

Distribution:

Production:

Lauren Faust
Chris Bartleman
Kirsten Newlands-Davidson
Rob Renzetti
Sarah Wall
Jayson Thiessen
James Wooton
Angela Belyea

Discovery/Hasbro:

Donna Ebbs
Scott Pennington
Chris Mehl

Hasbro Studios:

Stephen Davis
Lisa Licht
Linda Steiner
Mike Riley
Brian Lenard
Robert Fewkes
Sophia Hussain

Hasbro IP:

Mark Wiesenhahn
Matt Mattus

Hasbro Global Brand:

Valerie Jurries
Michelle Hogue
Donna Tobin

Hasbro Design:

Liz Knight
Dean Carley

Ed Consult:

Jordan Brown

MY LITTLE PONY

"The Cutie Mark Chronicles"

EP023

Outline by
Mitch Larson

Outline: March 1, 2010
Notes Due: March 2, 2010

TEASER

Apple Bloom, Scootaloo, and Sweetie Belle are standing on a platform high up in the pine trees, wearing helmets and harnesses. They're going ziplining through the treetops!

"Are you sure about this, Apple Bloom? I've never gone ziplining before." She hits her helmet for luck. "Neither have I! Now let's go!!"

They all take a deep breath, then leap off the platform! But when they go to grab the rope, their hooves slide right off! "Oh no! NO THUMBS!!" The safety harnesses keep them from falling, but they're spinning out of control toward the pine tree! They slam into the tree, then plunge toward the ground, slamming into just about every branch along the way. Sap and needles stick to them. Angry owls scratch them with their talons. Finally the Crusaders slam into the ground in a filthy, beat-up pile. Apple Bloom shakes herself off, then looks expectantly at her rump. Nothing.

As the others sit painfully up, she says, "Well, I guess we're not meant to be zipliners."

ACT I

The Crusaders are back in their clubhouse cleaning themselves up from the failed experiment. Apple Bloom is frustrated. No matter what they try, they always end up in pain and no closer to a cutie mark. It's time to rethink things. It's time for a new strategy.

She proposes they do a little research. Maybe they can learn something from ponies who already have their cutie marks that'll help them with their own quest. The others love the idea. Scootaloo insists they start with the coolest pony in Ponyville: Rainbow Dash.

As they pile out of the clubhouse, they happen upon Applejack, who's working in the orchard. Scootaloo wants to get going, but the others say they might as well see what Applejack has to say. Sure enough, Applejack loves telling a good ol' story like that one. So the Crusaders settle in and we flashback as she narrates her tale...

As a filly, Applejack always felt trapped on the farm. Even as a younger Big McIntosh and Granny Smith assign her tasks we know she'll eventually love to do, such as applebucking, Applejack just isn't interested. No, she's meant for something more. Her dream is to leave Sweet Apple Acres behind and try her luck in the big city.

So Applejack packs up her things and heads out to live with her Aunt and Uncle Orange in Manehattan. At first, life in the big city is more than she ever imagined. The troughs are enormous, and so are the possibilities. If the pace on the farm was a trot, this place never goes slower than a gallop.

Applejack does her best to fit in, disguising her country accent with a posh one and spending all her money on a designer saddle. She even makes some new friends. But the big city lifestyle soon starts to take its toll. As a morning pony used to the quiet of the country and waking up with the roosters, she can't get any relief from the all-night noise of the city that never sleeps. She also misses eating plain ol' country food. All she ever gets in the big city are "seared baby carrot peels in a barley and wild oat reduction" and things like that.

One day, Applejack looks out her window and realizes how homesick she feels. She wonders what Big McIntosh and Granny Smith are up to. She misses running through the mud and eating apples right off the tree. Just then, in the middle of her reverie, something appears in the sky like a beacon: a beautiful rainbow, pointing right back to Ponyville.

Applejack finishes her story by saying that once she returned home to her family, she realized she wasn't an Orange, but an Apple. She accepted that she was a farm gal through and through and her familiar apple cutie mark appeared. She's been happily working the orchard ever since.

