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MY LITTLE PONY 5

Cutie Markless

Part 1

Episode 501

Written by: Meghan McCarthy

Outline: Dec. 30th, 2013

TEASER**EXT./INT. PONYVILLE – VARIOUS**

A typical morning in Ponyville. A quick SERIES OF SHOTS show APPLEJACK, PINKIE PIE, FLUTTERSHY, RARITY, and RAINBOW DASH going about their usual routines – working with the Apple family at Sweet Apple Acres, throwing a party, giving a bear a massage, selecting just the right jewels to bedazzle a dress, and being a totally awesome flyer, respectively.

All of a sudden they all feel a strange sensation come over them. “That’s not my Pinkie sense,” Pinkie Pie comments. A SPLIT-SCREEN as all of a sudden they find themselves RAINBOWIZED (a la our Season 4 finale).

EXT. PRINCESS TWILIGHT’S CASTLE – SOON AFTER

Spike and a rainbowed PRINCESS TWILIGHT answer the door to find her confused and still rainbowed friends standing there. “Any idea what this is all about?” Applejack asks. “I’m not sure, but I think it may be connected to this,” Twilight responds.

INT. PRINCESS TWILIGHT’S CASTLE - THRONE ROOM – SOON AFTER

Princess Twilight ushers her friends into the throne room to reveal a ROUND TABLE with what appears to be a map carved into its surface is growing out of the floor of the castle. Shooting out of a locale on the map are HOLOGRAPHIC IMAGES of the Mane 6’s respective CUTIE MARKS. The friends all look on in awe as we...

END TEASER

MAIN TITLES

ACT I**INT. PRINCESS TWILIGHT’S CASTLE – THRONE ROOM – SOON AFTER**

The Mane 6 cautiously approach the map and as they do so, note that their coats and manes are returning to normal. (NOTE: In future “map episodes”, when their Cutie Mark is the one projected from the map, the girls will briefly flash to their rainbowed forms. A newly acquired “Rainbow Sense”.) Twilight examines the map and reads aloud an inscription that is written at the bottom. “Across Equestria and beyond, friendship problems big and small, when your Cutie Mark appears, be prepared to heed the call.”

Princess Twilight looks at the projections of the Cutie Marks. “Looks like we’ve been called to, well I’m not sure what this place is exactly,” Twilight says as she looks at the location on the map from which the Cutie Marks are being projected. “But it is pretty far away so we’d better get moving,” she adds, turning to face her friends.

“Whoa! Whoa! Whoa! I’m all for adventure, but a weird map just grows out of the floor and now we’re just gonna do what it says?” Rainbow Dash asks. The others agree that it is all a bit strange. “We don’t even know where the map came from, darling,” Rarity adds. “I think I do,” Twilight replies.

EXT. CASTLE OF THE TWO SISTERS – TREE OF HARMONY - SOON AFTER

Princess Twilight and her friends, including Spike, now stand before the Tree of Harmony. Twilight tells the others that she believes that the map, much like the chest that gave them the ability to defeat Tirek is from the Tree of Harmony. “Ever since we opened the chest, I’ve felt this strange connection to it,” Twilight says, placing her hoof on the trunk of the Tree. “I don’t know how, but I think the Tree of Harmony can sense where the Magic of Friendship is weakest,” she adds. “It’s given us the map to guide us there so we can help strengthen it,” she tells her friends.

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Princess Twilight's friends consider this for a moment. "Spouse there is only one way to find out," Applejack replies with a grin. The rest of the girls nod their heads in agreement. "I know the map didn't exactly call for me..." Spike starts to say. "The map may not have summoned you, but the Princess of Friendship will always need her trusty assistant by her side." Spike grins as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION – LATER THAT DAY

Spike and the Mane 6 prepare to board the train. "Don't forget your traveling cloaks," an excited Rarity exclaims as she produces a trunk of identical bejeweled cloaks. "When did you have time to make these?" asks an impressed Fluttershy. Rarity explains that the minute she saw that they had thrones in Twilight's new castle she knew they would have some role to play.

