**UNCOMMON BOND**

**Written by Josh Haber, Kevin Lappin**

**Produced by Devon Cody**

**Story editing by Josh Haber**

**Supervising direction by Jim Miller**

**Directed by Denny Lu, Mike Myhre**

**Transcribed by Alan Back (**[**ajback@yahoo.com**](mailto:ajback@yahoo.com)**)**

Prologue

(*Opening shot: fade in to the sun in a tranquil daytime sky and tilt down to the Ponyville train station. Starlight Glimmer paces the platform, a happy bundle of nerves, and gazes searchingly in one direction along the silent tracks that stretch toward the horizon.*)

**Starlight:** (*trotting in place, turning to conductor stallion at window*) Ooooh! Excuse me, when does the noon train from the Crystal Empire arrive?

**Conductor:** (*slightly bemused*) Uh…noon.

**Starlight:** Huh. Right. (*Laugh.*) Sorry. (*Trot in place.*) I’m just a little excited because my friend Sunburst is coming!

(*She directs a big grin through the glass. Dissolve to her walking alongside an engineer stallion as he pulls a dolly stacked high with luggage across the platform and pays no attention.*)

**Starlight:** He’s my oldest friend. I mean, we’ve known each other practically forever. (*She stops; he goes on.*) We have tons in common.

(*Another grin; now the view dissolves to a close-up of her sitting on her haunches and addressing DJ P0N-3, partly visible in the foreground. An energetic dance track can be faintly heard, the blue-maned unicorn bobbing her head to the beat.*)

**Starlight:** We both love magic and games and jokes—everything, really. Now that I think about it, there isn’t a pony in all of Equestria I have more in common with.

(*As she finally realizes that she is being roundly ignored, the camera zooms out to frame DJ P0N-3’s trademark headphones socked firmly over her ears. The music is coming from these, cranked up loud enough to be heard through the housings. Starlight shoots her a dirty look, but before she can come up with anything more devastating, the sound of a distant locomotive whistle prompts her to gasp happily, get up, and hurry toward the platform’s edge. A train pulls in, stopping in just the right spot to put one set of car doors directly in front of her. These slide open so that a great many crystal ponies can emerge; she looks eagerly back and forth through them, but worry pulls her mouth into a frown after a few seconds. Once the last of the passengers have debarked, she gallops to the open doorway and peeks inside. Cut to her perspective, looking down the length of the cars in one direction—empty—then back to her, glancing the other way—then to her perspective, finding these cars equally vacant.*)

(*When the camera cuts back to her, the doors slide shut with no warning and she pulls her head out barely in time to avoid a broken neck. The train pulls away in a hiss of steam, leaving one low-spirited unicorn now alone on the platform. She lets her head drop and begins to plod away, but the next word stops her cold.*)

**Sunburst:** (*from o.s.*) Starlight?

(*She glances back over her shoulder; cut to her perspective of her old friend, letting some of his overstuffed luggage settle out of his field and onto the platform. She gasps happily; back to her.*)

**Starlight:** Sunburst! (*They gallop toward each other and embrace.*) You made it!

**Sunburst:** Of course! I’ve been looking forward to this visit for a long time.

(*He levitates one suitcase into a nearby wagon and begins to shift a second, larger one. Starlight takes control, grunting with exertion, but it proves to be too heavy and hits the boards with a thud. The lid flies open—it is full of books, a few of which tumble out.*)

**Starlight:** Whoa. How long are you staying?

**Sunburst:** Uh, just a little reading for the train. (*Grin.*)

**Starlight:** (*giggling*) Same old Sunburst.

(*She has no trouble levitating the tomes back into the case and forcing the lid down, and one grunting heave sends the case into the wagon. Sunburst’s magic brings his last bag over to join them as she continues.*)

**Starlight:** It’s gonna be so great spending time together! Just like old times. (*Close-up.*) You and me, doing the stuff we like—games, magic—

**Sunburst:** (*from o.s.*) —antiquing—

(*Not at all what she had expected to hear, judging from her suddenly wide eyes.*)

**Starlight:** What? (*Cut to frame both.*)

**Sunburst:** Antiquing. You know I like antiquing.

**Starlight:** You do?

**Sunburst:** (*laughing a bit*) Um, of course! Historical knickknacks, ancient relics—oh! You are so lucky! Ponyville is Antique Central!

**Starlight:** It is?

**Sunburst:** How have we never talked about this? (*poking her in the chest*) We are going antiquing, and you are gonna love it!

**Starlight:** (*smiling*) Okay. Let’s drop your stuff off at the Castle first.

**Sunburst:** Sure. Only…

(*He gestures behind himself, the camera zooming out to frame a roof-high pile of luggage that most definitely was not there when he first arrived. A porter stallion strains to carry up one last suitcase by the handle in his teeth, having apparently been quite busy during the previous exchange.*)

**Sunburst:** (*laughing sheepishly*) …uh…we may need to make a few trips.

(*The piece is pitched atop the mass. Fade to black.*)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(*Opening shot: fade in to a shelf within a store stocked with a wide variety of random items: candlesticks, mirrors, teapots, and so forth.*)

**Sunburst:** (*trotting into view, followed by Starlight; pan to follow*) This is so great! Who knew *I’d* be the one showing *you* the cool sights of Ponyville?

(*But she does not even come close to sharing his enthusiasm.*)

**Starlight:** I’m a little surprised myself.

(*After a quick glance this way and that, he stops and ignites his horn, bringing two bricks out of a crate and floating them overhead.*)

**Sunburst:** (*showing each in turn*) Wow! What a difference between the hoof-molded bricks and the extruded ones, right?

