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MY LITTLE PONY

Season 8

A Matter of Principals

Ep 814

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Premise: December 14th, 2016

Outline: January 10th, 2017

A MATTER OF PRINCIPALS

Outline by Nicole Dubuc

Logline: When Twilight Sparkle leaves Starlight in charge of the School of Friendship, Discord is frustrated he wasn't picked for the job, so he does his best to make Starlight's new role impossible.

TEASER**SC. 1 - INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – TWILIGHT'S CLASSROOM - DAY**

TWILIGHT SPARKLE addresses her STUDENTS, telling them about the exciting school-wide activity coming up in a few days – the SPELL-VENGER HUNT! Students will work in pairs on a magical scavenger hunt in the school, following clues and having fun. But before Twilight can go into details, her CUTIE MARK glows. And she knows what that means...

SC. 2 - INT. TWILIGHT'S CASTLE – MAP ROOM – SOON

Twilight runs in to find the rest of the MANE 5 there – their cutie marks glowing as well. They've ALL been summoned on the same Friendship Quest. And not just any quest – the location their cutie marks float above is far on the outer, uncharted reaches of the map. Just getting there will take days. *"Do y'all know what this means?"* APPLEJACK asks the others with concern. PINKIE PIE: *"That if you stick a pen in a papaya you get a papaya pen?"* Applejack shakes her head – it MEANS that there won't be any teachers left to run Twilight's Friendship School!

END TEASER.**ACT ONE****SC. 3 - INT. TWILIGHT'S CASTLE – MAP ROOM - RESUME**

While the other ponies discuss what this means for the school, Twilight speaks up. She has a plan for just this possibility. She tells the other ponies to get ready for their journey, while she ensures the school is in good hooves.

SC. 4 - INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – HEADMARE'S OFFICE – SOON

"You want ME to be Headmare?!" STARLIGHT GLIMMER can't believe it. Twilight nods – Starlight is a good leader, who after all has been personally trained in friendship by Twilight herself! *"I trust you to do things exactly the way I would,"* Twilight says. She knows it's a big responsibility, but she also knows Starlight is the one pony who can fill her horseshoes. Starlight promises she won't let Twilight down. Twilight smiles and horn-dumps books in front of Starlight – her curriculum, the spellvenger hunt rules/clues, the cafeteria menus for the next six months... Clearly Twilight has prepared for this happening. And if Starlight has any questions, SPIKE will be there to answer them. With that, Twilight bids them both goodbye and takes off for her quest.

Spike asks a shell-shocked Starlight if she's okay. Starlight nods and gathers herself – how hard could this be? Twilight's left all the instructions she needs to run her school perfectly.

SC. 5 - EXT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP - SOON

Starlight and Spike wave goodbye as the Mane 6 disappear on their friendship mission. Spike sadly guesses they'll be gone weeks, if not months. A loud NOSE BLOW near his ear makes him jump. REVEAL – it's DISCORD, tearing up and wiping his nose with a hankie. *"I hate goodbyes, don't you? They're so mucousy."*

Surprised, Starlight greets Discord. This is an unexpected visit. Spike nods – yeah, he's never been to the school before. *"Oh, was I not invited to the grand opening? Friends and Family Day? Baccalaureate? I hadn't noticed."* Discord snarks. The moment grows awkward until Starlight asks why he's there. *"To fill in for Twilight of course. As Headraconequus."* Starlight and Spike share an awkward look. Starlight explains that Twilight actually left HER in charge.

Discord is sure there's been some sort of mistake. After all, he seems to recall a whole song about how this is a school where you make your own rules. No pony could be better than a Lord of Chaos at THAT. Starlight understands where Discord is coming from, but Twilight has left her with a specific way to do things. Discord nods, but he has a few tiny suggestions for improving the school. He shrinks to a foot tall and begins reading his suggestions.

Starlight cuts him off-- *"She said I'm the only pony who could do it. So I don't need any help."* Discord, back to normal height, clearly takes this as a challenge. *"REEEALLY. Well, we'll see if you change your mind."* And with that, he's gone. Spike is nervous. Did Starlight hear how many "e"s were in that "really"? *"Discord doesn't usually give up on something he wants that easily,"* Spike worries. Starlight tells him not to worry. She and Discord are old friends. Now they need to start prepping for the spell-venger hunt – they're already behind on Twilight's to-do list. DISSOLVE TO:

SC. 6 - EXT. / INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – NEXT MORNING

The sun is rising and Starlight happily trots into the school, hearing students greet her as Headmare. Spike is at her side, reviewing the day's lesson plans/responsibilities, which Starlight has clearly under control. She doesn't know why she was even worried about taking over for Twilight—

SC. 7 - INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – TWILIGHT'S OFFICE – CONT.

