

MMMYSTERY ON THE FRIENDSHIP EXPRESS

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Prologue

(Opening shot: fade in to an extreme close-up of the uppermost tier of an intricately styled cake, seen in a soft focus. The icing is pale yellow, with bright pink trim around the bottom edge, an apple and orange rest on top, and the upper surface of the next tier down sports red flowers. Tilt down slowly to show the rest of the cake done with flowers and edging—four tiers in all.)

Pinkie Pie: *(from o.s., shuddery)* Marzipan Mascarpone Meringue Madness!

(Stop on her and Mrs. Cake standing next to it on the end of this. The whole construction stands at least twice as tall as either of them. Cut to overhead; they are in Sugarcube Corner, as is Mr. Cake. Normal lighting establishes itself.)

Pinkie: You've really outdone yourselves, Mr. and Mrs. Cake! This is sure to be the winning entry of this year's National Dessert Competition!

Mrs. Cake: Oh, thank you, Pinkie!

Mr. Cake: And thanks for transporting it all the way to Canterlot for us. *(Close-up of Pinkie.)*

Pinkie: Absolutely! It's my honor and I— *(Zoom out; Applejack now stands next to her.)*

Applejack: Uh, beg pardon, but could we maybe move things along? This here cake's a mite heavy...

(Pan from her to Big Macintosh, who has the thing balanced on his back and is struggling not to hit the floor. A fruit garnish has been added at the base.)

Applejack: *(from o.s.)* ...right, Big Macintosh?

Macintosh: *(grunting)* Ee-yup.

Pinkie: All righty, then, Big Mac!

(She puts on a hard hat with a top-mounted red light, which begins to flash.)

Pinkie: To the train depot!

(Now she backs out, turning herself into the pony equivalent of a pilot car escorting a big rig with an oversize load, and he eases after her. Cut to outside; barricades have been set up to keep

the crowd back from the side door, where she is leading him out. The couple who built this monster brings up the rear. It is daytime.)

Pinkie: That's it, Big Mac, nice and slow. This is precious cargo you're carrying. *(Tiers start to wobble a bit, worrying both Cakes.)*

Mr. Cake: Yes. It took months of planning and testing.

Mrs. Cake: I would hate for it to—

(Macintosh groans as his legs buckle, threatening to bring the dessert down around his ears. He muscles it back up to the level, the Cakes cry out, and Mr. Cake faints.)

Pinkie: Don't worry, Mr. and Mrs. Cake. *(She spots Fluttershy and Rainbow Dash flying in.)* Rainbow Dash, Fluttershy! *(Cut to them; she continues o.s.)* A little pegas-sistance?

(Dissolve to the procession, now grown to six ponies—the original four, plus the two hovering pegasi who have attached ropes to the cake platter's handles to help steady it. A teeter toward Fluttershy's side is met by a countering yank from Rainbow. Mr. Cake is back on his hooves.)

Pinkie: I'll get it there safely, you'll see. *(This fails to reassure the couple; Mr. Cake starts to sweat.)*

Mrs. Cake: *(forcing a laugh)* Oh, of course, Pinkie.

Mr. Cake: We never doubted you. *(Fake chuckle.)*

(The next weight shift starts the high-rise confection toppling toward Rainbow; she zips over to Fluttershy's side so they can both haul in the ropes. Balance is restored, but Mrs. Cake's eyes look to pop out of their sockets and Mr. Cake keels over again.)

Pinkie: *(addressing herself o.s.)* Twilight...

(Cut to Twilight Sparkle, hunkered down nearby with a soda and a good book.)

Pinkie: *(from o.s.)* ...can I see you a second?

(The unicorn looks up from her reading with a smile. Dissolve to a profile close-up of her, stepping ahead with horn glowing and eyes narrowed in determination, and cut to frame the seven-pony squad on the start of the next line. She walks between Macintosh and the Cakes, keeping a spherical force field around the colossus. Mr. Cake is again back upright.)

Pinkie: A nice protective spell as extra insurance? *(Nervous giggle.)* Better safe than sorry.

(The two senior bakers alternate panicked glances between Twilight and the cake, their faces betraying the less-than-total trust they have in this jury-rigged freight move.)

Pinkie: *(addressing herself o.s.)* AJ, Rarity? One last thing?

(Dissolve to a close-up of Applejack and Rarity, holding up an old-style fireman's safety net—similar in appearance to a round trampoline—by its frame in their teeth on opposite sides. The cake's towering shadow falls over them from up ahead as they walk along, and a longer shot of the nine-pony detachment shows that they are now behind Macintosh, followed by Twilight and then the Cakes. They approach the station, where a train idles at the platform.)

Pinkie: All right, everypony! *(Cut to the freaked-out Cakes; hubby hyperventilates as she continues o.s.)* We're in the home stretch here!

(A happy bound deposits her on the platform.)

Pinkie: See, Mr. and Mrs. Cake? I got it here without a hitch. *(Close-up; she opens a car door.)* Now all we have to do is get it...

(Confusion sets in on the bright pink face as the camera zooms out. The others have made it here—and it quickly becomes apparent that this thing is far too tall and wide to go through the doorway as is.)

Pinkie: ...in?

(Mr. Cake hits the deck for the third time. Fade to black.)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(Opening shot: fade in to the platform. One of the train cars has had its entire side removed and laid down flat to accommodate the cake, and Macintosh flips it back up into position. Cut to just inside the window as he straightens up, mallet in mouth, and bangs a few spots to secure everything in place. A short pan frames Twilight and her friends looking admiringly up at the cake; Pinkie voices a relieved sigh, having ditched her hard hat.)

Pinkie: Thank you all for helping me get the cake safely on the dessert car.

Twilight: Thank *you* for inviting us all to go with you to Canterlot for the National Dessert Competition.

Rarity: I'm sure the festivities will be just lovely.

Applejack: *(nudging her in the side)* Phooey on the festivities. *(eyeing the cake)* I can't wait to try all those tasty treats!

