

MY LITTLE PONY
Season 8

Sounds of Silence
Ep 823

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SOUNDS OF SILENCE

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Logline: Applejack and Fluttershy are tasked with visiting the Kirin, a lost civilization of ponies known for honesty and kindness, who have shunned one of their own for not taking the mandatory vow of silence that keeps their anger in check.

APPLEJACK and FLUTTERSHY have been summoned on a Friendship Quest, the first repeat of a pair of ponies to be called. AJ says it must mean they're pretty good at solving friendship problems – and that's lucky, cause this one is a doozy: their destination is far at the map's NEW season 8 outer edge, a location they've never been to, or heard of before. TWILIGHT doesn't have answers in her books, and new Keeper of Tales, ROCKHOOF, can only share that in times past, a group called the KIRIN lived there, known for their kindness and truth-speaking. Unfortunately, another creature also lived there – the NIRIK, a fearsome beast of pure fire. Fluttershy *really* hopes they don't encounter those.

Taking the Friendship Express as far as they can, Applejack and Fluttershy go deep into uncharted terrain. It's a little scary, and they're afraid they might encounter flaming Niriks, especially when they hear hoofsteps approaching from all around. But a group of unicorn-like ponies step out, revealed to be the beautiful Kirin. Applejack and Fluttershy introduce themselves, but the Kirin don't say anything. Applejack wonders if they don't understand, but it's clear the Kirin do. Fluttershy manages to use charades to figure it out – the Kirin don't speak. “*Don't or won't?*” “*Both.*” Applejack is flummoxed – how are they supposed to solve a friendship problem if none of them talk?! Fluttershy says she's sure they'll be able to figure things out, eventually. Applejack comically tries to get the Kirin to make a peep – asking questions, and finally sneezing with the hopes of a “gesundheit,” – no luck. In frustration she asks if ANY of them speak! As one, the Kirin point to a forest path. Applejack goes to check it out, while Fluttershy stays with the Kirin to learn what she can.

Applejack soon encounters AUTUMN BLAZE, a female Kirin, high on a mountain terrace. Applejack says she's relieved to finally find a Kirin that talks. But Autumn remains silent. Applejack face-hooves, only to hear Autumn chuckle – “*gotcha!*” Autumn Blaze is a garrulous, charismatic, teasing Kirin, full of fun and thrilled to talk to another pony. She shares that that's why the other Kirin turned their back on her – she had enough of their vow of silence. Applejack is starting to get an idea of what the friendship problem is. But she doesn't understand why there's a vow of silence in the first place! Autumn shares in a song (she LOVES singing, the main reason she couldn't bring herself to give up her voice) what happened to her civilization – a long time ago, one Kirin said something that hurt another's feelings. And the hurt one retaliated with cruel words. As the Kirins' anger grew, the whole village was destroyed in their rage. So to prevent it ever happening again, the Kirin all bathed in the Stream of Silence, which took away their voices so they'd never utter an angry word again. Or express emotion, really. “*I couldn't stand not being able to joke with friends, or sing, or share a story, just in case I might get angry.*” Autumn explains, so she researched and found an antidote to the stream's silencing properties. But the other Kirins refused to drink the cure, and they threw Autumn out of their community. Applejack doesn't

understand – *“no pony should give up feelin’ everything just to stay away from gettin’ mad.”* She leaves to go talk sense into the Kirin.

Fluttershy has “heard” the same tale as Applejack (through sign language, etc.). But she has a different take away that she shares with AJ – because she’s learned the OTHER part of the story (seen in a mural in the center of the village). When the Kirin get mad, they change into their furious fire-forms – the Nirik (sort of a yin-yang thing)! That’s how the village was destroyed. She can understand why the Kirin don’t want that to happen. As Applejack and Fluttershy argue, the Kirin get more and more anxious, watching the two ponies disagree. Finally, they grab them both and hustle them off to the Stream of Silence before things get worse! Applejack and Fluttershy protest, but they can’t break free! If they hit that water, they’ll never be able to speak the truth/talk to animals again!!!

Suddenly, a beast of fire leaps in their path and orders the Kirin to let her friends go. It’s a Nirik... That sounds an awful lot like Autumn Blaze?! The other Kirin cower and back away. Autumn calmly quenches her flames. Fluttershy asks how she was able to control her temper as a destructive Nirik, and Autumn explains – she’s learned that the danger is not in the anger, or in being a Nirik. It’s in letting your anger rule you... Which is just as bad as letting your fear of being angry rule you. Applejack and Fluttershy now both see the others’ point – Niriks are pretty scary. But giving up joy, songs, and poems about sunsets is no kind of life!

They appeal to the Kirin to let Autumn back into the village. They know from experience that in life, everypony gets mad. AJ: *“But the solution isn’t to stuff your anger down. It’s to talk honestly about how you feel.”* Fluttershy: *“If you feel yourself becoming a Nirik, then take some time away for yourself to be mad where you can’t hurt anypony.”* Autumn chimes in – that once you no longer fear your own anger, you can use it for good – like protecting your new friends from being thrown into the Stream of Silence...

The Kirin share a look, then nod, acknowledging this truth. Their leader uses Autumn’s antidote and speaks – Autumn will be allowed back in the village, and she can teach them all she has learned about controlling her anger... And perhaps sing? They do all so miss her beautiful voice. Autumn says she’s happy to – and she thanks Applejack and Fluttershy – without them, she’d never have gotten the other Kirins to listen. At that, the two ponies’ cutie marks light up. *“Whoa! You’re glowing! Does that mean you’re angry?”* Autumn asks. *“Pretty much the opposite,”* Applejack smiles.