**SECRET OF MY EXCESS**

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Prologue

(*Opening shot: fade in to an extreme close-up of an unlit candle. A unicorn’s violet, glowing horn extends into view and puts flame to it; zoom out to show that the horn belongs to Twilight Sparkle. She is in the library’s reading room, and the daytime sky can be seen through the half-open window curtains behind her. The candle, and two others that are already lit, stand on s small table at the wall.*)

**Twilight:** No distractions.

(*She walks off., magically closing the curtains so that the room dims a bit, and sets her face in single-minded determination.*)

**Twilight:** Today is too important.

(*Tilt up slightly to focus on her horn as it fires up again, then cut to an overhead shot and zoom out to frame the whole room.*)

**Twilight:** Re-shelving day!

(*Sitting on her haunches, she levitates every single book off its shelf at once, lets them tumble to the floor, and floats them back up into the air. A bit of concentration gets them organized into neat lines and starts them marching around her. Books move toward her as she names them and are sent off to their new homes in the stacks.*)

**Twilight:** *Understanding Medieval Equestria* goes in…Pony History! *Modern Spellcasting*—that’s Classics!

(*Cut to a section of shelves where volumes are being slotted in.*)

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) *The Art of the To-Do List*. (*She pokes her head into view.*) Actually, I kinda want to read that again.

(*It is floated out, but a burst of laughter from the o.s. Spike breaks her focus so that all the books end up jumbled on the floor again—except for the very few that have been re-shelved. The irked librarian sticks her head up from one pile; a book is impaled on her horn.*)

**Twilight:** Spike, what are you laughing at?

(*Tilt up to him on the stairs leading to their room. He is holding a large, heart-shaped red jewel upside down in his hands.*)

**Spike:** This little beauty is my birthday present to myself! (*Close-up of his reflection in a facet.*) It’s a fire ruby! (*Zoom out; he holds up a tuning fork.*) I’ve been aging it for months, and it’s almost ripe!

(*A tap of fork against gem causes both to sound off at exactly the same frequency; he giggles at the result. When he starts downstairs, one foot slips on an open tome and he drops o.s., losing both items. Up comes the end of his tail to balance the ruby upside-down on its point; once he uncovers his eyes and finds disaster averted, he looks happily around the mess.*)

**Spike:** Hey! You took my advice! (*standing up, chuckling*) Just use the whole floor as one big shelf.

(*Twilight looks daggers across the room and snarls threateningly at her self-satisfied assistant. Fade to black.*)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(*Opening shot: fade in to the library’s closed front door, seen from inside.*)

**Rarity:** (*from outside, through door*) Helloooo?

(*Her magic hits the knob and opens the door far enough to fit her head in.*)

**Rarity:** Anypony home? Twilight?

(*Her eyes pop and she sucks in a sharp gasp while throwing the door fully open. Cut to Spike, polishing his fire ruby.*)

**Rarity:** (*from o.s.*) Is that a fire ruby?

(*Zoom in to a close-up of it in this line. She leans into view, close enough to be reflected in its surface, and gives a delighted sigh.*)

**Rarity:** That must be at least twenty carats! No inclusions…pristine facets…

**Spike:** And totally delicious! (*Cut to Twilight, floating books around; she has removed the one from her horn.*)

**Twilight:** (*mildly annoyed*) Uh, if you guys don’t mind?

**Rarity:** Oh! Uh…of course. (*walking across room*) Uh, I just came by to see if you had any books on historical fashion.

(*Cut to Spike on the end of this line; he runs a finger over the gem’s surface and licks it to gauge the taste. The camera then zooms out to frame a very puzzled Rarity looking on.*)

**Rarity:** Did you say “delicious”?

**Spike:** Sure did! Next week’s my birthday— (*walking off*) —and this is my birthday dinner. (*Twilight returns, floating books and sending one to her.*)

**Twilight:** Start with this one.

**Rarity:** (*opening it*) Thanks, Twilight.

(*Cut to the violet unicorn, who keeps bringing up other tomes and filing them away.*)

**Rarity:** (*from o.s.*) I’ve got a feeling ruffled taffeta capes are going to make a *huge* comeback this season—

(*Back to her on the end of this; now she flips pages and reads intently.*)

**Rarity:** —and I want to be ahead of the game.

(*She loses a bit of steam on the end of this, having glanced enviously back to find Spike cradling his prize ruby. As she clamps her teeth onto her foreleg to hold herself in check, the camera cuts to a close-up of an open box that sits next to him. This is filled with padding that has a cutout to hold the ruby, and he nestles it in place.*)

**Rarity:** (*from o.s.*) I hope it’s as tasty as it is beautiful, Spike. (*Cut to frame both of them.*) I have never seen anything quite so stunning before.

