

THE BEGINNING OF THE END—PART TWO

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Prologue

(Opening shot: snap to a “Previously on My Little Pony” title card, then cut to a slow pan through the throne room of Canterlot Castle—Part One, prologue. Twilight Sparkle, her friends, and Spike have gathered for a conference with Princesses Celestia and Luna.)

Celestia: It is time for us... *(firmly)* ...to retire!

Twilight: And you want *me* to take your place?

(The seven out-of-towners pile up hooves and claw, Twilight adding hers last.)

Luna: *(voice over)* With the help of your friends, of course.

(The end of Act One: Cozy Glow, Chrysalis, and Lord Tirek, in Grogar’s cavernous underground stronghold, are caught out by his arrival in the distance.)

Grogar: *(voice over)* You may call me... *(Close-up; he leans over the central table to address them.)* ...Grogar. *(pacing; King Sombra vacates his elevated post to join the others)* Together, Equestria will be ours.

(The Crystal Empire under a diseased brown sky, Act Two: Sombra assaults the Royal Guard ponies trying to apprehend him and conjures up one of his brainwashing helmets.)

Sombra: *(voice over)* I will take back the Crystal Empire on my own!

(The throne room of the Crystal Castle: he has redesigned it and made himself at home, the Crystal Heart impaled overhead. Princess Cadence and her family are led in, chained and muzzled.)

Spike: *(voice over)* How are we gonna stop him?

(The cavern of the Tree of Harmony, Act Three: the Element jewels embed themselves in their necklace/tiara settings and place themselves on their bearers.)

Twilight: (voice over) With the Elements of Harmony!

(The Crystal Castle throne room: the six float in midair, eyes and Elements fully energized to fire a pastel rainbow beam straight and true toward Sombra.)

Twilight: (voice over) With those, we can defeat anypony!

(The magical onslaught wipes him away. Cut to the mares sans Elements and leaving the Tree cavern, unaccompanied by Spike. None notice the presence of Sombra's black haze above the Tree until the whole place starts doing the mambo; a huge, jagged crystal smashes up through the floor to shatter the Tree and dislodge the Elements so that they burst to pieces on impact. Sombra uncorks a long, wild laugh of triumph, the camera zooming in on him, and the view snaps to black.)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(Opening shot: fade in to a long shot of the mineral-arboreal devastation and zoom in slowly. Sombra's laughter rises a notch in both volume and madness as the camera pans slowly across the spectators' thunderstruck visages.)

Rainbow Dash: What just happened?!?

Fluttershy: The Tree of Harmony can't really be gone, can it?

Twilight: It can't be!

Sombra: But it is! *(pacing)* You thought you'd defeated me, but you led me right to the source of your power. *(The whites of his eyes briefly go green and spill purple flame.)* Now that it's destroyed, nothing can stop me!

(Twilight floats up two fragments from the scatter of smashed Elements and tries to fit them together like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Quickly giving the endeavor up as futile, she lets the pieces drop and collapses to her haunches.)

Twilight: He's right. With the Elements gone, I don't know how we can defeat him!

Rainbow: Then we'll just have to beat him the old-fashioned way!

(Five mares kick wings and hooves into gear to take the battle to their foe, but their far-from-fearless leader keeps her seat and has another halfhearted go at reassembling whatever Element shards she can scoop up. The set of her eyes, though, proves that she knows this a lost cause even before the first click of stone on stone. Sombra lets one rip from his horn, causing more deadly sharp spires to erupt from the cavern floor. Rainbow's airborne charge is stopped short, then Rarity's headlong rush, but Twilight barely budes even as a wall grows up behind her. Only the realization that all six have been hemmed in brings her upright and gets her blood

boiling; she takes a shot at one massive needle but cannot even scratch it. A second blast brings the same result, and a third, sustained beam generates a pulse of feedback strong enough to force her to cut it off.)

Sombra: *(pacing)* Ha! You're no match for me! I will finally rule the Crystal Empire! *(Gasp, then a cruel smile.)* Wait! With you out of the way— *(peeking in through a gap)* —I will rule all of Equestria! *(He moves on.)*

Twilight: No!

Sombra: *(now o.s.)* Oh, yes. *(Cut to him.)* And I think I know exactly where I'll start.

Applejack: *(viciously)* Don't you dare say it!

Sombra: Your sweet little hometown.

Rarity: *(stomping)* You leave Ponyville alone!

Sombra: Or what? *(eyes flaring green/purple)* Without your Elements, it would be so easy to control you.

(Inside the enclosure, clawed hands made of black vapor sneak in and poise themselves to snatch at the six, who scream and cower into each other.)

Sombra: *(from o.s.)* But there's no point. *(The hands retract; back to him, eyes normal.)* My conquering Ponyville is already your greatest fear.

(Twilight sends her most venomous scowl his way; he backs off with an oily chuckle, which blooms into a full-throated laugh as he dematerializes into smoke.)

All six: NO!! *(He streaks away; cut to them inside.)*

Fluttershy: *(hyperventilating)* What do we do?