**Starlight:** (*gamely, glancing between them*) Uh-huh. (*Weak chuckle; he puts them away.*)

**Sunburst:** (*looking toward ceiling*) Ooh!

(*A longer shot establishes that an assortment of chandeliers has drawn his eye.*)

**Sunburst:** And check out all these chandeliers! Sometimes, the crystals have magical properties.

**Starlight:** Oh! Oh, that’s cool. Uh, how do you—

**Twilight Sparkle:** (*from o.s.*) Sunburst! (*Cut to her at a doorway.*) I’m so glad you’re here! (*She trots to the pair.*)

**Sunburst:** In the antique store?

**Twilight:** In Ponyville! Starlight’s really been looking forward to your visit. (*Starlight grins.*) Though I’m glad you’re in the antique store, too. I’m usually the only one.

**Sunburst:** (*snickering*) That’s crazy! Who doesn’t like antiquing? (*to Starlight*) Right?

**Starlight:** (*grinning/laughing unconvincingly*) Right.

**Twilight:** (*trotting across store*) Ooh, look!

(*As she continues, cut to a close-up of a framed map, carved into a weathered stone slab and hanging on the wall, and zoom out to frame all three.*)

**Twilight:** An ancient map of Equestria made by the Mighty Helm!

**Sunburst:** (*to an uninterested Starlight*) Without the help of unicorn magic or pegasus flight, the earth ponies of the Mighty Helm were able to map the entire coast of Equestria.

**Starlight:** (*forcing a grin*) Cool!

(*Finding herself alone as Twilight and Sunburst set off across the shop floor, she starts gloomily after them. Dissolve to a slow pan along a set of shelves, the camera pointing out across the aisle and panning slowly as the two antique aficionados advance into view. Both stop short, gasping in unison, and race ahead as Starlight clumps wearily after them. What they have found is a pole-mounted hat rack; they circle around to inspect it from various angles, and Sunburst waves to Starlight, who does her best to feign interest with an artificial grin.*)

(*Dissolve to a close-up of a glass display case that holds a necklace consisting of a gold seashell strung on a thin chain. The beaming reflections of Twilight and Sunburst are visible on the surface, and both laugh merrily over the find before ducking out of sight. Cut to them; Starlight is a few feet back, chin propped on one foreleg supported by a stack of books and bored out of her gourd. They turn their eyes to her, but she does not react until one book slides loose, sending up a puff of dust and nearly dumping her to the floor. She manages a blushing smile and widens it to a grin while bending down to embrace the collection of well-aged literature.*)

(*Dissolve to a close-up of Twilight, floating a small stone carving past that might bear a strong resemblance to Sweetie Belle if she were an earth pony. Pan to follow it past an appreciative Sunburst and a dour-faced Starlight, who forces herself to grin at the item. Another dissolve, and Twilight is leading the other two down an aisle; only now does Sunburst fully notice just how much fun his old friend is not having. Cut to them.*)

**Sunburst:** You don’t have to pretend to like all this stuff.

**Starlight:** (*laughing airily*) What? No! I do like it. I mean, if you like it, I like it. Besides, we’ve almost looked at everything, right?

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) Oh, wow! You have got to see this Saddle Arabian vanity!

(*Sunburst gallops eagerly in the direction of her voice and finds her some distance along a side aisle, leaving Starlight to gaze dejectedly after him.*)

**Starlight:** This shop looked a lot smaller from the outside.

(*Dissolve to a long shot of the front entrance to the Castle of Friendship, zooming in slowly, then cut to a patch of floor in the library. Twilight’s magic sets down a multitude of items from a bygone era, a large, locked chest figuring prominently among them, and she and Sunburst step into view in the fore. Cut to the crowded interior of the chest, which lightens as the lid creaks open so the two can aim inquisitive, anticipatory grins toward the contents. Sunburst pulls out a lantern, which meets with Twilight’s approval, and pivots to show it off to an unenthused Starlight as the camera zooms out to frame her at a table. Caught out by the exhibition, she offers the best grin she can gin up on zero notice. A dissolve frames a close-up of Twilight, magically lifting a chipped teacup out of the day’s piled-up finds. Sunburst, having put the lantern aside, is quick to bring up a matching saucer on one hoof and let his own horn take control of it; Starlight, unnoticed, sourly twirls a teaspoon in her field until he notices and exerts his own to pull it away. As she grimaces to herself at being overlooked, Twilight and Sunburst have fun assembling the place setting in midair and stirring an imaginary cup of tea. The pinkish-violet face flops onto the table.*)

(*Dissolve to a long overhead shot of the three, Sunburst levitating an implement up for Twilight’s appraisal. Various items are scattered on the table, and others litter the floor among a couple of Sunburst’s suitcases. The cobbled-together tea service has been put away.*)

**Sunburst:** Did you see this Palominian letter opener?

**Twilight:** (*levitating a quill*) Wow! That goes well with this ancient phoenix-feather quill! We could write to each other! (*They embrace, setting the items down.*)

**Twilight, Sunburst:** Pen pals!

(*They pull apart with a laugh, Starlight joining in as best she can fake it.*)

**Starlight:** Um, I-I really like this old-timey barrel.

**Sunburst:** Actually, the stuff I bought is inside the barrel. (*leaning head against it, stroking staves, clapping*) But I can’t wait to see what it is! (*He floats the lid off…*)