The Crusaders thank Applejack and move on, none of them too sure they got anything useful out of the story. Scootaloo says they just need to find Rainbow Dash to get some answers to their problem.

They head to Fluttershy's cottage to see if she knows where her fellow pegasus is. She doesn't, but says she'll be happy to tell them how Rainbow Dash got her cutie mark. Scootaloo and the others excitedly listen as Fluttershy starts her story...

Fluttershy as a filly had awkwardly long legs, which made her feel self-conscious and even more shy than she is now. And like all pegasi, she was forced to go to the ultimate awkward pegasus nightmare... summer flight camp! She didn't fit in with anyone, and because she was so gangly and tall and couldn't fly worth a hoot, other pegasi made fun of her constantly.

One day, after a particularly disastrous attempt at a beginner flight obstacle course, some bullies decide to really give it to her. They surround her, laughing and mocking her and making her feel awful. Until...

The filly version of Rainbow Dash steps in! (Scootaloo interrupts the story to cheer!) They've never met before, but Rainbow Dash just can't stand to see the bullies picking on helpless Fluttershy. Despite being unusually small for her age, she stands up to the bullies with her typical bragging and tough talk, so they challenge her to a race.

Later, the whole camp gathers to watch Rainbow Dash take on the bullies. Fluttershy stands in front of them with a flag (like a '50s drag race). The crowd is in a frenzy as the competitors step to the starting line. Then, Fluttershy waves the flag and the race is on!

They zoom out of the starting gate, knocking Fluttershy right out of the clouds! She plummets toward the ground below! Like someone who can't swim falling into a pool, Fluttershy flails as she tries to flap her wings. But it's not working! She can't fly!

ACT II

Fluttershy hurtles toward the ground! She manages to calm herself down and stop flailing her awkwardly long legs, focusing solely on flying. As the ground closes in, her self-encouragement finally starts to work and she gets some air under her wings. Before she knows it, she's flying!

As she tests out her new powers of flight, she notices something unlike anything she's ever seen before. It's a strange, beautiful creature with big gorgeous wings. A butterfly! She follows it down to the ground, and a whole new world opens up before her. She starts to sing a girly song about all these things she's never seen before because she's spent her whole life in the clouds:

the grass and the trees and the streams and best of all... the animals!!! The song turns into over-the-top, magical, glittery silliness with Fluttershy and the animals dancing together, when...

KA-BOOM!!! A massive explosion knocks them all over like bowling pins! The animals scatter, freaked out from the incredible noise! Fluttershy starts to act out of pure instinct. From somewhere deep inside, she finds the ability to calm the animals down, reassuring them that everything is okay. And by finding that ability, her butterfly cutie mark appears on her rump! A gorgeous rainbow appears across the sky to emphasize her symbiotic relationship with the animals...

"Wait wait wait! I thought this was about Rainbow Dash?!" Scootaloo's frustrated. She and the others take off on the scooter to find her hero. "But I was getting to her!"

Next the Crusaders stumble upon Rarity. She hears what they're doing and volunteers to tell her story. But only if they'll help her by posing as tailor's dummies. Draped in fabric, they listen to another cutie mark origin story...

Rarity says she always knew she wanted to be a designer, which is why it was so strange that she just couldn't seem to get her cutie mark. She understands what the Crusaders are going through, because she, too, tried everything. She studied all the top pony designers, she learned their techniques, she practiced day and night. Still, no cutie mark.

Well, one day she was busy designing outfits for the school play. It's a typical little kid play, where the actors (including young Applejack and Pinkie Pie, with her giant frizz-fro) are dressed as the main pony food groups: oats and grains, grasses and hays, fruits and vegetables, flowers and sweets. Rarity follows the pre-made designs, but something's just not working with these costumes. She breaks out all her techniques, working through the night, but still the costumes don't look quite right.

Opening night is fast approaching, and the pressure continues to mount. Rarity begins to despair. Maybe she wasn't meant to be a fashionista after all. Just as she reaches her lowest point, something strange happens. Her unicorn horn starts to glow! It seems to be trying to lead her somewhere, so Rarity goes with the flow and follows.

