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MY LITTLE PONY

SPRINGBOARDS

"Boast Busters"
"Spring Cleaning"
"Making a Mark" or "Call of Cutie"
"Party of One"
"Fall Weather Friends"

Springboards by
Lauren Faust and Rob Renzetti

Springboards: October 22, 2009

Notes Due: October 27, 2009

Each of the first three springboards was designed to address a specific aspect of the show that we want to establish early in the series. The last two would also make good early episodes but are not as fundamental to the foundation of the show.

Boast Busters establishes that Twilight's magical powers are truly extraordinary and not limited in anyway to her chosen 'career' the way other Unicorns' magical powers are.

BOAST BUSTERS

Twilight tries her best to be humble, but the truth is that she is exceptionally talented. The Queen has chosen her as her student because the Queen can tell that Twilight has an incredible talent for magic. And unlike other Unicorns, whose magic tends to be limited to their chosen pursuit in life, Twilight's magic has the potential to be limitless, if she only studies diligently enough! But this fact is not something Twilight likes to billboard about herself so as not to seem like a braggart or to make her friends feel bad about themselves.

But there is a new visitor in Ponyville. A boy Unicorn from a neighboring village. He claims that, besides Queen Celestia, he is the most magical unicorn in all of Equestria. He's cocky, condescending and ANNOYING!! Spike can't tolerate such behavior, and touts Twilight's talents--- *she* is the most magical Unicorn in Equestria! The Queen said so herself! But humble, responsible Twilight has no interest in encouraging this braggart. Besides, Spike is surely exaggerating her abilities. She's not *that* great. But this conceited stallion is intent on competition, and challenges anypony in Ponyville that he can outperform any of their skills using magic alone. Well, competitors like Rainbow Dash and Applejack want their chance to get this boastful boy to eat crow--- but he quickly beats them at their own games! Rainbow, Applejack and Spike plead with Twilight to give this guy his come-up-ence, but Twilight insists that she is not as powerful as Spike makes her out to be. She is still just a student and has very much to learn. Still unchallenged, the cocky colt grows so full of himself, he even shows up ponies who have no interest in competing, and soon he's out-partying Pinkie Pie, out-sparkling Rarity and even out-caring Fluttershy!! Applejack, Rainbow and Rarity are angry, Pinkie Pie and Fluttershy are hurt, and this egotistical Unicorn is becoming absolutely unbearable! Finally Twilight cannot stand it anymore. She puts her humility aside--- this colt needs to be taught some manners! She finally challenges him, and in an impressive show down, Twilight out-magics the haughty horse and puts him in his place. There is no question who the most magical Unicorn in Equestria is now! Twilight learns that while it is good to be humble, you should never sell yourself short!!! Especially when boastful bullies are messing with your friends!

Another aspect of the show that needs to be setup is the Ponies' literal control of their world. This episode shows the Ponies directly managing their environment.

SPRING CLEANING

It's time for the ponies of Equestria to clean Winter up and get Spring started.

Everypony in Ponyville has their own specialized and essential task that must be completed before Spring can be sprung. Everypony that is, except Twilight Twinkle. It's her first springtime in her new home and she's dying to be a part of the annual ritual but there appears to be nothing for her to do. Every facet of the job seems to be covered. Rainbow Dash leads the Pegasus as they chase the winter storm clouds from the sky. Apple Jack is among those watching the ground and encouraging the first buds to push their way through the melting snow. Fluttershy tiptoes from warren to warren, waking up all the hibernating animals. Twilight tries her best to shoehorn herself into her friends' activities, insisting that she can improve things by using magic. But this is one instance in which Twilight's impressive magical skills are really not needed. What else does she have to offer? It looks like Twilight may have to sit this one out.

Until she overhears her friends arguing. It seems that Rainbow Dash can't chase the clouds away fast enough for Apple Jack's liking. Her buds are having a hard time pushing through the snow and she wants more sunlight to melt the white stuff faster. But Fluttershy interjects that if the snow melts too quickly it will flood the animals' warrens before she has a chance to wake them. She wants Rainbow Dash to slow things down.

Apple Jack scoffs at this and insists that Fluttershy just hurry up and stop being so gentle with the oversleeping critters. Before long, Rarity, Pinkie Pie and other ponies have joined the fray as everypony starts complaining about how everypony else is doing their job. How can all the various tasks be synchronized and coordinated? *Who's in charge anyways?!?* A smile spreads across Twilight's face. A short while later, Project Manager Twilight's superior organizational skills have gotten spring-cleaning back on track. And Twilight has learned there are other aspects of her personality that can help her friends besides her talent for magic.

This episode will explain how Cutie Marks work and setup Appleseed, Sweetie Belle, and Scootaloo's quest for their marks.