**Starlight:** Wait. You don’t know what you bought? (*…and then back on, shaking his head.*)

**Sunburst:** Mmm-mmm. It’s a blind buy. Sometimes, shops get too busy to go through everything. So they load up a box or barrel and sell it without knowing what’s inside! (*Twilight grins.*)

**Twilight:** Buying one is sort of like a treasure hunt. (*Starlight does likewise.*)

**Sunburst:** Once, I found a first-edition history of Equestria, in the original Old Ponish.

**Twilight:** *Hleit farsetten pleit!*

[*Note: I have chosen to transliterate Twilight’s line as an approximation of spoken German, in which “ei” is pronounced as a long I and the “e” and “a” sounds in the second word are short vowels.*]

(*The two share a hearty laugh, but it takes a moment or two for Starlight’s total lack of comprehension to register in their minds.*)

**Sunburst:** (*to her*) It’s an Old Ponish saying. “Reward prefers risk!” (*Twilight considers this, not quite satisfied.*) Uh, it loses something in the translation.

(*Starlight nods and grins dumbly with a little laugh, but quickly deflates again.*)

**Twilight:** (*levitating everything off table and down to floor*) Mmm—why don’t we look through this stuff later?

**Sunburst:** Yeah. What do you want to do, Starlight?

**Starlight:** (*smiling slyly*) Well, I don’t know if you’re gonna remember this, but…

(*Tabletop-level view of the slightly confused stallion, seen from her side as she slides a flat, stained box into view toward him. He utters a short, sharp gasp, the eyes behind the round spectacles widening, and leans down over it.*)

**Sunburst:** Is this…

(*He grins, rotating it a quarter turn; cut to his perspective. The lid depicts two dragons breathing streams of fire that converge over an erupting volcano. Tilt up from it to frame a newly animated Starlight leaning over the table toward him.*)

**Starlight:** Dragon Pit! (*All three again.*)

**Twilight:** I remember that game! You two used to play it?

**Sunburst:** (*chuckling*) Pretty much anytime we weren’t working on magic. (*to Starlight*) I can’t believe you found a copy!

(*She offers up a genuine grin. Dissolve to the three sitting/lying on the library floor and gathered around the gameboard, which includes a model volcano at its center with tracks of “lava” snaking down its sides to run in all directions. Clusters of reddish crystals jut from the board surface as decoration. Each player has a dragon-shaped token on a path of movement spaces; Starlight nudges hers along, and Twilight uses a burst of magic to roll a die, which comes to rest showing one.*)

**Starlight:** Sunburst would get so excited whenever his dragon got trapped, he knocked the whole board over.

(*On the end of this, cut to a close-up of one token as Twilight leans down to float it one space ahead.*)

**Twilight:** That’s adorable.

**Sunburst:** Uh, well, it’s an exciting game. But I have a little more control over my horn now.

(*He proves it by levitating the die up, spinning it in place above one hoof, and letting it bounce across the floor. The roll is two, and he pushes his token ahead to match.*)

**Starlight:** (*tauntingly*) Uh-oh! Somepony’s dragon’s gonna get trapped!

(*The volcano rumbles and ejects a red-streaked marble, which rolls down the slope and along one of the tracks. It strikes Twilight’s token and stops dead as she watches with an amused smile.*)

**Twilight:** Doesn’t seem so exciting to m—

(*And then the space on which her token rests opens like a trapdoor to drop both it and the marble out of sight. She cranks off a peal of wild laughter, igniting her horn brightly enough to white out the screen as the whole board shakes and overturns. Fade in to the three and their capsized game, Starlight snickering silently while Twilight offers an embarrassed blush and grin.*)

**Sunburst:** Huh. I guess it *is* adorable.

(*Starlight giggles quietly. Dissolve to her and Sunburst in a guest room crowded with his luggage; he levitates books out of a case and tucks them away, while she shifts one of his bags off to the side.*)

**Starlight:** (*tentatively*) I hope you’re enjoying your visit so far.

**Sunburst:** Are you kidding? I mean, first antiquing, and then spending time with Twilight? (*Close-up of Starlight.*)

**Starlight:** (*caught off guard*) Oh! Yeah. She’s pretty great.

**Sunburst:** (*from o.s.*) Right? (*Both again.*) I mean, I know she’s a princess, but I never thought she’d be so fun to just hang out with.

**Starlight:** (*chuckling*) Well, she *is* the Princess of Friendship.

**Sunburst:** (*laughing*) Right. I guess that makes sense.

**Starlight:** So, tomorrow I thought—

**Sunburst:** I suppose I’m just surprised at how well we get along. (*His face falls; he stops sorting the gear.*) I don’t have much in common with most ponies.

**Starlight:** You two are pretty similar. I don’t know many ponies who are fluent in Old Ponish.

**Sunburst:** Exactly! (*He trots over, not seeing her sudden glumness.*) Oh, I probably have more in common with Twilight than anypony in Equestria! (*Back he goes.*)

**Starlight:** Right.

**Sunburst:** (*sighing, patting her shoulder*) Anyway, I better get some sleep. (*Yawn.*) Ponyville might be small, but there’s a lot to do. (*He ushers her out.*) Maybe we should ask Twilight what she recommends we see!

