

MY LITTLE PONY
Season 8
The Hearth's Warming Club
Ep 815

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THE HEARTH’S WARMING CLUB

Outline by Brian Hohlfeld

Logline: A prank gone-wrong ruins Hearth’s Warming Eve preparations, and while Twilight tries to figure out which of her students is behind it, the students bond over shared memories of home.

TEASER**SC. 1 - INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP - GRAND HALL - DAY**

It’s the last day of classes before the Hearth’s Warming Eve break, and the Grand Hall of the School of Friendship is buzzing with excitement, activity, and holiday music. The MANE 6, SPIKE, and VARIOUS STUDENTS decorate the school in traditional Ponyville holiday style—wreaths, lights, Hearth’s Warming Dolls, and a huge tree. But not an ordinary tree—instead of a star, this one’s topped with a FIRE OF FRIENDSHIP, magically burning at the top and brightening the Hall.

The tree-trimming party is all supervised by TWILIGHT SPARKLE, who, as they work, briefly tells the non-pony students the significance of the holiday and, specifically, the Fire of Friendship —how the Earth Ponies, Pegasi, and Unicorns teamed up and used it to ward off the Windigos on the first Hearth’s Warming. It all seems a little strange to a few of the students, who celebrate their own holidays.

Twilight reminds the students that once the decorations are up, the school will officially be on holiday break. And that means the students parting ways to head to their own various kingdoms and homes. GALLUS takes in this info as he decorates, but his heart doesn’t seem to be in it—Twilight has to remind him to work a little faster.

A so-excited-she’s-nearly-hysterical SILVERSTREAM doesn’t have to be told twice as she teams up with YONA and OCELLUS to hang some ribbons. SANDALWOOD explains the meaning behind every candle and bell to a skeptical SMOLDER, who insists that dragons don’t do pony holidays. Overhearing this, SPIKE corrects her— MOST dragons don’t, but he LOVES Hearth’s Warming. It’s a time of friends coming together, and presents, and hope, and family, and...presents!

Twilight proudly ties the last bow and declares the decorations to be perfect! She dismisses the students to go gather their things for their trip home. But as the students rush off, we see a SHADOW FIGURE creeping along between the beams up in the hall’s rafters... and then, from a beam above the Tree, a mysterious POWDER is poured by an unseen hand, right into the Fire of Friendship!

The treetop Fire of Friendship momentarily BLAZES with a <WHOOSH!> Twilight and Spike look up with a <GASP> as we **END TEASER.**

ACT ONE

SC. 2 - INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP - GRAND HALL - RESUME

Spike and the Mane 6 look up as the Fire momentarily BLAZES— then changes color— and THEN BUBBLES UP (like putting detergent into a fountain into a STICKY PURPLE GOO that grows and grows until—<SPLAT!>. It explodes into blobs that cover everything in the Hall in the purple gunk! The decorations are ruined!

Twilight and Spike quickly fly up to the rafters above the tree, where they find the tipped-over POT that held the powder. This was no accident...someone deliberately poured the powder into the fire to sabotage the decorating and the party. But why would anycreature do that? Just then, Spike spots the shadowy figure move behind some beams in the rafters, trying to escape! Twilight and Spike try to follow, but they are one step behind—whoever it was has fled out a window. They give chase to—

SC. 3 - EXT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP - CONTINUOUS

—outside the Great Hall, where, across the Quad, they see a door <SLAM> shut behind whoever has gone inside. It’s the Student Quarters building—whoever it was has gone inside there!

SC. 4 - INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP - STUDENT DORMS – CONTINUOUS

Twilight and Spike enter the main hall of the dorm, where several doors lead off to the students’ various rooms. But there’s no sign of anyone. Twilight calls out... “*Ocellus, Yona...anybody here?*”

Silverstream and Smolder are the first ones to come out, and they assure Twilight that they haven’t heard or seen anyone come in. Then the others come out of their rooms, so that the entire group is now gathered—Silverstream, Smolder, Gallus, Yona, Ocellus, and Sandalwood. They’re all puzzled as to what’s going on. So is Twilight...she’s sure she saw the culprit come in here...And if no creature left (which Spike confirms) “...*that means it’s one of you.*” The students look at each other, confused as to what she’s talking about. So Twilight leads the group back to....

SC. 5 - INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP - GRAND HALL - SOON

The students are stunned to see the Hall and all the decorations covered in the purple goo. “*Who would do this?*” asks Silverstream. Twilight replies that she’s wondering the same thing...and, unfortunately, she thinks that it must be one of them....

They all simultaneously express their innocence. Twilight quiets them and explains how she and Spike saw whoever it was going into their dorm. So the only logical explanation is that one of them is the guilty party.