Twilight: I don't know. The Tree of Harmony grew the Elements. It kept the Everfree Forest under control. And now it's gone. Sombra will take over Equestria, and it's all my fault! I knew I wasn't ready to take the Princesses' place, but I never thought I'd mess up this badly!

(She slumps on her hooves as all but Pinkie Pie gather in, Applejack resting a gentle hoof on the lowered head. The eyes of these four turn to the pink goofball, putting her on the spot when the camera cuts to her.)

Pinkie: What are you looking at me for? *(Rainbow flies over and grabs her cheeks.)*

Rainbow: This is usually when you say something funny to lift our spirits.

Pinkie: *(head drooping)* Sorry. Nothing about this is funny to me.

(A sob from the o.s. Rarity; cut to her and Applejack, the unicorn's big blue eyes filling with tears.)

Rarity: *(sobbing)* I'm sorry. I'm trying to be strong, but I just can't bear to think about poor Sweetie Belle under the spell of that monster!

(The earth pony puts a hoof to one white shoulder as if to give a bit of strength.)

Pinkie: *(plopping onto haunches)* Or those sweet little Cake twins.

Rainbow: Or Spike, or Starlight.

Fluttershy: *(frightened)* Or Angel, or anypony forced to do that monster's bidding!

(As she says this, Twilight's eyebrows lower with fresh resolve and she paces o.s., gobbets of dirt flying back into view to splatter against Applejack's hat.)

Applejack: What the—? Twilight... *(She shakes herself clean.)* ...what are you doin'?

(The answer, when the camera cuts to the violet Princess, is "trying to dig her way out.")

Twilight: We can't just stay here! *(straightening up)* I don't have a plan, a-and I don't know what I'm gonna do once we get out. But we can't just sit here and let Sombra make slaves of everypony we love! *(Rainbow rises to a hover.)*

Rainbow: Uh, let me help. I'm faster.

(She darts across to the newly opened excavation, and both hunker down to start moving some earth. Pinkie is by their side in short order.)

Pinkie: I like digging!

(Dropping to her haunches, she winds up her forelock and lets it go to spin like Equestria's fluffiest drill bit. She rises to all fours for only as long as it takes to topple headfirst into the hole, dirt and clods flying so fast and thick that both Twilight and Rainbow have to cover their faces. Once she has sunk completely out of sight, Fluttershy trots over to the pair.)

Fluttershy: I've been known to get my hooves dirty. *(All three hop to it as Applejack steps up.)*

Applejack: Move over, y'all! *(She joins the effort.)*

Rarity: *(trotting across)* Normally I wouldn't dream of digging, but right now... *(savagely, shoving others aside)* ...show me the muddy!

(Now she takes the lead, attacking the earth with a speed that would make Pinkie sit up and take notice, and the other four plunge in after her. Cut to another patch of the cavern floor, which starts to bulge and distend with the underground activity, and zoom out as a broad fissure bursts open in a hail of dirt and rock chunks. The prime mover is Pinkie, who has surfaced beyond the confines of the prison Sombra erected; she lets both her forelock and her dizzy eyes spin to a stop, then shakes her head clear as the other five put theirs up. Smiles and grins pass from face to face—one successful escape in the books.)

(Dissolve to a hilltop overlooking the Sweet Apple Acres orchards as the mares fly/gallop onto it and away from the camera. The sky here has gone the same unhealthy brown as that seen in the Crystal Empire during Sombra's takeover in Part One. Pan slightly to show them heading straight for Ponyville proper, already pocked here and there with eruptions of Sombra's favorite mineral-based hazards. They skid to a stop in one street, gasping in fright, and the camera pans

ahead of them down the block to frame Bon Bon and Carrot Top plodding emotionlessly along the street. Their colors are slightly faded, and their eyes have gone the same pallid, featureless, glowing green that Sombra inflicted on the crystal pony family he attacked in Part One, Act Two. The six heroes are further poleaxed to spot a similarly afflicted Mayor Mare and...)

Applejack: Apple Bloom! *(She races ahead to intercept.)* It's me! *(Drop to haunches; lift the washed-out yellow chin.)* Look at me, sugar cube!

(Bloom pulls free and continues her monotonous advance as the others race up to Applejack.)

Applejack: *(as Twilight helps her up)* Twilight, you gotta free her! Please!

(The magic ace sprints ahead and plants herself in Bloom's path with a wing-assisted leap. Her horn kindles up to an intensity just short of "inferno," and the point is brought down to within a fraction of an inch of the red-maned forehead. Sparks pop and sizzle wildly like a fireworks factory about to blow its own roof off, the blank eyes pop wide—and then Twilight is flung away in a sudden backlash and Bloom starts walking again. The adult mare lands in a heap.)

Twilight: I-I can't! *(She stands up.)* Without the Elements, my magic isn't strong enough to stop Sombra's!

(The problems are compounded by the passing of Starlight Glimmer and Spike, both having fallen into the despot's power.)