(*Having stepped out, Starlight puts her head back in through the doorway.*)

**Starlight:** Um…sure. (*Smile.*)

**Sunburst:** Great! (*His perspective of her.*) Good night, Starlight.

**Starlight:** Uh—

(*She gets no further before the door closes in her face. Cut to the discomfited mare in the corridor.*)

**Starlight:** (*softly*) —good night.

(*Four hooves plod away as the view fades to black.*)

Act Two

(*Opening shot: fade in to Sunburst sleeping soundly in his bed, glasses off, as the chirping of crickets drifts in from outside. With no warning, the door bursts open and a very perky Starlight bounds in.*)

**Starlight:** (*singsong*) Knock-knock!

(*Close-up of him on the end of this, grabbing and clapping on his specs, then cut briefly to his perspective as she leans grinning over him. When the view shifts back to the bed, he sits up with a yelp, the blankets sliding down enough to expose the fact that he has removed his cloak.*)

**Sunburst:** (*drowsily*) Oh. Hi, Starlight. (*Yawn.*) Is it morning already?

(*A glance out the window informs him that the hour is nowhere close to dawn.*)

**Starlight:** Yep! Maybe a bit early— (*He pulls the blankets up with an embarrassed grin.*) —but like you said, there’s a lot to see in Ponyville.

**Sunburst:** Uh…right. Okay.

**Starlight:** (*laughing*) Plus, I couldn’t really sleep. I just kept thinking about all the stuff *we* have in common and how much fun we’ll have today.

**Sunburst:** Great! Uh, is Twilight up yet?

**Starlight:** Uh, actually, I’m pretty sure she’s busy with princess stuff today.

**Sunburst:** Oh.

(*Yawning, he floats his glasses back onto the nightstand and settles down to sleep again; her next words jolt him out of it and prompt him to sit up again.*)

**Starlight:** *But* I’ve got a full day of stuff planned—just you and me. (*Chuckle.*)

**Sunburst:** Uh…great! (*Glasses on; she stares at him for a silent moment.*) Um…would you mind turning around or preferably leaving the room so I could get changed?

**Starlight:** (*suddenly catching on*) Oh! (*laughing nervously, backing out of room*) Right! Sorry.

(*Her magic wreathes the door handle and pushes it closed once she has gone, leaving him sitting up in bed and mulling over this off-kilter wake-up call. Wipe to a close-up of him standing among a grove of trees—fully dressed, mane/tail/beard in their usual, slightly unkempt state, and wondering just what is going on. He waves off an annoying fly; zoom out slightly to frame Starlight standing a pace or two back and gesturing ahead.*)

**Starlight:** One genuine Sweet Apple Acres apple tree! (*Chuckle.*)

(*Cut to just behind them and tilt up slowly; it is indeed a healthy specimen, but Sunburst does not seem terribly impressed and turns a puzzled look to her. The camera then shifts to an overhead shot of them, seen from among the topmost branches.*)

**Starlight:** (*coaxingly*) Because we used to drink so much apple juice as foals?

**Sunburst:** Uh—I don’t remember that. (*Ground level.*)

**Starlight:** Really? (*laughing*) I mean, it was all we drank. Uh, here. Try an apple. I bet that’ll jog your memory.

(*A few steps bring her to the trunk, where she pivots to deliver a buck that brings down a respectable number of apples.*)

**Voice of Trixie:** (*from o.s.*) Oh! Ow.

(*Close-up of the itinerant magician as she totters sideways into view from behind the tree, stars whirling around her head and an apple freshly impaled on her horn. She is not wearing her usual wizard’s hat and cape.*)

**Starlight:** (*from o.s.*) Trixie?! (*Cut to her and Sunburst.*) What are you doing here?

(*Trixie comes to her senses with a little gasp. During the next line, she magically pulls the fruit off her horn, turns it into a teacup, and settles it on an upraised hoof.*)

**Trixie:** I often seek the privacy of the orchard to practice new feats of amazement. (*It vanishes; she deflates a bit.*) And also, I fell asleep.

**Starlight:** Oh! Well, Sunburst and I were just catching up, so— (*Trixie gasps excitedly.*)

**Trixie:** I don’t suppose the two of you want to see a never-before-witnessed magical marvel?

**Sunburst:** Sure!

(*Starlight gives him an “anything but that” look and utters a dispirited sigh.*)

**Starlight:** (*resignedly*) Why not?

(*He grins from ear to ear. Dissolve to a close-up of a fully kitted-out Trixie standing proudly in front of her wagon.*)

**Trixie:** Behold, visiting friend from Starlight’s past, and be amazed by the Great and Powerful— (*winking*) —and current best friend of Starlight…

(*Zoom out. She is up on a small, light-festooned stage set up in front of the wagon and has set out two trunks of props, and Starlight and Sunburst have taken up haunch-sitting positions on the ground to watch the show. The entire setup is parked around the side of the Castle.*)

**Trixie:** …Trixie!

(*Fireworks burst in the air around the setup, bringing a giddy grin to Sunburst’s face and a contented little smile to Starlight’s. Kicking her horn into gear, she brings a long chain out from each trunk, wraps these around her legs and body, and applies a padlock.*)

**Trixie:** I give you… (*She strains briefly against the bonds.*) …the Unicorn Escape!

(*Her magic pulls a long rod into view overhead, an attached curtain hiding her from sight.*)

**Trixie:** (*from behind, grunting with effort*) Just…one…more…twist…and…

(*During the previous, the camera cuts briefly to the two spectator unicorns, who let their faces communicate their perplexity at the way this show is turning out. The view shifts to behind them again after she finishes.*)

**Trixie:** (*from behind, hushed*) The Great and Powerful Trixie requires a little assistance!

(*Another cut to the pair on the end of this; they gallop toward the stage, and the curtain is whisked away to expose the hapless magician. She has managed to entangle herself even more thoroughly, and a few drops of sweat are dribbling down from beneath the hat that has crumpled under the weight of the chain loops now wrapped around it. A zoom out frames Starlight and Sunburst on the stage to either side of her.*)