And then the duo walks into the Headmare's office and freezes. Discord has more than made himself at home in the office, feet on the desk, change in décor, etc. Agape, Starlight asks what he's doing there. Discord sits up (leaving his feet, detached, on the desk) and smugly tells her, *"No pony was at your desk. SOMEcreature had to take charge. Oh, by the way, I hope you like herring. I got a month's supply for the dining hall."* Discord opens a huge crate, and smelly fish pour out to swamp Spike.

Starlight frowns and firmly tells Discord to listen to her (he pulls off his ears and holds them out, patiently): he isn't the head of the school, SHE is. He says that he knows, which is why he's agreed to be vice-headmare. *"I've already taken care of so many things – like hiring substitute teachers for your classrooms."* Spike shrugs – that actually sounds helpful. But Starlight suspiciously asks WHICH teachers. CUT TO:

SC. 8 - INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – CLASSROOM – CONT.

Starlight, Discord and Spike peek in to see IRON WILL is terrifying his friendship class as he encourages YONA to go full-Yak in bellowing, stomping aggression. Starlight pales. That's not in the curriculum.

SC. 9 - EXT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – CONT.

Outside, Starlight is shocked to see CRANKY DOODLE has his students waiting on him hand and foot. *"This iced tea is too cold. Now it's too hot. Now it's too tea-flavored."* That's DEFINITELY not in the curriculum.

SC. 10 - INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – CLASSROOM – CONT.

A DRAGONSNEEZE tree stands behind the desk. Starlight looks at Discord incredulously – he hired a TREE as a teacher? *"Its schedule was free,"* Discord shrugs. Spike corrects them – that's not just any tree... Just then, SMOLDER gets a sniff of the tree and explodes with FIREY SNEEZES as the rest of the students duck. *"It's a Dragonsneeze tree..."* Spike flatly finishes. The students run out of the classroom in a panic.

SC. 11 - INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – HALLYWAY – CONT.

Panicked, Starlight takes in the chaos. *"My, you do seem like you're in over your head. Won't Twilight be so disappointed with how you're ruining – I mean RUNNING - her school?"* On Starlight's horror...

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SC. 12 – INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – HALLWAY - RESUME

Starlight rounds on Discord, furious – none of this would have happened if he hadn't caused the problem. He shrugs, *"I'm happy to find new teachers, if you'll just admit you need my help..."* But digging in, Starlight says she can do this BY HERSELF as Twilight intended. She "fires" Discord from his self-appointed position as vice headmare. *"You can't fire me!"* Discord counters, *"I quit!"* And with that, he disappears. *"Let's just hope he stays gone..."* Starlight sighs to Spike.

SC. 13 – INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – ASSEMBLY HALL – NEXT DAY

Starlight greets the students and tells them that today's the day! This afternoon, they'll be starting their Spellvenger hunt! Spike will be passing out their list of paired teams soon. For now, they can go to their classes, which have been replaced with APPROPRIATE teachers. *"Now things can go exactly according to Twilight's plan!"*

She doesn't notice when DISCORD, in a janitor uniform, sweeping in the corner, smiles to himself...

SC. 14 – INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – CLASSROOM – CONT.

TRIXIE addresses her class (*"You may call me the Great and Powerful Professor Trixie!"*) In response to this, a cell phone rings. (NOTE: just the ring, no actual phone). Trixie's eyes narrow and she looks out to see that Discord is now a student in the classroom. *"Oh, I'd better take this,"* Discord says, and then picks up a banana off his desk and talks to it like a phone. An annoyed Trixie tells him he can't take fruit calls in class. *"Why not?"* *"Because the great and powerful professor Trixie says so."* Their banter continues, with Discord goofing off and distracting the other students into laughter. Trixie sends Discord to the Guidance Counselor's office.

SC. 15 – INT. GUIDANCE COUNSELOR'S OFFICE – SOON

Which is where a shocked Starlight finds him, making paper airplanes out of her files. *"What are you doing in my office?"* *"I thought you had the Headmare's office,"* Discord huffs – besides, Trixie sent him there to be the new Guidance Counselor. Starlight fires him again, but it's no use...

SC. 16 – EXT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – CONT.

Because now Discord is acting as COACH. When the students don't want to run the track, Discord tells them they just need motivation – and he summons a CHIMERA to chase them! Starlight shows up just in time, evaporating the Chimera with a spell (it was only an illusion), and finally having had enough of Discord. Spike tries to talk her down – remember, Discord's her friend! Maybe if they just talk about things...

But Starlight is beyond talking. She casts a spell that BANISHES HIM from the school grounds. The students look on in awe/horror. Even Spike is taken aback. *"You know you probably just made things worse,"* Spike says, *"Discord never gives up."* Starlight doesn't care – she's been entrusted to keep Twilight's school running smoothly at all costs.

SC. 17 – INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – GREAT HALL – SOON

Starlight announces the start of the Spellvenger hunt and the students take off in happy pairs. We follow OCELLUS and YONA as they look at a drawing of a FAMILY CREST – their first magical item to find. Yona says she knows where it is, and they race off.