(She licks her lips and extends a hoof tentatively toward the sky-high sweetness, only to get it slapped away by Pinkie.)

Pinkie: Well, the tastiest treat of all is sure to be the Cakes' Marzipan Mascarpone Meringue

Madness. (*Extreme close-up; it is reflected in her eyes.*) All that rich, creamy goodness of the marzipan—

(*Cut to a slow, softly focused pan along the topmost tier.*)

Pinkie: (*from o.s.*) —combined with the tart tanginess of the mascarpone— (*Slow tilt down toward the base.*) —blended perfectly with the smooth, silky sweetness of the meringue.

(*Cut to a slow pan across all but Fluttershy on the end of this; Applejack drools and lets her tongue hang out.*)

Pinkie: (*from o.s.*) That’s why I call the Marzipan Mascarpone Meringue Madness... (*Extreme close-up.*) ...the MMMM!

(*Pronounced not as four separate M’s, but as a continuous “mmm” sound. Zoom out to frame all six.*)

Other five: MMMM! (*She jumps up onto its table.*)

Pinkie: Exactly! It’s the most delicious, delectable, delightful, de-lovely cake in Equestria! (*Cut to the others as she continues.*) And it’s sure to win first prize!

Male French voice: This is not so!

(*General surprise. Pan quickly to the speaker, Gustave LeGrand, standing in an open doorway. Griffon; light gray plumage over dark gray fur; red kerchief tied around neck; white chef’s toque; long, thin, curling black mustache; scornful black eyes with yellow-orange whites.*)

Gustave: For I, Gustave LeGrand, do challenge your crude cake— (*spreading one wing, revealing a plate of éclairs*) —to a duel of delectable delicacies against my...

(*Close-up of the plate, held up in a radiance that sparks a gasp from the group.*)

Gustave: (*from o.s.*) ...Exceptionally Exquisite Éclairs!

(*Back to him. The flare has come from a spotlight he held up in his free forelimb. This is switched off and thrown aside.*)

Gustave: (*setting plate on a free table*) They will undoubtedly strike down all the competition... (*smoothing mustache*) ...winning first prize and crowning me *le champion*!

(*A tough male voice cuts in.*)

Tough voice: Not a chance, LeGrand!

(*Another round of confused looks from the Ponyville contingent. Pan quickly to the open doorway, where Pony Joe—the proprietor of Spike’s favorite donut shop as seen in “The Best*

Night Ever”—is on his way in. The shafts of a cart harness extend back behind him.)

Twilight: *(from o.s.)* Donut Joe! What are you doing in Ponyville?

Joe: Picking up the final, all-important ingredient for my contest entry...

(He looks behind himself on the end of this, and the camera zooms out to frame the cart, which is now inside the car and no longer harnessed to him. On it stands a range of skyscrapers built from varicolored donuts, with little strips of icing around the edges as the windows.)

Joe: ...Donutopia!

(Close-up of the upper reaches; he reaches into view to shake on sprinkles.)

Joe: *(from o.s.)* And with these super sprinkles... *(Zoom out to frame him as he continues.)*
...my donuts are gonna dunk all the other lousy desserts, steal first prize, and make my donut shop famous—*forever!*

(His bout of wild laughter is cut off by a high, quavery female voice that bears a passing resemblance to Julia Child, including the occasional suppressed giggle.)

Female voice: Oh, Joe...

(He skulks off, pushing Donutopia along. Behind him, in the doorway, stands a life-size chocolate sculpture of a moose on a wheeled platform.)

Female voice: ...your dippy donuts could never outrun me.

(The broad antlers bend on contact with the frame, then spring out intact within the train car. Pinkie emerges from the bemused mares with a smile.)

Pinkie: Hello! *(She trots over and addresses the moose.)* What's your name?

(From behind it emerges Mulia Mild, an elderly female mule. Light brown coat, curly dark gray mane, light blue eyes that match her pearl necklace.)

Mulia: I am Mulia Mild. *(The sculpture sparkles.)* Behold...my Chocolate Mousse Moose! It will trample all your treats, be given first prize, and make me the greatest chef in Equestria!

(During this second sentence, cut to Gustave, Joe, and Pinkie/Applejack/Rainbow in turn; the griffon and unicorn glare at her, while Pinkie adopts a puzzled frown and her two friends smile in anticipation. Gustave now addresses Mulia.)

Gustave: Madame Mild, you and your mousse moose are mistaken!

Joe: Your frou-frou éclairs will never defeat my donuts!

Pinkie: The Cakes' Marzipan Mascarpone Meringue Madness is going to win!

Mulia: Your simple cake could never take my moose!

(The sound of the train whistle puts an end to the trash-talking. Cut to a close-up of it, then to the wheels as they begin to turn amid billows of steam. Inside, Pinkie and Joe are locked in a full-bore stare-down, as are Gustave and Mulia; the impasses break at Twilight's approach.)

Twilight: Well, it sure looks like we're in for a delicious competition tomorrow. Maybe we should all settle in for a good night's sleep.

(Pinkie's three rivals reluctantly head for the dessert car's rear door, grumbling all the way. Near this hangs a painting of a distinguished earth pony stallion in a military uniform liberally decorated with medals. The doors to three compartments in this sleeping car are slid shut, leaving Pinkie to stare after them from her spot in the dessert car. Rainbow flies up alongside, yawning and stretching.)

Rainbow: I got to admit, I'm pretty beat.

Applejack: Yeah. I'm gonna hit the hay myself.

(A general move toward the rear is thwarted when the pink pony blocks the passage.)

Pinkie: Wait! Didn't you hear those chefs? *(pointing)* We have to protect MMMM!

Rarity: *(pointing to it)* MMMM?

Pinkie: Mmm-hmm! I know for super-sure that MMMM is the best dessert in all Equestria, and I know that they know it too!

Rainbow: So...?

Pinkie: *(freaking out)* So...one of them is gonna sabotage the Cakes-es' cake tonight! *(Her perspective of the five—mixed amusement/disbelief.)* You have to help me stand guard!