Twilight: Spike! *(She hustles ahead to cut off Starlight's path.)* Spike, where are you going? Starlight?

Starlight: *(monotone, walking again)* We must lay siege to Canterlot.

Twilight: No! Snap out of it, you two!

(A look ahead, and she has seen many other hypnotized ponies going their way.)

Twilight: You're stronger than his magic!

Rarity: *(from o.s.)* Sweetie Belle, please stop!

(Up the way, the elegant unicorn has found her younger sister among the slow-moving tide of brainwashed equines. She drops to her haunches as Twilight approaches.)

Rarity: I can't get her to stop! *(Huddle on belly, hooves to head.)* I can't get her—

Twilight: None of us can. *(hugging her)* We can't reach them.

(An earsplitting scream from the o.s. Pinkie rips the air and prods the other five into a fear-propelled race to the source. Cut to Sugarcube Corner, now as heavily studded with the treacherous crystal extensions as the street around it. The party lover has thrown herself at the hind legs of Mr. and Mrs. Cake in a hopeless attempt to dissuade them from obeying the will that has taken hold of their minds. The two adults are pulling a cart loaded with their children Pound

and Pumpkin, also enthralled, and a most unappetizing eight-tiered cake—sloppily constructed, studded with crags, and frosted in dripping globs of green and black. As Twilight and the others reach the scene, Pinkie loses her grip and is left lying in the middle of the road.)

Pinkie: Uh...

(She rises to her haunches, working up a weak sob, then gets upright and wheels toward her friends.)

Pinkie: *(frantically, rising to hind legs)* He made them bake a black licorice fruitcake that says “Congratulations to Our Favorite Supreme Emperor King Sombra” in green frosting! IT’S THE UGLIEST CAKE I’VE EVER SEEN!!

(She falls against Rainbow’s chest, crying her eyes out at this unforgivable transgression against all things dessert-based. Both Fluttershy and the blue pegasus drop to their haunches to console her as Twilight paces worriedly.)

Rainbow: Twilight, this is bad! Like, really bad!

Fluttershy: *(voice breaking)* I’ve never been so sad in my whole life! *(Pinkie gets up.)*

Twilight: I don’t know what to do! I don’t know how to free them, but I don’t know how to stop Sombra! *(Close-up.)* Everypony was so sure I’d do such a great job! Well, this is exactly what I was afraid of! Could anything else possibly go wrong?

Pinkie: *(from o.s.)* Well... *(Cut to her, eyes slowly widening in panic.)* ...with the Tree of Harmony gone, the Everfree Forest could grow out of control and threaten the town!

Rarity: Darling, that’s oddly specific.

(She finds herself being seized by the face and turned bodily to look in the direction on which Pinkie has fixated. Cut to a long overhead shot that frames Ponyville and the nearest portion of the Everfree Forest; thick, tangled vines have begun to creep toward the town from the wilderness. The mares utter a unison gasp of mingled fright and disbelief, and the view snaps to black.)

Act Two

(Opening shot: fade in to the same Ponyville/Everfree long shot, the vines continuing to snake and thicken. Cut to one particular tree and zoom out quickly to frame it between two buildings at the edge of town, with Fluttershy and Rainbow watching it from the fore. The timid mare gasps before the view shifts to frame all six.)

Twilight: Even if we figure out how to defeat Sombra and bring everypony back to Ponyville, if we don’t stop the forest, there won’t be a Ponyville to come back to!

(Rainbow launches into a rainbow-striped U-turn and is at a florist’s stall in a blink. A fast look over the wares, a moment’s rummaging, and she has come up with a load of assorted gardening

implements. She peels out as quickly as she arrived; cut to the others, who look up at the sound of her throat-clearing, and tilt up slightly as she descends with the goods and a smile. The lot is dumped to the street, and the items are lifted one by one—hedge-clipping shears for Applejack and Fluttershy, a trowel for Rarity, a rake for Twilight, a hoe for Pinkie. The speakers of the following lines step forward and lift their tools in turn.)

Fluttershy: For our friends!

Applejack, Rarity: For our families!

Pinkie, Rainbow: (*Rainbow holding an axe*) For our home!

Twilight: For Equestria! (*The vines curl forward; all six charge toward the camera by air and land.*)

All six: *EQUESTRIA!!*

(Fade to black as Twilight's face fills the screen, then in to a long shot of Canterlot under the same horrid sky as that in Ponyville. The path to the great city is choked with ponies who, to a one, have fallen under Sombra's control and are plodding toward the gates, and the roadsides are punched through with crystal barbs. Among those at the head of the procession are Big Macintosh, Granny Smith, Starlight, the Cutie Mark Crusaders, and Spike; a ball of black smoke loops into view ahead of them and forms into Sombra, who leads them over the lowered drawbridge. Four Royal Guard pegasi spot the throng from their observation post on a battlement and raise horns to sound an alarm, but two bursts from the dark gray stallion's horn reduce the instruments to smoking splinters. The guards dive for cover; cut to Sombra, facing the closed gates at the far end of the drawbridge.)

