

Distribution:

Production:

Devon Cody
Meghan McCarthy
Josh Haber
Jim Miller
Denny Lu
Lesley Crawford
Claire Bartleman

The HUB:

Linda Shima Tsuno
Wayne Winstead

Hasbro Studios:

Stephen Davis
Kathy Page
Brian Lenard
Gabriel Monje
Daniel Barnes
Finn Arnesen
Nina Scales

Hasbro Brand:

Jamie Cipolla
Yusun Hwang
Husuk Jung
Andrea Ehret
Marissa Mansolillo
Samantha Lomow
Gretchen Forrest
Kristen Riley
Katherine Padilla
Brain Chapman

MY LITTLE PONY 6

The Times They Are A Changeling

617

Outline by: Kevin Burke and Chris “Doc” Wyatt

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TEASER**SC. 1 - EXT. THE FRIENDSHIP EXPRESS – DAY**

Establishing – the train speeds through a beautiful Equestrian landscape.

SC. 2 – INT. THE FRIENDSHIP EXPRESS – DAY

TWILIGHT is trying to get in a little time with her trainee STARLIGHT—But the ponies are too excited to focus. They're on their way to the Crystal Empire on an official trip to visit Twilight's new niece (the Royal Baby-- Flurry Heart) and her parents Shining Armor and Cadence. As the ponies chat about how excited they are, SPIKE stumbles in, dragging a MASSIVE STEAMER TRUNK. As the train rounds a bend, the trunk scoots away from him, smashes into the wall, and ejects TONS of clothing—burying Spike! As the ponies help dig Spike out of the pret-a-porter mountain, they ask him: "Why have you packed more clothes than Rarity when she's going to Equestria Fashion Week?" Spike: "They're all disguises." Um, What? Explanation please...

Spike humblebrags that in the Crystal Empire he's "kind of a big deal"—They call him the "Great Hero" because he, "you know, saved the kingdom... a couple of times. No big deal." However, Spike wants this trip to be all about the baby, and doesn't want to detract from that with his presence. He's worried that if they go out in public, everypony'd be all over him, and not the baby. So he's decided to wear a disguise... He just can't figure out which one, so he brought them all!

QUICK COMEDY DISGUISE MONTAGE: Spike tries on a series of silly costumes to get feedback from Twilight and Starlight (Detective, Pirate, Cowboy, Ninja, Punk Rocker, Showgirl, Vampire, Monster, Alien, etc...). Spike isn't satisfied with any of them until he lands on "the Distinguished Gentleman" (top hat, tails, monocle, diamond-headed cane). Yep—Nothing beats the Distinguished Gentleman! The girls humor him—it's perfect.

END TEASER**MAIN TITLES****ACT ONE****SC. 3 - EXT. CRYSTAL EMPIRE TRAIN STATION – DAY**

When the train comes to a stop at the station, Twilight, Starlight and "the Distinguished Gentleman" (Spike) rush off, excited to be here... But the station is empty. As in—TOTALLY EMPTY! Nopony's in sight. "How will I know if my disguise is working?" wonders Spike.

SC. 4 - EXT. CRYSTAL EMPIRE - STREETS - DAY

Twilight, Starlight and Spike walk through empty streets. The Crystal Palace is a GHOST TOWN! Shops are boarded up. Houses seem empty... Nothing. The ponies are getting worried. What could have done this? Is the Royal family OK? They decide to hurry to the castle!

SC. 5 - EXT. CRYSTAL PALACE – MINUTES LATER

They reach the castle to find the gates CLOSED (they're never closed). Twilight is really worried now. She magics open the gates and the trio RUSHES IN—

SC. 6 - INT. CRYSTAL PALACE – MINUTES LATER

--Only to be surrounded by ROYAL GUARDS!!! "What's going on here?" Twilight wants to know. "Nopony can enter without confirmation," the guards reply. But don't they know who this is? Twilight is the sister of their commander, Shining Armor, and also the niece of the royal baby, Flurry Heart. "That doesn't matter," comes the

answer. But Spike realizes he can fix all this. “Guys,” he says taking off the monocle and top hat, “It’s me.” Revealing his identity does indeed cause a surprised murmur among the guards, but Spike is disappointed to see that it doesn’t solve the problem—the guards still insist on surrounding them.