Twilight: Pinkie, you're overreacting. *(Back to Pinkie at the door.)*

Applejack: Yeah, those chefs aren't gonna do your cake any harm. *(Pinkie squeezes Applejack's cheeks.)*

Pinkie: But they are! I just know it!

Rainbow: *(from o.s.)* Fine! *(Cut to frame the entire group.)* If you want to stand guard, go for it. We're going to bed.

(She flies over Pinkie's head, carving a divot through the fluffy magenta mane that instantly seals itself. The wearer of said mane can only watch with the clearest unease as the other four exit to leave her alone in the dessert car. She flops onto her haunches for a second, then leaps up onto the cake table as an equine shield.)

Pinkie: I'll show them. I'll stay up all night and protect you. *(jumping down, backing up, sitting on haunches)* Nothing and nopony will stop me from keeping you safe.

(Dissolve to a close-up of the towering concoction. The lights in the train car have been put out, and the night sky can be seen through the half-raised window shades. Zoom out slightly as Pinkie grimly paces the floor in front of it, then dissolve to her scrutinizing a patch of floor nearby. A

series of three more dissolves points up her steadily increasing fatigue; after the last one, a blur of shadow whisks past the camera, snapping her awake.)

Pinkie: Huh? (*looking after it*) Stop, you saboteur!

(Long shot of the rear door on the end of this; the fleeing figure slams it as she gives chase. Cut to its other side; Pinkie opens it to glare in, then races through. Outside, the silhouettes of the intruder and pursuer move from car to car, seen through the windows; cut to a close-up of the charging Pinkie.)

Pinkie: I have you now!

(Close-up of one door, zooming out as she opens it—the rear door of the caboose, seen from outside. She hits the brakes hard on order to keep from skidding off the platform, and finds herself the only pony within sight.)

Pinkie: What?

(Inside again; she backs in, looks around the unused furniture in here, then returns to the dessert car. The camera zooms in on the closed door at its forward end, through whose window a blurred silhouette in a high-crowned cap can be seen. As soon as it ducks out of view, Pinkie grits her teeth and races after it. Just as before, the chase ranges from car to car, seen from both inside and outside. Pan quickly ahead to the engine, then cut to just inside its door as Pinkie throws it open. Zoom out to frame part of an engineer's striped cap in the foreground.)

Pinkie: Aha!

(Behind her. The second mystery figure stands here, shoveling coal into the engine's furnace; it remains as only a silhouette due to the glare from the flames. Having had no luck in catching would-be cake-nappers so far, Pinkie retreats toward home base. Cut to just inside the dessert car's forward door; she peeks in with a nervous little cry, and the camera zooms out to frame the MMMM still intact. She zips over to it.)

Pinkie: Oh, thank Celestia you're okay! But one of those bakers is mixing up something bad! So I'm not leaving you again, no matter what!

(She sits on her haunches to stare directly at the towering sugar rush—and "what" chooses that moment to occur. More specifically, all the window shades pull themselves shut to black out the screen. A gasp.)

Pinkie: Who turned off the moon? (*Clatter of hooves.*) Don't go near that cake, thief! (*Soft squelch.*) Stop, thief! (*Bang.*) Oh! Are you okay, thief?

(The lights come back up when Pinkie gets a shade open. What gets her attention first is the painting hanging by the rear door—it has been knocked askew. Sliding the door open, she aims a

menacing growl down the empty corridor of the sleeping car, then looks at the picture again. The military officer seems to have grown a set of rather long eyelashes.)

Pinkie: Huh. *(She straightens it and returns to the cake.)* Overreacting, my hoof. I knew I was gonna have to keep a close eye on you—and that's just what I'm gonna do!

(She fixes it with her most ruthless stare, her front hooves propped on the table's edge so she can watch it from point-blank range. At least, that is, until her head tumbles forward through her forelegs and she starts snoring with great vigor. Fade to black.)

(Fade in to a close-up of the not-so-attentive escort, now curled up on the floor and still sawing two-by-fours. Daylight shines through the windows, and a rooster's crowing from outside causes her to start awake and scratch at her head with a hind leg.)

Pinkie: *(drowsily)* Huh...wha...

(She snaps to with a gasp and jumps upright to check out the scene.)

Pinkie: The cake! *(It appears untouched; her eyes shine.)* Oh, MMMM, you look mmm-mmm-marvelous!

(Pan to frame Twilight, entering through the rear door and rubbing her eyes, and cut to a close-up. When she looks off toward the desserts, her sleepy smile gives way to a pop-eyed stare.)

Twilight: Whoa! *(Back to Pinkie and the cake.)*

Pinkie: I know! *(Twilight walks up and eyes it closely.)* I think some congratulations are in order for a job well done.

Twilight: Um, you better hold off on giving yourself an award just yet, Pinkie. *(Close-up of the bottom tier; she continues o.s.)* Look.

(She begins to rotate the platter, exposing a sizable gouge taken from this layer.)

Pinkie: Look at *what?*

(On the last word, the blue eyes do exactly what the purple ones did a moment ago. A longer shot of the cake reveals all the damage: every tier except the uppermost one has had a chunk taken out of it. The mess had been disguised by keeping it turned to the wall; zoom in on it, the camera tilting slightly as well.)

Pinkie: *(from o.s.)* Huh?

(Cut back to Pinkie, who sucks in a lung-bursting gasp as her pupils shrink to points and her face makes ready to get off this crazy train under its own power. Snap to black.)

Act Two

(Opening shot: fade in to an extreme close-up of the interior of Pinkie's screaming mouth and zoom out slowly to frame both her and the ruined cake. Applejack and Fluttershy emerge from the sleeping car; Rainbow's hooves hang into view above them.)

Applejack: What is it? *(Zoom out to frame Rainbow and Gustave, who is right behind them.)*

Rainbow: What happened?

Pinkie: It's the Marzipan Mascarpone Meringue Madness! *(pointing)* It's been... *(Pan to it.)* ...mutilated!

