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MY LITTLE PONY

Season 9

Between Dark and Dawn

EP 913

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BETWEEN DARK AND DAWN

Outline by Gail Simone

Logline: Celestia and Luna take a long-hoped-for road trip to fulfill their recreational bucket list as sisters, leaving the Mane 6 in charge of planning for the Grand Galloping Gala.

TEASER**SC. 1 - EXT. APPLE FAMILY ORCHARDS – DAY**

“Remind me how this happened again?!” TWILIGHT says, as the MANE SIX gallop through the orchard (SPIKE flying overhead). The group dodges as a sticky, huge TOAD TONGUE snaps into frame. Instead of catching our heroes, the tongue grabs the trunk of an apple tree and rips it out of the ground to <SNAP> it OS...

Where it’s gobbled by a massive APPLETOAD, sitting in the middle of the orchard. “And what its doin’ eatin’ my family’s entire summer crop?!” APPLEJACK adds, fuming. A wincing FLUTTERSHY admits that it didn’t look like that when it showed up hungry at her sanctuary. She fed it an apple, and it was so cute she fed it another one, and... “It got BIG,” apologizes Fluttershy. “Well, how do we UN-big it?!” RAINBOW DASH demands, as the toad gives a mighty hop that shakes the orchard and sends the everypony stumbling. PINKIE PIE says that maybe since APPLES make the toad big, maybe if they feed it something else, it’ll get small! She hurls a cupcake at the toad. It inhales it... Then gets bigger still. “Maybe I need to feed it something ELSE,” Pinkie thinks. Spike turns to Twilight – isn’t there some sort of spell that will work? Twilight wracks her brains, but the toad takes that moment to snap out his tongue again...And catches Spike! “Spikey-wikey!” RARITY yells. The ponies hurry to try to free Spike, and Twilight powers up her horn to safely send the toad back to the Everfree Forest when suddenly...

“PUT HIM DOWN!” A regal voice calls from OS. REVEAL PRINCESS CELESTIA and PRINCESS LUNA. Luna conjures a massive DREAM APPLE that floats above the toad’s head, while Celestia uses her magic to release Spike. Together, the two princesses touch horns to the toad and teleport him away.

The Mane 6 are surprised – Rainbow Dash points out, “All the times we actually need their help, and they show up for THIS?” Celestia and Luna teleport back in, smiling proudly. “No need to thank us,” Celestia beams. “We can stick around if the toad comes back,” Luna offers. “Or come back another time?” Celestia adds. “Y’all think they’re gonna do this a lot?” Applejack asks a confused/frowning Twilight.

END TEASER**MAIN TITLES****ACT ONE:****SC. 2 - EXT. APPLE FAMILY ORCHARDS - DAY**

Twilight is a bit surprised/worried the princesses' appearance means they don't have faith in her and her friends' abilities. "We appreciate your help," she says, "but we know you have WAY more important ruler things to be doing, so..." Luna and Celestia shake their heads – their schedule is completely free. And after recent events (the S9 premiere, specifically) Luna and Celestia were reminded how much fun it is to be part of the action, to be part of a team, to have hooves in the pasture when there's a problem to solve!

"Can you give us a second?" Twilight smiles, and the Mane Six and Spike quietly confer, as the princess sisters start gathering up the fallen apples from the toad incident. Twilight worries to her friends - if the princesses insist on solving problems for them, how will the Mane 6 ever learn to take over leadership roles? "Relax, Twilight, it was one time," Spike says soothingly. Until Luna calls, "Are there any other creatures, evil spells, or friendship problems we can help with?" "Let me take care of this," Applejack tells Twilight.

AJ honestly suggests that if the princesses enjoyed this adventure so much, just think of all the other exciting experiences they've missed out while being rulers. All the fun things they've missed out on – things that are way better than tug-o-war with toad tongues. The sisters share a look – it hadn't occurred to them, but YES! There must be an entire LIST of all the fantabulous things the sisters have wanted to do, but have been unable to, due to their royal responsibilities.

