

MY LITTLE PONY
Season 8
What Lies Beneath
Ep 822
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WHAT LIES BENEATH

Premise by Michael Vogel

GALLUS, SANDBAR, OCELLUS, YONA, SILVERSTREAM and SMOLDER are all in the school library working on their latest assignment for Twilight, a report on “FRIENDSHIP AND THE HISTORY OF EQUESTRIA”. Sandbar and Ocellus are on top of it, they both know Equestria’s history quite well. But the others are a bit dumbfounded by the stories. Gallus can’t get over the Tree of Harmony: “So wait. The tree grew a locked box and a rubber chicken was one of the keys and then the tree made a castle and a map. Are you serious?” Smolder agrees, Pony history is weird. COZY GLOW joins and asks if she can study with them. The gang agrees as Sandbar continues to try and explain the Tree of Harmony to the others. Despite the differing opinions on Pony history, the gang is clearly having a blast, and although they aren’t purposely trying to exclude Cozy Glow, she feels like an outsider... and doesn’t like it. She makes a few “innocent” comments about the differences in the group and manages to get the friends annoyed with each other. She casually mentions something about “what they’re all going to do when school is over and their friendship ends” and brings the energy of the room WAY down. It’s almost as if she were purposely manipulating them (but that would be CRAZY right?). Cozy offers to get the gang snacks for the study session, leaving them with a whole lot of awkward tension in the air. Ocellus notices something shimmering behind a painting on the wall. She moves it aside and discovers a stairway! Why is a painting covering a shimmering stairway? Curiosity wins out over annoyance with each other and the friends walk down the stairwell. They find themselves in strange crystal catacombs underneath the school!

The friends explore the catacombs. Sandbar has never heard anything about a place like this. Ocellus recognizes that it seems to be made of the same crystal as the TREE of HARMONY. As they explore, the crystal walls shift around them, separating the friends and trapping them with no way to get back to the surface! They try to find each other but can only see reflections of themselves at every angle... reflections that magically shift and change. Gallus’ reflection shows him back in Griffonstone, where no other griffons hang out with him. Yona searches for her friends, but in the reflections, she sees them escape without her. Her friends have left her alone in the catacombs forever. Smolder’s reflections keep looking smaller and weaker. She won’t be able to get out of the catacombs. She’s just not strong enough. Silverstream sees herself as a seapony back underneath Sequestria. A shadow appears above her. It’s the silhouette of THE STORM KING. She swims away to escape him, leaving her friends behind. Ocellus’ reflection reverts back to what she looked like before the changelings transformed. She’s forced to be a villain once again. Sandbar sees images of ponies telling him he’s wrong to hang with the “non-ponies” he’s always around. He’ll never truly understand friendship. Like the Phantom Zone in the Donner Superman, the friends find themselves trapped in their own crystal prisons of fear and it seems like they will never escape.

Each of them has their own “mini-realization” moment. Gallus figures out this is all an illusion because he DOES have friends who want to hang out with him. Silverstream realizes that even if she did return to Sequestria, her friends would still always be a part of her life to help her face whatever comes next. Ocellus accepts her changeling past for what it is, the past. It’s not her future, her friends are. Yona realizes her friends would NEVER leave her and Smolder won’t quit, no matter how impossible things look, because she refuses to let her friends down. Sandbar

stands up to the ponies and tell them he knows he's found friends that will last a lifetime! As they each "embrace their fears" the crystals around them shatter and they find each other.

The friends all realize that they let the things Cozy Glow said get to them. They are amazing friends and they always will be, no matter what! Together Sandbar and Ocellus piece together that these catacombs clearly have something to do with the Tree of Harmony. The roots of the tree must have grown and built all of this. The crystal reflections weren't trapping them, they were teaching them...almost as if the tree itself were reaching out to them. Gallus and Smolder realize they just lived through their own super weird part of Pony history! But why THEM, Yona wonders? Their theorizing is interrupted by Cozy Glow calling their names. She rushes down the corridor. She was SO worried! She's been searching for them for awhile. She over heard what they said about the crystal reflections and claims that she learned something in the catacombs too. She apologizes for the things she said earlier – she was just feeling left out. The group accepts this and as they head towards the stars, Sandbar says he thinks they should tell the teachers about the catacombs – this place definitely requires more study. Cozy offers to do it, since they all still have their reports due tomorrow. As the friends get back to work, Cozy looks back towards the catacombs with interest...