

MY LITTLE PONY
Season 8
A Rockhoof and a Hard Place
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A ROCKHOOF AND A HARD PLACE

Outline by Kaita Mpambara

Logline: When Rockhoof, heroic Pillar of the past, is having trouble fitting into the modern world, Twilight and her friends strive to help him find a new purpose.

TEASER**SC. 1 - EXT. ROCKHOOF'S ANCIENT VILLAGE – DAY**

TWILIGHT SPARKLE is excited to have been invited by PROFESSOR FOSSIL, the archaeologist who's been excavating Rockhoof's old village, to come and see how her dig is progressing. *"Rockhoof has been, er, BEYOND generous in his help,"* the Professor says cagily. Twilight is glad to hear that ROCKHOOF is fitting in so well in modern times...

That's when ROCKHOOF calls out in a big booming voice from atop the mountain next to the village. *"Achhh! A slippery serpent be slitherin' near one of our pits! Never fear lads! I'll scare him off!"* All the archaeologists scream *"Stop!"* But, intent on the problem, he ignores them and slams his massive hoof down, scaring away a snake that was crawling near the dig...and accidentally causing a HUGE ROCK SLIDE that tumbles down the mountain and crushes half the dig site! Ponies run for safety, yelling, *"Not again!" "All our work!" "I like snakes!"*

"You invited me here to get rid of him, didn't you?" Twilight says flatly. Professor Fossil nods, *"As soon as possible. PLEASE."*

END TEASER**MAIN TITLES****ACT ONE****SC. 2 - EXT. ROCKHOOF'S ANCIENT VILLAGE – DAY**

Professor Fossil paces back and forth, explaining to Twilight all the reasons why Rockhoof can't stay here with her team of archaeologists. She narrates as we see his issues in action: His super-fast digging with his oversized shovel is clumsy and wrecks as many artifacts as it uncovers. He ruins morale whenever he points out that one of their "priceless discoveries" is really an ancient toothbrush or some other worthless thing. And Professor Fossil is at her wits' end listening to his never-ending stories about all the impossible things he supposedly did back in the good old days. *"He HAS TO GO!"* She blurts, and Rockhoof overhears, though he hides his hurt.

When Twilight gently leads the Pillar aside to chat, Rockhoof acknowledges that he's still finding his place in this new time. *"But I know I can make a go of things if I just work at it. Back in the good old days, when I single-hoofedly saved the town from a volcano, I learned you can do anything if you try hard enough."* Twilight agrees – but

maybe he should try somewhere ELSE besides his old home for awhile. After all, a legend of his talents should be able to find all kinds of new opportunities to fit in. His strength, his courage, his knowledge of the past... And suddenly, Twilight is inspired! Rockhoof can come teach friendship history at her school! Rockhoof shrugs - he never spent much time in the classroom, but if there's a job that needs doing, he's the pony for it!

SC. 3 - INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – TWILIGHT’S CLASSROOM – DAY

The FRIENDSHIP STUDENTS (including OCELLUS, GALLUS, SILVERSTREAM, COZY GLOW, SMOLDER, YONA, and SANDBAR) sit in the room, gossiping about rumors that the school hired a new teacher, and wondering who it might be. Suddenly the ground begins to rumble and shake. Is it an earthquake? An explosion? Nope. Just Rockhoof stomping his massive heavy hooves as he walks up to the classroom and sticks his head in the door! *“Top o’ the mornin’ to ye’ wee ones! My name be Rockhoof, and I’m yer new ‘Friendship History’ teacher!”* Sandbar can’t believe it – this guy is a legend. And Yona is a little hero-worshipful from the get go. Finally, a pony that is strong and big like a Yak! Case in point... Rockhoof tries to enter the room, but his huge body gets stuck in the door. *“If I can just...squeeze through this itsy bitsy door...oooh...this is a right safety hazard this is.”*

SC. 4 - INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – HALLWAY – DAY

Twilight walks down the hall with RARITY, pleased about having neatly solved two problems at once – Rockhoof needed a job, and who better for her friendship students to learn history from than from somepony who was actually there! *“Let’s peek in and see how he’s doing!”* Twilight smiles.

