeth; Gabby beams and rubs her talons together in anticipation. Dissolve to an extreme close-up of a tabletop in the clubhouse. Scootaloo sets a full glass on it; on the next line, Gabby's talons settle down at the edge and the camera zooms out to frame all four around the table.)

Scootaloo: So, Gabriela...

Gabby: Gabby, 'kay?

Scootaloo: Gabby. (*Who picks up the glass and starts guzzling.*) Why do you even want a cutie mark? It doesn't seem like a very...griffon-y thing to want. (*Gabby slams it down, empty.*)

Gabby: (*leaning toward her, with growing zeal*) Right? Right? Right?

(She spreads her wings on the last repetition, startling Scootaloo into a topple backwards to the floor.)

Gabby: You're telling me! (*She settles down and taps her talons.*) I don't know if you've heard, but griffons can be a little bit...unfriendly.

(Her eyes swivel toward the ceiling in recollection, and the camera tilts up to follow them as the view undergoes a wavering dissolve to a long shot of Griffonstone, the realm visited by Pinkie Pie and Rainbow Dash during Season Five. It is in somewhat better shape than they left it, suggesting that this flashback is set sometime after they turned up, and residents bustle about through the air.)

*** *Until the end of the flashback, all of her lines are delivered as a voice over.* ***

Gabby: Most griffons don't pay much attention to each other. (*Two nearly collide in midair and exchange angry squawks, a third joins in.*) And if they do, it's not, you know, the good kind of attention.

(She perches atop a roof.)

Gabby: As for me, I'm just a little mail delivery griffon— (*She pulls a letter from her saddlebags with her beak and gives a cheery salute and thumbs-up.*) —who likes to spread a little bit of griffon-y sunshine on my rounds—

(The recipient of this gesture is a sour-faced local who is dumping a bucket of water out of his birdhouse-styled home's front entrance hole. Gabby wings over to him.)

Gabby: —which always makes me feel different from the other griffons.

(He snatches the letter away, ducks inside, and slams the door. Similar scenarios play out twice more with others on her route. She stops in a downcast hover; but her eyes widen upon glancing downward; on the start of the next line, cut to an elderly female hobbling along with a cane as she arcs down to help.)

Gabby: I'd do anything for any old griffon in need.

(What she gets are a few angry yelps and swings of the stick that send her scrambling for cover.)

Gabby: But it just always seemed like the harder I tried, the less I fit in.

(On the next line, she peeks out from the alley in which she is hiding and sees Pinkie talking with Gilda. The two are standing by the latter's scone cart.)

Gabby: It wasn't until your friends came to Griffonstone that I realized some creatures actually like helping each other— *(Smile; eyes shine.)*—and I saw something so awesomely awesome!

(Cut to the moment of Gilda offering a scone to Greta.)

Gabby: How helping spreads from pony to pony and griffon to griffon!

(Her excitement fades into bewilderment; cut to her perspective and zoom in on Pinkie's and Rainbow's cutie marks—flaring to indicate a completed friendship mission.)

Gabby: I knew then that I had to find out why I was so different from the other griffons. *(The two ponies leave; she watches from the carved archway leading into Griffonstone.)* And I knew the answer just had to have something to do with those wonderful, amazing marks on the ponies' flanks.

(Her eyes widen in close-up; behind her, the background dissolves to a thatched rooftop.)

Gabby: And I admit—

(Giggle; cut to a longer shot. She hovers behind Gilda, who is sealing an envelope that bears Rainbow's cutie mark.)

Gabby: —I became m-maybe a little obsessed.

(She practically vibrates in place with nervous excitement, earning a stony glare from the brown/white scone baker before the letter is held out to her. Gabby's wings flare out to full spread in the bargain.)

Gabby: So, first chance I had to deliver a letter from Gilda, I took it—

(She snatches it in a blur of talons and paper and is airborne in almost the same motion, leaving nothing but a couple of feathers drifting to the ground as Gilda stares dumbstruck after her.)

Gabby: —so I could find the perfect ponies to understand what those marks are!

(She makes a beeline for Ponyville; cut to a close-up of Petunia and her parents standing in front of their house and zoom out on the next line. The filly has cleaned up since her fossil dig in the backyard sandbox. Gabby hovers nearby to hear their tale, and they point off down the street.)

Gabby: Everypony here told me one thing.

(Away she goes; now Bulk says his piece to her, pointing to his barbell cutie mark for emphasis and then directing her elsewhere.)