(*Poise and grace have won this round against covetousness, but disappointment starts to creep over her face as he lifts the ruby back out and eyes it.*)

**Spike:** Gosh. You really like it, huh?

**Rarity:** Like it? It’s…magnificent!

(*The lovestruck baby dragon’s imagination casts a softly focused, sparkly background behind her lowered eyelids and gentle smile. After a bit of eyelash-batting on her part, reality reasserts itself in the library and he sighs heavily, eyeing his pride and joy.*)

**Spike:** Then you should have it.

(*Close-up of one front hoof; he pulls it gently toward himself and sets the ruby on it.*)

**Spike:** (*from o.s.*) This beautiful gem was meant to be with you.

(*Zoom out a bit; she lifts it wonderingly, then floats it up with shining eyes.*)

**Rarity:** I don’t know what to say! (*He cringes a bit as she circles around him.*) This is so thoughtful. Oh, my little Spikey-wikey!

(*She leans in to plant a kiss on his left cheek, leaving a prominent lipstick print and snapping him upright. He topples backward to the floor as if he were a two-by-four, hearts floating up from the spot where he falls; meanwhile, Twilight keeps inspecting books.*)

**Rarity:** (*hopping across with ruby*) Thank you so much!

**Twilight:** Wow, Spike! That’s one of the kindest, most generous things you’ve ever done. (*Cut to Spike; she continues o.s.*) I’ve never seen Rarity so happy.

**Spike:** (*dreamily, blushing, touching his face*) I will never wash this cheek again.

(*He goes limp with a blissful little chuckle. Dissolve to a close-up of the horse-head bust on the center table; a party hat has been set on top, and a cake rests next to it. The shelves behind the table have been filled with books. Tilt down slightly to frame more goodies laid out around the bust, and pan to one side as Twilight levitates a table across the confetti/streamer-strewn floor to the wall. A full punchbowl and several cups are brought down onto this; she gives the bowl’s ladle a tweak to place it just so, then looks across the room. More streamers have been strung up over the bookshelves.*)

**Twilight:** Just about finished, Spike?

(*Cut to him, on the bookshelf ladder’s top rung and tacking up more decorations.*)

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) Everypony will be here soon.

**Spike:** There! Perfect!

(*A shot of the entire reading room frames the extent of the pair’s work: plenty of balloons, streamers, and side tables loaded with sweet stuff.*)

**Spike:** Everything looks perfect! (*Close-up; he climbs down to stand in right-side profile.*)

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) Not quite everything.

(*Zoom out to frame her as well; she walks over, levitating and passing him…*)

**Spike:** A washcloth? I don’t get it.

(*She just gives him a hard, cocked-eyebrow glare and leans her face down into his; he drops the cloth and backs off a few steps.*)

**Spike:** Aw, no way, Twilight! I said I wasn’t gonna wash the cheek that Rarity kissed, and I meant it!

(*He turns his head defiantly away, allowing the camera to zoom in on his left cheek. It does still bear the print from Rarity’s kiss, but a considerable amount of grunge has since accumulated. Twilight responds with a determined smile, floating the cloth up and pawing the floor; he flicks one unsettled eye her way and breaks into a run.*)

**Twilight:** (*sending cloth ahead*) It’s over, Spike! I’m cleaning that cheek!

(*Cut to a close-up of the fleeing dragon; a flash of violet light envelops him and dissipates to show him gone. An instant later, a second flash from o.s. right brings him back, still running and yelling crazily. Another pair of flashes take him back again, after which the camera zooms out to frame Twilight behind him. She is using her teleportation ability to bring him back toward herself every time he tries to get away.*)