The duo peer inside the doorway and see Rockhoof regaling his class (Yona is enthralled) with a story about how he once defeated an Ursa Major with just his wits and his shovel. *“Oh my. Is that even possible?”* Rarity asks. Twilight says she’s sure Rockhoof knows what he’s talking about. Telling stories is what history’s all about. But as Rockhoof starts acting out the battle and overturning desks, Twilight can’t help but wince a little. Rarity reassures her – when the rest of them started as teachers, they all had a lot to learn too. They turned out fine, *“And I’m sure Rockhoof will too, darling.”*

SC. 5 - EXT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – LATER

Rockhoof is telling APPLEJACK how nice it is to feel like he truly belongs at the school. Applejack, who shares a pillar-bond with Rockhoof, is happy he’s joined the faculty. But as she’s talking, Rockhoof goes still, spotting smoke and flame coming from one of the school’s windows. All his volcano-fighting instincts kick in. *“Fire!”* he yells. *“The building be ablaze! Everypony out!”*

SC. 6 - INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – CONT.

Rockhoof STAMPEDES RIGHT THROUGH THE CLASSROOM WALL to make a hole for the students to escape. Twilight and Applejack shout for Rockhoof to stop. But he ignores them, and...

SC. 7 - EXT. LAKE BY THE SCHOOL – CONT.

...instead runs to the nearest lake, and uses his super strong shoveling skills to dig a trench all the way from the lake to the school so that water rushes in!

SC. 8 - EXT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP – CONT.

A water-logged Rarity splashes out (followed by PINKIE PIE, who surfs the wave on a desk, wheeeee!), not happy. *“What is the meaning of this? You’ve flooded the building! Not to mention RUINED weeks of work on our friendship quilts!”* Rarity glares. Rockhoof apologizes for the damage. But at least he was able to put out that blazing inferno and make sure nopony got hurt.

That’s when SPIKE and Smolder (waterlogged from the flood) come staggering out of the building. *“What inferno?”* Spike asks. *“We were just having our weekly fire-breathing competition. We do it all the time!”* Rockhoof looks taken aback, then downcast as he realizes the magnitude of his mistake. He’s not used to living with dragons. Or much else in this modern time, it seems. (Like a soldier returned from war, with no easy place in peacetime.) *“My deepest regrets, Princess Twilight. But it seems that teachin’ is not my place either.”*

END OF ACT ONE**ACT TWO****SC. 9 - INT. TWILIGHT’S CASTLE - DAY**

Spike enters with the morning mail, and sees Twilight, Applejack, Pinkie Pie, Rarity, STARLIGHT GLIMMER, FLUTTERSHY and RAINBOW DASH sitting around the main table, depressed. When Spike asks what’s wrong, Twilight says that finding Rockhoof a job is turning out to be a LOT harder than she expected. After he flooded the school, Applejack tried to get him a job working at the Pony Express post-office with Muffins (thinking maybe he could use his speed to deliver the mail faster). But...

SC. 10 - EXT. THE STREETS OF PONYVILLE – FLASHBACK – DAY

We see a quick cutaway shot of Rockhoof racing through the streets with a delivery cart. Shouting things like *“Achhh! Does anypony know where I can find Cranky Doodle Donkey? It’s urgent! He needs medicine! He has a rash in a verra embarrassing place!”* And, *“Has anypony seen Mayor Mare? She needs a new pair of fake glasses to help her look smarter so she can win elections!”*

SC. 11 - INT. TWILIGHT’S CASTLE – DAY

Pinkie Pie mentions that she tried to get Rockhoof a job carrying heavy magical items for Zecora, cause he’s so strong, but...

SC. 12 - EXT. ZECORA’S HOUSE – FLASHBACK – DAY

A quick cutaway shot of Rockhoof walking up to ZECORA with a giant tree strapped to his back. He knows she told him to grab a few medicinal leaves from the tree, but he figured it’d be easier to just take the whole tree. (Before Zecora can warn him, Rockhoof

discovers the flaw in his plan: The tree is home to a swarm of Everfree Bees!) The angry bugs come flying out, chasing Zecora and Rockhoof into the distance. (Pinkie: *"The good news is, I found this shiny button on the floor!"* How is that related to her story, exactly? *"It's not. But it's still good news!"*)

SC. 13 - INT. TWILIGHT'S CASTLE - DAY

As Spike thumbs through the mail, he notices a postcard from STARSWIRL THE BEARDED. Spike offhandedly mentions it's a shame Rockhoof isn't fitting in with the modern world as well as Starswirl. That's when Fluttershy gets an idea. The other Pillars all seem to have found ways to fit into the modern world. Why not talk with them? Maybe they can all put their heads together and come up with a few pointers to steer Rockhoof in the right direction. Twilight thinks that's a fantastic plan!

