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MY LITTLE PONY
Season 8

Friendship University
Ep 816

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FRIENDSHIP UNIVERSITY

Outline by Chris “Doc” Wyatt & Kevin Burke

Logline: When Twilight Sparkle learns that her idol, Starswirl the Bearded, has chosen to attend a friendship school other than hers, she and Rarity go undercover to get to the bottom of it.

TEASER**INT. TWILIGHT’S SCHOOL – HEADMARE’S OFFICE – DAY**

Rarity directs a mail pony who struggles to drop off a large wooden crate in Twilight’s office. Rarity explains it’s the sewing machines she’s ordered for her class. Of course they were expensive, but she is looking forward to sharing the friendship lessons with her students that can be learned through a double cross stitch. The mail pony also delivers a POSTCARD to Twilight who excitedly reads aloud. It’s from Starswirl the Bearded who tells her (through VO) about his latest adventures as he travels Equestria learning about friendship. Twilight reveals a WALL of postcards that she’s saved from Starswirl – sent from all over. “I’ve been asking him to come to our school forever, but he never takes me up on the offer. Maybe when his travels bring him back to Ponyville...” Twilight desperately wants her hero to come to her school, especially since he wants to learn about friendship. “He has to come here, right?”

Suddenly Pinkie Pie races into the room, wanting to know what Twilight plans to do about the rival friendship school. Twilight is surprised, she hadn’t heard about any other school. Yeah, Pinkie tells her, it claims to be a “University” and it’s all anyone’s talking about. While surprised, Twilight is cool with there being another school—It just means there will be more friendship lessons taught in the world... Oh good, because Pinkie was afraid Twilight was going to freak out when she heard that Starswirl was going to Friendship University. “*STARSWIRL IS GOING TO FRIENDSHIP UNIVERSITY?!*” shouts Twilight, freaking out.

END TEASER**MAIN TITLES****ACT ONE****EXT. TWILIGHT’S SCHOOL CAMPUS – MOMENTS LATER**

Twilight and Rarity head out and bump into several of her school’s STUDENTS along the way. Just like Pinkie said, everyone is BUZZING about the new school! Apparently, this University claims it can teach friendship in HALF the time that it takes at Twilight’s school! Twilight is completely taken aback by this – how is that POSSIBLE? Twilight, for one, doesn’t believe Starswirl is there—“If he was going to any school, he’d go to mine!” Determined to learn more, Twilight resolves to attend this “University’s” open house just outside of Las Pegasus. Rarity hates not getting a chance to unbox the new sewing machines for her class, but she can’t let Twilight go alone and they head off.

INT. FRIENDSHIP UNIVERSITY – AUDITORIUM

Twilight and Rarity walk in with all the other ponies who are excited to be at this school. They overhear everypony talking about “meeting THE Starswirl” at this orientation! Twilight can’t believe any of this. Who could be running a school like this? And suddenly she gets her answer, as FLIM & FLAM take the stage, putting on a song-and-dance number about the importance of friendship, and how with their patented teaching techniques, you can learn friendship in half the time it takes to master it at “that other school.”

Twilight isn’t buying any of this – it is Flim & Flam, after all. She stands up in the middle of their presentation and publically calls them out. They can’t possibly guarantee they can teach what she can in “half the time.” Learning about friendship is different for every student. She demands to know what their angle is. Unruffled (and obviously prepared for her appearance), Flim and Flam introduce their new friend, NEIGHSAY, who takes the stage and pronounces that unlike Twilight’s school, Flim and Flam’s Friendship University will receive ACCREDITATION from the EEA! Neighsay explains that he based his decision on Flim and Flam’s pony-centric curriculum (unlike Twilight’s school that is open to all manner of terrifying creatures) and by the presence of the most legendary pony of all time, Starswirl the Bearded. When Twilight expresses doubt regarding Starswirl’s presence, Neighsay is quick to wonder aloud if she isn’t just trying to discredit her competition. Her school is full of so many odd creatures, why must she trying to steal honest ponies from Flim and Flam’s school and rob them of the chance to meet Starswirl? “That’s not very friendly of you, is it?” The prospective pony students surrounding Twilight take a step away from her, giving her skeptical side-glances. Flim & Flam continue their “dog-and-pony” show, leading to the promised appearance of Starswirl... only to reveal that you have to actually ENROLL in the university to meet him. To Twilight’s dismay, ponies RACE to sign up. Twilight tells Rarity that she’s certain they are lying about Starswirl, and plans to prove it... By going UNDERCOVER!