[*Animation goof: All the tables are gone in this shot.*]

**Spike:** (*between cycles*) It’s mine!…Stop it!

**Twilight:** Never!

**Spike:** Twilight…!

(*He disappears with a flash, but the next one brings a genuine surprise when Pinkie Pie materializes on the floor instead. In her mouth is a party horn, which she blows loudly before zipping away to stop near where Spike reappears.*)

**Pinkie:** (*throwing confetti/streamers*) Happy birthday!

(*As soon as she backs out of view, Twilight seizes the opportunity and plies the washcloth on Spike’s cheek. The crud is scrubbed off in a heartbeat.*)

**Pinkie:** (*from o.s.*) Party time! (*Cut to frame all three.*) Woo-hoo!

(*Zoom out to bring the rest of the room into view. Applejack, Fluttershy, Rainbow Dash, and Rarity have slipped in; all but Rainbow hold wrapped presents in their teeth by the ribbons, while the last carries a dumbbell tied with a bow. Cut to these four.*)

**Spike:** (*from o.s.*) Are those…for me? (*Cut to him.*)

**Applejack:** (*walking by, tossing gift into his arms*) You bet they are, birthday boy.

**Fluttershy:** (*walking by, setting hers on top*) Happy birthday, Spike.

(*Rarity’s present is next on the stack, followed by one from Pinkie and finally Rainbow’s dumbbell. This last item is the one that overloads his arms and sends him to the floor; he regards the now-slightly-crushed boxes with some confusion. Applejack and Fluttershy trade an equally puzzled shrug as Pinkie looks on, and Rainbow descends to the trio.*)

**Rainbow:** Don’t you know you get presents on your birthday? (*Spike stands up.*)

**Spike:** Well, actually, this is my first birthday in Ponyville. (*a bit grumpily*) I usually just get one present—from Twilight—a book.

(*Right on cue, down the stairs she comes, floating a beribboned manuscript; surprised at his words, she hides it behind herself and backs off with a blush and a sheepish grin. Literally, in this case, as a sheep’s bleat is heard as she does so. Cut to Rarity, who has put on a gold necklace set with the fire ruby he gave her; the gem is positioned as a right-side-up heart.*)

**Rarity:** Speaking of presents…

(*She levitates a bright pink cape out from behind herself; it has a ruffled collar in dark magenta, with lighter accents and a silver clasp.*)

**Rarity:** …this is from my new line of taffeta capes. (*Pan to follow it to the others; she continues o.s.*) I’m gonna make one for each of you.

(*They voice their appreciation for the garment.*)

**Rarity:** I’ve been inspired by the generosity of my little Spikey-wikey— (*Her perspective of him and the group during this, then back to her.*) —who gave me this beautiful fire ruby—one of the kindest acts I’ve ever experienced.

(*In close-up, he goes a bit limp on his feet and lets a goofy, tongue-hanging smile steal across his face. Zoom out to frame Rarity alongside; she nuzzles his cheek with a blissful little sigh. Dissolve to a pan across the reading room floor, now littered with presents, discarded boxes, and scraps of wrapping paper; Spike pokes his head through the bottom of one box and pulls out a green checked blanket with an apple pattern.*)

**Spike:** Applejack, I can’t thank you enough for this great blanket.

(*Cut to Twilight and Applejack in party hats, the latter eating an apple as he jumps up to hug her.*)

**Spike:** I really needed a new one.

**Applejack:** Come on, Spike. You already thanked me fifteen times. (*Cut to him; she pushes him off gently and continues o.s.*) I’m startin’ to get a little embarrassed.

**Spike:** I know I keep thanking you guys— (*His perspective, panning across the group.*) —but I’m just so grateful. I wish this party could last forever. (*Pinkie is jumping on a balloon and pops it.*)

**Pinkie:** Duh! (*knocking Twilight, Applejack aside*) The party *can’t* last forever ’cause you have to go to Sugarcube Corner, ’cause the Cakes said they have a special surprise for you— (*Cut to him; zoom out to frame her.*) —’cause it’s your birthday!