SC. 14 - EXT. VARIOUS LOCATIONS AROUND EQUESTRIA – DAY

Rockhoof is skeptical, but he agrees to go along with Twilight and Fluttershy to visit his old friends. He points out that their postcards might make it *look* like they're all getting along fine in the new world, but there's no way they could've found a way to fit their ancient skills into modern times so easily.) However, as they encounter the Pillars one by one in a series of quick beats, they find they are not only fitting in, but THRIVING.

SC. 15 - EXT. WONDERBOLT ACADEMY: FLASH MAGNUS is teaching advanced flight maneuvers, clearly enjoying himself and doing a fantastic job.

SC. 16 - EXT. THE CRYSTAL EMPIRE: MISTMANE has turned her talents to becoming a landscape artist in the Crystal Empire, which has an old-world sense to it that makes her feel at home. *"You canna really ever go home again,"* Rockhoof points out, but...

SC. 17 - EXT. THE SWAMP – MAGE MEADOWBROOK has done just that, returning to her abode in the swamp. She's expanded it to a large clinic where she gives herbal medicine and remedies to ponies from near and far. Rockhoof droops a bit more – so far none of these "solutions" are possibilities for him to try. Fluttershy says not to give up yet...

SC. 18 - EXT. THE DESERT – SOMNAMBULA runs a meditation retreat where she asks ponies riddles to help them reach higher consciousness. Rockhoof attempts meditation, but only achieves sleep.

Twilight calls it a day, but Rockhoof points out that they haven't caught up with Starswirl or Stygian yet. Twilight says that Starswirl is wandering the land, and Stygian, well... She holds up a best selling book: *"Me and My Shadow."* *"Well, good fer the wee lad. Write what ye know,"* Rockhoof says. But it's clear that the Pillar of Strength is becoming increasingly depressed. *"Mayhap it's true that there really is somethin' wrong with me,"* he worries. *"Maybe I'll never fit in no matter how hard I try, and I'm just a pony out of time."*

SC. 19 - INT. TWILIGHT'S CASTLE – DAY

Twilight's friends reassemble to think harder about the Rockhoof situation. Rainbow Dash says it's not ROCKHOOF that's the problem - it's that none of the jobs he's been getting have given him a chance to be what he truly is: A Hero. What they need to do is go out and find Rockhoof a job that's as epic as he is. And she knows just the thing!

SC. 20 - EXT. EQUESTRIA HARBOR – NIGHT

ADMIRAL SEASPRAY welcomes Rockhoof aboard his ship, telling him how glad the crew is to have the legendary Pillar aboard. Rockhoof is also glad to finally have a place with ponies who understand the sea and adventure the way he does. It looks like he's going to fit in perfectly in the Hippogriff Navy, Rainbow Dash whispers to Twilight as they stand on the dock.

Unfortunately however, at that moment, a fog rolls in, making it difficult to see the shore. Rockhoof heroically leaps into action and tries to sail the ship by the stars (the same way his Coltic ancestors did in the years of the Selkie Mists). But his ancient-school directions wind up confusing the rest of the crew, and in the end, to Seaspray's horror, Rockhoof ends up crashing the ship! What was supposed to be an epic moment of triumph has turned into Rockhoof's most epic fail! Twilight tries to reassure Rockhoof – they'll think of something else!

But an embarrassed, deeply saddened Rockhoof interrupts, saying he doesn't need any more ideas, because he knows what he wants to do next. Rainbow Dash is amazed – what is it? *“I've heard tell there's a spell that sends creatures into stone sleep for all time. I want Twilight to cast it. On me.”*

END OF ACT TWO**ACT THREE****SC. 21 - INT. TWILIGHT'S CASTLE - DAY**

Twilight tries with all her might to convince Rockhoof to reconsider. But the Pillar is adamant. *“If I cannot find a place for myself, I want to be remembered as the hero I was, not the disappointment I've become.”* Twilight, who feels responsible for bringing Rockhoof to this time to begin with, has no choice but to respect his wishes. She tells Spike to substitute her class for the day, as she'll be busy preparing Rockhoof's stone sleep spell. *“The one the Princesses used on Discord?!”* Spike asks. Twilight nods sadly.