Gabby: I just *had* to see the Cutie Mark Crusaders.

(She zooms away; as she continues, cut to Tender on his stage, indicating his own mark and adding a few words and a new direction to check out.)

Gabby: They've helped everypony here get their cutie marks, and I knew— *(She takes off again.)* —I just knew—

(Now she finds Blue Note, the sax player, hanging out near the clubhouse; he makes a suggestion and points her toward the structure.)

Gabby: —that someday I'd have one too! *(Close-up, her eyes shining.)* A cutie mark of my very own!

(The flashback ends with a wavering dissolve back to the present, framing her identically composed face inside the clubhouse.)

Gabby: *(jumping onto table, standing on hind legs)* That's why I flew all the way here! I want to find my own place in the world, and I know you can help me, by giving me a cutie mark! *(hovering)* So, let's make with the cutie!

(She covers her eyes, only to separate her one set of talons so she can open one of them to peek out.)

Gabby: Whenever you're ready. *(Cover, then uncover both and check the haunch.)* Did it happen yet?

Sweetie: Uh...not exactly.

Gabby: *(rapid fire)* How about now, how about now, how about now, how about now?

Bloom: Um...Gabby, I hate to break it to you, but...it sounds like you mighta heard some tall tales about what Crusaders can do.

Scotaloo: I mean, we *are* kinda awesome and all, but nopony can just give you a cutie mark. It just sort of...happens. (*Bloom nods.*)

Sweetie: Though I'm pretty sure it doesn't happen to griffons, or if it does, we've never, ever heard of it.

Gabby: (*dejected, touching down*) Oh. I hadn't thought of that. (*brightening, hovering*) Sounds like a challenge! And who could be up to it but the world-famous Cutie Mark Crusaders? Cutie marks! It's in your name and everything, right? Right? Right?

(*She leans into one Crusader's face on each "right"—first Sweetie, then Bloom, lastly Scotaloo—and then backs off.*)

Gabby: (*pulling a letter from her pouches*) Now I have to deliver Gilda's letter to Rainbow Dash. (*Tuck it away.*) I bet by the time I get back, you'll have it one hundred percent figured out!

(*Cut to just outside the door as she opens it from inside.*)

Gabby: Toodles for now!

(*She flaps away to get on the job, punctuating her departure with a long, high-spirited whoop as the Crusaders step to the door with clear worry in their eyes.*)

Gabby: (*fading out*) GONNA GET MY CUTIE MARK!! (*Close-up of them on the end of this.*)

Sweetie: What she wants...it's not possible, right?

Scotaloo: I don't know. But I know someone who just might.

(*Wipe to an extreme close-up of a table cluttered with books. One more is plunked down and opened with magic, the pages flipping quickly, and Twilight Sparkle leans into view over it.*)

Twilight: I've read every book on the subject—

(*Cut to a longer shot; she and the Crusaders are in the library of the Castle of Friendship.*)

Twilight: —and I've never read a thing about any creature other than a pony getting a cutie mark.

Scotaloo: But, Twilight, Gabby flew all the way here so we could help her! There's gotta be something we can do! (*Sweetie thinks for a second.*)

Sweetie: Say, is there some kind of spell you can whip up to make her mark appear?

Twilight: Um, I don't know if any of you remember, but using magic to get a cutie mark never really works out all that well.

(*Referring to both her attempts to conjure one onto Bloom's haunch in "Call of the Cutie," and the filly's run-in with the title affliction in "The Cutie Pox."*)

Crusaders: (*deflated*) Ohhhh! Right. (*Twilight paces the room, floating a couple of books along.*)

Twilight: Crusaders, I'm sorry. While I can't say for certain that it's utterly impossible—*(shelving them)*—the chances of Gabby getting an actual mark are...pretty slim. Everything I've ever learned tells me—it's just not gonna happen. *(Cut to the Crusaders.)*

Bloom: Oh, no! Poor Gabby *(to Scootaloo/Sweetie)* What the apples are we ever gonna tell her?

(Zoom in slowly on their apprehensive expressions and fade to black.)

Act Two

(Opening shot: fade in to a long shot of the Castle and tilt down to frame the Crusaders heading away from it into town. Scootaloo is back on her scooter and wearing her helmet.)

Sweetie: Crusaders, this is terrible! Gabby really believed in us, and now we're gonna let her down.

Bloom: But...what else can we do?

