

Distribution:

Production:

Devon Cody
Meghan McCarthy
Jayson Thiessen
Jim Miller
Angela Belyea
Lesley Crawford
Melinda See

The HUB:

Tegan Molloy
Laurence Braun
Allegra Newman
Linda Shima Tsuno
Wayne Winstead

Hasbro Studios:

Stephen Davis
Kathy Page
Michael Vogel
Brian Lenard
Gabriel Monje
Lauren Solomon
Robert Fewkes
Sophia Hussain
Finn Arnesen
Nina Scales

Hasbro Brand:

Donna Tobin
You Sun Hwang
Samantha Lomow
Georgina Melone
Dori Santos
Anne-Marie Horne

MY LITTLE PONY 5

Cutie Markless – Part 1

Episode 501

Written by: Meghan McCarthy

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CUTIE MARKLESS

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PART 1:

Our TEASER opens in the throne room of Twilight's new castle where RARITY fits APPLEJACK, FLUTTERSHY, RAINBOW DASH, and PINKIE PIE with new outfits. Now representatives of the Princess of Friendship, Rarity insists that it is absolutely vital that they "look the part" and "act accordingly". Alas, while they all appreciate the new get-ups Rarity is making for them, they can't seem to agree on what it means to "act accordingly."

Their discussion is suddenly interrupted by a loud RUMBLING SOUND. PRINCESS TWILIGHT and SPIKE rush into the room to see what is going on and are forced to dive out of the way as a wooden table suddenly bursts from the floor where they once stood. Off everyone's shocked expressions we go into our TITLE SEQUENCE.

We return to the throne room where Spike and the girls are now gathered around the table. Carved into its surface is a map that depicts Equestria and the lands beyond it. Much like the chest that held the magic that sent Tirek back to Tartarus and created Twilight's castle, the map appears to be linked to the Tree of Harmony. Twilight points out the words inscribed around the map – "Across Equestria and beyond friendship problems big and small, when your Cutie Mark appears, be prepared to heed the call."

Suddenly, a point on the edge of the map of Equestria glows and six holographic images of the Mane 6's Cutie Marks shoot out of the map. "I think you're being called," Spike says in awe. The Mane 6 are excited to take on whatever friendship challenge the map is directing them to and are eager to do it together.

Twilight and her friends, including Spike, travel to the remote village depicted on the map. On their journey, Twilight's friends continue to discuss their new roles as representatives of the Princess of Friendship. Rarity insists that their new position means that a sense of decorum must be upheld at all times. (Something we'll see the easily excitable Pinkie Pie struggle with throughout the remainder of the story.)

When they arrive in the village, GLIMMER TWIRL, its elderly leader, greets them. Glimmer Twirl is surprised to hear that the Mane 6 have been summoned there to solve a "friendship problem". Glimmer Twirl insists that she has seen no such problems. In fact, since the village was formed, nopony has ever experienced a friendship problem. Our heroines find this hard to believe; even the best of friends sometimes have issues they need to overcome. As the Mane 6 look around, they notice something strange -- not a single pony in the place has a Cutie Mark! Glimmer Twirl tells them this is exactly why everypony in town has always been and will always be good friends.

Glimmer Twirl explains that as a young pony she had a group of what she thought was close friends. But when she and her friends got their Cutie Marks, it put a strain on their relationship and the close bond they once shared was destroyed. It was then that she realized that the expression of individuality and the ability to excel at something only leads to problems between friends. Luckily, she discovered a MAGICAL ORB that allows her to remove Cutie Marks and the problem-causing talents behind them. Glimmer Twirl founded this village to save others from the fate that befell she and her friends and, using the magical orb, has been able to give everypony who chooses to live in the village the gift of being Cutie Markless.

Glimmer Twirl then sings a SONG that expresses her POV – a world without Cutie Marks is a world filled with ponies that are always care-free, happy, and surrounded by good friends. Her song concludes and though the Mane 6 aren't on board with Glimmer Twirl's views on Cutie Marks, they have to admit that the village does seem to be quite the utopian society and they aren't sure why they are there.