EXT. FRIENDSHIP UNIVERSITY CAMPUS – DAY

Later, two COMPLETELY NEW Ponies show up to the University (actually Twilight and Rarity in disguise). As amazing as Rarity’s disguises are, she insists that they rehearse their undercover “backstories”...Rarity, looking like a grunge musician, is now “Commonity” a chill and sloppy pony who doesn’t mind getting dirty, and who doesn’t care about her appearance. (Rarity is thrilled to be playing such an out-of-character personality, and totally committed to her performance). Twilight Sparkle’s disguise has an eye patch (reminiscent of “Future Twilight” from “It’s About Time”). Twi is now “Salty Yarn.” Salty’s recently come back from a long stretch at sea, and is eager to make new friends. With these perfect disguises, Twi is convinced that they can go undercover and prove to the world that Starswirl does NOT go to Flim & Flam’s school. They head to where Friendship University students are enrolling. While walking away, Rarity avoids a mud puddle, but Twilight points out that “Commonity” wouldn’t avoid the puddle, so Rarity steels herself... and walks through, getting mud on her hooves. She’s strangely excited by her own “wild” behavior.

INT. UNIVERSITY COMMON AREA – MOMENTS LATER

“Commonity” and “Salty Yarn” find a group of students in line to enroll, who are talking about finally being able to meet Starswirl. Twilight looks down the long line of students, and sees that they’re all standing in front of a CARDBOARD CUT OUT of Starswirl. Twilight snorts—This is Flim & Flam’s worst con yet! Everyone can tell that’s not Starswirl... But then the REAL STARSWIRL steps out from behind the cut out, greeting the students in line. He really is here! Twilight is shocked!!!

ACT TWO**INT. UNIVERSITY COMMON AREA – RESUME**

RESUME AS: Twilight approaches Starswirl STILL SHOCKED! Twilight tries to talk to Starswirl, but since she’s in disguise, he doesn’t recognize her. Twilight covertly lifts her eye patch just to him, and when Starswirl recognizes her, she begs him for a word in private. Starswirl apologizes to the line, saying he’ll be right back, as Twilight pulls him behind a curtain to talk. After a warm greeting, Twilight expresses surprise that Starswirl would be here, but Starswirl explains that Flim and Flam convinced him to give a friendship school a try. Great, says Twilight, now that Starswirl is interested in a friendship school, he can go to HERS. But Starswirl says no—At her school he would be too much of a distraction. He wouldn’t want students coming just to see him. Twi peeks out through the curtain and points to the line of people waiting to see him—Isn’t he a distraction here? No, no, no—This is different. Flim & Flam asked him to help manage the intake of new students, (stamping paperwork, etc.)—He’s just volunteering to do his part and help out around the school.

Twilight doesn’t buy it, and insists that Starswirl is being used! Twilight points out that Flim & Flam are CONPONIES who run a resort in Las Pegasus. She starts to list all the things Flim & Flam have done in the past, but Starswirl interrupts her. He knows all about Flim & Flam’s past, but believes that they’re trying to make up for all their schemes by creating a tuition-free school where ponies can learn about friendship. Starswirl is disappointed. Twilight, of all ponies, should believe in giving ponies a second chance. Rarity points out that this would be more like a fourth or fifth chance, but Starswirl is firm and heads back to his line of students. Twilight turns to Rarity. If only they can prove to Starswirl that Flim and Flam are up to something they can convince him to go to Twilight’s school instead. They decide to split up, with Rarity registering for class (in her undercover persona), and Twilight snooping around to try to find info.