Scootaloo: Hmm.

(A split-second inspiration causes her to wheel around and stop so that she faces them.)

Scootaloo: You know what, Crusaders? So what? Maybe we can't help Gabby get a cutie mark, but we can still do what we're best at. We can help her find her purpose! *(Bloom and Sweetie brighten.)*

Bloom: And I reckon doin' that is the same for griffons as it is for ponies, or any other creature in Equestria. *(Scootaloo is now off her scooter.)*

Scootaloo: All we have to do is be extra-special-clear with her. *(Close-up.)* Like, "Crystal Empire" clear. *(Zoom out to frame all three.)*

Crusaders: Yeah!

(The little speed demon mounts her vehicle again and all three continue their travels. Dissolve to them crossing the stretch of land surrounding the clubhouse as Gabby barrels toward them from above.)

Gabby: INCOMING!!

(The warning brings them up short; cut to just below the plunging flyer, the camera pointing straight up at her splayed limbs and exuberant countenance. The view blacks out as she fills the screen, then snaps to her delivering a triple-whammy hug to the fillies. After several seconds that probably rearrange a few too many bones, she puts them down. Scootaloo has shed her helmet and scooter again by this point.)

Gabby: Hiya, you wonderful, wonderful Crusaders! I just know you've figured out how to help me because you're all so incredible! *(Cut to the trio.)*

Scootaloo: Well, Gabby, we've talked it over, and we think we may just be able to help you out—but not exactly in the way you think. See, here's the thing about you getting a cutie mark. *(Back to Gabby on the next line.)*

Gabby: *(shrilly)* I'm getting a cutie mark! *(She lifts off into a whooping, corkscrewing ascent.)*

Scootaloo: *(calling after her)* Wait! You didn't let me finish!

Sweetie: *(to Scootaloo)* Um, I think maybe that could have been clearer.

(Dissolve to an open clubhouse window, seen from outside. She stares glumly out beyond the shutters, watching the enraptured Gabby flap into view.)

Gabby: Cutie mark, cutie mark, gonna get my cutie mark! Yahoo!

(Off she goes with yet another round of joyful vocalizations; cut to inside, where Sweetie turns away from the window to address the other two.)

Sweetie: She's still going. Anypony know if griffons ever get tired?

(Said griffon chooses this moment to hang upside down into view from outside, startling her a good bit.)

Gabby: What do you think my mark'll be? A lightning bolt? An erupting volcano? *(Cut to Bloom and Sweetie, trading unhappy looks; she continues o.s.)* I don't care if it's a jar of marmalade! *(All four again; she is now right side up.)* I know I'll love it, whatever it is!

Bloom: *(stepping to window)* Hold on just a hoofstep, Gabby. There's somethin' we need to clear up. We can definitely help you find your purpose, but... *(scratching back of neck)* ...that mark's probably not gonna happen.

(Gabby zips in through the open door, talons to cheeks in total shock.)

Gabby: *What?!?!?*

Scootaloo: *(stepping toward her)* It's true. Twilight's never heard of a creature other than a pony getting a cutie mark.

(Instead of being utterly crushed by this bit of information, the newcomer smile and waves it off.)

Gabby: Oh! *(scoffing)* Is that all? You had me worried for a second. I mean, there's a first time for everything, right? *(knowingly)* And she didn't say it was impossible, right?

(On her last word, cut to the Crusaders, more than a bit flummoxed by her sudden shift in attitude and/or failure to comprehend the situation.)

Bloom: Well, not exactly. *(Gabby rises to a hover.)*

Gabby: Well, then, if anypony can make it happen, it's you three! I mean, you haven't failed yet!

(That gets the three youngsters' minds working.)

Scootaloo: You know what, Gabby? (*crossing to her*) I promise we're gonna do everything we can to help you get your mark.

Gabby: (*hugging her*) Ooooh! It's gonna happen! (*Let go.*) I can feel it!

(The exterior of the clubhouse; she launches herself out the door for the latest round of jubilation in flight. Out come the Crusaders onto the platform, definitely not sharing the mood.)

Sweetie: And she's off again.

Bloom: (*to Scootaloo*) Why in tarnation would you promise somethin' that just can't be done?

Scootaloo: (*flapping her wings*) I know what it's like to want something that's out of reach.

(looking up, smiling) And just because it hasn't happened yet, doesn't mean it can't. *(stepping toward ramp)* Maybe trying for the impossible isn't so bad. *(The others flank her.)*

Sweetie: Guess we'll never know for sure unless we give it a try.