Twilight is delighted. "That's a great idea!" she says. Celestia says, almost as an afterthought, "So you won't mind watching over Equestria while we're gone, and supervising the preparations for the Grand Galloping Gala!" "Uh...Surrerre?" Twilight says, starting to realize just what she's gotten them all into...

SC. 3 - INT. CELESTIA'S CASTLE THRONE ROOM – DAY

The princess sisters take to the "Fun Not Yet Had" List idea with the enthusiasm of kids having a slumber party. They have both made lists, but haven't shared them with each other yet. Celestia says, "Imagine! A chance to do whatever we want! You know what THAT means..."

"Luxury!" says Luna. "Adventure!" cries Celestia at the same time. An awkward moment passes, the first hint that they're not on the same page. Luna explains that she has all the adventure she could ever want, every night in pony's dreams. It would be great just to enjoy some pampering and R&R. Celestia says she understands, but her day job is one long list of meetings, and decrees, and decrees about meetings, so she'd like some excitement. A beat as they ruminate on the problem, and then blurt out together: "We can take turns and do both!" Smiles all around. Huzzah!

Luna says she has the perfect accessories, and steps OS, only to come back with an odd strap around her waist, and one for her sister, much to Celestia's surprise and confusion. "It's a belly pack!" Luna enthuses – she got one for each of them! Because SISTER TRIP! Celestia diplomatically adds, "Oh. It's...it's very nice?" "We can use it to carry our hoof sanitizer," says Luna, helping Celestia on with hers. Celestia winces – it looks ridiculous, but...Sister Trip!

SC. 4 - EXT. CELESTIA'S CASTLE – DAY

The Mane 6 arrive at the castle as the princesses are departing. Celestia and Luna are wearing some ridiculous touristy gear, perhaps sun hats or visors or sunglasses.

Celestia, perhaps unnecessarily, explains how important the Grand Galloping Gala is to Twilight, who bristles a bit, like any star pupil being told what she already knows. But that melts away as the two sisters regale the M6 with a comedically brain-bursting flood of information and preparations that need to be done. Every item seems essential, all the instructions are vague and confusing, and suddenly Twilight and the others are aware of the sheer depth of responsibility they have taken on. At one point, Twilight seems to be hearing multiple voices from both princesses at once. “And be sure to peel the pineapples and rally the guards and polish the armor and...” “Have you got all that, Twilight?” asks Celestia. Echoing her previous answer, all she can say is, “Uh...Surrre?”

Celestia says that the MOST CRUCIAL thing of all is to remember to use the amulet that controls the rising of the sun and moon. This is vital. Twilight takes the amulet with some overconfidence and some reverence. The princesses leave, and Twilight attempts to rally the troops. “We got this, team! What’s our first priority?”

Everypony answers at once, with a completely confused response. “Polish the guards! Rally the pineapples! Peel the armory!” It’s going to be harder than they thought.

SC. 5 - EXT. CANTERLOT BORDER – DAY

The two princesses on their first road trip, their first adventure as sisters, full of enthusiasm. They decide they are going to travel not as royalty, but as “regular ponies,” to experience Equestria the way others do. EXCITEMENT! In fact, they’re not even going to fly! They’re going to walk EVERYWHERE! Because they’ve never done it before! It’s going to be AMAZING!

DISSOLVE TO – an hour later. It’s not that amazing. Both ponies are exhausted already, tired of walking, but Luna is really playing it up. “Being a regular pony is HARRRRD!” she says. “I’m tired and I’m thirsty and I’m tired and I’m hungry and my hooves hurt and I’m TIRED!” Celestia is tired too, just unwilling to give in already. They stop at a...