The glowing horn takes her through Ponyville and out to the rocky outskirts where nopony ever goes. It leads her right to... a big, dumb rock. That's it. There's nothing else here. Rarity is about to explode with frustration, when all of a sudden...

KA-BOOM!!! A massive explosion rocks Ponyville! The giant rock splits in half! Inside, a horde of rare, breathtaking gems spills out! Rarity's eyes fill with wonder...

Back in the auditorium, the little filly actors take the stage for the school play, only now their food costumes are bedazzled with the gorgeous, sparkly gems. The crowd oohs and aahs, then gives Rarity a standing ovation for her incredible costumes. She smiles, pleased that she not only found her own artistic signature, but also her three-diamond cutie mark.

Back in the boutique, Scootaloo shakes off the fabric that's draped over her. She can't take it anymore! These stories are all about "finding who you really are" and boring things like that, things that aren't getting them any closer to their cutie marks. "That's not what we need; we need ACTION! We need Rainbow Dash!"

Instead, they find Twilight Sparkle. Scootaloo's ready to keep right on going, but the others convince her that Twilight's story might be useful, since she's from somewhere other than Ponyville, and maybe she's got a new cutie mark perspective.

Twilight begins her story. As a young filly in Canterlot, she had always longed to go to the summer sun celebration and see the Princess raise the sun to commemorate the beginning of the summer season. Finally, one year, she's old enough.

Her parents take her to the fairgrounds, and they spend an amazing night together. But the highlight of the celebration, and the event that changes Twilight's life, happens when Princess Celestia herself appears for the sun-raising ceremony. She uses her incredible powers of magic to raise the sun into the sky, instantly turning night into day.

Twilight is so knocked out by the display of magic that she dedicates her young life to becoming the best spell-caster she can be. She reads her way through every book in the Canterlot Library of Magic, gradually learning to perform her very own spells. She starts by levitating dragon eggs (Spike, perhaps?), then gradually increases her repertoire until finally her parents decide to enroll her in Princess Celestia's school for gifted young unicorns.

To Twilight, this is a dream come true. The only problem is, she's self-taught when it comes to magic, and she'll have to pass a nerve-wracking entrance exam to make it in. If she fails, her dreams will be crushed, and she'll be humiliated in front of the Princess.

She practices day and night, her skills improving with each passing hour. But when it comes time for her audition, Twilight is so spaced out from lack of sleep that she can't focus enough to perform her magic. With her parents, the faculty, and Princess Celestia herself watching, Twilight Sparkle freezes up! Disaster!!

ACT III

As Twilight flails in front of everyone, her dreams evaporating in front of her...

KA-BOOM!!! The explosion startles Twilight, and she accidentally starts performing magic left and right without even realizing what she's doing! The Princess is so impressed with Twilight's skills that she decides to make the impressive filly her own personal protégé!

But Twilight's amazing day isn't finished yet. Thanks to the bizarre explosion, Twilight not only reaches her dream of getting into the magic school and working with the Princess, she also gets her pink sparkle cutie mark.

As Twilight finishes her story, Apple Bloom and Sweetie Belle agree with Scootaloo. Yup, waste of time. Which way to Rainbow Dash?

They decide to check Sugarcube Corner to see if she's there, but on the way they run into Pinkie Pie, who, in true Pinkie fashion, is randomly roller skating there herself. She happily says she'll tell her own story. With a sigh, Scootaloo says, "Why not?"

Pinkie Pie tells about her upbringing in an extremely serious, dour family on a rock farm outside of Ponyville. Every overcast, gloomy day is spent toiling away in the rock fields. Every dinner is

spent silently eating a meal with no flavor. There is no laughter. There is no joy. There is no smiling. There are only rocks.

Pinkie's family are severe, humorless ponies. They have straight hair and gray fur. Pinkie, on the other hand, is, obviously, pink, and has an unruly bush of a mane. Every morning, her mother painfully brushes it out in a vain attempt to control it.