SC. 18 – INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP HALLWAY – CONT.

Smolder and Ocellus run down a hallway with a SUIT OF ARMOR near the crest that matches their drawing. Smolder studies the coat of arms – three hooves. Now that they've found their item, they have to find out its magic somehow. While Smolder works on the riddle, Ocellus notices in growing alarm that the suit of armor has seemingly come to life and is creeping toward them. She tries to warn Smolder, but the Dragon is so into solving the puzzle (three hooves means knock three times), she doesn't notice. Smolder knocks on the crest and reveals a gold medal – they found their first spellvenger hunt

piece! She turns to find Ocellus staring at the suit of armor. A GHOST HEAD of Discord peeks out of the helmet and smiles, “BOO!” Smolder and Ocellus drop their gold medal and race off, freaked out! The school is haunted!!!

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

SC. 19 – SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – STAIRCASE – RESUME

SANDBAR and SILVERSTREAM examine the staircase balustrades to try to find the magical panel on them (to match their spellvenger hunt photo). Each one they touch does nothing, until Silverstream hears one click – she thinks she’s got it! Only to suddenly start to sink into the stairs – they’ve become quicksand! To the sounds of the disembodied laugh of Discord, Silverstream and Sandbar struggle to get loose!

SC. 20 – SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – LIBRARY – SAME TIME

Nearby, Gallus and Yona look around the library for a specific portrait as listed as their hunt clue. But before they get too far, the eyes of the portraits grow red, and the ponies on them open large TOOTHED MOUTHS! The portraits fly off the wall toward Gallus and Yona who run for their lives! *“I never wanna go on a spellvenger hunt again!”* Gallus yells. *“Yak not like Pony school anymore!”* Yona wails as she runs past a surprised Starlight. *“What have I done?!”* Starlight wonders.

SC. 21 – SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – GREAT HALL

Starlight steps into the Great Hall to see a ghostly figure of Discord chasing terrified students around. *“DISCORD?! How are you here?”* Discord explains that she banished HIM – she didn’t banish his ghost, phantom, out-of-body-casting, spirit, haunt, etc. He makes the chandeliers shake and the lights flicker, to the student’s horror. Spike, consoling the scared students, tells a frazzled Starlight that she needs to ask for Discord’s help to stop the chaos. *“But this is HIS fault!”* She protests. *“It can’t make anything worse,”* Spike argues.

Defeated, Starlight yells to Discord that she needs his help to get the school back to normal. *“Say please,”* Discord smiles. Starlight grits her teeth and does. With a finger snap, the school is back to normal, and the real Discord stands there, proud of himself. *“Apparently I was the best Headmare for the job,”* he says. *“NO, you weren’t!”* Smolder says, furious. Discord looks surprised as the other students chime in. Discord has made the last week of school horrible. He ruined their fun activity, messed up their classes, and scared them. *“Yak hate being scared!”* Yona announces indignantly.

Discord looks surprised, and a little hurt. He was certain he’d know more than clueless ponies about how to run a ruleless school. *“You mean you let your ego get in the way?”* Gallus asks. *“Don’t push it, griffon,”* Discord snaps.

Starlight corrects Discord – the school isn’t ruleless. It’s just they’ve made their own rules, based on friendship. Like be kind. Share. Listen. Discord raises an eyebrow on

that last one. Starlight admits that maybe a tiny part of this was her fault. She never gave Discord a chance to share his ideas for running the school.

“Twilight picked me for the job, and I was so proud...I didn’t want to let her down. But that’s no excuse not to listen to other ideas.” Discord accepts her apology. At a pointed throat-clear from Spike, Discord admits that maybe Starlight isn’t such a bad headmare after all.

Starlight asks Discord to be her assistant until Twilight and the rest of the Mane 6 get back. *“Do I get my own office? Expense account? Parking space?”* Discord asks. Starlight smirks, *“You’re new to the world of education, aren’t you?”* As the two walk off, amicably arguing about plans for the school, we DISSOLVE TO:

SC. 22 - INT. TWILIGHT’S CASTLE – FRIENDSHIP MAP – LATER

Spike looks sadly at the map as Starlight walks in. She says she was looking for him, what’s he doing in here? Spike says he just was looking at the map to try to figure out how far away everypony’s quest took them. As he peers over it, he loses his balance falls onto the map table... Which then ripples, and the cutie marks above it disappear. *“HUH?!”* Asks Spike.

Starlight looks closer and gasps – there was an illusion cast on the map. There never was any friendship quest. Discord appears next to them. *“Oops! I knew I forgot something.”* The others turn to him, horrified. *“What? I had to figure out some way to get a chance to run the school. Don’t worry, I’m sure they’ll all figure it out soon.”* And on Starlight’s disbelief... **END EPISODE.**