(*She leans a bit too far over the pile of gifts and ends up on the floor.*)

**Spike:** No way! (*He bolts for the door.*)

**Pinkie:** (*calling after him*) I said the party couldn’t last forever— (*Cut to him running out; she continues o.s.*) —but it doesn’t need to end right now!

(*Paying no mind at all, he yanks the door shut behind himself. Wipe to the exterior of Sugarcube Corner and zoom in, then cut to the shop floor as he hurries up to a display case and bounces eagerly in place. Mrs. Cake fishes around behind it and comes up with a cake on her head, and Mr. Cake walks over.*)

**Spike:** Hi, Mr. and Mrs. Cake!

**Mr. Cake:** There’s the dragon of the hour! Happy birthday, Spike!

**Spike:** Thanks!

**Mrs. Cake:** (*ducking down*) When we found out it was your birthday— (*Cut to him; she continues o.s.*) —we couldn’t resist trying out a new recipe.

(*Back to the couple; she has set down the cake and now holds up a cupcake on a plate. The frosting is bright blue and studded with tiny matching jewels.*)

**Mrs. Cake:** Sapphire! (*Giggle. Zoom in on it, then cut to Spike and his widening pupils.*)

**Spike:** (*breathlessly*) Wow… (*Big grin.*)

(*Wipe to him outside, cupcake in hand and waving back to the Cakes at the front door as he departs.*)

**Spike:** Thank you so much! (*They go inside; he licks his chops.*) Man, first I get a bunch of great presents from my best friends, and now an amazing sapphire cupcake! (*laughing*) What a day!

(*His attention is diverted just long enough for him to run flat into Cheerilee; the hit sends him and the treat in two different directions, but he lashes out his tongue to catch and reel it in. Once he lowers it out of his line of sight, Cheerilee is seen sitting dazedly on her haunches, the fresh produce from her grocery bag scattered on the ground. She shakes her head clear.*)

**Spike:** Oh my gosh! (*walking to her*) I’m so sorry, Cheerilee! (*She starts refilling the bag.*)

**Cheerilee:** That’s okay. What’s got you so excited?

(*After eyeing the mess, he stuffs the entire cupcake in his mouth and begins picking up.*)

**Spike:** (*mouth full*) Pinkie Pie told me I should come see the Cakes so they could give me a cake, ’cause it’s my birthday today.

**Cheerilee:** Well, happy birthday, Spike! I wish I had something to give you. (*She thinks for a moment.*) Uh…oh!

(*All the runaway fruits and vegetables are back in the bag, and Spike has swallowed his cupcake. The schoolteacher digs around for a second and produces a white fedora with a red band and feather, setting it on his head.*)

**Cheerilee:** Here you go.

**Spike:** Wow! Really?

**Cheerilee:** Sure. Everypony should get fun gifts on their birthday.

(*He jumps up to give her the biggest hug that his short arms will allow, and she heads out with the bag on her back.*)

**Cheerilee:** Have a great birthday, Spike.

**Spike:** (*pulling sides of hat brim down*) I wish every day was my birthday.

(*Dissolve to him on the move down the street, wearing a rather puzzled sort of look. Behind him, Derpy Hooves pops up from a well between Bon Bon and Lyra Heartstrings, surprising them greatly.*)

**Spike:** Pinkie Pie mentions my birthday to the Cakes, and I get a cupcake. I mention it to Cheerilee, and I get this great hat.

(*Flicking its brim, he stops short at the sound of something squeaky, as if a rubber toy. His eyes oscillate up and down as if watching this thing bounce, and a longer shot reveals a rubber ball being bounced under a hoof. A camera shift frames its owner, a dark khaki earth pony colt with a white mane/tail, medium blue eyes, and a cutie mark showing a dish of ice cream. This pony, Lickety Split, nimbly works the ball back and forth from rump to head as the wheels inside the scaly little skull start turning. Zoom in on his calculating grin.*)

**Spike:** Hmmm…I wonder. (*Lickety now twirls the ball on a hoof; Spike calls to him.*) Hey there, Lickety Split! That’s a pretty cool ball you got there. (*slyly*) Did you know it’s my birthday?