Sombra: (*over shoulder, pointing toward them*) You! Break it down!

(These words are aimed at Macintosh, who lowers his head and gallops toward the gates. An instant before the scarlet cranium meets wood, cut to just inside; the gates withstand one hit, then two, but the third does them in and leaves the way clear for Sombra to lead his newly minted underlings. He stops to survey the opulent architecture laid out before him. Cut to the closed doors of the Canterlot Castle throne room, seen from inside, as his black/purple energy wreathes them from top to bottom. The view shifts to point directly along the red carpet and into the darkened chamber, toward the vacated thrones; the doors swing open, spilling in light, and dozens of shadows extend into view along the full length of the floor. Sombra's wondering stare turns to a leer of triumph.)

Sombra: They've fled! (*walking in*) Celestia and Luna are too cowardly to even stand against me! (*He mounts the dais.*) Equestria is mine!

(Zoom out slowly as his unfettered, unhinged laughter peals out over the throne room, then dissolve to Twilight and company facing down the out-of-control foliage in the Everfree Forest. Rainbow hunts for the ideal spot to swing her axe; Fluttershy drops her shears and huddles with a cry, but soon joins the others in an offensive relying on magic, muscle, and a good sharp cutting edge. She and Rainbow are the only ones still armed. The meek flyer dives toward a knot

of brambles, teeth gripping the shears' handles, and frees several small critters with one looping snip. She drops the implement in almost the same motion.)

Fluttershy: Come on, everypony!

(Seeing them too scared to move, she throws herself down to shield them with a yelp of fear as the tendrils grow back at an absurd speed. Here comes Applejack at a gallop, in harness and pulling a plow whose blade slashes through the thickest of the lot; the woody prison collapses to pieces around Fluttershy and her wards. She lets them go and gets up to race after the farmer; by the time she catches up, Applejack has unhitched herself and Rainbow has dropped the axe. All have deflated a notch or three, even as Twilight and Rarity keep firing.)

Applejack: We've been at this for hours, but it's just growin' back too fast!

Twilight: We have to keep trying!

(They barrel toward a wall of thorns, only to get slapped back and tumble to the turf. A low growl rumbles out from the forest as the peril looms over the half-prone forms—and then twin beams of blindingly bright magic, one blue and one yellow, rip downward at an angle to obliterate the nearest patch of vines. The mares turn their stunned gazes skyward and find Celestia and Luna hovering in the light that shines through a break in the sickly brown clouds. They fire again, the six down below gasping happily and standing up to see more of the colossal weeds being wiped out. A third salvo is the prelude for their landing.)

Applejack: I know we're supposed to be able to handle things on our own, but I've never been happier to see two ponies in my whole life!

(A poof of white light marks the arrival of Starswirl the Bearded.)

Starswirl: No pony is meant to handle this on their own!

Twilight: Starswirl, the Tree of Harmony! It's—

Starswirl: *(stopping her with a hoof)* I know. I alerted the Princesses as soon as I could. I felt it when it happened, like part of my essence just ceased to be. *(Close-up of Twilight.)*

Twilight: *(head drooping)* I know what you mean. I'm sorry. *(A gray hoof lifts her chin.)*

Starswirl: *(from o.s.)* Don't be. *(Cut to frame both.)* I've more than enough magic in me to keep the Everfree Forest under control.

Twilight: You can do that?

Starswirl: The Pillars and I planted the Tree of Harmony. Who do you think kept the forest under control before it did?

(Slow, confident steps bring him to the battlefront, where Celestia and Luna have kept at their extreme pruning.)

Starswirl: It will take time, but with the Princesses' help, I can keep it at bay!

(The old mage levitates himself up several yards and cranks his horn up to top gear, strafing the area with a wide-angle beam. Left in its wake are a large trench carved into the dirt and a tangle of dead vegetation, both of which bring smiles to the spectators' faces.)

Rainbow: Aw, yeah! *(half-shoving Fluttershy and Pinkie aside)* Go get 'em, Beady!

(“Beady” settles to the ground between Celestia and Luna and adds his mojo to the fight; after three tracts are blasted clean in quick succession, cut to Celestia. Zoom out to frame Twilight now alongside her on the start of the next line.)

Twilight: Sombra's back, and he's taken control of all of our friends! *(Pan past Starswirl to Luna, who reacts with disbelief.)*

Luna: We've left Canterlot defenseless!

Celestia: Twilight, you must go. Defend Equestria, and we shall contain the forest! *(Twilight returns to her friends.)*

Pinkie: At least now we're back to just one problem.

(With a resolute nod, Twilight teleports them and herself away. Dissolve to the upper reaches of Canterlot and tilt down slowly to ground level, framing the masses of enthralled ponies who have taken up positions on battlements, the base of the outer wall, and the path leading to the now-raised drawbridge. The six poof into view facing this last group and yelp in terror upon getting a good look at just how badly they are outnumbered at every level.)

Pinkie: Aw, everypony's all evil-y. *(One guard leans down over a battlement with a scowling grunt.)*

Fluttershy: Sombra's gonna force us to fight our way through our friends?