INT. CLASSROOM – DAY

Rarity (still in “Commonity” disguise) shows up for her first class, to find Flim himself teaching. He tells them how awesome this class is going to be, and how they’re going to learn tons of stuff—but then he just hands out paper and hoof paints, then puts his feet up on his desk. Rarity, not wanting to touch the messy hoof paints, asks Flim how this is supposed to teach them about friendship. “Just paint about ‘helping others’, or something,” says Flim dismissively. Rarity is still reluctant to use the paints, until Flim points out that “Commonity’s” admission essay clearly described how she likes messy things... “Oh yeah,” realizes Rarity, she has to stay true to her

character. She hesitates, but tries the paints— To instantly find out she LOVES hoof painting! Flim comes up to her and sees her painting, telling her it's AMAZING, and that she must have already learned so much about friendship! He praises her as a student, which makes "Community" feel good, then informs her that she JUST might be ready for the next level of classes. Lucky for her, they are offering a deal. Rarity is pleased!

INT. UNIVERSITY LIBRARY – DAY

Searching the school brings Twilight (still in disguise) to the University's "library," but a quick check through the books prove that they have NOTHING to do with friendship! The books are things like cookbooks, Shadow Spade novels, and an entire series of autobiographic books (written by Flim & Flam themselves) detailing their various escapades, "The Baltimore Bamboozal," "The Fillydelphia Five Step," etc. It's outrageous! There's no way you can teach friendship from books like these... Her school has a REAL library—Which is something Twi is going to go tell Starswirl!

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS – MOMENT LATER

Twi catches up to Starswirl, and uses what she's found at the library to prove that Flim & Flam aren't teaching real friendship lessons! "There are book that are literally about them conning ponies." Clearly Starswirl should come to Twilight's school instead. But Starswirl shakes his head. Of course there are books about their past mistakes—they are an example of how friendship changed the conponies' lives for the better. He asks Twi to look around... She sees various Ponies having picnics together, clearly enjoying friendships. "It doesn't matter what books you use," says Starswirl, "as long as real friendships are being formed..." Once again he's disappointed in her and asks her to stop trying to get him to leave and go to her school.

INT. CLASSROOM – DAY

As a Level 2 student, "Community" is doing well in more messy classes (that Rarity would never have liked). She feels free, and gets praise from Flim and other students. Film delightedly announces that Community is soooo advanced that she's ready to move on to Level 3, which is great, because one of the special things Level 3's get to do is recruit new students!

EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS – DAY

Twi (in disguise) goes to find Rarity (in disguise) who is out on the grounds with a few other Level 3 students, handing out flyers about the school. Twi reports her failed efforts, then asks Rarity if she's had any luck... Nope, Rarity's detected nothing suspicious. But then Twi sees the flyers that Rarity is handing out—They FEATURE PICTURES OF STARSWIRL and imply that Starswirl is the spokesman for the school (not just another student). She grabs a copy of the flyer to take to Starswirl—Knowing that this will be the thing that makes him see the light!

INT. UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE – MOMENTS LATER

Starswirl is in the administration office, helping Flim & Flam with filing and office work (while they put up their feet, relaxing). Twi enters—pulling off her eye patch and REVEALING her true identity to the surprised brothers—and shows Starswirl the flyer. But Flim & Flam are prepared. They pull out dozens of different flyers with different ponies' pictures on them: “We feature all of our students on our flyers, because we’re proud of them, and they’re our friends!” Once again, Starswirl tells Twi how disappointed he is in her. Clearly she can’t stop trying to get him to leave, so he asks her to leave instead.