(*A smile from the colt is followed by a dissolve to a close-up of his ball, which is now being bounced by Spike as he walks along and chuckles shrewdly. Tilt up to his face.*)

**Spike:** This is unbelievable!

(*Another chuckle; cut to a light yellow earth pony mare, Junebug, taking a drink at a fountain. Her curly mane and tail are two shades of yellow-orange, and she carries baskets of flowers on her back. Pan to Spike, just arrived in this area; he chuckles once more and lets his clawed fingers tap against the ball’s surface before zipping up behind Junebug.*)

**Spike:** Hey, Junebug! (*She opens her eyes—yellow-green.*) It’s my birthday!

(*She straightens up, wipes her mouth, and responds to his expectant wide-open arms and beckoning hands by smiling pleasantly.*)

**Junebug:** Uh…happy birthday, Spike! (*She starts off.*)

**Spike:** Aren’t you gonna give me something—you know, like a birthday present? (*She stops.*)

**Junebug:** Um…I-I don’t have anything.

**Spike:** (*pointing*) Well, how about those flowers?

(*He makes as if to lunge at them, pupils narrowed to slits and face set in a sudden burst of unbridled avarice.*)

**Spike:** I’ll take those.

**Twilight:** (*from o.s., sharply*) Spike!

(*A bit of telekinesis seizes one green ear and drags him backward to her; she sighs wearily and backs him off with a hoof.*)

**Twilight:** Sorry, Junebug. (*Another burst yanks him o.s.*) I think Spike might have gotten a little carried away.

**Junebug:** Um…no problem. (*walking off*) Uh, happy birthday, Spike!

**Twilight:** (*to Spike*) What are you doing? You’re out here demanding gifts now?

(*He has kept the ball wrapped up in his tail, but now drops it and vigorously shakes his head as if trying to clear some foreign influence out of it.*)

**Spike:** Wow. You’re right, Twilight. (*taking off hat*) I don’t know what got into me. Thanks for snapping me out of it. I better go give Cheerilee her hat back. (*Twilight smiles.*)

**Twilight:** No problem. (*walking off*) See you at home later?

**Spike:** Sounds good! (*waving*) Bye!

(*As soon as she is out of sight behind the town square pavilion, desire gets the better of him again and he jams the fedora back over his head spines with a nasty little laugh.*)

**Spike:** Who else has a present for Spikey-wikey?

(*Out comes his forked tongue for a hiss as a set of translucent inner eyelids blink over the hard green pupils. Dissolve to just outside the library’s hanging-lantern window at sunrise of the following morning. A rooster’s crowing is heard; cut to just inside Twilight’s bedroom window and pan/tilt down to her asleep in bed. She shifts position a bit to get away from the brightening sunbeams, but soon gives up, opens her eyes, and sits up to stretch.*)

**Twilight:** Wow. What a rough night’s sleep, Spike. (*leaning over footboard, laughing a bit*) I had the weirdest drea—

(*Her eyes bug out as the camera tilts down to the loft’s floor. Piled up by the bed is a haphazard scramble of random items, a few of which have figured in past episodes: Rainbow’s rainbow-striped football from “Fall Weather Friends,” Apple Bloom’s red-streaked bowling ball from “The Cutie Pox,” the kitchen sink Rarity hid from Hoity Toity in “Suited for Success,” among others. The entire jumble pulses slightly as Spike’s snores and mumbles float up from somewhere inside. Back to an appropriately needled unicorn.*)

**Twilight:** (*levitating items away*) I can’t believe you! Where’d you get all this—

(*She cuts herself off with a sharp gasp, letting everything crash back down, and the camera cuts to the baby dragon’s basket. The problem is that the dragon is no longer a baby; Spike has now grown to perhaps twice its length, his arms and legs much longer than before and hanging over the sides. He is still wearing the hat Cheerilee gave him, and he sits up with a hissing yawn to look Twilight straight in the eye.*)

**Spike:** What happened?

(*He rubs his head as her face rearranges itself into a genuinely horrified grimace. Snap to black.*)

Act Two

(*Opening shot: fade in to the gangly Spike, now standing up and regarding himself with justifiable trepidation. He has come down from the loft.*)

**Spike:** What’s happening to me, Twilight?

(*Zoom out; Twilight reads frantically at the other side of the room, and he starts trying to pull the now-too-small fedora off his head.*)

**Twilight:** I don’t know! Think back to last night. (*Back to him; he pulls it off and she continues o.s.*) Did something happen?