(The camera now cuts to seven gasping onlookers: Applejack, Fluttershy, Pinkie, Rarity, and all three of the other bakers. Rarity's mane has been swept forward a bit to cover her right eye.)

Pinkie: *(all business)* Now we just need to find out who done it!

Twilight: You mean "who *did* it."

Pinkie: Exactly! "Who did-done-dood it"!

Twilight: Well, having read many mystery novels, I know that the only way to discover the culprit is to investigate.

(The hyperactive mare leans over to her, carrying a checked, two-tone gray "deerstalker" hat of the sort often worn by Sherlock Holmes in illustrations and films. A pipe rests inside.)

Pinkie: Exactly!

(She tosses the hat onto her own head and lashes out her tongue to catch the pipe, which she uses to blow a cluster of soap bubbles. One of these envelops Twilight's head and grows for a moment, comically distorting her face before it bursts. Now Pinkie inspects the cake while balancing the pipe on a front hoof.)

Pinkie: And as chief detective, that's exactly what I'm gonna do. *(She blows bubbles; cut to Twilight and Applejack.)*

Applejack: Uh, you're investigatin'?

Pinkie: *(from o.s.)* Yes!

(Leaping into view, she plunks a dark gray bowler hat on the violet unicorn's head.)

Pinkie: And Twilight shall be my lowly assistant who asks silly questions with obvious answers. *(The assistant is not amused; Pinkie trots off.)*

Twilight: Fine, Pinkie. Should we start looking for clues?

(On the end of this, zoom out to frame the entire contingent of nine. Pinkie stands in the foreground, tipping bubble soap into her pipe from a can held in her mouth; she spits this away and roots around.)

Pinkie: Perfect silly question, my dear Twilight, because the obvious answer is...

Twilight: *(smiling):* ...yes?

Pinkie: ...no! 'Cause I know who did it! *(Blow bubbles; a round of gasps.)*

Twilight: *(incredulously)* Pinkie, how could you possibly know?

Pinkie: *(pacing)* How could I possibly *not* know? Clearly this dastardly deed was done by the baker who knew their dessert could not measure up to the mastery of the Marzipan Mascarpone Meringue Madness! I guess you feared your éclairs lacked flair... *(She rounds on...)* ...Gustave!

(“Iris in” to a close-up of the griffon, now clad in a dark hat and cloak and with only his eyes and beak showing between them. The picture has taken on the scratchy, faded quality of an old black-and-white silent movie, with an appropriate piano soundtrack. Gustave swirls away from the camera and along the dessert car to loom behind Pinkie, who is watching the cake closely. He tries to snatch at the uppermost tier, only to get his talons batted away and back off.)

Intertitle: “Ouch!!”

(She rounds on him furiously.)

Intertitle: “Get your claws off that cake you cur!”

(Before she can say anything further, she is grabbed up and securely lashed to the train tracks; he stands over her, laughs, and runs off. Down the way, a growing pinpoint of light marks the train’s rapid approach; Pinkie’s mouth falls open.)

Intertitle: “Oh goodness!”

(Close-up of a control panel. Gustave reaches into view and yanks a lever as far as it will go; cut to a close-up of a circular saw blade, positioned over one end of a conveyor belt inside the train. It spins up from rest, the camera zooming out slightly. The cake has been placed on this belt, which begins to carry it toward the saw, and Gustave zips in to gloat and twirl his mustache.)

Intertitle: “Muhu ha ha!”

(Close-up: he laughs some more as gobbets of cake and icing spatter back over him—the saw has done the dirty work. “Iris out” to a full-color shot of the dumbfounded chef, then zoom out slightly as Pinkie leans hard into his face, balanced on Mulia’s head and back.)

Pinkie: ...thus destroying the cake and the Cakes-es’ chance of winning the National Dessert Competition!

Twilight: But it makes no sense! *(Pinkie turns and pokes her face with the pipe’s stem.)*

Pinkie: What do you mean, lowly assistant? *(Twilight pushes it back.)*

Twilight: Well, first, if you were tied to the train tracks, how are you now here? *(Pinkie thinks and blows bubbles.)*

Pinkie: Huh...guess that *isn’t* a totally silly question.

Twilight: (*gesturing to cake*) And second, the cake hasn't been sliced, it's been bitten. (*Close-up of the bottom tier; she continues o.s.*) Just look at the teeth marks. (*Pinkie leans in close.*)

Pinkie: Hmmm...you're right, my fine fellow. (*pacing*) Gustave LeGrand is clearly in the clear, which means the MMMM was destroyed by another baker—a baker whose donuts are do-nots! That's right. It was Joe!

(*Cut to him on this last word; she thrusts an accusing hoof into his face. The view swivels 90 degrees around an invisible vertical axis through its center, leaving the screen black. Against this, a frosted donut with sprinkles travels from left to right, leaving a series of ghost images behind itself that quickly fade away. The overall effect recalls the "gun barrel" opening sequence of the James Bond films. The donut's hole is filled in with pale blue-white light; when it reaches the right edge, the camera zooms in to a close-up. A grim Joe walks into the hole, now wearing a tuxedo jacket and shirt with a red bow tie and toting a set of saddlebags, and the donut tracks his movement from right to left.*)

Pinkie: (*voice over*) Or as he's known in the spy world, Mane. (*He stops.*) Con Mane.