**Sunburst:** I know this trick. There’s a special link, but I could never hold the chain up long enough to find it.

(*His aura pulls at first one length and then another, eliciting a range of pained grunts and mumblings from Trixie but yielding no progress. Starlight’s patience quickly runs out, and her magic hoists Trixie bodily off the stage and separates her from the chains in one swift flash, letting them rattle down while gently lowering her onto her hooves.*)

**Trixie:** Well, if I could do magic like that, I’d have a whole slew of new tricks at my disposal.

**Sunburst:** I always liked close-up magic, because I knew I could do it if I just practiced enough.

(*He steps closer to her, slips a hoof behind her head and under the hat brim, and withdraws a string of colorful handkerchiefs as she giggles to herself. Dissolve to the three unicorns still on the stage, Sunburst’s power whirling the bright cloths in a circle overhead as Starlight boggles at the sight. The trunks have been cleared away, and the sky has lightened into morning. Sunburst points one front hoof toward the clouds and brings the handkerchiefs down; from this camera angle, they seem to thread themselves directly into his foreleg and disappear from sight. He faces the hoof forward with a satisfied grin, showing no trace of them—and then the camera cuts to his perspective. On the side facing him are a couple of bits of tape, indicating a paper cover on the hoof that is the same color as its pale tan sock. These pop loose, the cover falling away to reveal the whole string wrapped around his actual hoof, and Trixie cheerfully stomps her approval of the trick while Starlight stitches on a slightly pained grin.*)

(*Dissolve to an extreme close-up of an open newspaper, which tears itself down the middle to show Trixie in control behind it. The two pieces are further shredded and crumpled into a single large ball, which she works between her hooves and then unfolds to reveal it completely restored. However, a cut to her perspective gives away her secret—dozens of pieces of tape holding the scraps together—and the whole thing falls apart to frame a grinning Sunburst as her audience. The handkerchiefs are gone from his hoof now.*)

(*An expanse of some starry material is pulled into view to fill the screen in extreme close-up, then floated away from the camera. It is a deck of cards in Sunburst’s magical grip; he fans them out, keeping their backs to Trixie, and turns his face away as she draws one with her own field, checks it—three of diamonds—and slips it back in. Sunburst executes a quick cut and shuffle, then flips up the top card with a dazzling grin. It is the ace of clubs, though, and Trixie shakes her head at the wrong pick as it is returned to the bottom of the deck. Card after card is shown and rejected in like manner, and Starlight puts an exasperated hoof to her forehead at her old friend’s ineptitude.*)

(*A blue, polka-dotted cup is pulled down past the camera; behind its upended bottom, the view changes to show Trixie standing behind it and two striped ones arranged in a row, a smug smile on her lips and a small red ball on one hoof. Her magic lifts the dotted one, in the center, just long enough to slip the ball underneath, and both front hooves shuffle the cups in a pastel blur. The classic “cups and balls” routine has begun, and Sunburst and Trixie stand facing each other across the cardboard box on which the cups are laid out. He points to the center one, which she lifts with her aura to expose the ball, and is so pleased with his success that he stomps applause. However, the motion jostles the box enough to topple the other cups and expose a ball hidden beneath each. One ball bounces across the stage and rebounds slightly against Starlight’s hoof as she stares flatly toward the two illusionists.*)

(*Dissolve to all three standing amid a scatter of props.*)

**Trixie:** Starlight, why didn’t you tell me how much Sunburst and I had in common?

**Starlight:** (*dryly*) Gee. I don’t know.

(*Dissolve to a slow pan across the underground cavern in which Pinkie Pie found the Mirror Pool in “Too Many Pinkie Pies.” Starlight leads Sunburst down the natural ramp into the area, having regained her chipper demeanor.*)

**Starlight:** I know Trixie’s “magic” is, you know, fun, but the Mirror Pool is actual magic.

**Sunburst:** Whoa! Th-this place is pure pony lore!

**Starlight:** Yep. I mean, It’s supposed to be all dangerous and— (*Cut to Sunburst, inspecting his reflection in the water; she continues o.s.*) —I guess I shouldn’t have broken the seal to get in, but— (*Her image leans into view.*) —you wanted to see the sights of Ponyville, right?

(*She has referred to the huge boulder that Twilight and Big Macintosh used to plug up the cavern entrance at the end of that same episode. She ducks away again as puzzlement registers on Sunburst’s face.*)

**Sunburst:** So Pinkie Pie just dove in and made copies of herself?

**Starlight:** (*nodding*) Mmm-hmm. (*coaxing*) If *we* made copies of *ourselves*, we could get a year’s worth of hanging out over in one day.

(*A mildly reproachful look from the stallion is all it takes to make her reconsider.*)

**Starlight:** Uh, not that we would. (*A distant tapping is heard against the rock walls.*)

**Sunburst:** Do you hear that?

(*He trots in the general direction of the disturbance and she follows. Cut to a head-on view of the pair, moving through a dim passage that slowly brightens.*)

**Starlight:** Oh, I hope it’s not a leftover Pinkie Pie.

**Maud Pie:** (*from o.s.*) Not exactly. (*Both smile.*)

**Starlight:** Maud! How did you get in here?

(*Cut to frame all three ponies within a small chamber illuminated only by the lamp on the hard hat worn by Maud.*)

**Maud:** This cavern’s actually connected to mine.

(*Referring to the domicile she set up for herself in “Rock Solid Friendship.” The cause of the noise becomes clear when she starts striking a front hoof gently against a patch of wall.*)

**Sunburst:** Um, w-what are you doing?

**Maud:** Tapping.

**Starlight:** (*to Sunburst*) Maud isn’t super-chatty. (*Close-up.*) I mean, you and I could sit around and talk all day— (*Laugh.*) —but she looks pretty busy.