"Clearly we have been called upon to be representatives of the Princess of Friendship," she says. "We must look the part," she adds, draping a cloak over Rainbow Dash. "I guess," Rainbow Dash says looking a bit uncomfortable in her sparkly cloak. "I think they're lovely," Princess Twilight says. Rarity gives Rainbow Dash a smug look and then boards the train.

A SERIES OF DISSOLVES

The BACKGROUNDS CHANGE as the train travels through Canterlot, Manehattan, Appleoosa... Pinkie Pie hangs her head out the window asking "Are we there yet? Are we there yet? Are we there yet? Are we there yet?"

EXT. TRAIN STATION – LATER

Spike and the Mane 6, with the exception of Pinkie Pie, look a little road weary. "Are we there yet?" Pinkie Pie asks. "Not quite," Twilight replies.

A SERIES OF DISSOLVES

The BACKGROUNDS CHANGE from tundra, to grasslands, to wetlands as the girls continue their trek. Pinkie Pie bounces alongside her increasingly tired companions. "Are we there yet? Are we there yet? Are we there yet?"

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VISTA – LATER

Spike and the Mane 6 reach the top of a vista that overlooks a SMALL VILLAGE. Pinkie Pie bounces up to Twilight. "Are we there yet?" she asks again. "We're there," Twilight replies.

EXT. REMOTE VILLAGE – MAIN STREET – DAY

Princess Twilight, Spike, and the rest of the Mane 6 enter the village and walk along the road that leads to its center. "Remember darlings, we are official representatives of the Princess of Friendship. A certain level of decorum is required," she says looking at Pinkie Pie who is mid-bounce. Pinkie Pie slowly drifts back down to the ground.

"This place seems awful peaceful. Wonder what the trouble could be?" Applejack says as she looks around the village at the PONIES who are walking calmly down the streets, trading wares in their shops, sharing meals at a small café. "Yeah. I thought for sure there'd at least be some kind of magic wielding smoke unicorn or a shape-shifting bug queen," says a disappointed Rainbow Dash.

Twilight looks down to see Spike tugging at her leg. "What is it Spike?" she asks. "Take a look at their flanks," he whispers, gesturing to the passing townspoonies.

Written by: Meghan McCarthy

The Mane 6 look around and notice for the first time...

"None of them have Cutie Marks," Princess Twilight says in shocked awe as we...

END ACT

ACT II

EXT. REMOTE VILLAGE – MAIN STREET – CONTINUOUS

Spike and the Mane 6 continue to look around at the Cutie Markless ponies. "Creeepy," Pinkie Pie says. "What do you think happened to them?" Applejack. "I don't know," Princess Twilight answers. "Is it Tirek? Is he back?" Fluttershy asks nervously. "Tirek is still a prisoner in Tartarus," Twilight answers. "But these ponies are far too old not to have gotten their Cutie Marks yet. Something strange is definitely going on around here."

Just then, one of the Cutie Markless ponies, SNOW DRIFT, cheerfully approaches the Mane 6. "Hi! You must be here to see Aurora Glimmer," she says. "Aurora who?" Applejack replies. "The one who can help you with your problem," she replies with a smile. Snow Drift beckons the girls to follow her. Princess Twilight gives her friends a shrug and they follow Snow Drift to...

EXT. AURORA GLIMMER'S COTTAGE – CONTINUOUS

Snow Drift knocks on the door. "Come in," calls out a voice from within the cottage. "Be on guard," Princess Twilight whispers to her friends. "Who knows what kind of evil is behind that door," she adds. The rest of the ponies nod in understanding and then enter...

INT. AURORA GLIMMER'S COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Hunched over an array of glass jars and earthen vases is an elderly and completely harmless looking unicorn. Snow Drift introduces her as AURORA GLIMMER, the founder of the village. She eyes the ponies Snow Drift has just brought into her home. "See, Snow Drift, I told you the word would spread," she says with a smile. "No doubt you've come to be a part of our beautiful revolution," she then says to Twilight and her friends.