They look back and forth at each other suspiciously, wondering which of them it is. Twilight says she’ll make it easy for the culprit to confess. She tells them to close their eyes, and they obey. “*Now, whoever did it, raise your hoof. Or your paw. Or wing, or—whatever.*” But no one moves.

Twilight sighs, turns to Spike for advice only to see that he’s closed his eyes as well. She tells them all to open their eyes, and says she hates to do this, but...if no one’s going to take responsibility, they’re ALL going to have to make amends, by pitching in and cleaning up the hall before they head home. There are a few protests, and Twilight says that while they continue to clean up, she’ll interview them one at a time to get to the bottom of this mystery, and give the guilty party an opportunity to confess. And whoever it is won’t be going home over Hearth’s Warming Break—they’ll be staying at school to finish cleaning up, and for some extra friendship lessons. It’s a serious threat for the students, who are eager to get home for the holidays! “*But...what if no one confesses?*” asks Sandalwood. Then, says Twilight...they’ll ALL stay!

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SC. 6 - INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP - GRAND HALL - RESUME

Twilight leads a cool Gallus away to her office to be questioned first. After they’re gone, the other students get to work cleaning up the mess. Ocellus works as fast as she can, and encourages the others to do the same—she’s worried that they’ll miss even one moment of their holiday break. Smolder points out that fixing the mess won’t do any good if the culprit doesn’t confess. “*So come clean,*” she says. “*Which of you did it?*” The others look at each other suspiciously. Yona is offended. “*How Yak know it wasn’t dragon?*”

Ocellus says there’s no way she would have done something like this. She LOVES Hearth Warming, can’t wait to get home, and never would do anything to mess that up. Silverstream is surprised—she didn’t know changelings even celebrated Hearth’s Warming. Of course they do, Ocellus assures her. It’s their favorite holiday—always has been! “*But didn’t you just celebrate it for the first time last year?*” asks a confused Sandalwood. Well, yes, answers Ocellus, but they got really good at it really fast. See, Twilight gave the Changelings the “Beginner’s Guide to Hearth’s Warming,” which they followed to the letter! (Ala Ameila Bedelia...) DISSOLVE TO:

SC. 7 - INT. CHANGELING HIVE - FLASHBACK

OCELLUS’ HOME: Ocellus looks over a thick book along with her FAMILY (MOM AND DAD CHANGELING and TWO SMALLER SIBLINGS). In a quick SERIES OF SHOTS, the family follows the instructions that we hear in Twilight’s voice narrating:

“*The first thing most families do is put the tree up!*” CUT TO: The Changeling family HOISTS a rope and pulley that lifts a LARGE TREE off the ground and up to the ceiling.

“*Don’t forget to bake your gingerbread house! Everypony has fun putting it together!*” CUT TO: The family struggles to put up the last wall of a FULL-SIZE GINGERBREAD HOUSE near their actual house. The wall finally goes into place—but as it does, the wall next to it FALLS with a thud.

“Just before bed, everypony exchanges gifts.” CUT TO: Standing in a circle, the family members pass around wrapped gifts—back and forth, over and over. Ocellus is a little confused. *“Does it say how long do we’re supposed to do this?”*

“And finally....Light up the Fire of Friendship!” CUT TO: Each family member points a LAMP or FLASHLIGHT at a fireplace, where the Fire of Friendship blazes. The family members look at each other, a bit confused. *“This seems a little silly, doesn’t it?”* asks one of the parents. *“Maybe,”* agrees Ocellus. *“But it sure is fun!”*

SC. 8 - INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP - GRAND HALL - RESUME

Ocellus brings her story to an end. Sandalwood gapes – that is NOT how Hearth’s Warming Eve usually works. Ocellus shrugs - they may not have done everything exactly the right way...but it was THEIR way. *“We made our own traditions! And I can’t wait to do it again this year!”* If they ever get out of there, Smolder reminds her.

The group turns as they hear Gallus return with Twilight, who asks Ocellus to come in next. Ocellus gives a nervous wave to her classmates and goes off with Twilight.

Yona’s getting frustrated waiting. *“Yaks ALWAYS home for holidays.”* Silverstream asks how they celebrate Hearth’s Warming, and Yona replies that Yaks don’t—their holiday is much better. It’s called Snow and Snow and More Snow. *“Sounds...snowy,”* says Gallus. Yona assures her friends that it’s not JUST about snow. They have other ways of celebrating: Games in the snow...eating the snow...decorating the snow... Okay, maybe it is all about snow, says Yona. *“But Yak holiday perfect!”*

Last year’s celebration, though, was even more perfect than usual, because she received the best gift ever...when Twilight came to Yakyakistan to celebrate with them...