SC. 6 - EXT. REFRESHMENT STAND ON REMOTE ROAD – DAY

It’s a cute woodsy stand selling fizzy rainbow lemonade. The PROPRIETOR instantly recognizes the princesses and starts to be a bit obsequious, and Luna just wants a drink, but Celestia insists that they treat the sisters as regular ponies, it’s a royal decree, practically.

“Okay...If you’re sure...” says the proprietor. “Sure as any regular pony!” Celestia says. “Then the line is over there.” WHIP PAN to a long, long, long line, all ponies waiting in the hot sun for a fizzy rainbow lemonade. Luna groans. Maybe there’s a REASON they didn’t do all these things before...

ACT TWO:

SC. 7 - EXT. FOREST ROAD – DAY

Luna says that since they're a little tired, maybe the first thing they do shouldn't be TOO wild, and Celestia readily agrees. "Exactly what I was thinking. So...ZIP LINE!" "Zip line?" Luna asks, half-heartedly, a semi-forced smile on her face. "ZIP LINE!" Celestia says, with a wild-eyed adventure lust.

CUT TO: The duo zip line over a gorge. Even Luna has some fun, but Celestia is clearly loving it, and buys tons of souvenirs – "I Ziplined the Gorge shirt" and a photo of the sisters over the gorge, and a mug, and some stickers... Luna says it's great that Celestia enjoyed herself so much. Now it's time to do something Luna's ALWAYS wanted to do but never could because of her nocturnal hours...

SC. 8 - INT. EQUESTRIA POST OFFICE – DAY

The two princesses, in another unending line, this one moving even slower. Celestia is skeptical, but Luna is elated. "WOW! We're at the post office! This is where ALL THE MAIL in Equestria comes from! Isn't that amazing?!" "Oh, yeah," says Celestia, bored out of her mind but still trying to be nice. They get to the front of the line finally...Luna is thrilled. "One stamp, please!" She puts the stamp on a postcard, and was about to drop it in the slot, when she instead just hands it to Celestia. It's a postcard of the post office. "Here. I was just going to mail it to you, anyway. Celestia forces a smile. "MY TURN!" She says, looking to her list...

SC. 9 - INT. HUGE UNDERGROUND CAVERN – NIGHT

Luna can't muster much enthusiasm for this activity. The sisters are spelunking, wearing the hardhats with magic flashlights on the front, as they drop down into a huge cavern in the pitch blackness. Celestia says that the bottom of these caves have never been explored before. Luna can only respond, "...yay?"

SC. 10 - INT. BEAUTY SALON – DAY

Luna is in a chair, in heaven, getting her hooves painted and her mane styled, wildly colored and permed and glitzy makeup on her face. She might look a LITTLE ridiculous as she talks about how she's always dreamed of getting a mane-over, but not NEARLY as ridiculous as...WHIP PAN to Celestia, brooding and clearly miserable in her chair, as the beautiful princess pony with the long flowing mane is being made over with 80's style spikey disco goth black hair. She couldn't hate this more, and it's clearly starting to fester, so she gets a BIT passive aggressive, and chooses...

SC. 11 - EXT. HUGE CLIFFS OVER THE SEA – DAY

Luna looks horrified, she's still got all her mane-over makeup and hair. Luna says, "Wait. Wait...what are we doing now?" Celestia smiles. "Cliff-Diving!" she answers chirpily as she pushes her sister off the edge, and we hear a long angry scream all the way down. When she surfaces from the water, her makeup is running and her hair is droopy and ruined, and she is

SMOLDERING. Celestia dives in and checks off CLIFF DIVING from her bucket list, smiling, with a little heart emoji.

MONTAGE

These are quick cuts, just showing the sisters' growing frustration and pettiness. Each time the princess who chooses that activity shouts out what they are doing, or perhaps shows the item being crossed off the list...