(*Producing a couple of donuts from a pocket, he bites down hard enough to send out a squirt of purple jelly that oozes down over the screen. The donut frame retreats slightly and fades from view as the moon fades in to replace it, and the background becomes the starry night sky. As the train's chuffing is heard, tilt down to frame it making good time, then cut to Joe in a lounge/bar car and zoom in. He is enjoying a frothy ice cream soda in the company of three admiring, giggling mares—Berry Punch, Carrot Top, and Cherry Berry—but his attention is diverted by the beeping of a small monitor/wristwatch on a foreleg. The green monochrome display shows a railroad track, a pony alongside, and a bomb being set to blow the works apart. Setting the soda on Carrot's head, he brusquely takes his leave of the gathering.*)

(*Cut to Pinkie, wearing a security guard's hat and watching the Cakes' creation intently in a darkened car, and zoom out through the window of the closed rear door. Joe nips up, keeping himself plastered against the wall to avoid being seen, and slaps a device onto the pane. A glass-cutter blade extends from this and swings through one full circle; the cut piece falls away, taking the tool with it, and a small ball is flung through the new opening. It bounces across the floor, stops in front of Pinkie, and lets go with a burst of gas that sends her to the floor, unconscious.*)

(*Here comes Joe, who takes a moment to straighten his tie. Its knot emits a jet of powder that spreads into a cloud and illuminates a net of laser beams, which encircle the cake closely as a security measure. These are easily redirected thanks to a hand mirror in his teeth; a moment later he swings them down through all four tiers. The apple at the base falls apart, neatly cleaved in two, and the entire assembly comes down in a tumble of frosted chunks. Berry and Carrot drape themselves over him in a flash, and the camera zooms in to a close-up of his face, which shifts from a debonair smile into a contemptuous sneer.*)

(*Another swiveling transition brings the action back to the real-life, visibly unnerved Joe as Pinkie leans into his face.*)

Pinkie: ...crushing the Cakes' chances to win!

Twilight: Pinkie!

(Her bowler bounces off her head for a moment, and she gestures to the cake.)

Twilight: There is no laser beam security system! *(Back to Pinkie and Joe; she continues o.s.)* And Joe is not sleek, stealthy Con Mane! *(She zips over and pokes at him.)* He's big, gruff, and messy!

Joe: *(offended)* Hey!

Rarity: Although you *would* look rather dapper in a tuxedo. *(He smiles at this.)*

Pinkie: Huh... *(pacing)* ...you may be right, lowly assistant.

Twilight: *(sardonically)* May be?

(Now, in close-up, the pink private eye turns her attention to Mulia's creation.)

Pinkie: Now that I'm taking a closer look at these desserts... *(nudging it; slight jiggle)* ...I see that one simply cannot look me in the eye.

Twilight: *(from o.s., pleadingly)* Pinkie... *(Cut to frame her and others.)* ...that moose is a mousse!

Pinkie: *(crossing to her; hoof to nose)* Yes! And the mule behind the moose panicked when she saw the mastery of the MMMM!

Twilight: So you're saying that the culprit is...? *(Pinkie rounds on...)*

Pinkie: Mulia Mild!

(Wipe to a letterbox view of the train speeding through the night. The camera is set at roof level, and the scene is rendered in a soft focus. Mulia drops into view, clad in a black ninja outfit that covers everything but her eyes and snout, and lands in a crouch. After a quick zoom in on her stoic face, she sprints and somersaults her way toward the front of the train as the sun begins to rise. Cut to Pinkie, once again on cake-guarding duty and wearing her hat from the Joe scenario. When she turns and walks off, the stealthy mule is exposed at the far end.)

(Mulia hurls herself into a leap, the screen snapping to black and tiling itself with three panels. Left half: Pinkie. Top right quarter: Mulia raising something. Bottom right quarter: the item, a frying pan. It is swung down in all three panels; cut to an extreme close-up of Pinkie's eyes as the clang of its impact rings out. The irises and pupils contract to points and she crumples to the floor, the camera zooming out to expose Mulia standing behind her. Next the baker-turned-ninja darts across the car, dropping the cookware and unsheathing a katana in whose blade the cake's reflection becomes visible.)

(The view changes to a horizontally split screen, with Mulia charging left to right in the top half and the cake slowly moving in the opposite direction across the bottom. She raises her blade; snap to black, with three slashes of light appearing one by one, then cut to a blurry shot of the cake. Mulia lands in front of it on her hind legs, holding the katana with its point upward, and the camera pans past her just enough to expose the cake again. The focus shifts to the

background as it falls apart into sugary frosted rubble, then shifts back to Mulia for a slow zoom.)

Pinkie: *(voice over)* ...putting an end to the Cakes' dreams of taking first prize!

(On the end of this, wipe back to reality, fullscreen and properly focused. Pinkie is still leaning hard into Mulia's flinching face.)

Pinkie: *(scornfully)* Huh. I hope you're proud of yourself, Mulia. *(Longer shot; Mulia has hunched down on her belly.)*

Twilight: Pinkie, stop! This is ridiculous! Look at her!

(The mule is now so badly unstrung that every part of her is shivering with fright.)

Pinkie: Huh. I guess you're right.

Twilight: Thank you!

Pinkie: *(blowing bubbles, pacing, sighing)* But I was so sure that it was one of the other bitter bakers that destroyed the MMMM. That way, their delicious dessert would reign supreme. *(eyeing Donutopia)* I mean, just look at Joe's Donutopia. It's a spectacular city of donutty delight—

(Cut to Applejack, Rainbow, and Mulia, all of whom look ready to chomp into it, and pan slowly as happy little murmurs drift around them.)

Pinkie: *(from o.s.)* —topped temptingly in sprinkle-licious sprinkles. *(Cut to the plate of gleaming éclairs as they are held up.)* And Gustave's éclairs look incredibly edible with glistening glaziness.

(Zoom out during this last description; Fluttershy and Rarity lean toward the stack, wearing ear-to-ear smiles. The next cut frames a close-up of the moose; zoom out slowly.)

Pinkie: *(from o.s.)* But then there's Mulia Mild's mousse moose. *(She leans over to it, blowing bubbles, and sighs happily.)* Why, this mouth-wateringly marvelous mousse moose tempts the taste buds with his silky smooth, yummy-nummy chocolaty-ness.

(On the latter part of this, cut to a slow pan across the other three smiling competitors—Gustave drooling a bit—as well as Applejack and Rainbow. She then leans toward her bosses' ruined entry as Fluttershy and Rarity pace behind her.)

Pinkie: So why did this criminal devour the Marzipan Mascarpone Meringue Madness— *(Her perspective, gesturing toward the other goodies.)* —while leaving this trio of tasty treats untouched?