END OF ACT TWO**ACT THREE****EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - DAY**

Shunned by Starswirl, Twi goes to find Rarity who’s still recruiting ponies on the street to come to Friendship University. Twilight explains that she failed and it’s time for them to go home, but Rarity wants to stay. She’s accomplishing so much as Commonity—she wants to stay in character awhile longer. She goes on to admit that she believes the school might have something to offer after all. Twilight can’t believe what she’s hearing. What can Flim and Flam’s “University” of Friendship possibly have to offer!? They don’t even have a proper library. It’s just full of cookbooks and Shadow Spade novels. Rarity points out that Shadow Spade always comes through for her friends—maybe those books are more appropriate than Twilight thought. “Friendship lessons can come from anywhere,” she points out. Twi should know that.

This pushes Twi even more down in the dumps. It feels like both Rarity and Starswirl are choosing Flim and Flam’s school over hers—What has she done wrong? Maybe she shouldn’t be teaching friendship at all! Rarity says that’s nonsense, though Twilight should get back to her own school—and while she’s there if she wouldn’t mind selling the sewing machines Rarity just bought for her class and sending her the bits that would be great. Surprised, Twilight asks why and Rarity explains. “Commonity” is advancing so quickly through the Flim and Flam’s school, she needs a lot more bits to cover the cost of tuition. Twi is confused... Didn’t Starswirl say the school was “tuition-free”? Are the bills happening to just Rarity, or everypony at the school?

INT. /EXT. UNIVERSITY – VARIOUS – MONTAGE

MONTAGE: Twi speaks to a bunch of different students, all of whom love the school, but are having to sell more and more of their stuff to cover the fees!

INT. UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION OFFICE – DAY

Film & Flam, alone in the admin office, are counting STACKS OF BITS, when Twi comes in, busting them. But when Flim & Flam insist Twi can’t prove anything, Twi produces one of the books from their own library. It’s a book on one of their previous cons called “The Scholastic Surprise,” and it details every single step they’ve used to bilk bits out of their unsuspecting

students! All Twi has to do is show this book to Neighsay, and the school will be lose its accreditation and be closed! Film & Flam realize they're busted ("Why did we write all that down!?") and tell Twi that she's won. They offer her a deal—If she doesn't tell anyone, they'll convince Starswirl to go to her school instead of theirs: "We know that's what you really want anyway..."

NO DEAL. That is what Twi wanted... But then she saw that Flim & Flam had accidentally created a school that really was making some ponies happy (like Starswirl and Rarity) so she tells them that *if they give back all the money*, she will let them keep running the school. "Not keep the money!? Forget it!" says Film. Flam grabs a PA and announces: "Congratulations! You all graduated! School closed forever!" At that moment, Starswirl enters. He's heard all of it, and is impressed that Twilight was willing to give up her want (of getting him to come to her school) so that he and the other students could be happy. Twi and Starswirl reconcile.

Twi and Starswirl are so caught up in their reconciliation that they don't see Flim & Flam sneaking out the backdoor with a HUGE BAGS OF BITS! But they bump into Neighsay, who is bringing the University's final accreditation certificate! Seeing the Conponies with the bags of bits, Neighsay demands to know what's going on. Starswirl reveals all, and Neighsay immediately RIPS UP the accreditation certificate. Disappointed that Twilight has somehow managed to continue to be the only friendship school in Equestria, he still promises to ensure that all the ill-gotten gains are returned.

INT. /EXT. UNIVERSITY – VARIOUS – MONTAGE

MONTAGE: Students are overjoyed as they get their bits back! The University might be closing, but they've learned a lot, and some of them might even apply to Twilight's school!

INT. TWILIGHT'S ROOM – DAYS LATER

Back in her room, Twi is pleased to get a new postcard from Starswirl. After the experience with Flim & Flam, he's back on the road, walking Equestria... But he thinks that one day—maybe sooner than later—he'll wind up at Twilight's school. Twi couldn't be more pleased.

FADE OUT

END EPISODE