SC. 22 - INT. CLASSROOM IN TWILIGHT'S SCHOOL – DAY

As all the students gossip excitedly over the “Rockhoof rumors” they've heard floating around Ponyville (*“Did you hear how he gave Zecora a tree full of bees?” “I heard he sunk a ship in Seaspray's Navy!”*) Spike comes trudging glumly through the door. *“Good morning, class. Twilight sent me to tell you she won't be in today, since she's working on a spell to turn Rockhoof into stone for all eternity. So your instructions are to spend the day writing an essay on ‘Heroism: And what it means to you.’”* Yona is

horrified by this news and gasps a quiet, “No.” Smolder tries to reassure her, “*It probably doesn’t have to be a LONG essay.*”

SC. 23 - INT. TWILIGHT’S CASTLE - DAY

We find Rockhoof sitting in a hallway, waiting for Twilight to prepare her spell. Suddenly, Yona bursts into the building, runs up to Rockhoof, and begs him to say it’s not true, that he’s not really thinking of turning to stone. Rockhoof says it is true, and he tells Yona not to bother trying to talk him out of it. The fact is, he doesn’t belong in this new world. He tried his hardest, but ever since he got here, all he’s done is mess up. There isn’t one single thing in the new world that he’s good at. Except being a statue, to hopefully inspire ponies without causing more problems.

Yona is heartbroken to hear this news. But she is undeterred and asks if Rockhoof will tell her class one last story before he goes. Rockhoof says his stories aren’t worth anything in this time. Yona digs in stubbornly – if Rockhoof won’t tell her a story, she’ll tell HIM a story. And Yona begins to read him her hero essay – which is about Rockhoof. “*When Yona come to Pony school, Yona not fit in. Pony ways strange. But Yona find friends! Yona meet Rockhoof, Pony brave and strong as Yak! Not afraid. Hero! When Yona grow up, Yona want to be like Rockhoof. Rockhoof best pony.*” It might not be poetry, but it is heartfelt. And Rockhoof, touched that he meant something to somecreature after all, agrees to return to the classroom to tell one more story before he enters stony sleep.

SC. 24 - EXT. TWILIGHT’S CASTLE – DAY

Yona guides Rockhoof outside the castle, and he’s stunned to see EVERY SINGLE STUDENT from Twilight’s school waiting for him, eager for him to tell a story.

SC. 25 - INT. TWILIGHT’S CASTLE - LATER

Twilight comes out into the hallway to tell Rockhoof that the limbo spell is ready. But they don’t see him anywhere. Where could he be?

SC. 26 - EXT. TWILIGHT’S CASTLE - DAY

Twilight steps outside, surprised to find Rockhoof entertaining all the students from Twilight’s school (and the rest of the Mane Six and Starlight), rapt with his huge over-the-top tale from the old days. And the heroic pony is enjoying himself thoroughly. But then he sees Twilight, and reality sets in. To the students’ great dismay, he brings his story to an end, and says it’s time for him to say goodbye. But when he turns to leave, Twilight blocks his path. She’s got a huge smile on her face. “*I don’t think it IS time for that.*” Rockhoof is confused. “*What do ye mean, lassie?*”

Twilight responds that Rockhoof wanted to turn to stone because there wasn’t anything in the world he was good at. But Twilight just figured out something that he is good at. Something he’s great at, in fact! (She can’t believe it took her this long to think of it.) “*What?*” Asks Rockhoof. “*Telling stories!*” answers Twilight. Sharing tales of the past in modern times so that everypony who listens can learn valuable lessons, feel deep inspiration, and...have fun! Upon thinking it over, everycreature agrees. (“*Yona knew*

THAT.”) In fact, Twilight would like to make him Equestria’s official Keeper of Tales. (Spike: “*Can you do that?*” TS: “*I’m a princess. It’s gotta be good for something!*”)

Rockhoof isn’t so sure. He’s still not certain he belongs in the modern world. “*Yona Rockhoof’s friend. So Rockhoof belong,*” the little Yak asserts. Rockhoof thinks about it... and seeing Yona’s hopeful, shining eyes, he agrees to give it a try. It seems the Pillar has finally found his place in the modern world, thanks to the power of friendship.

END OF EPISODE.