(Cut to the mouth of a tunnel as the train shoots into it, then back inside the car. The view fades to black, there is a squelching noise and a shrill scream, and the lights come back up to frame all

the ponies except Twilight and Applejack, as well as Gustave. Five jaws drop wide open, ten eyes bug out, and one pink throat gets out a strangled little cry; cut to the platform on which Mulia's moose had stood. Nothing is left but the head and a few half-chewed limbs.)

(Two quick pans reveal that Donutopia now lies in ruins and that there are only a few heavily gnawed survivors of Gustave's éclair stack. Cut to a long shot of the group and zoom in on Pinkie.)

Pinkie: Now I have no idea who do-doned it!

(Snap to black.)

Act Three

(Opening shot: fade in to a slow pan across the tableau. Gustave, Joe, and Mulia sadly inspect the debris left from their efforts, while the ponies have gathered at the far end of the car.)

Pinkie: This mystery gets more mysterious every minute!

Twilight: Well, you have to stop the wild accusations and get to the truth. Everypony, go back to your cars while we do a little investigating.

(On the end of this, cut to the car's rear door. Fluttershy and Rainbow fly over the distrustful Mulia, who gives Gustave a hairy eyeball before walking out ahead of him. Back to the two sleuths; Twilight floats the deerstalker and bowler off their heads and settles a saddlebag onto her back.)

Twilight: Okay, Pinkie. *(The hats trade places and settle down.)* In order to really solve this mystery— *(taking pipe from Pinkie's mouth)* —we're gonna have to find clues.

(Giving the stem a quick wipe with a levitated handkerchief, she gets her lips around it and blows some bubbles. A moment later, she floats it in front of herself while stepping by Pinkie.)

Twilight: Now you were here at the scene of the crime all night. *(Shocked gasp from Pinkie.)*

Pinkie: You're not accusing *me*, are you?

Twilight: No! *(Bubble.)* But maybe you saw something that will help us.

Pinkie: I saw a silhouette in the moonlight.

Twilight: Good. Let's retrace your steps.

(The pink assistant stands on her hind legs, salutes, then drops to all fours so she can walk slowly backwards toward the rear door. Surprise on Twilight's face gives way to a look of weary realization that her friend has taken the advice a bit too literally, but she nevertheless plods ahead to keep pace.)

(Dissolve to the exterior of one car and pan to follow their silhouettes as they move from one to

another. Pinkie is now walking straight ahead.)

Pinkie: Then I chased the culprit down the train towards the caboose. *(Cut to inside it; they open the door and look in.)* But when I got there, he was gone. *(Twilight steps in, levitating the pipe.)*

Twilight: Hmm...

(A few glances and bubbles later, the camera cuts back to Pinkie, who proudly crosses her right legs over her left.)

Twilight: *(from o.s.)* Aha! *(Face falls; pan quickly to her.)* Our first clue!

(She magically opens her bag and brings out a manila envelope; Pinkie gallops in, but not in time to see her drop something in from near the stove. The envelope is quickly sealed/stowed and the bag closed.)

Twilight: I think I know who did it, Pinkie.

Pinkie: Already?

Twilight: Yes. But I need more evidence to confirm. Tell me what happened next. *(Pinkie thinks hard.)*

Pinkie: I heard somepony else in the dessert car and chased them up to the engine.

(Wipe to the engine, where Twilight is surveying the mounded coal ready for the furnace. Pinkie peeks in from around the doorframe.)

Pinkie: But when I got there...

(Zoom out to frame a light tan, brown-eyed earth pony stallion at the throttle. Brown mane/tail, red bandana around neck, striped engineer's cap, cutie mark of a blowing train whistle.)

Pinkie: ...all I saw was the conductor shoveling coal. *(Close-up of him.)*

Twilight: *(from o.s.)* The conductor, huh?

(He gets a mild surprise when his cap floats off his head and over to her, flipping upside down in the bargain. Twilight peeks inside and gasps as her eyes grow a few sizes.)

Twilight: But that doesn't make any sense.

(Up comes the envelope, which drops into the cap; by the time Pinkie can get close enough, it is already out, sealed, and packed away. The cap is returned to its owner as the demoted detective gives Twilight a slightly dirty look.)

Twilight: What happened next, Pinkie? *(Pinkie thinks.)*

Pinkie: Well... *(switching hats, racing off)* ...I went back to the dessert car!

(Cut to it; Twilight walks in as Pinkie plies a magnifying glass here and there. Her last

inspection carries her right back to the slightly vexed unicorn, who gives her a searching glance. As her eyes and ears broadcast dejection, both mares remove their hats for another telekinetic switch.)

Twilight: Yes? *(Pinkie thinks hard.)*

Pinkie: The curtains mysteriously closed— *(Cut to one; she continues o.s.)* —all on their own! *(Pan to Twilight, rubbing her chin.)*

Twilight: Interesting. Anything else?

Pinkie: *(trotting along)* I heard hoofsteps, a loud thud... *(She runs into the rear door.)* ...and then they were gone!

(Cut to Twilight, now walking slowly along the car and lost in thought.)

Pinkie: *(from o.s.)* When I opened the curtains, I saw that the portrait by the door was all crooked.

(Zoom out to frame both on the end of this, Pinkie pointing in its direction. The equine sleuth moves in for a very close look, while the assistant tries to peek over her shoulder.)

Twilight: Oh, my! *(eyes nearly touching the canvas)* What is that?

(Cut to behind them, the camera positioned so that her head blocks the painting from view. Out comes the trusty envelope, which floats into and out of the gap too fast for Pinkie to see whatever might have gone into it. Once it is back in the saddlebag, Pinkie's frustration gets the better of her, in the form of a growl and steam shooting from both ears. Now Twilight turns away from the wall, allowing a view of the painting—and the fact that the stallion subject has lost the long eyelashes that became visible after the cake took a hit.)