Bloom: All right, but... where do we even start?

Scootaloo: Where we always do—with a good old-fashioned Crusaders chart!

(Dissolve to a tilt up the length of a long sheet of paper tacked on a wall inside. It is covered with crayon drawings of various activities and topped with a header that shows the group's insignia.)

Bloom: (*from o.s.*) The first thing we gotta do is find your purpose.

(On the end of this, a pointer rod taps the sheet and the camera zooms out to show her holding it alongside. A longer shot frames all four gathered here.)

Scootaloo: No pony gets a mark without one. (*Gabby sits.*)

Gabby: Oh, right! (*pumping fists*) Let's do this!

Scootaloo: What are you good at? Do you play any sports?

Bloom: (*tapping paper*) Or like to dance?

Sweetie: Or how about singing? I just love to sing.

(And she demonstrates with a quick, slightly out-of-tune arpeggio. Gabby moves a bit closer to the visual aid.)

Gabby: Wow! I kinda want to just try everything! I mean, I don't even know what to pick!

Marching drum cadence, moderate 4

Scootaloo: (*nudging her flank*) Don't worry. That's what we're here for.

Acoustic guitar/mandolin in; quiet melody with flute/glockenspiel accents (D flat major)

(All three fillies start marking time, but each stops when she sings.)

Sweetie: (*crouching*) Like a racer at the starting line, you're chomping at the bit

Scootaloo: You are here to find your purpose and the place you really fit
(*Bloom sidles up to Gabby, having put her pointer down.*)
Bloom: And until you find your place in life, you're never gonna quit
Crusaders: We can help you find the purpose in your life

***Drum cadence replaced by standard percussion, with heavy accent on first beat of each bar
Flute out immediately; mandolin/glockenspiel out at start of next verse***

(*Scootaloo and Sweetie, now over by the sheet of drawings, pull on the lower end and cause the whole thing to roll up like a windowshade. It floats down, briefly filling the screen with whiteness that yields to a close-up of Gabby holding the document.*)

Gabby: A griffon mixes lion strength with winged eagles' might
(*Roll it up; tuck under a foreleg; point to haunch.*)
When I finally find my purpose, then my cutie mark's in sight
Crusaders, I won't let you down, I've just begun to fight
(*Outside the clubhouse; she opens the door and flies out, having shed her mail pouches.*)
You're gonna help me find the purpose in my life

String accents in; mandolin/glockenspiel in for two bars, then out again

(*The Crusaders gallop down the ramp after her, Sweetie carrying the rolled sheet in her magic; a moment later all four are bounding down the block in Ponyville proper.*)

Drum cadence takes over for percussion (A flat minor)

(*They slide to a stop, Gabby shades her eyes for a look around, and Sweetie unfurls the sheet as Scootaloo points in a certain direction.*)

Gabby: Got a job that's just no fun? Call on me, I'll get it done
(*All race off that way, Sweetie pulling the paper past the camera. Behind its trailing edge, the view wipes to a frustrated Zecora in her hut, trying and failing to stir an incredibly thick brew in her caldron. Gabby steps up and takes over for her, successfully agitating the batch and bringing a smile to the zebra's face.*)

Caldron stuck and needs a mix? I'm the one who's got the fix
(*She pulls a blackboard eraser across the screen; behind it; wipe to a stretch of the green surface and zoom out as she chalks up a formula for Cheerilee and the students in the classroom of the Ponyville schoolhouse. Bubbles wash this view away to show her now cleaning a patch of floor in the ground-floor showroom of the Carousel Boutique. Rarity and the Crusaders look on with delight.*)

Help you teach pre-calculus, scrub the floors, won't make a fuss
(*A strand of seaweed waves across the screen; behind it, wipe to her and a stallion cleaning up the green stuff on a beach as the Crusaders look on. A quick rain of apples changes the view to the Sweet Apple Acres orchards, where she hangs from a branch to drop fruit into one of several*

waiting tubs. Applejack smiles at the help. In both of these scenes, the Crusaders look on approvingly and Sweetie keeps the sheet handy.)

Clearing kelp, just give a yelp, raring to go, ready to help

***Half-time feel; strings strengthen; mandolin in
Drum cadence replaced by standard percussion (E major)***

Crusaders: That's the spirit, you want to see what you do best
(Gabby pores over it and picks out a picture of a baby; several other options are now crossed out.)