Down the grand staircase come SHINING ARMOR and CADENCE, with FLURRY HEART floating in a foal-carrier. Cadence is notably trying to get Flurry Heart to laugh and play, but the baby is bored, even crying. Twilight is sure the Royal Family will clear everything up... but instead finds that even her own brother regards her with suspicion. He asks her a series of questions that only she would know the answer to, which ends with Sparkle and Cadence doing their little hoof-shake together: “Sunshine, sunshine, lady bugs awake...” Shining Armor: “It’s all right, that’s her.” The guards breathe a sigh of relief and back off.

Finally Twilight, Starlight and Spike get the explanation they’ve been looking for. It seems a CHANGELING has been spotted at the edge of the Crystal Empire! The sighting has caused a panic, and all the Crystal Ponies are in hiding! Starlight hasn’t heard much about what Changelings are, so Twilight catches her up: They’re evil shape-shifting ponies who are untouched by the joys of friendship! No one wants what almost happened to Canterlot to happen here in the Crystal Empire! So the guards are on high alert. Because the Changeling can look like ANYPONY, everyone is under suspicion—neighbor can’t trust neighbor! Shining Armor has the guards preparing to march out of the city to search for the Changeling.

While the Royal Family is talking, the Royal Guard approaches and shyly whispers a request to Shining Armor. It turns out that now that the “Great Hero” (Spike) is here, the guards are asking that he lead the expedition into the field. Spike is pleased about this and happy to lead the charge! Twilight, however, has some reservations about letting Spike do something that dangerous. Spike tries to urge Twilight to ease off—she’s embarrassing him (“Please, Twilight, I think Spike the Brave and Glorious can handle it!”) Once Cadence assures Twilight that Spike would be safely surrounded by guards, Twilight relents. Spike is named temporary head of the guard, and everyone CHEERS!

SC. 7 - EXT. TUNDRA – DAY

Spike and the guards pass through the barrier and into the TUNDRA. The guards turn to Spike for guidance (“What do we do now, Great Hero?”) so Spike tries giving a few orders, attempting to use military commands: “At tension! Hup-two against the port bow on my mark!” All the guards look around to one another, confused... then back at Spike. “Uh... aft bow?” Still nothing. Finally Spike gives up the fancy terms: “Let’s try THAT way,” he says, pointing. The ponies all agree that Spike is very decisive and makes a great leader!

SOME TIME LATER—The Guards have been wandering around in frozen trenches, and are finding NOTHING... Well, one guard does find a suspicious looking block of ice, but when Spike questions it, it seems to answer all the questions with the exact kind of silence that a chunk of ice would answer, so Spike pronounces that lead a dead end... In order to cover more ground, Spike decides that the guards should GALLOP as quickly as possible. But when he gives the order, the Guards respond so quickly that he FALLS OFF the Pony he’s riding and ROLLS off down a snowbank!

SC. 8 - EXT. TUNDRA – NEAR THE PIT – LATER

Spike catches himself before going into a pit, but when he picks himself up, he finds himself all alone! He starts to call out for the Guards, but then remembers he’s out looking for a Changeling, and shouting could bring the Changeling just as easily as it could bring back the guards. He decides that there’s nothing else to do—He’s going to just have to walk back to the palace on his own... assuming he can find it. He’s gotten his directions a little turned around. Is he lost?

But as Spike passes the space between two snowdrifts, he spots a reflection of himself. That’s odd. Who would put a mirror out in the tundra? Spike senses that something isn’t quite right. We get a Marx Bros-style mirror gag routine. Spike raises his hand—So does his “reflection,” etc... Finally, Spike just shrugs and heads in (what he hopes is) the direction of the palace, when he—as also his “reflection”—passes an ICE LILLY FLOWER. Suddenly... His reflection SNEEZES. Uh... what? How could a reflection sneeze...?

POOOOOF!!! The “reflection” TRANSFORMS into a terrifying CHANGELING!!! Spike SHOUTS in FEAR!!!

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SC. 9 - EXT. TUNDRA – NEAR THE PIT – RESUME

RESUME: The Changeling REARS up above the stocky Spike, terrifying him! “AHHHHH!!” Spike screams, running, stumbling, and crawling away from the enemy as quickly as he can! Spike barely looks where he’s going, tripping in a general panic!