"Revolution?" Princess Twilight asks. "We are but a small village now, but our numbers are growing," says Aurora Glimmer. "More and more ponies like yourselves are seeing the light. Coming here for the same reason I'm sure you have, to do away with that which has caused you such sorrow and pain," she adds, gesturing to their Cutie Marks.

"I'm afraid you're mistaken," Princess Twilight replies. "My name is Princess Twilight Sparkle and I am the Princess of Friendship. We have been summoned here to solve a friendship problem."

"Oh, but then you are the one who is mistaken," Aurora Glimmer replies. "No pony who lives in the village experiences friendship problems," she adds with a smile. The Mane 6 find this hard to believe. "Even the best of friends have their differences," Applejack says. "Not here," Aurora Glimmer responds. "I've made sure of it," she adds. "Come, let me show you," she continues.

EXT. VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

MUSIC UP as Aurora Glimmer SINGS a SONG about how everything in the village is perfect and how because they don't have Cutie Marks to divide them, everypony is the best of friends. As she sings she takes the Mane 6 on a tour of the village where we might see...

A PAIR of blank flanked PONIES racing. One of the ponies starts to pull ahead but is then magically pulled back so that the race can end in a tie. The two ponies share a smile.

A small birthday party is going on. A blank flanked pony, BUBBLE BURST, makes balloon animals in the shape of ponies. She starts to make something far more elaborate but then finds herself turning it back into a pony. She shares a smile with the other guests who smile back.

They pass a dress shop where a pony is putting the last identical dress on the last identical pony mannequin. She smiles and waves to a pony who is looking at her from outside the shop. The pony, wearing the same outfit as one in the window, smiles and waves back.

Three blank-flanked ponies paint portraits of Aurora Glimmer. We go down the row to see that Pony 1 and Pony 2 have painted identical stick-figures. Pony 3's portrait is far superior, but then her brush moves across the canvas, and we reveal she has turned it into a stick figure just like the others. The three painters smile.

EXT. EDGE OF VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

Aurora Glimmer has led Spike and the Mane 6 to the edge of the village and the SONG ENDS. Aurora Glimmer smiles and tells our heroes that it's obvious that a mistake has been made and they should be on their way. "Might I ask how you even got the idea that there was a friendship problem here?" inquires Aurora Glimmer.

"A tree told us!" Pinkie Pie replies matter-of-factly. "Technically it was a map that grew out of the floor, but it was a tree that made the map grow," adds Applejack, realizing mid-sentence how odd this must sound.

"Well then, I suppose you can let your tree know that everything here is just fine. More than fine as you've seen," Aurora Glimmer replies. "Your village does seem very peaceful, but I think we'll stick around just a bit longer, if you don't mind," Princess Twilight tells her.

"Be my guest," says Aurora Glimmer with a smile. "I think the more time you spend here, the more you'll see how perfect our little village is," she adds. But as she turns and heads back into the village, her smile turns into a menacing scowl.

EXT. VILLAGE CENTER – SOON AFTER

Spike and the Mane 6 walk back through the village. Aurora Glimmer may have wanted to show them that it was perfect, but to the Mane 6, it is clear that the loss of their Cutie Marks has led to everypony being unable to express who they really are. "How can anypony really be friends if no one is allowed to truly be themselves?" Princess Twilight asks aloud.

As they walk through town, Bubble Burst (the balloon-making pony from earlier) sneakily follows them. To avoid being seen she ducks into alleys, hides behind other ponies, peers around carts. Suddenly, Rainbow Dash spins around and is in Bubble Burst's face before she can make another move. "What are you after, huh?" Rainbow Dash asks. "Meet me at the Main Street Bakery in fifteen minutes," the pony quickly whispers, before slinking away.

"Who-ee something strange is definitely going on around here," Applejack comments. "And we're going to get to the bottom of it," Princess Twilight responds. "I was afraid you were going to say that," says Fluttershy.