Rainbow: Not if I can help it!

(She blazes ahead, ruffling the manes of the nearest ground contingent, and rises with the intent of going over the wall. That plan promptly hits a major snag in the form of several flight-suited, brainwashed Wonderbolts rising from behind the masonry and charging. Their teammate gasps sharply and stops just short of a collision, then gets a further surprise once magic beams slice the hazy air from below and very nearly take her out. Dodging one potshot after another from the affected unicorns, she drops to the grass and takes cover behind Twilight's spread wings.)

Rainbow: Okay. Guess we need a different plan. Twilight?

Twilight: I don't know! I'm not prepared to fight against the citizens of Equestria! I guess that's one more thing I'm not ready to do. *(Sound of the drawbridge lowering.)*

Applejack: Well, we'd better figure out somethin' quick— *(pointing ahead)* —because none of them seem to have a problem with it!

(A proper scare grips the other five, and the massive wooden barricade thuds down to reveal a squadron of reinforcements ready to go. Dozens of blank-eyed citizens at both ends throw themselves into a blind charge, all but Rarity get clear of the tide of bodies, but she voices a

panicked yelp as Fancypants and a phalanx bear down on her position. The dapper stallion levitates a large net and prepares to throw as she ducks and weaves.)

Rarity: Ooh, sorry about this, Fancypants!

(She counters with a spell that undoes his bow tie and wraps it around his head as a blindfold, then commandeers the net and drops it over her assailants. Applejack and Pinkie gallop in to clamp their teeth on the corners and pull in opposite directions, cinching the strands and hooking them onto crystalline outgrowths to anchor the group in place.)

Applejack: We promise we'll let y'all out as soon as we can!

(A cluster of shadows lances down the path, cast by Fluttershy and Rainbow leading five of the Crystal Empire's Royal Guard pegasi, clad in Sombra's helmets. The two Ponyville mares split up, two enemies chasing Fluttershy and three Rainbow.)

Rainbow: *(veering sharply back and forth; her pursuers follow)* Eh, will I go here? Or here? Or here, or there?

(Fluttershy is doing her best to shake the two on her tail, but her lack of athleticism makes it all too easy for them to keep up. She looks ahead, puzzled.)

Fluttershy: Huh?

(Here comes her opposite number, who throws her a calculating nod and grin. She returns the gestures, whereupon the two set themselves on a collision course; they pull sharply up with only inches to spare, but the five guards fail to copy the maneuver and crash head-on into one another. Down they go like an armor-clad ton of bricks; Twilight catches sight of them, gasps, and exerts her magic to catch them before they can go splat. The five pegasi are set safely down in the grass off to one side.)

Rainbow: Gotcha!

(Now the Wonderbolts make another looping pass; she and Fluttershy drop to the other four, who back up toward each other into a panicked little cluster, and the hostiles slowly close in.)

Fluttershy: I don't know how long we can hold them off!

Applejack: And holdin' them off isn't what we need, anyhow! We need to get inside!

Rarity: But we can't just leave them here, all possessed and Sombra-fied!

Pinkie: What do we do, Twilight?

Twilight: I don't know, but we can't stay here.

(A mass teleport deposits them in a corridor of Canterlot Castle, now lined with ugly crystal forms of its own.)

Twilight: I'm sorry we couldn't help our friends, but I didn't know what else to do.

Applejack: At least we're inside.

Pinkie: (*gamely*) Yeah! All we have to do now is defeat King Sombra. (*A forced chuckle.*)

Twilight: I...we...

(This is as far as she gets before a droplet of greenish liquid falls from above and splashes off the tip of her nose. Puzzled eyes turn toward the ceiling; cut to a longer shot, which frames Discord floating lazily down and biting into a juicy pickle impaled on a fork that he holds in his talons.)

Discord: Oh, my! (*He stands on his hind limbs.*) No Elements? No Princesses? (*Cut to the six; he continues o.s.*) Seems like you're in a bit of a pickle.

(It is held into view on the end of this, after which the camera cuts back to him.)

Discord: Or are you in... (*Lion-paw digits snap; a jar of jelly appears in their grip.*) ...more of a jam?

(The pickle is dipped into the contents and given a hearty chomp.)

Discord: Mmm!

Twilight: Discord! What are you doing here? (*Swallowing, he vanishes the items.*)

Discord: Well, I was going to hang these up all over the castle to celebrate your coronation, but apparently it's a bit premature.

(He starts this line by reeling down a construction-paper banner decorated with a crayon drawing of Twilight's crowned head, and finishes by folding/rolling it up and making it go bye-bye behind his ears.)

Twilight: I'm so glad to see you! (*hovering*) We could really use some "all-powerful Lord of Chaos" help right now!

Discord: (*innocently*) *Moi?* Oh, I couldn't possibly.

(He walks away, the group following, and they are very soon spotted by a fireteam of Royal Guard pegasi. Two rise into the air.)

