

MY LITTLE PONY
Season 7
Shadow Play – Parts 1 & 2
Ep 725 & 726

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Ep 725 SHADOW PLAY – PART 1

Premise by Josh Haber

Friendship lesson: As their responsibilities grow, your friends need you more, not less.

Starlight is excited to visit Sunburst in the Crystal Empire and puts a lot of effort into planning her visit. Unfortunately, Sunburst has to postpone. He apologizes, but his research into Starswirl's journals has gotten serious. He wants to spend time with Starlight, but he's afraid that until he finishes his work on the books, he won't be able to think about anything else. Being the studious wizard that he is, he feels that it's his duty to study the journal fully so he can help others understand Starswirl's work. Starlight is disappointed, but understands the responsibility he feels – for an academic wizard like Sunburst, Starswirl's journals are the find of a lifetime. Looks like he's becoming a big-important wizard after all. Maybe him not having as much time for their friendship is something she'll just have to accept. Sunburst assures her that he will send word as soon as he finishes - then he can dedicate all of his time and attention to her visit.

But when word never comes, Starlight grows increasingly anxious. Maybe since he has so much to do, their friendship isn't as important as it once was. When she finally does hear from him, it's just a short message telling her not to come at all. Starlight is hurt. She knows how important studying Starswirl's books is to Sunburst, but this seems strange. Worried that something odd is going on, Starlight asks Twilight and the others to come with her to the Crystal Empire and look into it. Twilight and the rest agree that Sunburst's behavior seems odd and make plans to go along. Unfortunately, before they can leave the map calls the Mane Six to the Mysterious South.

Twilight and the rest apologize to Starlight. They absolutely want to help her, but when the map sends them somewhere, they have to go. Starlight is upset, she needs her friend's help, but knows how important map quests are. Have all of her friends' responsibilities grown so much that her friendship has to take a back seat? She starts to feel jealous of the map – where did it even come from? How do they know it's even worthy of this responsibility they all feel toward it? She knows she's being ridiculous, but the others understand. Sort of. Even though the map's origin is unknown, it's always lead them down the right path. Torn, the Mane Six feel bad, but duty calls and they go to the Mysterious South. Determined to check on Sunburst, Starlight and Trixie head to the Crystal Kingdom to find out what's going on.

Starlight and Trixie arrive in the Crystal Empire where everypony explains that Sunburst has been holed up in his library studying. Starlight feels silly that she traveled all this way just to keep tabs on him. Is she being overly-sensitive? While she and Trixie debate whether or not to bug him, the Mane Six arrive in the Mysterious South and are immediately captured by a tribe of Native Pony Warriors. Meanwhile, Trixie finally convinces Starlight to barge in on Sunburst, but when they get to the library they discover the place is a shambles and Sunburst is gone! (*to be continued...*)

Ep 726 SHADOW PLAY – PART 2

Premise by Josh Haber

Starlight and Trixie discover that Sunburst was researching the Pony of Shadows – an ancient and powerful wizard who believed unicorns should rule all ponies because they alone possessed magic. He was banished by a group of Legendary Ponies (our pillars), but swore that he would return one day and have his revenge.

In the Mysterious South, the Mane Six are rescued from the Tribal Ponies by none other than Sunburst, himself. Looking ragged, he explains how Starswirl's journals described a growing darkness that threatened all of Equestria, and the only chance to stop it lay in the Mysterious South. That's why Sunburst dropped everything and headed there – he's trying to save the world. He's also pretty sure the Native Ponies are servants of the darkness. The Mane Six promise to help him in any way they can. Sunburst explains that he needs to mine a rare crystal in order to create a protective magical statue for Equestria! The magical properties of the crystals will capture the darkness and contain it. The Mane Six help Sunburst to build the statue, even though raids by the Native Ponies make it difficult.

Meanwhile, Starlight and Trixie continue to sort through Sunburst's work. They discover Starswirl's theory that the Pony of Shadows might one day return and it looks like Sunburst believes it's happening now. In Sunburst's notes they learn about the crystals and the Mysterious South and assume that's where he's gone. They decide to head there realizing this must be why the map sent the Mane Six there too.

Starlight and Trixie arrive, eager to help, but it looks like Sunburst and the others already have the situation in hand and don't need her. Starlight feels silly. Of course they can all handle things without her. She and Trixie decide to head home, but instead are captured by the Warrior Pony tribe. They think they are done for, but in the Tribal Ponies' camp they learn what's really going on. Part of the Pony of Shadows has already returned – and it's controlling Sunburst. Suddenly it all makes sense. That's why Sunbursts been acting strange. The Tribe tell Starlight that the Pony of Shadows is making Sunburst build an indestructible crystal body for his imminent return.

Starlight, Trixie, and the native warrior ponies face off against Sunburst and the Mane Six, both thinking they're on the right side. Finally Starlight convinces everyone of what's happening and Sunburst is freed from the Pony of Shadow's control. They destroy the crystal body and the Pony of Shadows dissipates. Sunburst thanks Starlight for saving him – he needed her help and he always will, no matter how busy he gets or how many responsibilities he has. The Mane Six realize this is the friendship problem they were called to fix.

Back at home, Twilight apologizes to Starlight for choosing duty over their friendship. Starlight doesn't see it that way. Responsibilities will come and go, but friendship is forever. Just then, the map lights up! A magical recording plays, showing none other than the six legendary pillars we've learned about this season. In an awesome song (think the opening of Hamilton), they admit they were the ones who sent the map. Through the years, they discovered that friendship was the most important lesson anypony can learn, and whoever's seeing this magical recording has learned it completely!