Try it all, pick your fave and leave behind the rest
(All four stand in a street; she lets Sweetie pull it away and magically roll it up.)

Gabby: I'll try anything to get my cutie mark
(She takes to the air and they gallop after her.)

Keep up with me, Crusaders, we're just getting our start

Half-time feel ends; strings out (D flat major)

(The cylinder of paper floats past the screen; behind it, wipe to a fenced-in yard in which Gabby is rocking an infant gently in a cradle. The mother wipes her forehead in silent gratitude for this respite as the griffon turns away to hang laundry on a clothesline.)

Gabby: Rock your little ones to sleep while hanging up the sheets
(Next she helps Bulk tote stacks of boxes, but passes her load off to him as the Crusaders catch up, leaving him to tumble onto his back. She zips past them to find Granny Smith and escort her across the road.)

I can help you with your heavy load, walk Granny 'cross the street
(A baseball bat swings across the view; behind it, wipe to home plate at a packed stadium. She is up to bat, and she gets a hit and breaks into a run for first, passing the Crusaders and stripping a pennant from Bloom's grip.)

I'll run you 'round the bases fast, it's really no big feat
(The fillies suddenly become very uneasy; Sweetie levitates the sheet up from behind the wall that runs along the foul line.)

Crusaders: Can we help her find the purpose in her life?

String/glockenspiel accents in

(A flash of white fills the screen and clears to give an extreme close-up of a set of teeth being fitted out for braces. Two gloved hands grip the ends of the wire running along the front teeth and pull it taut; zoom out to show Gabby on the job in a dentist's office. Her patient, a colt, smiles gratefully from the examination chair in which he sits; across the way, though, the Crusaders are now very worried and Sweetie uses her field to float the sheet and maneuver a pencil to cross off yet another item.)

Glockenspiel/mandolin out; drum cadence takes over for percussion (A flat minor)

(A gush of water streams down over the screen, triggering a wipe to a close-up of Gabby putting a wing around a glum-faced stallion on a bridge and causing him to smile. She has removed her gloves. Next a rush of flowers shifts the view to a close-up of a potted plant getting attention from her watering can. Zoom out to show her at work on a path lined with copious flora and two pony topiaries. The Crusaders watch, awed.)

Gabby: Cheer you if you're feeling low, plant your garden, make it grow
(A sheet of music is extended into view; one set of talons holds it while another adds a few bars, and she hands it off to a vocal/harp/cello trio and pulls out a clarinet to accompany them.)

Write a piece for your quartet, filling in on clarinet
(Muffins tumble down from above, the view wiping to the kitchen of Sugarcube Corner. As the Crusaders sit at the counter, sheet held magically in tow, Gabby pulls a fully decorated three-tier cake from the oven and sets it before them. Oven mitts cover the taloned digits.)

Bake that cake as fast as lightning
(Sweetie scratches another idea off the list.)

Crusaders: She's so good at things, it's frightening
(Closer shot, tilting down from top to bottom; every choice has been stricken through.)
Cutie Mark Crusaders, I think we've got a problem

***Half-time feel; strings strengthen; mandolin in
Drum cadence replaced by standard percussion (E major)***

(The multi-talented avian now stands at the wheel of a ship, having ditched the oven mitts and donned a life jacket.)

Gabby: Build a boat and sail it out across the sea
(Leaves stream past, the view wiping to a street as she flies along to the admiration of those she has assisted; she has ditched the survival gear, and she winks and waves to them.)

Need some help? You know that you can count on me
(She lands among the Crusaders and gathers them into a hug with her wings, but the gesture only worsens their unnerved state.)

CMC's, you're gonna help me find my purpose
(She rises alone into the sky high above Ponyville, twirling slowly.)
The purpose in my life

***Half-time feel ends and standard percussion resumes as she holds the last note
Glockenspiel accents in***

(Swoop down to ground level, where two stallions hold her aloft on their front hooves, then lower her onto their backs for a celebratory procession.)

Gabby: In my life

Hold a dramatic chord (D major)

(Pan a short distance away from her to stop on the Crusaders, Bloom sitting on her haunches and holding the sheet.)

Bloom: Now how we gonna do *this*?

Song ends with a pair of stingers (E major)

Sweetie: Gabby's special purpose can't be everything, right?