INT. MAIN STREET BAKERY – A LITTLE LATER

Spike and the Mane 6 enter the bakery. Pinkie Pie sadly eyes the dessert case and its rows and rows of identical vanilla cupcakes. Just then, Bubble Burst peeks out from behind a door in the back. She motions for Spike and the Mane 6 to follow her.

INT. CELLAR – CONTINUOUS

The Mane 6 follow Bubble Burst down a flight of stairs and into the cellar. “Why did you want us to meet you here?” Princess Twilight asks Bubble Burst.

Suddenly, several blank flanks emerge from the shadows and surround Spike and the Mane 6. As they menacingly close in around them we...

END ACT II

ACT III**INT. CELLAR – CONTINUOUS**

The Mane 6 circle up as the Blank Flanks continue to menacingly move in. Princess Twilight’s horn begins to glow, her magic at the ready if things go south. “Is it true?” one of the blank flanks asks. “Are you really the Princess of Friendship?” asks another. “Yes,” Princess Twilight answers. “And we’re her dearest friends,” adds Rarity. “You mess with her, you mess with all of us,” Rainbow Dash chimes in, ready to prove it.

“But you have your Cutie Marks,” replies one of the Blank Flanks. “What of it?” Applejack responds defensively. “How can you be friends if you have your Cutie Marks?” asks another Blank Flank. “That’s not possible,” adds another. “Is it?” asks another in a far less menacing tone.

It gradually becomes clear that these villagers have not gathered to do the Mane 6 any harm, but are genuinely inquiring about their friendship. They reveal that they willingly gave up their Cutie Marks and the unique qualities that go with them because Aurora Glimmer convinced them that by doing so they would never have to worry about having problems with their friends. But the ponies that have gathered here have started to wonder if perhaps they have given up too much.

The villagers concede that the village may not have conflict, but it doesn’t have much joy either. Pinkie Pie can attest to that. She can spot a genuine smile from a fake one from a mile away. “How can you show true kindness to your friends if you aren’t able to see what really makes them happy?” Fluttershy adds. Alas, there isn’t much the villagers can do about it. “She’ll never give us our Cutie Marks back,” says one of the villagers. “She won’t even let us near them,” she adds. The pony goes on to reveal that Aurora Glimmer has collected the villagers’ Cutie Marks and keeps them in a vault to which only she has access. They are free to leave whenever they want, but if they do, their Cutie Marks and an important part of who they are will be lost to them forever.

Another blank flank, NIGHT FLIGHT, steps out of the shadows to suggest a solution. Perhaps Princess Twilight and her friends could gain Aurora Glimmer’s trust if they offered to give up their Cutie Marks. She would bring them to the place where she performs the magic ritual that removes them and, once she’s opened the vault to place their Cutie Marks inside, they could then release the rest of the Cutie Marks.

The villagers look to the Mane 6. Will they help them get their Cutie Marks back? Princess Twilight and her friends agree to the plan. This is clearly why they have been summoned to the village. “Summoned?” asks one of the villagers.

“A tree sent—” Pinkie Pie starts to answer before being interrupted by Rarity. “We’re here to help, dear, let’s just leave it at that,” she says.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON – AURORA GLIMMER

She is beaming. “Oh I just knew with a little time here you would come to see the light.”

WIDEN TO REVEAL:

INT. AURORA GLIMMER'S COTTAGE – DAY

Aurora Glimmer addresses Spike and the Mane 6. She is thrilled that they have decided to give up their Cutie Marks and become part of the village community. "I felt your pain the minute you arrived," she tells them. "You said you were sent here to solve a 'friendship problem'," Aurora Glimmer says, "And now you have come to see that it was your own friendships that were suffering," she adds. "And all because of those," she continues, pointing to their Cutie Marks.

The Mane 6 agree with Aurora Glimmer's assessment of the situation. A bit too eager to keep up the ruse that their friendships are in trouble, Applejack and Rainbow Dash begin to call one another out for past indiscretions. What starts out as an act starts to border on a genuine disagreement before Twilight puts a stop to it by expressing her eagerness to move things along.