Pinkie is a sad, bored little filly. Her only friends are the little "rockmen" she makes when she's working in the fields. One day she even makes a whole village of rockmen, and they all live in little rock houses—

"Wait a minute!" Scootaloo interrupts when she sees Pinkie veering wildly off topic. So Pinkie refocuses her story, and tells about the day she found her cutie mark. She was out in the south field, preparing the rocks to be brought in for the winter. Suddenly, there's a giant KA-BOOM!!! that blows her hair back, leaving it in a crazy poof.

The explosion is followed by a brilliant, glowing rainbow. Pinkie's mouth hangs open and her eyes go wide. She's never seen anything this beautiful before. It's so spectacularly gorgeous that it causes her to smile. Suddenly Pinkie's entire world changes. She's never felt a smile before, and the joy that comes with it only makes her want to smile even more. In fact, she loves smiling so much that she decides she wants to share the feeling with her family. She races through Ponyville, frantically following a trail of smiling ponies until she finds the source: the party store. She dramatically bursts into the party store: "Quick! I need everything you've got to make ponies smile! It's an emergency!"

Pinkie gets to work setting up her very first party. She fills the rock silo with balloons and cake and streamers and everything else you need for a party. When her serious family walks in, their minds are blown. At first Pinkie's worried that her plan backfired, but then, slowly, the corners of their mouths start to turn upwards in the faintest hint of smiles. And just like that, by providing joy to others, Pinkie's balloon cutie mark appears.

Before Scootaloo can become too frustrated with the story, they arrive at Sugarcube Corner. All the ponies are there for a sweet break, including the elusive Rainbow Dash. When she hears that Scootaloo desperately wants to hear her cutie mark story, she's only too happy to oblige...

Back in Cloudsdale, young Rainbow Dash is at the starting line with the bully from before. Fluttershy stands in front of them with her flag. She waves it, and Rainbow Dash takes off like a shot, not even realizing that she's knocked Fluttershy out of the sky. As she zooms through the clouds, Rainbow Dash feels a jolt of adrenaline. And she likes it.

She twirls through the air as she shoots around the course. No doubt about it, this pegasus has a need for speed. But while she's busy discovering the joys of flying, the bully has made his move and caught up. He sneers and mocks her as he passes. So Rainbow Dash does something we've seen her do a million times: she finds another gear. Turns out the only thing she likes more than flying... is winning!

She digs deep and pours on the speed. She's steadily closing in on the bully. Faster... faster...

KA-BOOM!!! A brilliant, sparkly rainbow forms behind her as she creates a Sonic Rainboom, a phenomenon that most pegasi assume was just an old mare's tale! She leaves the bully in cloud

dust, and leaves her blank flank behind at the same time! A cloud and a rainbow lightning bolt appear on her rump!

Back in the sweet shoppe, the ponies begin to realize that the Sonic Rainboom Rainbow Dash created when she got her cutie mark is the same thing they all saw or heard when they got their cutie marks.

The ponies all hug and share a heartfelt moment, realizing for the first time that they've had a special connection since before they even met. They've been BFFs forever, and they didn't even know it!. Apple Bloom and Sweetie Belle watch the sappiness with melty hearts. "Awwwww..." "Gimme a break," says Scootaloo. "Come on, let's go try ziplining again. Maybe we just did it wrong last time..."

Later, Twilight Sparkle dictates her letter to the Princess to Spike. She's still feeling the warm, close connection with her friends. As she dictates, we see idyllic visuals of Twilight and her friends galloping through fields of rainbows, smiling like true best friends. "Dear Princess, today I learned something about friendship I'd never realized before. Everypony has a special connection with her friends, even before she's ever met them. . If you're feeling lonely and you're still searching for your true friends, just look up in the sky. Who knows, maybe you and your future best friends are all looking at the same rainbow."

"Oh, gross!" says Spike, yanking us out of the visuals. "When did you get so cheesy?" Twilight smiles knowingly. "Just write it, Spike."