Twilight: What next, Pinkie? *(Pinkie calms down.)*

Pinkie: That's it. I was here guarding the cake the rest of the night.

(This claim earns her a very skeptical look from the purple eyes.)

Pinkie: *(reluctantly)* I mean...I slept by the cake the rest of the night.

Twilight: And when you woke up, half the cake was gone?

Pinkie: *(with renewed fire)* Exactly!

Twilight: By Jove, I think I've got it! *(Cut to Pinkie; she continues o.s.)* Call everypony back! We have a cake culprit to catch!

(Dissolve to a close-up of the quadruple-decker wreck and zoom out to frame all but the two gumshoes gathered around it.)

Mulia: *(stammering)* Why are we all here again?

(A door is heard opening; cut to Twilight and Pinkie, who have just entered from the rear one.)

The unicorn balances her pipe on her hoof.)

Twilight: I bet you're wondering why you're all here again.

Joe: *(to Mulia)* She's good. *(Mulia nods; the two advance slowly.)*

Twilight: *(pipe in mouth)* We have discovered the true culprit of this cake carnage.

(She gets a bit ahead of Pinkie on the end of this, prompting the latter to scramble and catch up.)

Gustave: But how?

Twilight: Well, you see, when committing a crime, it's crucial that one never leaves behind clues... *(floating pipe away, bringing out envelope)* ...especially an obvious clue like...

(Close-up of it on the end of this line; the flap opens and a sky-blue feather floats out. Zoom out to frame the three bakers, Fluttershy, and Rainbow.)

Twilight: *(from o.s.)* ...this! *(A round of gasps.)*

Pinkie: Aha! A blue feather! *(advancing to face Rainbow)* I knew it was you... *(She pivots around to...)* ...Gustave LeGrand! *(Cut to Twilight.)*

Twilight: *(annoyed)* Pinkie, Gustave doesn't have blue feathers!

Pinkie: *(pawing through Gustave's plumage)* No, 'cause he's been dyeing them!

(Or not, as the only thing she finds underneath is a patch of bare gray skin.)

Twilight: No, Pinkie!

(Cut to a flashback of the caboose's rear door opening and Pinkie skidding onto the platform, as seen in Act One.)

Twilight: *(voice over)* Remember how when you chased the suspect to the caboose, they suddenly disappeared? *(Inside; she looks around.)* That's because they flew away! *(She walks off.)* But the thief *did* leave a little something behind. Didn't you... *(Tilt up to the ceiling.)* ...Rainbow Dash???

(Sure enough, the blue speedster is up by a light fixture. Cut to a close-up of her in the present—caught, and she knows it—and zoom out on the next line to show Twilight staring her down nose-to-nose. Applejack and Fluttershy look on.)

Rainbow: I...I-I don't even like cake! *(Cut to Pinkie.)*

Pinkie: So Rainbow Dash did it! Case solved!

Twilight: *(from o.s.)* Case not solved. *(Pinkie drops to the floor; cut to Twilight and company.)* Because when we went to the engine—*(bringing out envelope)*—I saw the conductor's hat.

(Her perspective of the group; it floats between her and them.)

Twilight: And inside the hat was... *(Flap up; out floats a pink strand of hair.)* ...this!

(It is Fluttershy's turn to be caught out now, but Pinkie gets in Rainbow's face instead.)

Pinkie: So it was you! *(poking Rainbow's mane)* That pink hair came from your rainbow-colored mane! *(Rainbow pushes her away.)*

Rainbow: I don't have pink in my mane, Pinkie!

Pinkie: So you're wearing a wig?

(She extends her neck upward to an impossible length, just long enough to let her snatch a tuft of hair in her teeth and pull.)

Rainbow: Ow! Cut it out!

Twilight: *(sternly)* Pinkie, remember?

(Another Act One flashback: Pinkie throws open the door to the engine and the camera zooms out to frame part of the engineer's striped cap in the foreground.)

Twilight: *(voice over)* You chased a pony to the engine— *(The silhouetted figure stokes the furnace.)*—where you thought you saw the conductor shoveling coal. *(Pinkie gallops away.)* But that wasn't the conductor at all. It was...

(A short pan frames the figure in full light: Fluttershy, dressed in the engineer's cap and bandana. She removes the former item with a guilty look.)

Twilight: *(voice over)* ...Fluttershy!

(A swiveling transition, similar to the ones that bookended Pinkie's imagined scenario involving Joe, brings the action back to the here and now. She glares down at the huddled yellow pegasus.)

Fluttershy: *(shuddering)* Oh, my.

Pinkie: *(jumping toward her)* You're going down, Fluttershy!

Twilight: Pinkie! *(The earth pony halts in midair and settles to her hooves.)* But then another clue confounded my suspicions.

(Swivel change to a third Act One flashback: Pinkie sitting watch in the dim dessert car. The shades come down, blacking out the screen.)

Twilight: *(voice over)* You were guarding the cake when the curtains mysteriously closed. But that's no mystery. *(A unicorn's horn begins to glow, faintly illuminating Rarity's mane behind it.)* That's magic.

(Cut to Pinkie, blundering sightlessly in the dark; the lights have come up just a bit. A shadow races past.)

Twilight: *(voice over)* But when the thief tried to make their great escape...

(Rarity runs smack into the painting by the rear door and knocks it crooked before getting out. Its subject gains the long eyelashes only after she has fumbled her way back from it; zoom in on these.)

Twilight: *(voice over)* ...they left a little addition to the portrait.

(Swivel change to an extreme close-up of a set of false eyelashes being held aloft by Twilight—the third piece of evidence she retrieved. Zoom out to frame her, Applejack, and Joe; she walks along, the camera panning to follow until she stops in front of Rarity.)

Twilight: *(knowingly)* Has anypony else noticed that Rarity is wearing her hair rather differently today? *(Pinkie glares at her as well.)*

Rarity: *(stammering)* What? Is it a crime to change one's style now and again? Why, I think it's a crime not to.

Twilight: Really?