The Changeling watches him run and calls out “Wait!” but his voice goes unheard under Spike’s screams and panic! The Changeling begins to fly after Spike! At this moment, Spike looks back over his shoulder, seeing the creature coming after him! Spike FREAKS OUT, not realizing he’s run up back up to the edge of the pit. He FALLS! Oh no! Spike covers his eyes, awaiting his certain doom! But suddenly a HOOOF grabs him, holding Spike up in mid-air. Realizing he is no longer falling, Spike uncovers his eyes – to see the Changeling caught him, saving his life! “What?” a confused Spike says as the Changeling carries him back onto solid land.

“You really should watch where you’re going,” the Changeling says. “I wouldn’t want you to get hurt, especially on account of me.” Spike looks at him, confused. The Changeling turns away, sadly. “You can run away now. I won’t chase you. I know you don’t want to be friends. Just be careful.” The Changeling slowly flies away from Spike, but Spike follows the Changeling. “Wait!” The Changeling turns as Spike catches up to him. Spike explains that he’s never met a Changeling that would ever dream of being “friends” – yet along save someone. What’s the story here?

The Changeling, cautiously excited that Spike is talking to him, explains himself. He might be a Changeling, but he doesn’t like being mean and nasty – not at all! He was part of the army that assaulted Canterlot during the royal wedding. The hungry Changelings were coming to feed off of love. But this Changeling witnessed first-hand the triumph of the Ponies’ friendship, and realized just how wrong it was for the Changelings to come and steal love. So he left his society, no longer wanting to deceive people, and headed towards the Crystal Empire, where he’s heard everypony is very kind and friendly. From now on he vows to feed only off of love freely given.

However, his journey hasn’t been as easy as he had hoped. Changelings have a terrible reputation in all of the kingdoms, and one single Changeling who wants to be friends doesn’t seem to be enough to change that. He’s never been able to get close enough to anypony to explain himself – that is, until now. Before this, everypony ran away in fear at first sight! The reason the Changeling turned into Spike was in an awkward attempt to make friends. “You can’t be afraid of yourself, right?”

“I’m going to help you!” Spike declares! The Changeling is taken aback. “You can do that?” Spike assures him it’ll be no problem – people will definitely befriend the Changeling if Spike says it’s okay. “I’m kind of a big deal in the Crystal Empire – a great hero. Spike the Brave and Glorious? You might have heard of me.” The Changeling hasn’t... but he follows with “I don’t really know much about the Crystal Empire.” Spike, knowing that the Changeling’s appearance will immediately scare people, decides he needs to talk to the kingdom first, to prepare them for the arrival of their new friend. “What do they call you, anyway?” he asks. The Changeling responds: “My name is VIOLENT TERROR.” Spike: “...Okay ... Let’s just call you ‘Violet’ for now!”

SC. 10 - INT. CRYSTAL PALACE – MINUTES LATER

IN THE CASTLE: One of the GUARDS is in the middle of telling Shining Armor that they lost their great leader in the woods – and they fear the worst. Perhaps the Changeling got him? But just then— Spike rushes into the room! The Guards, Twilight, and the rest CHEER when he arrives! This only adds to Spike’s reputation as a hero!

Spike addresses the assembled Ponies, asking: “What if I told you that not all Changelings are evil?” The room, even Twilight, scoffs at this notion. Shining Armor: “I’d say you hit your head in the woods and aren’t thinking straight.” The rest reaffirm that Changelings can’t be trusted. They kidnapped Cadence and nearly destroyed the

Royal Wedding. Cadence: “Now with Flurry Heart here, we have to be extremely cautious of dangers in the kingdom. A royal baby would be a target for the Changelings, no doubt.”

“Well...” Spike tries, “I met the Changeling in the Tundra and...” This causes an immediate GASP! “Surely you fought it!” shout some. “Don’t worry,” shouts another, “the great hero would never show weakness to a Changeling. He clearly battled it! He wouldn’t be Spike the Brave and Glorious if he didn’t.” Not wanting to risk damaging his reputation, Spike tells them he chased the Changeling off.

SC. 11 - EXT. TUNDRA – NEAR THE PIT – LATER

Violet sees Spike return, and is extremely excited. Violet: “How did it go? Am I finally going to make some friends?” Spike: “It, uh, didn’t go as smoothly as I had hoped.” Violet’s face drops. Of course it didn’t. He should have known better. But Spike’s not finished – “Don’t worry – I’ve got a new plan!” Violet looks up, interested.