Pinkie: Aw, poodles! (*The guards charge; cut to Twilight.*)

Twilight: Discord, *please!*

(Pan/tilt up to him—now wearing a pair of gold-framed pince-nez glasses on a chain around his neck and reading a book, which he grumpily closes and tosses over his shoulder.)

Discord: Oh, fine. (*A taloned snap sends away the corrective lenses.*) Just to be clear, I was really rooting for you to do this on your own and parlay that confidence boost into being the best protectors of Equestria you can be.

(The armored ponies barrel down the corridor toward the group.)

Rainbow: A little less talking and a little more helping?!?

(The draconequus just gives an idle snap, not even sparing a glance for the quartet. The two airborne pegasi wind up caught in a giant spiderweb; a door appears in the floor, opens to expose a stairway and let one galloper drop out of sight, and closes again; the last one slides to a stop and is immediately buried under several giant scoops of ice cream and a basketball-sized cherry. He impassively sticks his head out from the sugary trap.)

Fluttershy: Oh, thank you, Discord! *(The ponies move out.)*

Twilight: I don't know what we'd do without you.

(Zoom in to a close-up of Discord, who pouts uncertainly but starts off after them. In the throne room, Sombra is busy growing more crystal shards and jags wherever his horn's spells can reach. The doors at the far end are flung open for the not-quite-magnificent seven to enter.)

Rainbow: *(acidly)* Okay, King Sombra. Time to give up the crown! *(Cut to just behind them; slow pan.)*

Sombra: *(chuckling)* Here to fight the good fight with nothing but your wits? *(Close-up; he fires up his eyes.)* Admirable, but foolish.

(A roar escapes his throat as a spell zips from his horn, but Discord jumps in front of the mares and snaps, causing it to disintegrate into a splatter of yellowish goop and vanish. The tyrant tries again, but this one is neutralized in a puff of pink smoke. Pan slowly toward the thrones.)

Discord: *(to Twilight)* Well, I guess it's on me to be the MVP today. I was betting on you, and I do hate being wrong. *(Close-up, seen from behind.)* Although if you think about it, I *am* your friend, so maybe you win because friendship wins?

(During this line, he counteracts a string of further spells by turning them into balloons, butterflies, confetti, and sparkles, in that order.)

Discord: *(gesturing to Fluttershy)* Although Fluttershy should get most of the credit for that. She's my favorite.

(A diabolical grin creases Sombra's face, and he lets go with a real barn-burner aimed directly at the pink-maned pegasus. Every neuron freezes up, leaving her paralyzed in the face of certain doom—that is, until Discord throws himself in front of her and takes the full brunt of the attack. Action and sound shift to slow motion as he tumbles limply overhead with a yell, leaving a series of rapidly fading afterimages in the air until he thuds to the carpet. Normal speed resumes with Fluttershy's horrified gasp, the blue-green eyes instantly tearing up.)

Fluttershy: *Discord!*

(Voicing a round of gasps, all six mares race to the insensate chaos master. Snap to black.)

Act Three

(Opening shot: fade in to the tableau.)

Sombra: *(laughing)* Not even the Lord of Chaos can stand against me! I am truly the most powerful creature in Equestria!

(He accentuates this assertion by raising an irregular throne from the dais, hiding those of Celestia and Luna from sight.)

Rainbow: Discord! *(She and Fluttershy cradle his head/neck.)*

Twilight: We need you!

Fluttershy: *(voice breaking, shaking him gently)* Ohhh...please wake up, please wake up...

(She trails off into teary sobs, but the mismatched red eyes do open so he can regard her weakly. Despair turns into an overjoyed gasp.)

Fluttershy: Discord!

Twilight: I'm so glad you're okay! We can't beat him without you!

Sombra: *(stepping onto throne)* You couldn't beat me *with* him, either.

(He plunks his rump onto the seat with a malevolent laugh. Down on the floor, Discord coughs a bit and tries to stand, but his strength fails so that he winds up on the carpet again. He speaks in a hoarse tone until further notice.)

Discord: It would appear that you're on your own.

(He pulls in a deep breath and snaps, but can manage only a feeble scatter of sparks.)

Discord: I have nothing left to give. *(He lays his head down.)*

Applejack: That's it, then? We're doomed?

Sombra: Of course you are. I can't believe it's taken you this long to realize it. Now, how shall I eliminate all this clutter in my throne room?

(The Ponyville six turn to face him, growling out the depths of their searing rage, but are distracted by the lift of Discord's head.)

Discord: Listen to me. You don't need me. You don't need the Princesses, and you certainly don't need the Elements. *(Cough.)* Fluttershy...

(Cut to her, watery-eyed but smiling gently, and pan in turn to each one he addresses.)

Discord: *(from o.s., caressing her cheek)* ...you will always be kind. Applejack, you will always be honest. Rarity, you'll always be generous.

(Longer shot; he hitches in a breath and gestures at the hovering Rainbow.)

Discord: And Rainbow Dash will be loyal as can be. *(raising his head)* Pinkie...

(Cut to her, grinning from ear to ear despite her tears.)