Aurora Glimmer turns her attention to Spike. "Perhaps your dragon can start looking for accommodations here in town while I perform the ritual that will set you free," she says. Princess Twilight agrees that this would be wise. She and her friends are fully committed to the village and all it stands for and the sooner they can truly settle in the better.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. VILLAGE CENTER – MAIN STREET

Spike shuffles down the street, mumbling about being left out of the big heist. He is about to turn a corner when he hears the familiar voice of Snow Drift. "You've done well," she tells an unseen pony. "We were worried they would sense you weren't really one of them," she adds. Spike peers around the corner to take a look at whom Snow Drift is talking to.

Spike's eyes go wide as he sees that it is Night Flight -- the pony who suggested the Mane 6 give up their Cutie Marks to gain Aurora Glimmer's trust and access to the vault!

Snow Drift and Night Flight's conversation reveals that Aurora Glimmer knows exactly what Twilight and her friends are up to and as soon as she has their Cutie Marks, she'll close the vault and insure that they never get a chance to get inside. Spike lets out an audible gasp that draws Snow Drift and Night Flight's attention. "Get him!" Snow Drift cries out as Spike makes a run for it.

INT. CAVE – AT THE SAME TIME

The Mane 6 follow Aurora Glimmer into the cave. At the far end is an ornate vault. Aurora Glimmer tells the Mane 6 to gather around a glowing orb in the center of the cave. She will use its magic to remove their Cutie Marks and rid them of those qualities that are driving a wedge between them. Princess Twilight asks where Aurora Glimmer found the glowing orb. "It's not important where the magic comes from, only that it works," Aurora Glimmer says dismissively. Her horn lights up and the globe does as well.

EXT. VILLAGE – AT THE SAME TIME

Spike makes a mad dash through the village. He passes the Main Street Bakery where he sees one Bubble Burst. "The vault! Where's the vault?!" he calls out. The confused Bubble Burst points toward the woods at the edge of town.

Spike continues to run with Snow Drift and Night Flight hot on his trail. Spike is able to keep a bit of a lead because every time Snow Drift starts to pull ahead of Night Flight, she is magically pulled back so that she and Night Flight can be evenly matched in their pursuit of the dragon.

INT. CAVE - AT THE SAME TIME

The cave becomes a swirl of glowing light as Aurora Glimmer carries out the ritual that will rid our Mane 6 of their Cutie Marks.

EXT. VILLAGE

Spike, desperate to warn his friends that Aurora Glimmer is on to their plans to release the Cutie Marks, races through the village, dodging a myriad of obstacles.

INT. CAVE

Aurora Glimmer uses the magical orb to remove the Cutie Marks of the Mane 6. The Cutie Marks swirl around the room and transform into small balls of light. Princess Twilight and her friends eagerly eye the vault as Aurora Glimmer retrieves a key.

EXT. CAVE

Spike finally reaches the cave and is about to warn his friends that they are walking into a trap when Snow Drift and Night Flight appear out of nowhere and knock him away from the cave entrance.

INT. CAVE - AT THE SAME TIME

Aurora Glimmer suddenly spins on her heels to face the Mane 6. “I am trying to create a more perfect Equestria. Did you really think I would let you ruin it?” she asks.

The Mane 6 share confused looks. “Take these traitors away!” Aurora Glimmer says as a half-dozen Blank Flanks suddenly surround Princess Twilight and her friends. Twilight tries to use her magic to help them escape but finds that her horn only emits a few sparks and then fizzles.

Aurora Glimmer opens the vault to reveal it is filled with clear glass containers. Inside each one is a bright glowing ball of light. Princess Twilight and her friends watch helplessly as she retrieves 6 empty containers and seals their Cutie Marks inside.

Aurora Glimmer shuts the vault.

The Mane 6 are marched out of the cave by Aurora Glimmer’s minions, passing Spike who declares a little too late that “It’s a trap!”

As the horror of what has just happened sinks in we...

END PART ONE