(*She looks toward him with sudden surprise as the camera zooms out to show her now standing alone. The next shot is an overhead close-up of Maud and an intently watching Sunburst at the wall.*)

**Sunburst:** Are you taking some kind of core sample?

**Maud:** Not exactly. I’m uncovering this section of strata for closer study.

(*Cut to Starlight on the end of this, a slight scowl wrinkling her features, then back to the other two.*)

**Maud:** You might want to step back.

(*He does as instructed, and she delivers one more blow against the stone before doing likewise. A sizable patch fractures and collapses, giving a brief glimpse of violet crystalline material behind it as the screen fills with dust. Starlight’s coughing is heard in time with the clearing view; now the lustrous layer beneath the dull rock gleams for all to see.*)

**Maud:** I’m studying this area’s metamorphic—

**Sunburst:** —foliation! Is this gneiss, phyllite, or slate? Wow. The pressure above must be pretty uniform to get the planar fabric to be this consistent.

**Maud:** You know about geology?

**Sunburst:** (*pacing across chamber*) Eh, I dabble. For example, by the speleothems in this cave, I kind of figured there was another way out.

**Maud:** (*crossing to him*) Because of the calcite deposits.

(*They walk off together, leaving Starlight to voice a long sigh and turn back the way she and Sunburst came in. Dissolve to Maud and Sunburst crossing the open space to another exposed luminous patch, which draws an enthusiastic reaction from him, then to a small depression in the ground as they step to its edge. This is filled with some dark, sluggishly bubbling liquid that again draws Sunburst’s interest; a bit of horn work, and he has brought up a rock covered in spatters of this goop. After Maud runs a cloth over the surface, it proves to a sizable gem whose every facet reflects her impassive countenance. She answers his broad grin with a subdued nod of approval.*)

(*Cut to the two rockhounds on the move, Sunburst having set the gem down and Maud now carrying a small pickaxe in her teeth. They stop beneath one particularly large stalactite protruding downward from the ceiling, and she cautiously chips off the tip and catches it so Sunburst can give it a closer look. Finally, the view dissolves to Starlight sitting on a stool, at a table in the library of the Castle. Her back is to the camera, but the slump of her entire body says everything about the severe case of the blues she has contracted. The Dragon Pit board game rests on the table, and she listlessly floats the tokens in a small circle above it as Twilight enters.*)

**Twilight:** Starlight? Where’s Sunburst? (*Starlight gives an “I don’t know” grunt.*)

**Starlight:** (*softly, sourly*) Doing stage magic with Trixie? Studying new rocks with Maud? (*Tokens down.*) You’re here, so I guess you two aren’t off translating some ancient Old Ponish text.

**Twilight:** What are you talking about? Why would Sunburst be doing any of that? I thought he came to Ponyville to see you.

**Starlight:** I thought so too, but it hasn’t worked out that way. (*smiling wistfully, floating two tokens up*) When we were foals, we had more in common than any two ponies in Equestria. (*Face falls.*) But now it seems like he’s got more in common with my friends than he does with me.

(*The playing pieces tumble down onto the board, and a trapdoor opens beneath one to drop it.*)

**Twilight:** (*circling behind Starlight*) Oh, everypony changes. But that doesn’t mean there aren’t still things you both like. You both love magic, right? (*Starlight turns wonderingly to her.*)

**Starlight:** Magic?

**Twilight:** Sure! You’re really good at it, and Sunburst practically knows every spell that ever was.

**Starlight:** (*gasping happily*) You’re right! Thanks, Twilight. (*jumping off stool, hugging her*) You’re the best! (*She trots off.*)

**Twilight:** Hm. I try.

(*Wipe to an overhead shot of the throne room. The central map table is bare, and the only occupied seat is Twilight’s, where Starlight sits with a scroll spread out before her and a levitated quill taking notes. Sunburst enters.*)

**Sunburst:** Starlight? What happened? (*Close-up.*) Maud and I found some fascinating sedimentary stratum [*sic*], but when I turned to show you, y-you were gone.

**Starlight:** (*setting quill aside*) Maud does have a way of making rocks really interesting, but I wanted to work on something a little more “us.”

[*Note: “Stratum” is singular, while “strata” is plural.*]

(*She puts four hooves on the floor to face him and floats the parchment over, letting him take it in his magic and start skimming.*)

**Sunburst:** What’s this?

**Starlight:** Just a little something I made up. (*Grin.*)

**Sunburst:** Whoa! You made up this spell, just now?

**Starlight:** (*stretching legs*) Yeah.

(*After a contented sigh at the release of muscular tension, she re-exerts her hold on the scroll and sends it up to the room’s tree-stump chandelier. A blast from her horn causes the writing to flare bright yellow and a blue-green whirlwind to emanate from it, spiraling down to envelop both of them. Cut to one “wall” of the maelstrom as it subsides, the throne room disappearing behind it to become the room in which Sunburst earned his cutie mark while playing with Starlight in their youth—as seen in Part Two of “The Cutie Re-Mark.” On the next line, cut to the two standing in the middle of the floor, scroll floating overhead.*)