(A short burst of magic lifts the forward-swept purple curl away from Rarity's face, exposing a right eye without lashes. She drops to her haunches.)

Rarity: *(sobbing)* Fine, I'm guilty! *(Her perspective of Applejack and the three bakers.)* I wear false eyelashes!

(Her reaction is perhaps a bit over-the-top, considering that "The Best Night Ever" showed her using this particular accessory in full view of the other ponies. Cut back to her, now instantly calmed down and even smiling as she gestures to the cake.)

Rarity: Oh, and I took a bite of the cake.

Fluttershy: So did I.

Rainbow: Aw, nuts. So did I.

Rarity: You just made it sound so delectable.

Fluttershy: So tasty.

Rainbow: And boy, was it! *(Each addresses Pinkie in turn.)*

Rarity: I only meant to take a little, ladylike bite.

Fluttershy: But it was so good.

Rainbow: Yeah, I just dove right in! *(They drop their heads in turn.)*

Fluttershy: But I'm really, really sorry.

Rarity: Terribly sorry.

Rainbow: Sorry, Pinkie.

Pinkie: That's okay. *(smiling)* At least this mystery is finally solved.

Twilight: But it isn't! *(pacing)* We've figured out who ate the Marzipan Mascarpone Meringue Madness—*(Cut to the other ruins; zoom out to frame her as she continues.)*—but we still don't know who devoured the other bakers' goods.

Pinkie: You're right, Twilight! You know what we have to do?

Twilight: Well...yes, I do. Do you?

Pinkie: *(rearing up, grabbing magnifying glass)* Look for clues!

(With a relieved smile, the violet unicorn magically shifts the bowler away from Pinkie's head, not bothering to don it herself, and transfers the deerstalker. A beaming Pinkie zips off into the crowd, peering and sniffing as she climbs over the three confessed cake-wreckers and the chefs.)

Pinkie: Uh-huh...uh-huh...uh-huh...

(She returns to Twilight, who has ditched her saddlebag, and blows on the bubble pipe.)

Twilight: Well, Pinkie, did you find the devourer of the desserts?

Pinkie: I most certainly did. It was...none other than...

(Quick pan to...)

Pinkie: *(from o.s.)* ...the bakers!

(A gasp from all the ponies; cut back to Twilight and Pinkie, the latter throwing the pipe upward.)

Pinkie: First of all... *(Zip over to Gustave; the pipe catches up to her.)* ...Gustave has mousse in his mustache!

(During this line, she stretches it out to expose a lump of the brown chocolate, the camera cutting to an extreme close-up as she points it out. Letting it snap back, she charges over to Joe.)

Pinkie: And Joe has éclair in his hair!

(This time, she points to his mane as she speaks and an extreme close-up shows a blot of icing, filling, and crumbs up near the base of his horn. Her next move is to get up close and personal with Mulia, snagging a fold of one saggy cheek in her teeth and stretching it out until she can hook it on her pipe stem.)

Pinkie: *(shaking it; sprinkles fall out)* And Mulia has sprinkles in her wrinkles!

(When she lets go, the cheek hangs off the side of Mulia's face for a moment instead of snapping back.)

Twilight: *(scornfully)* What do you say, bakers?

Gustave: Oh, I am so sorry, Mulia. But Pinkie made your mousse moose sound... *(licking lips)* ...*très magnifique!*

Joe: *(to Gustave)* And Pinkie's description of your éclairs really did make 'em sound scrumptious!

Mulia: *(to Joe)* And the way she spoke of your Donutopia... *(sighing blissfully)* ...was too delectable to resist!

(All three work their way from guilt to regret and forgiveness during this exchange. Cut to the Canterlot train station as the train pulls in, then back to the group—Pinkie with pipe in mouth. Rarity has replaced the false eyelashes she lost during her raid on the cake.)

Twilight: Well, everypony, we finally have the mystery solved.

(Cut to Gustave, holding up the bits of his éclairs, On the next line, zoom out to show Joe and Mulia sitting on their haunches with their own shattered remains.)

Gustave: Yes, but now we don't have any desserts to enter into the contest! *(Cut to Pinkie; she has put away the pipe.)*

Pinkie: I think we can fix that. Come on!

(She hops off the train, followed by Twilight and the three bakers.)

Pinkie: *(voice over, dictating)* “Dear Princess Celestia...”

(Dissolve to a long shot of Canterlot, tilting slowly down from the uppermost spires toward the main gate by the waterfall.)

Pinkie: *(voice over)* “Today I learned that it's not good to jump to conclusions.”

(Cut to a garden on the grounds of Canterlot Castle. Mulia pulls her wheeled platform, which now carries a tarp-covered bulk; Gustave and Joe come in behind her, followed by Pinkie and company. Other desserts have been/are being set up on tables, and two earth pony stallions are judging. Pinkie has put away her deerstalker.)

Pinkie: *(voice over)* “You have to find out all the facts before saying somepony did something.”

(As she continues, the tarp is whisked away to reveal a rather interesting four-way dessert combo. The Cakes' construction has been augmented with éclair borders on the bottom three tiers, the moose head and a donut border on top, a layer of donuts on each of the other three, and judiciously placed extra icing.)

Pinkie: *(voice over)* “If you don't, you could end up blaming somepony for something they never did. This could hurt their feelings—” *(Impressed, the judges give it a blue ribbon.)* “—and it can make you look really foolish.” *(They move on; Princess Celestia steps up.)* “So from now on, I will always make sure to get all the facts.”

(The sovereign licks her chops at the sight as Pinkie zips up next to her.)

Pinkie: How's that for a lesson, Princess Celestia?

(A slice on a plate is floated out under Twilight's control.)

Twilight: Care for a bite?

Pinkie: I don't mind if I do!

(Mentor and student are greatly surprised to watch her leap straight up and o.s.; she comes down on top of the amalgamation, consuming it in one belly-busting bite and leaving the rest of the travelers floored. As all share a good laugh, a few chomps are taken out of the picture, leaving blackness exposed behind them, and the rest of the view then snaps to black.)