Bloom: It may as well be. I don't know how we find what she's supposed to do— *(holding sheet out for others to see; every single item is now marked off)* —when she can do it all. *(Scootaloo sits down with a heavy sigh.)*

Scootaloo: And if finding her purpose seems impossible— *(Close-up.)* —we can just forget about the whole “griffon getting a cutie mark” thing, which is *actually* impossible.

(Sound of the paper being rolled up; cut to frame all three, Bloom holding it in a foreleg and seated on her haunches, Scootaloo clapping hooves to eyes.)

Scootaloo: I never should've gotten her hopes up!

(On the start of the following, zoom out to frame “her” hovering nearby.)

Gabby: *(emphasizing each word)* I did it all! *(normal enunciation)* So? Lay it on me, Crusaders. *(Land.)* What's my purpose? *(pointing to haunch)* And how do we get a mark on these here haunches?

(Red-gold, violet, and green eyes telegraph pleas of silent desperation to one another before Scootaloo steps forward.)

Scootaloo: Gabby...we... *(hanging head)* ...we don't.

Gabby: Wait. What are you saying?

Bloom: *(standing up)* We're sayin' that since you can do everything so amazingly well...

Sweetie: ...we just can't figure out what one thing you're supposed to do.

Scootaloo: *(voice breaking)* Gabby...we can't help you.

Gabby: *(tearing up)* B-But-but...y-you're the world-famous Cutie Mark Crusaders! I can't believe it. I...I... *(with sudden ire)* ...I won't believe it! *(She takes off.)*

Bloom: Gabby, wait! *(All three gallop after her.)*

Scootaloo: We're sorry! *(All stop.)* We're so, so sorry! *(softly, to Bloom/Sweetie)* This is just awful. For the first time ever, the Cutie Mark Crusaders are cutie mark failures.

(Tears brim in her eyes on the end of this, and the other two pairs follow suit all too quickly. Fade to black.)

Act Three

(Opening shot: fade in to the trio in their clubhouse, seated despondently on their haunches near a wall. Scootaloo rolls up their list of ideas.)

Scootaloo: I'm sorry, Crusaders. I really thought we could help Gabby.

Sweetie: I thought we could help anypony.

Bloom: Maybe that's just it. Maybe we can only help ponies.

Scootaloo: *(angrily)* Or maybe we just plain failed.

(She throws the roll aside, but her sulking is interrupted by the sound of the opening door.)

Gabby: *(from o.s., excitedly)* Failed? *(Cut to her, having just entered and wearing her pouches.)* Then what do you call *this*?

(On her last word, she points to her haunch and lifts her wings slightly the camera zooming in to a close-up of a full caldron on the bluish-gray hide. The new mark gleams, throwing a hearty measure of surprise into the Crusaders.)

Crusaders: *A cutie mark?*

(Bloom and Scootaloo are all smiles and galloping across the room in a trice, but Sweetie stays put and boggles at this new development.)

Sweetie: What?!? You got your mark after all! Even though we couldn't find your purpose? But...what? Huh? How?

Bloom: And what does it mean? A caldron?

Gabby: *(suddenly jittery, folding wings to cover it)* Uh...I don't know. M-Maybe it means my purpose is, uh, helping Zecora with potions. That was the first thing I tried. I guess it just took some time to appear. But here it is!

Scootaloo: *(jumping around Gabby)* This is *awesome!* We're not failures! Whatever we did worked! *(nudging her)* I had a feeling we could help you, and we did!

Bloom: Oh! We've gotta go see Twilight right away! She'll want to know about this.

(If the griffon got a bit jumpy before, this idea really jams up her mental gears and brings her over in a sweat.)

Sweetie: Correction—she *needs* to know about this. I bet she'll want to write a whole book about the very first griffon to get a cutie mark of her own!

Gabby: O-Oh! Um...totally! Um, but, you know, uh, Rainbow Dash asked me to pick up her answer to Gilda's letter. I better take care of that before I forget. *(Weak laugh.)* Here's an idea. Uh, y-you head to the Castle, and I'll meet you there... *(giving double thumbs-up)* ...cutie mark and all! Um...toodles!

(And out the door she goes in a cloud of dust and loose feathers. Cut to just outside as the three gather on the platform.)

Scootaloo: Wow! Can you believe it? We were able to help her get her mark after all! Come on, Crusaders! Let's tell Twilight!

(All twelve hooves pound down the ramp. Dissolve to the library within the Castle; they are now here, and Twilight has two stacks of books floating in her aura and brings one down for a quick riffle through the pages. Zoom in slowly.)