- At a museum, Luna looking at a pony version of DaVinci's PONA LISA painting. Celestia is tapping her hoof, bored.
- Whitewater rafting, they hit a bump, Luna falls in the water AGAIN, comes up growling in pure frustration.
- Luna and Celestia in a luxury box at an opera as a pony in a tuxedo is singing opera, Luna watches with opera glasses and Celestia is snoring loudly, drooling.
- They go surfing to a California beat, Luna falls in the water for the last time, then LEAPS out yelling, "JELLYFISH?!"

SC. 12 - INT. CELESTIA'S CASTLE - DAY

Twilight Sparkle tells herself in the mirror, "You can do this!" Spike, at her side, nods – he gave each of their friends the list of tasks they were supposed to have accomplished, which should give Twilight just enough time to take care of all the last minute preparations for the Grand Galloping Gala. There's nothing you can't do with your friends at your side!

SC. 13 - INT. CELESTIA'S CASTLE – THRONE ROOM – CONT.

Twilight's friends do indeed rush to her side – but with a chaotic list of problems! Fluttershy says the castle birds have sore throats and can't sing, Rarity says the royal fabric supply is out of purple and honestly how is she supposed to decorate?! Applejack says the royal road-sweepers are on strike – good luck gettin' fancy gowns down those roads. And Pinkie Pie opens the doors to let in several of the Canterlot elite (FANCY PANTS, SASSY SADDLES, and UPPER CRUST), all with a complaint, each more ridiculous and unsolvable than the rest, like: the petits fours aren't petite enough, the crème brulee's crust isn't crusty enough, the sparkling water isn't sparkling enough OR water-y enough, it's just endless. Nothing is going right. Rainbow Dash, seeing a crestfallen Twilight Sparkle, says, "I hope Luna and Celestia appreciate everything we're doing while they're off having fun!"

SC. 14 - EXT. FOREST—DAY

Celestia and Luna sit turned away from each other, front legs crossed as they dramatically fume at each other. Celestia icily says, gesturing to a picnic basket, "Well, I hope you're enjoying your super-exciting PICNIC." Luna tartly responds, without turning around, "It WOULD be, if you hadn't made us HIKE THE ENTIRE WAY HERE!" She pulls a thorn out of her hindquarters.

The sisters begin to bicker, and what starts as a discussion of the day's events quickly devolves into issues beneath the surface. Luna accuses Celestia of not wanting Luna to be happy, and that

she resents sharing power with her sister after ruling the day AND night for so long. Celestia says that's not true, and starts a flowery, pointed metaphor about the sun and moon taking turns in the sky, and the sun's warmth... Luna rejects the speech, "That's not a metaphor, Celestia! Don't think I don't know you're talking about us! And don't use your Royal Canterlot voice!" Celestia, clearly angry, shouts back, "Honestly, one disagreement and you go all Nightmare Moon!" This clearly stings Luna, who adds a new final item on her bucket list. "I just thought of something ELSE I always wanted to do," Luna says, reading from her list. "Be ALONE!"

Celestia, sad, then angry, writes on her list too. "Finally, something on both of our lists!" And they walk off in opposite directions, not looking back.

ACT THREE:

SC. 15 - INT. CELESTIA'S CASTLE LIBRARY – DAY

Twilight Sparkle is holding the sun/moon amulet. Spike peers an instruction manual, filled with baffling illustrations and poorly translated directions. He reads to Twilight as she tries to figure out the amulet. "Okay, put slot A into Tab 7. "Seven? Seven isn't even a LETTER!" Twilight yells.

The rest of the Mane 6 and Spike come in, downhearted. They all tried to do too much, and nothing is working. They are near amusing despair. Pinky Pie says the food isn't ready. Fluttershy says the castle courtyard is filled with ponies waiting to get in. And don't even TALK to Rarity about the decorations. Everypony wonders how the Princesses managed to accomplish so much. Applejack says, "Yep. Guess now we know why they leave Twilight n' us to defend Canterlot and help spread friendship."

Twilight brightens – suddenly realizing, that's exactly what they need to do! "Spread friendship?" Rainbow Dash asks, "Cause I'm pretty sure we got that covered." No, Twilight insists - DELEGATION! She tells everypony to find somepony else in the castle and start DELEGATING!