SC. 9 – EXT. YAKYAKISTAN - FLASHBACK

Yona and her Yak Family greet Twilight, even though they’re not sure why she’s there, and show her various ways they have of celebrating—Crushing the Yak Log...Building the perfect snow fort—then crushing it!...Decorating the tree...then crushing it! Twilight comments how it seems their holiday is just about crushing things. No, they assure her. *“Is also about snow.”* And as the Yaks happily start stomping in the snow...

Twilight tells Yona she has to get back to Equestria for Hearth’s Warming Eve, and reveals the real reason she came – to give Yona a present. Yona unwraps it to find a SCROLL inside—a letter of acceptance. Yona is the first ever Yak to be chosen to attend the School of Friendship!

SC. 10 – INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP - GRAND HALL - RESUME

“Was best Snow and Snow and More Snow present ever,” says Yona, finishing her tale, and explains why it meant so much to her. Though she loves her family and Yakyakistan, she wanted to meet other creatures from other lands. *“Not-Yaks good friends too,”* she says, giving them all an exuberant hug.

Except, Smolder points out, one of those “good” friends has gotten them all in trouble. *“And they better confess soon...”*

Just then, Ocellus rejoins them and we hear Twilight’s voice—*“Next!”* Sandalwood volunteers to go. Smolder picks up where Yona left off and tells the group they can keep their celebrations—dragons don’t need ‘em. Silverstream can’t believe it – don’t they do ANYTHING over the winter for fun? *“Well,”* Smolder admits, *“There is Storynight. The whole Flight gets together and tells stories. And the best story wins a pile of really tasty gemstones.”* *“What’s your favorite story?”* Asks Ocellus. Smolder looks thoughtful – well...The one that won last year was pretty good.

SC. 11 – EXT. DRAGON LANDS - FLASHBACK

Smolder tells her (condensed) story, the Dragon version of “The Little Match Girl,” called “One Wonderful Night,” in which a sad little dragon, SCALES, alone and forsaken on Storynight, is taken up by the Dragon King’s family (reuse EMBER and her DAD) and given a wonderful gemstone dinner and a warm hoard to sleep on...then the next day is put back out into the rocky wilds. *“But at least she had one wonderful night.”* CUT TO:

SC. 12 – INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP - GRAND HALL - RESUME

The others gawk at Smolder, mouths hanging open. That’s the saddest ending of a story they’ve ever heard. Smolder shrugs and agrees. *“I never said it was a happy story. Besides, all Dragon stories end like that.”* Spike, who has come back in with Sandalwood, confirms this. Dragons feel good when they hear that other dragons have it even worse. The others agree, that’s...kind of a weird way to celebrate a holiday. *“But it’s our way,”* says Smolder. *“Besides, storytelling is just a good excuse for dragons to get together for once. That’s the important part.”*

Spike takes Silverstream to Twilight for questioning. As the other students continue to clean, someone points out that it’s not really punishment for Sandalwood to stay over the break, because Hearth’s Warming is his holiday—and what better place to celebrate it than the School of Friendship. He sort of agrees—but he’d much rather spend it at his own home with his *own* family. He then starts to point out all the decorations in the hall that his family also has—we have that one, and that one, and that one....which reminds him! He has the best Christmas story ever—the day his Hearth’s Warming doll almost fell into the fire! CUT TO:

SC. 13 – INT. SANDALWOOD’S HOUSE/FIREPLACE - FLASHBACK

A VERY QUICK FLASHBACK. Over the action, Sandalwood breathlessly narrates how his whole family put their crocheted dolls on the mantle above the fireplace....only his was too close to the edge...and FELL!

SC. 14 – INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP - GRAND HALL - RESUME

The suspense is killing them. *“And?”* Ocellus asks. Sandalwood finishes: The doll hit the floor, but, thank goodness, was nowhere near the fire. *“But it could have gone in!”*

Gallus deadpans: *“That’s a great story and you told it really well.”* Sandalwood says it may not sound like much, but to him—it was a Hearth’s Warming miracle!

Silverstream returns and Yona goes into see Twilight. The pressure’s on. If Yona isn’t the one who did it...they’ll never get home for the holidays!

END ACT TWO

ACT TWO

SC. 15 – INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP - GRAND HALL - RESUME

NEVER GET HOME?! Silverstream doesn’t even want to hear that. Of course they’ll get home. She *has* to! She can’t miss the celebration of the Five Long Nights! *“Right! Which is what?”* Gallus asks, sarcastically.

SC. 16 –EXT. SEAQUESTRIA -- FLASHBACK

We see what Silverstream narrates (in STILLS)—how, underwater, the sea ponies celebrate with seven nights of activities – sea-dancing, whale-singing, race-swimming, kelp-harvesting, and shell-decorating ...followed by a huge feast and the lighting of a magical undersea bonfire with their family—grandparents, cousins, second cousins, third cousins. Then, on the final night, the Queen hands out presents to all the kids in town. (PERHAPS we PULL OUT to show she’s been reading them a seapony story book.)

