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MY LITTLE PONY IV
"Trade Ya!"
Episode 418
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“Trade Ya!”
Scott Sonneborn

Rainbow Falls isn't only home to the Equestria Games trials; it is also the location of the Equestrian Antiquities Exchange, a daylong event in which collectors of various Equestrian antiquities gather to trade valuable historical items. No bits are exchanged, only objects. The Exchange has always been presided over by a Princess whose royal position grants her the power to provide a ruling should there be a dispute over whether a trade was fair. For the first time, Princess Twilight will be the one performing this royal duty. As a trade is considered fair if both ponies end up with something they want, not many (or any) ponies will likely need Twilight's help. It is more of a tradition that a Princess be present in case any problems arise.

The rest of the Mane 6 are also headed to the Expo, each with an important goal for the day. But none is more important than RAINBOW DASH'S – at least to her, anyway! RD is desperate to trade for a one-of-a-kind, first edition of Daring Do's first novel. There's only one copy in existence and the collector who has it is going to at the Exchange! RD has brought a TBD item to trade that she believes is extremely rare. Only problem is the collector already has one and doesn't want RDs! Turns out, RD's “rare” item isn't rare at all.

But luckily, there is something the collector is willing to trade his first edition for. He points to the stall next door... where there is a gold-plated, brand-new, state-of-the-art, top of the line, carriage! Whoa - that's wayyyyy more valuable than the item RD has to trade! RD's not sure how, but she's got to find a way to turn her not-so-valuable item into something she can swap for the carriage before the Faire is over! RD enlists FLUTTERSHY'S help, and Fluttershy – so swept up in how much her friend wants the Daring Do book – forgets all about what she came to the Exchange for to pitch in.

Meanwhile, TWILIGHT is having book problems of her own. Not only has she come to Rainbow Falls to fulfill her royal duties, but she's also brought a ton of old tomes that she wants to unload to create space at home. (Her new status as a Princess means Celestia has been sending her lots of new reading material.) But PINKIE cautions her that she can't look too desperate to trade the books away, or else she won't get anything good back for them. “You've got to drive a hard bargain,” Pinkie insists. But Pinkie's ridiculous attempts to drive hard bargains end up driving all the customers away – much to Twilight's frustration.

And in another runner, APPLE JACK and RARITY have pooled their trade stashes, because they are both on the hunt for the same thing: VINTAGE stuff. But Rarity is shocked to learn the vintage pie plates AJ wants aren't beautiful antiques but are instead old and rusty (That's the way I like 'em, insists AJ). Rarity can't see how they have any value at all – not compared to the vintage jewels she's looking for. AJ doesn't see any value in them: “They look just like the jewels you already have at home,” says AJ. Rarity agrees they may look and feel exactly the same, but she *knows* they're older, which makes them valuable to her. Each pony refuses to let their pooled resources be “wasted” on something she thinks has no value and insists it should all be swapped for the “actually valuable” thing *she* wants. But as they hide, or pretend to have misplaced, the trading goods they brought from each other, it looks like neither is going to get anything! Until, in a *Gift of the Magi* moment, each pony uses the half of the stash she's grabbed – to swap for what *the other* wanted. In the end, both Apple Jack and Rarity realize that if even one doesn't see the value of what the other wants, it *is* valuable – just because her friend wants it.

Back at the A-story, Rainbow Dash and Pinkie work their way across the massive Exchange grounds, trading RD's item for something slightly better, and then trading that for something else that's slightly more valuable. They wheel and deal, take on any dare or dangerous job, making every trade they can. RD gets so caught up in things that she ends up trading Fluttershy away! (Fluttershy will pet-sit for a Rainbow Falls citizen who is going on a six-week trip and needs someone to stay at her home with her critters while she's away.) Fluttershy's happy to do it if it

means getting what RD wants. And besides, the Exchange is just about over! It's now or never. Which means, RD realizes, Fluttershy never got the chance to get what she came for! Seeing what her friend sacrificed for her, RD realizes that her friendship is more valuable than any thing, and trades the first edition novel to get Fluttershy back – and get Fluttershy what she came to the event to get.

At the same time, with none of Twilight's books traded away, Pinkie finally sees that she has screwed up by talking up their value. But Twilight insists Pinkie hasn't screwed up at all. Pinkie's insisting the books are so valuable has reminded Twilight how much she values them. As the one who was granted the power to decide if a trade is fair, how would it look if Twilight ended up trading something she truly valued for something she didn't care about nearly as much? She'd have had to rule against her own trade! Twilight is keeping her books – thanks to Pinkie!

And as Twilight loads them on the train to head home, we see they happen to include a copy of the first Daring Do novel – the one RD was desperate to get her hands on! Sure, this one's a battered paperback, rather than a prized first edition. But it's got the same story, which RD is psyched to reread for the 12th time on the train ride home with her friends, who have all helped each other in different ways to learn what's truly valuable.

THE END