**Sunburst:** Wow!

**Starlight:** I know, right? (*She throws a foreleg across his shoulders.*) But wait! There’s more!

(*Taking a step away, she zaps it a second time to create another tornado that sweeps down to revert them to pre-mark foals. Sunburst’s cape and glasses are gone, their manes/tails have shortened, and Starlight wears her mane in pigtails tied with blue-green ribbons as she did back in the day. Sunburst is more than a little shocked at the transformation, but Starlight is gung-ho about it.*)

**Filly SG:** Cool, right?

**Colt SU:** (*hesitantly*) Um…sure.

**Filly SG:** (*pushing him across room*) Now we can play Dragon Pit, just like we used to!

(*She disappears in a blur of color and returns an instant later to set the treasured game on a low table, already out of its box and ready to play.*)

**Colt SU:** A-Actually, I thought we could go with Maud and—

**Filly SG:** (*laughing*) I mean, nothing was better than just you and me playing this game when we were foals, right?

**Colt SU:** Starlight—

**Filly SG:** (*floating up two tokens*) Do you want to be red or blue?

**Colt SU:** (*suddenly angry; they clatter down*) Starlight, I don’t want to play the game at all!

(*The outburst brings tears to the young blue eyes; struggling to hold them back, Filly SG fires a third shot into the scroll. This time, it crackles with arcane energy that briefly whites out the screen and subsides to show the two foals back in Twilight’s throne room. The scroll rolls itself up under the filly’s control, and one more flash restores their present ages and appearances as it drops to the floor between them. A side door opens and Twilight enters the room.*)

**Twilight:** What’s going on in here?

**Starlight:** Nothing. I was trying to have fun doing the one thing I thought we still had in common— (*tearing up again, voice breaking*) —but I guess we don’t even have that anymore.

(*She gallops out, leaving Twilight and Sunburst to trade extremely worried looks. Fade to black.*)

Act Three

(*Opening shot: fade in to Sunburst pacing back and forth past Twilight.*)

**Sunburst:** I don’t understand. Starlight and I have known each other since we were foals, but that doesn’t mean we have to *be* foals to hang out.

(*The Princess voices an uneasy little moan and brings the discarded scroll up in her telekinesis. During the next line, she opens it for a read and then rolls it up again.*)

**Twilight:** Starlight does have a tendency to overdo. (*Away it goes.*)

**Sunburst:** I mean, it is surprising how well I get along with all of her friends, but she and I still have tons in common.

**Twilight:** Maybe you just need to remind her what those things are.

**Sunburst:** (*catching on*) That’s it! And that’s exactly what I’ll do! (*puzzled*) Uh…right after I think of them.

(*He puts a hoof to his chin in thought as Twilight moans dejectedly over this new roadblock. Wipe to him standing before Trixie’s stage and zoom in slowly; she is setting up a horizontal box for the classic “sawing someone in half” trick.*)

**Trixie:** Obviously you and I hit it off. I *am* quite impressive. (*Chuckle.*) And we share a love for prestidigitation.

(*A deft twirl of one foreleg causes a bouquet of flowers to appear in its crook.*)

**Sunburst:** Right! And Starlight and I share a lot of things too. I just need to think of them. What else do you guys have in common? (*Trixie tosses the flowers over her shoulder.*)

**Trixie:** (*magically opening box*) Well, we’ve both made not-so-great choices in the past.

(*She steps behind the head end of the rig and climbs in, the panel swinging shut behind her. Two stained, stuffed legs made of blue cloth pop out from the holes in the other end, and she forces her head out through the opening meant for it.*)

**Trixie:** And we’re self-conscious about everypony judging us, even though we’ve both changed—

(*Now her power maneuvers a large saw into position above the seam that divides the two halves of the box.*)

**Trixie:** —and are trying hard to be better. (*The saw slices through the box.*)

**Sunburst:** (*turning face away*) Yeah, we don’t really have that.

(*With his eyes averted, he completely misses the blade being set aside and the two halves being magically slid apart. Trixie’s “ta-da” grin shifts into a petulant grimace over having her trick ignored; once Sunburst realizes his blunder, he grins and offers a couple of feeble claps.*)

**Trixie:** Hmph! I can think of something you have in common.

(*She pulls her head in and emerges from the back of that half.*)

**Trixie:** (*pointedly*) You’re both poor practice audiences.

(*One of the fake legs tears loose and flops wearily to the stage. Dissolve to Maud and Sunburst sitting at the edge of the Mirror Pool; she no longer wears her hard hat, but is now using a small balance scale to weigh stones from a pile alongside. Her pet rock Boulder has a front-row seat to watch her clean one sample with a cloth.*)

**Maud:** Starlight and I don’t really have a lot in common, other than feeling different from most ponies—and comedy.

**Sunburst:** Comedy? (*Maud puts the stone on the scale.*)

**Maud:** I’m very funny.

**Sunburst:** Was that a joke?

**Maud:** No. (*Sunburst stands up; she starts cleaning another one.*)

**Sunburst:** Well, that’s more than I can think of that she and I have in common.

**Maud:** We don’t really spend that much time talking about that, though. Mostly we’re just comfortable around each other.

(*Sunburst sighs, the camera zooming in slowly on him to put her out of view.*)

**Sunburst:** (*pacing*) We used to be. We did everything together. (*increasingly worked up*) But now I’m wondering if we’ve spent so much time apart that we don’t connect over anything anymore. And if we can’t connect over anything, then maybe we’re not even friends!

**Maud:** (*from o.s.*) Well, at least it’s not serious. (*He turns, surprised; cut to her.*) *That* was a joke.

(*Dissolve to Twilight and Starlight walking down a corridor in the Castle.*)

**Starlight:** (*sighing*) I appreciate you trying to help, Twilight. But it seems pretty clear that Sunburst and I have grown apart.