MAKING A MARK

---or---

CALL OF CUTIE

When baby ponies are first born, they have completely bare bottoms. It is not until they find a special talent or calling in life that makes them unique that they wake up one morning and their cutie mark, the colorful symbol that adorns every pony's hind quarters, magically appears!! But Appleseed, Applejack's little filly sister, is a late bloomer. She is one of the few baby ponies in her class who is still has no cutie mark. Of this fact she feels very embarrassed, different and awfully alone. She wears a kind of dress/cape to cover her back end and stays by herself at recess to avoid the shame of being called "Blank Flank" by the other colts and fillies (not that many baby ponies would tease, but still, it's a scary thought!) To pour salt on her wound, a baby pony in the grade below her just got her cutie mark and her parents are throwing a huge party that weekend. There is NO WAY she is showing up to another Cute-ciñera with a Blank Flank!!! Newly determined, she sets out on a quest

to find her special talent and every morning, every recess, every evening, she tries anything and everything she's never tried before, eventually building to ridiculous activities which accidentally cause trouble or make a mess--- but it's all in vain. The party day arrives, and Appleseed is still a Blank Flank. Sadly, (and melodramatically) she resigns herself to a life time with a shamefully, embarrassingly bare backside. Disappointed and ashamed, she dons her usual patootie-covering cape. At the party she returns to her wallflower ways. But hiding way back in the corner, something strange catches her eye. Away from the rest of the crowd are 2 other baby ponies, both engaged in some odd activity and both *wearing pony capes just like Appleseed!!* The little Unicorn, Sweetie Belle, and the baby Pegasus, Scootaloo, are Blank Flanks just like her! And just like her, they have been trying to get their cuties marks in the exact same manner! Appleseed is ecstatic to find kindred spirits, and finds renewed optimism! The 3 of them are no longer the odd-ponies-out because they have *each other*. Together, they solemnly swear to devote their lives to helping each other gain their coveted cutie marks and thusly form their own special, secret society: ***The Cutie Mark Crusaders!*** Now, not only does Appleseed have hope that she'll get her cutie mark someday soon, but she no longer feels so different or alone!

PARTY OF ONE

Pinkie Pie is in the mood for fun so she surprises her friends with another of her patented parties. But before things can even get going, the other ponies are making excuses and heading for the exit. Pinkie Pie is puzzled. Why would her friends bail on one of her awesome parties? The only possible reason she can come up with: the party wasn't awesome enough!! She redoubles her efforts and surprises them again. But her friends just leave at the double the speed. Undeterred, Pinkie Pie continues to spring impromptu parties on the girls wherever they happen to be gathered together. Each party is more over the top than the last but no amount of awesomeness seems to be good enough for her suddenly fickle friends. Finally, Rainbow Dash makes it quite plain to Pinkie Pie that there is nothing she can do to keep them with her. They *'have their own stuff to do'* and she needs to stop bugging them! Pinkie Pie is left alone with her bruised ego. It seems that her excessive love of fun has cost her the love of her friends. She heads for home on heavy hooves. It's dusk in Ponyville and the darkened town has an abandoned feeling that perfectly fits Pinkie Pie's own feeling of abandonment. She doesn't even bother to switch on the lights as she drags herself into the Sweet Shoppe.

But the lights pop on regardless, as a huge cry of SURPRISE springs up around Pinkie Pie! Everypony in Ponyville is crammed inside of the shop, which is decorated with streamers and balloons. Pinkie Pie is flabbergasted as her friends gather round and explain that they were only avoiding her and her endless parties in order to plan one for her. When she asks what the occasion is, Rainbow Dash rolls her eyes and points to the giant "Happy Birthday Pinkie Pie" banner directly overhead. Pinkie Pie gets super excited! HER BIRTHDAY!!! She ***knew*** there was a reason she was in the mood for fun!

FALL WEATHER FRIENDS

The two most athletic ponies, Applejack and Rainbow Dash have always engaged in friendly competition. But lately, their competition has reached unusual heights! Unfortunately, with every challenge, Applejack finds that Rainbow has an advantage --- those wings!! And with them, Rainbow wins their friendly competitions more often than not. Well this time, AJ has a plan! Every year in order to make the leaves fall in the autumn and plant the seeds for spring, all the ponies of Equestria run a stampede across the land. AJ challenges Rainbow to a race within the stampede--- NO FLYING ALLOWED!!! Prideful Rainbow scoffs. She doesn't need wings to beat Applejack---*again!* She is simply the stronger pony! But once on the ground, Rainbow finds that she and AJ are pretty evenly matched--- in fact, Applejack, who has never had wings to rely on, just might have a stronger set of legs than Rainbow! The other pony friends follow along as the two race to the finish! Fluttershy reports on the aerial view as Pinkie Pie relays the details to fans like a sports announcer! But while the race is exciting to the spectators, within the stampede, things are taking a turn for the worse! Rainbow and Applejack's competition starts getting serious---- too serious!! After some innocent mishaps, accusations of cheating fly back and forth, and soon the two rivals start playing just a little dirty to get ahead! As the race goes on, their competitive natures get the better of them, and eventually they're doing whatever it takes to make the other pony fall behind, and it ain't pretty! When tempers rise, they seem to forget all about the race and start focusing on getting back at each other until at last they get into a nasty scuffle. Suddenly, mid-struggle, royal horns blare out--- the race has ended!! and Applejack and Rainbow Dash discover they have tied for dead last. Shocked back to reality, the two realize that their need to win not only made them losers, but it almost cost them their friendship. They help each other up with sincere apologies and even accolades and compliments for the fancy footwork they both demonstrated. Feeling better, they resolve to end their rivalry with a firm hoof shake.... and almost immediately start a race home! At least it's friendly race this time!