SC. 16 - EXT. BEACH – BRIGHT DAY

ON Luna sitting back, drinking her (non-alcoholic) tropical drink, enjoying the sun. She says, "This is so much better. SO much more relaxing without my sister." But she doesn't look that happy.

SC. 17 - EXT. A BRIDGE OVER A DEEP RIVER- DAY

Celestia is about to bungee jump, and is talking to herself. "Who needs a gloomy sister hanging around all the time anyway?" But she doesn't look that happy.

SC. 18 - EXT. A HOT TUB IN THE HILLS - DAY

Luna, a fruit and cheese tray by her side as she sits in the burbling tub. She sighs heavily.

SC. 19 - EXT. SKY – DAY

Celestia parachuting, her parachute opens to reveal a royal image of her and Luna. She sighs sadly.

SC. 20 - EXT. HOSPITAL INTERIOR – NIGHT

A NURSE puts a cooling lotion on Luna's severe sunburn. "Didn't you wear ANY sunblock?!" the nurse asks sternly. Luna winces sheepishly. "Is that a thing? Celestia would've told me if she were here..."

SC. 21 - EXT. DEEP FOREST – NIGHT

Celestia looks a bit nervous, she's lost in the forest and can't read her map. She rotates it and peers closer. "Now, was it two left turns and a right, or two rights and a left?" Creepy eyes peer out of the dark all around her. She sighs, "Luna always handled the directions." She stumbles onward.

SC. 22- EXT. FORK IN THE FOREST ROAD—NIGHT

An arrow indicates a path to Mt. Everhoof's summit, and Luna and Celestia, coming from opposite directions, reach the fork at the same time. They make awkward small talk, no longer angry but unable to apologize. Both claim to have been having huge fun by themselves, both exaggerating by a huge margin. "You going this same way?" Celestia asks. Luna says yes, she was going to watch the sunrise from the summit. Celestia was going to base jump. "You can walk up with me...if you want, I mean."

SC. 23 - EXT. MT. EVERHOOF SUMMIT – NIGHT

It's a beautiful, spectacular view. Luna sits to wait for the sunrise. She's never seen one from the mountain and she's just now coming to appreciate it. This touches Celestia, and she sits down beside her, saying "I think the night is pretty special too." The two sisters stare up at the stars. Finally, Luna admits, "You know...Being with your sister all the time is hard. But when I was up on the moon I realized... Being WITHOUT your sister is harder." Celestia smiles and puts a hoof around Luna. "I wouldn't trade you for any of the adventures on my list," she smiles. And as the sun begins to rise... The moon doesn't budge. For a moment, both hang in the sky, together. Celestia and Luna stare, mouths agape. This isn't an eclipse, it's nothing ever seen before. Eventually, Luna says, "Wow. I guess we ARE a metaphor!"

Celestia talks to her sister from the heart – it's okay if two friends, or sisters, can like different things. Luna agrees - and they don't have to do every single thing together to know they care about each other. Celestia smiles and teases, "So...You wouldn't wanna base jump with me while we're here, right?"

Luna smiles, "As long as we get ice cream sundaes afterward." "White chocolate raspberry?" Celestia asks. "AND black licorice walnut," Luna says. They share a smile, then lean in closer to each other to watch the odd sky.

SC. 24 - INT. CELESTIA'S CASTLE – NIGHT

Twilight Sparkle jumps up and down on the amulet as Spike rifles through the pages of the instructions. “Spike. Are you sure this is what it said to do?!” <CRACK!> The amulet snaps in half from the abuse. Twilight looks horrified.

SC. 25 - EXT. CELESTIA’S CASTLE – CONT.

With both moon and sun still in the sky, we hear Twilight’s panicked yell: “DOES ANYPONY HAVE ANY GLUE!?!?”

END