**Twilight:** (*smiling*) I understand. But I feel like that only happens if you both let it. (*as both stop*) You still want to be friends, right?

**Starlight:** (*dryly*) I created a spell so we could relive playing a game in our childhood home— (*deflating*) —and bodies.

**Twilight:** Riiight.

**Starlight:** I’m just not sure Sunburst wants to stay friends too.

**Twilight:** (*smiling, backing up, wrapping aura around nearest door handles*) I think you might be surprised.

(*They begin to swing inward, away from the pair; cut to their perspective of what lies beyond. A set of sparkly, gold-trimmed purple curtains has been lowered to block off most of the space, and Maud and Trixie stand before this, the former without her rock-weighing equipment, the latter having shed her hat and cape. Trixie has the whole thing under her control, and a length of bright orange fabric snakes out behind her from the far side.*)

**Maud:** Prepare yourself…

**Trixie:** …for the new and improved Dragon Pit!

(*The curtains part to reveal the library, whose furniture has been cleared out to make room for a scaled-up version of the gameboard. Books have been laid out to form paths on the floor, and the central volcano stands within a ring of planks and sawhorses, the cloth is one of several that stand in for its lava-flow tracks. Even the reddish crystal clusters on the board have been re-created. The whole assembly brings a very odd look to Starlight’s face before the view wipes to an overhead shot of it. Twilight, Maud, Sunburst, and Trixie have donned dragon costumes in different colors and taken places along the paths, and a giant stone die rests in front of Sunburst. Starlight advances hesitantly into the room, past the costume that has been set out for her.*)

**Sunburst:** We had to take out a few spaces to get it to fit, but you hardly miss them. (*tilting die*) Maud made the dice [*sic*].

[*Note: “Dice” is plural, but the game only uses one.*]

(*A solid push sends it thumping across the floor to stop before Maud, and he moves two spaces in keeping with the number he has rolled.*)

**Maud:** Pumice is the lightest igneous rock. (*resting a hoof on it*) It seems the best choice.

(*She rolls a one and moves; now Trixie kick-starts her horn. On the next line, the caldera begins to glow in response and emits a brief burst of sparks and plume of black smoke.*)

**Trixie:** And I added the special effects. (*Laugh.*) There’s nothing like a little well-placed magic smoke.

(*Just as the real game used a marble when its volcano erupted, this version rumbles and spits out a red-streaked bowling ball that bounces back and forth across the lip of the caldera.*)

**Twilight:** (*as it rolls along a track toward Sunburst*) Looks like somepony’s dragon is gonna get trapped!

**Starlight:** (*to him*) I thought you didn’t want to play this game.

**Sunburst:** Well, I didn’t want to pretend to be a foal, but I know you wanted to play. I thought it’d be fun to play a version big enough for full-grown ponies. (*The ball comes to rest by him.*) What do you think? Fun, right?

(*Starlight casts two indecisive blue eyes across the tableau and the four life-size game tokens—three smiling/grinning, one stoic as always—and lets a calculating smile curve her mouth.*)

**Starlight:** (*igniting horn*) Actually, it’s missing something.

(*She lances a burst into the floor beneath Sunburst’s hooves, causing a jagged outline of cracks to snake around him. The spot creaks loudly, and he has just enough time for one panicked look before it falls away and he drops out of sight with a yell and thud. He quickly gets upright, though, and smiles up from the floor below as a salute to her workaround for the board’s trapdoor mechanism. She steps to the edge of the hole, wearing both an answering smile and the last dragon costume and ready to get in the game.*)

**Starlight:** (*giggling*) Now it’s fun.

(*The other players promptly join her, Twilight/Sunburst/Trixie laughing, Maud surely doing so on the inside. Dissolve to the train station, Starlight and Sunburst on the platform with two of the latter’s suitcases. A train pulls in to hide them from view; as the last of the arriving passengers leave the platform, both unicorns get the luggage stowed away with their magic. They have shed their dragon getups.*)

**Starlight:** I don’t know why I got so worried about us not having anything in common.

**Sunburst:** Yeah. (*They touch hooves.*) I kinda think it doesn’t matter, as long as we enjoy each other’s company.

**Trixie:** (*from o.s.*) And that game was certainly enjoyable!

(*On the end of this, cut to a hopelessly disorganized jumble of items floating along the platform—the rest of his gear, and everything he bought during his visit to the antique store in Act One. Twilight and Trixie each have control of part of this lot, and it shifts toward the train to reveal them walking up with Maud in between. All three have also removed their outfits, and both magic users are sweating a bit from having to move so much at once.*)

**Starlight:** What made it even better was getting to play it with all my friends.

(*All but Maud gather in for a group hug, but Trixie’s bright blue hoof hooks itself around the bluish-gray shoulders to drag her in. Sunburst then steps aboard, Starlight moving to the platform’s edge.*)

**Sunburst:** See you soon?

**Starlight:** You bet. I want to hear if you find anything interesting in that barrel.

**Sunburst:** Trust me, Starlight. You’ll be the first to know.

(*He moves farther along the car. Cut to just inside one window; he waves goodbye to the four mares as the train pulls out, then shifts his attention to the “blind buy” barrel he picked up. Telekinesis pulls the lid off and brings out a book, which he begins to read as the camera zooms in slowly and cuts to a close-up of the vessel. It is stuffed with other volumes from past ages, the topmost of which has a stained, dark gray cover decorated with a faintly glimmering cluster of stars and swirling curves within a hexagon. Zoom in slowly on this and snap to black.*)