Twilight: Gabby? You just missed her. She was in such a hurry, she didn't even come in. *(A folded sheet is levitated out.)* Just dropped this letter and zoomed away.

(The book goes to one stack, the note toward the fillies, positioning itself at their eye level. Behind them, one tome after another is floated back toward the shelves.)

Scootaloo: *(reading, with growing puzzlement)* "Dear Crusaders: I'll never forget you. You really are every bit as awesome as I'd heard. I'm heading home to tell all the griffons how you did the impossible by getting me my cutie mark. Toodles."

(Twilight's eyes shrink to flabbergasted points and all the books she has been shifting around hit the floor. Scootaloo catches the note before it can do the same.)

Twilight: *(turning to face them)* Wait a second. *(beaming)* Cutie mark?

(A poof of magic puts her right in front of them.)

Twilight: You actually got a griffon a cutie mark for the first time in recorded history? You know what this calls for? *(singsong, floating materials toward herself)* A full-scale research project!

(She walks off, the gear following, as Scootaloo sets the note on the floor and pins it under a hoof.)

Sweetie: This makes no sense! Gabby didn't come in and show you her mark?

Twilight: *(floating more books off shelves)* You have got to get Gabby back here right away! I have so many questions! Ooh, I hope I have enough ink and parchment to document everything!

(Cut to the corridor, just outside the closed doors.)

Twilight: *(from inside, muffled)* SPIKE!! *(They burst open; she gallops out, pulling the supplies along.)* GUESS WHAT JUST HAPPENED!!

(Inside the library again.)

Bloom: Weird. Gabby didn't show Twilight her mark like she said she was gonna do? Somethin' in this here applesauce smells kinda fishy.

Scootaloo: We'd better find her and find out what's going on. Come on, Crusaders!

(They beat hooves toward the exit. Wipe to them sprinting along one of the paths through the Sweet Apple Acres orchards, eyes trained upward.)

Scootaloo: Keep your eyes on the skies, ponies. Gabby can't have gone far. *(Bloom looks straight ahead...)*

Bloom: She's not in the air— *(...and now the others do too.)* —she's right there!

(Cut to their perspective, closing in on the flighty griffon. She is straining to push a cart free of a muddy patch as Doctor Whooves, in the harness, pulls from the front end.)

Bloom: Gabby, hold up! We're a-comin'! *(Gabby reacts with visible alarm; cut to her.)*

Gabby: *(hastily)* Um, sorry, uh, no time to chat. *(They catch up.)* I just stopped to help this pony get out of the muck, and then I really gotta fly, okay? *(Quick, forced chuckle; she pushes again.)* Heave, ho!

(The shove imparts enough momentum to break the wheels loose so Whooves can gallop away, but she overbalances and goes face first into the mud. Voicing a woozy little moan, she lifts herself partway up as the Crusaders gather around.)

Sweetie: Gabby, we're your friends! Why in Equestria are you running away from us? *(Close-up of Gabby, from the shoulders up.)*

Gabby: Running away? *(smiling weakly)* O-Oh, I'm not running away. I'm just, uh, e-excited to show my lovely new cutie mark to everyone in Griffonstone!

(Pan slightly to bring her hindquarters into view—along with Bloom, staring at the caldron cutie mark. The fact that it has degenerated into a smear of paint after the graceless splash landing speaks to a definite lack of authenticity.)

Bloom: You mean the cutie mark that's runnin' right off your flank?

Gabby: *(deflated)* Yep. That's the one. *(rubbing it off)* I guess the one thing I'm really not good at is...faking things.

Scootaloo: Wow, Gabby. Painting on a fake cutie mark to make yourself feel better? You must've been *really* upset.

Gabby: Sure, I was disappointed. *(smiling)* But I didn't do it to make myself feel better, I wanted to make *you* feel better.

(A tripartite gasp from the locals.)

Gabby: I couldn't bear you three thinking you failed after you tried so hard to help. That's why I had to leave before your Twilight found out the truth. *(Sigh.)* I'm sorry I wasn't honest with you. *(walking past them)* I'll just wing my way back to Griffonstone. Thanks for trying.

(Bloom's next words bring her to a halt.)

Bloom: You don't need to apologize for carin' about how other ponies are feelin'.