SC. 12 - INT. CRYSTAL PALACE – DAY

Spike walks in to greet everyone with his good friend “Violet GentlePony” (Violet in the guise of a pony and wearing Spike’s ‘Distinguished Gentleman’ outfit). Naturally, Shining Armor questions this new arrival. “So, how exactly do you know Spike?” “Uh, we’ve been longtime pen pals!” Spike is able to fill in enough details to satisfy Shining Armor. Twilight asks Spike why he’s never mentioned this pen pal before. Spike bristles that Twilight doesn’t know everything about him.

SC. 13 - INT. CRYSTAL PALACE – VARIOUS - DAY

MONTAGE: Violet makes conversation with everyone—They find him charming and funny! Violet loves EVERYTHING he sees in the castle! The stained glass windows depicting scenes of great friendship! The delightful aromas of delicious food! The genuine smiles on everypony’s faces! Even Flurry Heart finally laughs when he plays with the baby! **END MONTAGE.**

SC. 14 - INT. CRYSTAL PALACE - DAY

As they tour the castle, Violet confides to Spike that there’s nothing in the Changeling Empire that can rival the beauty and friendship of this place. But Violet realizes that all of the friends he’s made here, it’s all under false pretenses. He doesn’t like pretending to be something he’s not – He doesn’t want to lie anymore! Worried that it’s too soon—to risk his reputation—Spike convinces him, telling Violet that this is still a good idea. “You’re winning everyone over! Once you feel comfortable, then you can reveal who you really are.” Violet agrees to stick with the plan.

Turning a corner, Spike and Violet find everypony else checking out the new decorations being put up around the castle. They invite the Great Hero and their new favorite person, Violet, to come. But when they unveil the decorations, they’re made out of ICE LILLY BLOOMS!

Violet, who we’ve seen is allergic to these rare flowers, suddenly SNEEZES! When he does, he instantly transforms back into the CHANGELING— Everypony GASPS! Violet, seeing their reaction, quickly says: “No, it’s OK—I’m here with Spike!” Everypony turns to Spike! Shining Armor: “Great Hero— There’s no way you would have made friends with such a horrible creature, is there?” Spike under pressure: “Of course not.”

Violet, hearing this, FLEES—and the everypony gives chase! It’s pandemonium! Spike is left alone, feeling terrible about what he just said: “...What have I done?”

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE**SC. 15 - EXT. CRYSTAL PALACE – RESUME**

Spike walks out of the castle to find everyone searching for the Changeling. Seeing him, they brighten, saying things that would normally boost his ego: “Hero Spike—You were so close to that Changeling, and yet you survived. You truly are great!” But Spike feels far from great. He feels lousy!

The guards believe that since the Changeling was spotted in the castle, his goal must be to infiltrate the castle to get to the royal family— maybe even the royal baby! Because of this, they believe that the Changeling will be close by – disguised as someone else - ready to make another attempt. They’re searching everywhere inside the city. But Spike knows that the Changeling wants no such thing. He thinks he knows right where Violet is going. With the general chaos of everyone running around, search for the Changeling, Spike is able to slip away without anyone seeing...

SC. 16 – EXT. TUNDRA – NEAR THE PIT – DAY

Spike arrives near the pit, and looks around. No one’s there... Sadly, Spike starts to leave. But then he tries something: “Look! I want you to know I’m sorry. I didn’t mean what I said about you.” He gets no response. He walks over to two Pony-sized chunks of ice, and talks to them: “Come on, please forgive me Violet.” Suddenly we hear Violet’s voice (O.S.): “My name is not Violet—“

Suddenly, one of the ice chunks transforms into the Changeling: “My name is VIOLENT TERROR!” He bears down on Spike threateningly, but Spike doesn’t move or flinch. He doesn’t even blink an eye. “I know you’re not going to hurt me, Violet. I know that’s not who you are.” Violet instantly drops the tough-pony act. Violet is as calm, sweet, and nice as ever. “But I’m still mad at you,” says Violet. “You told the prince that you weren’t my friend, and that you could never be friends with someone like me...”