Discord: *(from o.s.)* ...will always bring laughter wherever she goes. *(Pan to Twilight.)* And Twilight... *(Cough; she tears up.)* ...you are and always will be the embodiment of magic. *(All seven again.)* You lost sight of what's in front of you. You're here, together, willing to give everything you've got for Equestria. *(Cut to them; he continues o.s.)* Nothing and nopony can ever take that away from you, because that's who you are.

(Warm, appreciative smiles pass from face to face, but a nasty chuckle from the throne room snaps them back to the present crisis and reminds them just how much they cannot stand the cause of it.)

Sombra: It's going to take more than a sentimental speech to save you. *(He steps off his throne.)*

Twilight: *(to others)* Discord's right. We've proven time and time again that the real magic is the six of us working together. *(They turn to face Sombra.)* With these girls by my side, I'm not afraid of you!

(Long profile view of the face-off; Sombra descends to floor level, eyes and horn boiling with magic, as the camera pans slowly toward his end.)

Twilight: I'm not afraid of what you can do or how much power you have! *(Close-up of Sombra.)*

Sombra: You should be.

(The spell he slings her way is blocked with a quick shield, but the momentum pushes her back a few feet.)

Twilight: *(walking slowly forward)* You may knock us down, but we're gonna get back up again! *(Another spell; another block; she continues, the others falling in behind.)* And again! *(Another, parried with ease.)* And again! As long as we're together, we will never stop trying to defeat you!

(Now both horns fire off, their beams canceling each other out as she hovers just off the carpet. After a moment's grunting strain, her spell expands into a pink/white nimbus that encloses all the mares and Fluttershy steps up to take one hoof.)

Fluttershy: For our friends! *(Applejack links to Twilight, Rarity to Fluttershy.)*

Applejack, Rarity: For our families! *(Pinkie and Rainbow touch the flanks of these two.)*

Pinkie, Rainbow: For our home!

Twilight: For Equestria!

[Animation goof: The mouths of all but Twilight move on the third line.]

(The glowing magic lifts them off the floor, Pinkie and Rainbow joining hooves to turn their line into a circle. Sombra's offensive dissipates harmlessly against it until he cuts the power and recoils with a snarl of equal parts fury and fear. Twilight's eyes have gone pure white, and her mane/tail have started to billow on their own in the same manner as Celestia and Luna.)

Sombra: No! This can't be possible! Your magic can't defeat mine! I DESTROYED THE SOURCE OF YOUR POWER!!

(Now a few flecks of light are playing up and down the streaked blue strands.)

Twilight: You can't destroy our friendship, Sombra!

Rainbow: And we keep telling bad guys...

Applejack: ...but y'all just don't seem to remember.

All six: Friendship is magic!

(The eyes of Twilight's friends turn white to match hers, and their shared strength intensifies until the whole place is thrumming and vibrating. Sombra unloads one squarely into Twilight's face, with no effect whatsoever, and the sphere swells to engulf and disintegrate him.)

Sombra: *(fading out)* NOOOOOOOOOOO!!

(The obscenity of a throne that he raised cracks and bursts to pieces, leaving the genuine articles untouched. A multicolored shock wave ripples outward from Canterlot Castle, clearing the sky of its ghastly brown pall, vaporizing the jagged crystal formations, and restoring the minds and colors of all those under the mad unicorn's sway. The healing magic spreads through Ponyville and the Everfree Forest, bringing everything back to tranquil normality.)

(Dissolve to the closed doors of the throne room, seen from inside. Celestia's magic wraps and opens them so she and Luna can enter. They stop short, suddenly boggled, and the camera zooms out to frame Discord lying on a pile of pillows and being attended by Twilight and company. Their magic light show has ended, and they are all back to their normal appearances.)

Fluttershy: Ohh...do you want more juice?

(The hoarseness is now gone from the trickster's voice, but he still sounds fairly weak.)

Discord: Only if it's not too much trouble. *(perking up)* And it's red. And it has one of those little umbrellas. *(Hold up two talons.)* And two cherries.

(Fluttershy turns to fill the request, but stops at his next words.)

Discord: *(holding up three talons)* No, no, actually, make it three. *(She heads off.)* And maybe, uh h h h h h... some donuts?

Celestia: *(playfully)* I see you've made yourselves at home.

Twilight: Celestia! Luna! *(crossing to them)* I know what you're gonna say. I should've called on you as soon as I knew how dangerous it was. *(Head-on view, framing Luna in the fore.)* A good leader knows when to ask for help, and I didn't. And because of me, the Tree of Harmony was destroyed. Equestria deserves someone much better than me as its leader.

Celestia: *(from o.s.)* You're right.

(Twilight reacts to these two words as if her mentor has just gone upside her head with a two-by-four; once she recovers her wits, she drops her head with a crushed moan. Cut to frame all three Princesses.)

Celestia: *(smiling gently, lifting Twilight's chin)* About one thing. *(hoof across Twilight's shoulders)* A good leader knows when to ask for help, but a great leader has the courage to admit when they've made a mistake—and the strength to make it right. Today you've proven to me beyond any doubt that you will be a great leader.