SC. 17 – INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP - GRAND HALL - RESUME

And on the last night, says Silverstream, everyone stays up until the bonfire has gone out, then they take some ashes home and spread them on their doorstep—this will bring good luck for the rest of the year....

Gallus listens as Silverstream finishes describing the Seapony Holidays, looking a bit sad and wistful. *“Cousins?”* he asks. *“What are cousins?”* Silverstream is stunned that Gallus doesn’t know, but before she can explain, Twilight returns with a grim-faced Sandalwood, and with a sigh announces that she’s finished all the interviews. And nocreature has admitted playing the prank. She doesn’t like doing this, but, since she didn’t get a confession....NO CREATURE is going home for the holidays!

Everycreature gasps. Twilight says she doesn’t like it either, so she’s going to leave them alone for a few minutes, to think about things....And when she comes back, she hopes the culprit will do what’s right and tell the truth. *“It’s up to you...whoever you are.”* She turns and goes....

Sandalwood is sad, Ocellus gets teary-eyed, and even the ever-ebullient Silverstream is crushed. Then Sandalwood notices that Yona, Smolder, and Gallus aren’t reacting—and wonders why they aren’t upset. They respond that they are upset—but not everyone reacts in the same way. What is Sandalwood getting at? He points out that whoever did it should be feeling *really* bad...not only did they commit the prank, they *lied* about it as well. Smolder agrees, and points out that Ocellus looks particularly guilty—did she do

it? Ocellus defends herself, but it sets off a round of everyone blaming each other....until finally Gallus stops them.

Gallus says they shouldn’t be arguing among themselves. That’s not what the holiday—no matter what it’s called, or how it’s celebrated—is about. According to the stories they just all told, it’s about sharing, kindness, and most of all, being together with everycreature you care about. In fact, the Griffons’ celebration is ALL about that—gathering with your family. It’s the one time of year every griffon is nice to each other. They meet in the home of the eldest family member, to feast on traditional food, sing traditional songs, and exchange traditional presents...

SC. 18 – EXT. GRIFFONSTONE - FLASHBACK

In a QUICK SHOT, we see an example of this— GRANDPA GRUFF and GILDA and GABBY and other INCIDENTAL GRIFFINS gathered around a food-laden table...then we PULL OUT to see Gallus standing outside in the cold, looking in through their window with longing. *“The problem is,”* he tells the others, *“I don’t have a family.”*

SC. 19 – INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – GRAND HALL - RESUME

He explains how in Griffonstone he felt like he never had a place, and was just in the way—that’s the reason he was sent to Twilight’s school. So he DOESN’T want to go home for the school break...there’s no family to go home to, and being there on his own would only remind him that he’s alone. And he finally admits... HE was the one who sabotaged the Hearth’s Warming decorations. The others are stunned, and all want to know—Why?

Gallus explains that he didn’t want to be alone over the holiday and guessed, correctly, that if he made a mess, Twilight would make them all stay to clean it. Which meant they could all be together a little longer.... He never thought Twilight would cancel the entire break. But that was even better than he’d planned! Then he could be with all of them, through the entire holiday!

So why is he telling them this now, wonders Silverstream. If Gallus had kept his beak shut, they would all have to stay, and his plan would have worked. But now they’ll have to tell Twilight he did it. Gallus explains that after hearing all their stories—about how much they love their celebrations, and their families—he realized he couldn’t do that to them. He doesn’t want to ruin everybody else’s holiday just because HE feels bad. He apologizes, and tells them not to worry—they won’t have to tell Twilight. He’ll tell her.

Twilight comes back out, wanting to know if the students have anything else to say for themselves. Gallus looks at the others, then steps forward and admits his guilt. *“It was me. I sabotaged the Fire of Friendship.”* Twilight doesn’t seem surprised, and admits that, after talking to them all, she and Spike guessed who the prankster was. But they wanted to give him the chance to tell the truth, and she’s proud of Gallus for doing so. Still, he’s going to have to accept his punishment, and stay over break.

But before Gallus can respond, Silverstream steps forward. “*Then I’m staying, too!*” And in an “I’m Spartacus” moment, the rest of the students step up, one by one. “*Me too!... I’m staying!*” That way they can all celebrate with Gallus....so that he’ll finally know what it’s like to spend Hearth Warming with friends who care about you.

Twilight smiles. She’s proud of the others for volunteering to stay. They’ve obviously learned that Hearth’s Warming is about coming together...so she’d be happy and honored if all of them would join the Mane 6 as guests at their holiday table. Gallus smiles, finally feeling the true meaning of Hearth’s Warming. And even Smolder has to admit... Maybe this pony holiday isn’t so bad after all.