Spike apologizes. Why did he say that? Because he was scared! “Why would you be scared of me?” asks Violet. “You know I wouldn’t hurt you.” No, that’s not it—Spike wasn’t afraid of Violet... he was afraid of the Crystal Ponies. He was afraid of them not liking him. Right now they think of him as a “great hero”—And that’s nice. Where he comes from, people don’t always look at him like a hero. But in the Crystal Empire, he’s famous and popular. That’s a reputation he didn’t want to lose. “I was afraid that if I stuck up for you, I wouldn’t be as popular anymore... but that was wrong.” Violet really is Spike’s friend, and he plans on proving it.

“How?” Violet wants to know... Well, Spike wants Violet to come back to the Crystal Empire with him. “Are you crazy? They’re hunting for me!” says Violet, alarmed. But Spike says that this time Violet can count on him. Violet thinks, trying to decide... Can he trust Spike this time?

SC. 17 - INT. CRYSTAL PALACE – DAY

Twilight and Starlight are traveling through the Crystal Palace, looking at the chaos around them. Guards and everypony else are checking everywhere inside the castle, under rugs, smashing furniture—Everywhere! The search methods seem very aggressive. “Is it really that big of a deal?” asks Starlight. “What could one Changeling do?” Oh, no—It’s a big deal, according to Twilight. “It starts with only one Changeling.” Twilight’s experience says that if there’s one Changeling hidden in the castle, then that means there’s probably an army of them on the way...

But Twilight does admit that it’s getting pretty crazy as one guard goes to check for the Changeling behind Flurry Heart’s foal-carrier, and accidentally KNOCK IT OVER! Twilight RUSHES to the rescue and saves the royal baby—! But it’s still chaos all around the castle. Then they hear the watch-pony shout: “The Great Hero has returned... and he’s with the—WHAT?!”

SC. 18 - EXT. CRYSTAL PALACE – CONTINUOUS

Spike and Violet walk into the city, hoof-in-claw. The army instantly SURROUNDS THEM! Violet gets nervous and flinches, like he’s considering bolting, but Spike holds his hoof even harder, reassuring him... At that moment:

“Great Hero!” shouts the captain of the guard, “You are showing great bravery by being so close to that beast—But get away from him now, so that we can capture him!” Spike responds: “No!”

Twilight arrives, speaking up and also telling Spike to get away. Shining Armor also shows up, and commands Spike to move. But Spike will not. “I’m not leaving him,” says Spike. The crowd GASPS. “Why not?” they ask. Spike: “Because... This is Violet GentlePony... And he’s my friend!” At this, the crowd goes nuts! And it’s just as Spike feared. The ponies say to one another how upset they are that someone they thought of as a hero could go be friends with a Changeling. “The Great and Honorable Spike?! Not anymore!” This hurts Spike... but he doesn’t back down. He stands beside Violet, and...

He SINGS (for the first time in the series). His musical number is about how each of the ponies liked Violet before they knew he was a Changeling—Violet can’t help that he happened to be born a Changeling, but he doesn’t want to be mean... He just wants friends, and isn’t that what we all want. “Why can’t you believe a Changeling can change?” Spike asks in his song, drawing attention to the fact that what matters is what’s “inside” a pony.

After Spike finishes, he’s greeted with dead silence. Everypony looks around at one another. Spike and Violet are nervous... what’s going to happen? Then Twilight steps up. “I’m so proud of you,” she tells Spike. “You are?” Yes, she is. It was truly brave for Spike to stand up for his friend, and face down an entire crowd. And more than that, Spike is right. The ponies talk so much about friendship, but they weren’t ready to extend a hand of friendship to someone who needed it because of who they thought that person was. As Twilight speaks, all the other ponies agree. The Crystal Ponies start CHEERING for Spike. “He IS a Great Hero!” they admit. Spike is pleased, and so is Violet. “They’ll let me try to be their friend?” he asks, so excited. “Yep,” Spike assures him... and then Violet’s face fills with joy!

SC. 19 - EXT. CRYSTAL PALACE – CONTINUOUS

In the palace, Violet is the life of the party having everybody laughing, even the royal baby, with jokes and impressions. The impressions are particularly good, given Violet’s shape-changing ability. Twilight pulls Spike away from the party to let him know that she “meant what she said before—I’m proud of you.” Twilight knows that Spike really is the Great Hero that the Crystal Ponies believe him to be. Spike smiles. He’s truly earned his reputation.

END