Twilight: “Will be”?

Celestia: Luna and I have decided. It may have been a bit unfair to thrust this upon you without giving you the time you need to prepare. *(Cut to Twilight.)*

Twilight: *(immensely relieved)* Oh, thank goodness! I really wasn't ready!

(Pan to frame Discord in the background, about to enjoy the glass of juice Fluttershy has procured for him—complete with paper umbrella and cherries speared on a swizzle stick. He is so surprised at this last that he throws it aside and springs upright, scattering pillows everywhere.)

Discord: *Not ready?!?* So Twilight's not taking over? *(He crosses to the gathering.)* This was all for nothing? I pretended to be very hurt and gave one of the most convincing speeches of my—

(Cut to the eight equines on the end of this, faces shifting into varied degrees of incredulity, shock, and full-tilt annoyance.)

Twilight, Fluttershy: *Pretended?!?*

Discord: Of course! You don't think some would-be king could actually hurt the Lord of Chaos, do you? *(Talon/lion-paw quotation marks on “would-be king.”)* Anyway, as I was saying...

(He bisects his body at the “waist,” the lower half falling away while the upper floats under its own power.)

Discord: ...I pretended to be very hurt to convince you that you didn't need anything but yourself to be the incredible leader I know you can be. *(indignantly, to Celestia)* And now it's not happening?

Celestia: It will, but when she's ready. *(He reassembles himself.)*

Discord: How can she not be ready? *(pacing to a stained-glass window)* What a waste of a perfectly wonderful speech! *(pushing it up, climbing out)* Ugh, honestly, I don't know why I even bother.

(The brightly-hued pane is pulled shut behind him.)

Rarity: Ugh! So he could have ended the whole Sombra thing whenever he wanted!

Fluttershy: *(tenderly)* But he didn't, because he cares. *(Rarity grimaces, not believing a word of it.)*

Rainbow: *(shrugging)* That's Discord for you.

Applejack: He sure has a weird way of being supportive.

Pinkie: Super-odd dude!

(A stained-glass image of the joker appears in the window through which he exited...)

Window Discord: I heard that!

(...and is gone again, leaving the group to share a laugh.)

Luna: Also, truth be told, Celestia and I had fun today, fighting side by side with Starswirl for our home. It's been years since we've gotten to do what you girls do. *(winking)* You all make it look so easy.

Rainbow: Well, we are kind of an awesome team.

Fluttershy: Every adventure is heart-pounding, but so rewarding.

Pinkie: I'm up for anything, as long as it's with all of you.

Rarity: *(giggling)* Life certainly hasn't been dull since we met.

Applejack: Nowhere else I'd rather be.

Twilight: We *are* pretty incredible together. And we would do anything for Equestria. I guess I know, when the time comes, as long as we're together, we probably—

(A round of pointed throat-clearings from her five friends prompts her to reconsider with a smile.)

Twilight: —we *definitely* got this.

Other five: Awww...

(They pile in around their local Princess for a group hug.)

(Dissolve to a stretch of vine/moss-choked treetops under an evening sky that has gone a repulsive gray-green and tilt down slowly. The movement frames the swamp seen in Part One, decorated with its rude stone carving in Grogar's likeness. From here, cut to Chrysalis, Cozy, and Tirek sitting in a circle within his underground stronghold. They have joined hooves and hands to form a circle, but the centaur and changeling look as if they would rather be punching it out with each other and/or the sweet-faced filly.)

Cozy: Now I'll say something nice about centaurs; Tirek, you say something nice about changelings; and Chrysalis, you say something nice about ponies.

Chrysalis: *(pulling away from Tirek)* Never!

(All three are brought up short by the approaching sound of slow, deliberate steps. Cut to Grogar as he emerges from a shadowy nook in a distinctly bad mood.)

Grogar: Let us hope the three of you will be enough for my plans. *(The three subordinates yank apart.)*

Chrysalis: And what of King Sombra?

Tirek: Did he succeed?

(The goat steps over to the central table and its crystal ball.)

Grogar: *(contemptuously)* Ha!

(Its dark central bar expands to fill the surface, which brings up a replay of Twilight and company laying the magical smackdown on Sombra. Once this has ended, the ball returns to its original appearance and the camera tilts up from it to frame Grogar's face.)

Grogar: I'd say he gambled—and lost! *(climbing onto table)* But at least he can serve as a warning to those who doubt continuing with my plans—unless any of you have doubts. *(The three are visibly cowed.)*

Tirek: Uh, not I.

Chrysalis: Nope!

Cozy: I'm good!

Grogar: Then we shall join forces and work together to bring Equestria to its knees!

(His hoarse laughter rings through the cavern; in response, the three surviving flunkies force themselves to smile and work up the most convincing laughs they can on no notice. The view fades to black around Grogar's glaring eyes and bushy brows, and these sets of features disappear in their own time as his laughter dies away.)