Glimmer Twirl tells the Mane 6 that a mistake must have been made and they should be on their way. In fact, she seems a bit eager to get the Mane 6 out of town. But Princess Twilight is certain there is a reason they have been summoned here and tells Glimmer Twirl that they are going to stay for a bit longer.

As Spike and the girls explore the village on their own, they start to see that it may not be as perfect as it first appeared to be. The relationships between the ponies who live there may not be fraught with conflict, but there doesn't seem to be any real emotional connection between any of them either. There is a false sense of kindness and happiness that Fluttershy and Pinkie Pie can see right through. The Mane 6 also notice that every time a pony starts to excel at something, some magical force seems to pull them back or change their behavior. Every competition ends in a tie -- something that bothers Rainbow Dash to no end. No matter who makes an apple pie it tastes identical to every other apple pie made. A fact that Applejack just can't wrap her mind around. When a pony tries to add a little flare to her wardrobe, she then feels compelled to give everyone in the village a matching addition to their wardrobe. Rarity understands the generosity of this action, but is appalled by the matchy-matchiness of it all.

Much to Glimmer Twirl's vexation, the presence of the Mane 6 and the obvious bond of friendship they share makes the ponies in the village start to question whether giving up their Cutie Marks really was the best choice. The Mane 6 are clearly friends despite the fact that they excel at different things and they've used their talents to not only become closer but to become ponies who get to help spread the Magic of Friendship across Equestria.

One of the ponies stealthily pulls Princess Twilight aside and informs her that she and some of the other ponies want to leave the village, but are certain that Glimmer Twirl will never let them have their Cutie Marks back. If they leave without them, they'll never get the opportunity to not only express an important part of who they are, but to use those special talents to help others and create lasting friendships the way the Mane 6 have.

Princess Twilight pow-wows with her friends and tells them that she knows why they have been brought to this village, to free the Cutie Marks that Glimmer Twirl is keeping in the vault so that the ponies can experience true friendship by being true to themselves.

Another pony in the village, WIND DRIFTER, overhears their conversation and tells them that Glimmer Twirl will never let them near the vault where she keeps the Cutie Marks. But perhaps if they gained her trust and offered to give up their Cutie Marks, she would bring them to the vault and they would be able to get inside and release the rest of the Cutie Marks.

Princess Twilight and her friends decide to do just that. They'll convince Glimmer Twirl that they've been won over by the utopia she's created, and offer to give up their Cutie Marks and stay there. Then, with direct access to the vault, they will distract Glimmer Twirl, release all the Cutie Marks and send them back to their rightful owners. Princess Twilight, not wanting to force those who believe in Glimmer Twirl's vision to abandon it, will give everyone a choice. Those who wish to return their Cutie Marks to the vault and stay in the village may do so, but everyone else will be free to leave.

The Mane 6 approach Glimmer Twirl and tell her that they have seen the light and want to be part of this amazing place she has created. Glimmer Twirl is thrilled! She eagerly takes them to the vault, noticeably leaving behind the Magical Orb, and performs a ritual that strips the girls of their Cutie Marks and unique talents.

Meanwhile, Spike, not having a Cutie Mark to give up, waits outside where he makes a terrifying discovery. Wind Drifter, the pony who suggested that the Mane 6 gain Glimmer Twirl's trust by offering up their Cutie Marks isn't a disgruntled villager who wants to leave. He's one of Glimmer Twirl's dearest and most loyal friends! He had been following the Mane 6 at Glimmer Twirl's request and discovered that they wanted to try and destroy all that Glimmer Twirl has worked so hard to build. The Mane 6 are walking into a trap!

Glimmer Twirl 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 tries to go and warn his friends, but is held back by Wind Drifter and a pair of other ponies who are "true believers." Off Spike's terrified expression we... END PART ONE.