Sweetie: I'm just sorry we couldn't come through for you. *(Gabby turns back to them.)*

Scootaloo: Hmm... *(smiling)* ...maybe we can! Gabby, clean up and meet us at the Crusaders' clubhouse.

(Gabby's reply is a smile and salute. Dissolve to the interior of the clubhouse, Sweetie standing by the closed door; she opens it to admit the griffon, freshly scrubbed but down in the mouth again.)

Gabby: *(walking in)* I know you all tried your very best. But I guess griffons and cutie marks just don't mix. Maybe I don't even have a special purpose.

(Cut to Bloom and Scootaloo, elsewhere in the room. The earth pony filly has focused her attention on a small box resting atop a crate.)

Scootaloo: Hang on a second. *(Glance at Bloom.)* We were racking our brains, trying to figure out your destiny, until we remembered how every time you did something new, you tried to help everypony around you.

Sweetie: *(leading Gabby toward them)* Even us. How did it feel when you showed up with that fake mark, and the three of us thought we'd actually helped you?

Gabby: *(smiling)* Well, I was really glad I helped you feel happier.

Scootaloo: So maybe helping is your thing. *(slyly)* You might even say it's your purpose!

Gabby: *(slightly perplexed)* Uh, but helping just feels...good. *(scratching back of neck)* I-It couldn't have anything to do with what I'm supposed to do with my life...right?

Scootaloo: Gabby, finding your special purpose doesn't have to be about *being* good at something. It's about *feeling* good about something, inside.

Bloom: And it looks like your destiny is a whole lot like ours—helping others. And you don't need a symbol on your flank to know that.

Sweetie: But since we *are* the Cutie Mark Crusaders, we made you one anyway.

(Gabby's eyes pop to the size of poker chips just before Sweetie fires up her horn.)

Sweetie: Behold!

(Her magic brings the box over and sets it before the uncomprehending flyer, leaving the lid behind.)

Crusaders: Your very own cutie mark!

(Close-up of the open container, zooming in slightly. Inside are two wooden crests shaped and colored to match the red/pink/magenta shields they bear on their haunches, each with a pink trophy chalice overlaid on a purple starburst.)

[Animation goof: The order of shield stripe colors is reversed here, but will fix itself in the next shot.]

Crusaders: *(from o.s.)* Ta-da! *(Cut to Scootaloo.)*

Scootaloo: We carved it to mark the moment we all figured out what you should do with your life. *(Sweetie magically clips them onto Gabby's mail pouches.)*

Gabby: But they look just like yours. *(Their meaning sinks in all the way.)* You can't mean...?

Scootaloo: You bet we do! You're one of us now! Gabby, today we dub thee...

Crusaders: ...the very first griffon member of the Cutie Mark Crusaders! *(rearing up briefly)*
Woo-hoo!

Sweetie: You may not be able to get a cutie mark...

Bloom: ...but you're selflessly dedicatin' your life to helpin' others anyhow. I can't think of anything more Crusader-y than that.

(Dissolve to a close-up of Gabby's joyful countenance in midair.)

Gabby: AWESOME!! *(turning around)* My very own cute-ceañera!

(On the end of this, the camera zooms out to a long shot of the town square. Both it and the town hall are fully decked out for this very sort of party: balloons, pennants, confetti, and plenty of banners and decorations sporting Gabby's newly bestowed crest. A lively crowd has turned out to commemorate the occasion; cut to an overhead close-up of the Crusaders among them.)

Bloom: Oh, land sakes! You sure have earned it.

Sweetie: And so have we. Scootaloo, you're pretty amazing. *(Ground level.)* Even though things looked bleak, you still found a way to help Gabby in the end.

Scootaloo: 'Course! Helping's what we do, right?

(A giddy gasp from the o.s. guest of honor; now she flutters down to the gathering, which includes the trio for which she composed music during her Act Two song. With a laugh, she sweeps the Crusaders into her patented pulverizing hug.)

Gabby: I am so grateful! *(Set them down.)* I'm gonna go home and do my very, very best to bring Cutie Mark Crusader values to Griffonstone! *(talons to hips)* I promise!

Scootaloo: Promise us one other thing, too? *(A quick glance among the Crusaders.)*

Crusaders: Come back soon!

Scootaloo: After all, you're a Crusader now. Crusaders forever?

Gabby: Crusaders forever!

(Cut to a point just above their heads. Three hooves and one set of talons clap together in extreme close-up for a four-way high five, celebrating the club's first cross-species initiation. Fade to black.)