(*Inspecting himself and flexing the fingers of one hand, he lets his mind roam free. Cut to a softly focused, white-haloed pan around various parts of the room, with Twilight popping her head into view—this is his perspective.*)

**Twilight:** (*echoing a bit*) Spike?

(*Normal lighting resumes as the camera cuts to the pair; he has let his tongue loll out of his mouth, but her next words snap him back to the moment.*)

**Twilight:** What did you do after I saw you? (*He claps his head.*)

**Spike:** Well, I went to talk to…

(*Zoom out slightly to frame a large globe sitting across the room; he trails off and moves dreamily toward this.*)

**Twilight:** (*really annoyed*) Spike!

(*He has begun to turn the globe and run a finger over its surface, but she telekinetically yanks it away and he loses his balance.*)

**Spike:** Huh? (*He topples over; zoom out to frame Twilight.*)

**Twilight:** You went to talk to who? (*He gets up.*)

**Spike:** Oh, um…I don’t remember. (*Cut to the floating globe; zoom in as he continues o.s.*) Hey, can I have that globe? You’re not using it, right? (*He reaches up and grabs it.*)

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) Huh?

(*Now he forgoes the stairs in favor of climbing up over the loft’s edge, the globe held by its support in his tail, and adds it to his stash.*)

**Spike:** (*grabbing a book from shelves*) What about this book?

(*She teleports up there and levitates it toward the ceiling while he keeps his grip on it; she ends up balanced atop the globe.*)

**Twilight:** Spike, I’m worried about you. You’re usually not so…grabby. (*Book yanked free; he pulls it down again.*)

**Spike:** My arms aren’t usually this long, either.

(*His voice deepens considerably on the second half of this line, prompting him to clap both hands over his mouth. Two purple eyes send a very hard glare down toward him.*)

**Spike:** What’s happening to me?

(*She rubs her chin, thinking hard. Wipe to a doctor’s examination room whose butterfly wallpaper and bowl of lollipops suggest its use by the pony equivalent of a pediatrician. Spike sits on the elevated table, Twilight on her haunches by its end. He reaches for the candy only to get his hand slapped away before the doctor arrives. Khaki earth pony stallion, fluffy orange mane/tail, green eyes, cutie mark of white doctor’s bag and stethoscope, dressed in white coat, with reflector on forehead and stethoscope around neck, small round glasses. His voice is that of a kindly old practitioner.*)

**Doctor:** Well, now, what seems to be the problem? (*Spike reaches toward a jar of tongue depressors.*)

**Twilight:** This is Spike. (*Hand slap.*) And something’s wrong with him. (*Slap.*) He used to be half this size, and he keeps trying to take things that aren’t… (*Cut to the doctor; another slap as she continues o.s.*) …his!

**Doctor:** (*crossing to him*) All right, then, let’s just have a look-see, shall we? (*baby talk*) Wi’l guy not feewing too good? (*flexing Spike’s arm*) Who’s the brave wi’l boy, huh? (*Spike tries to bite his nose.*) Who’s the brave one?

(*He taps a knee as if testing the growing dragon’s reflexes, and gets a flaming green belch in the face that leaves him singed and slightly miffed. Cut to Twilight and zoom out to frame Spike.*)

**Twilight:** So? What do you think, Doctor?

**Doctor:** (*normal tone, from o.s.*) Well, I-I think I know what the problem is. (*Both smile; cut to him.*) He’s a dragon! (*The pair again.*)

**Twilight:** That’s not the problem. He’s always *been* a dragon!

**Doctor:** (*from o.s.*) Oh, well, that would explain it. (*Cut to him, cleaning up at the sink.*) Listen, I don’t know anything about dragons.

(*On the end of this, the one in question grabs a handful of lollipops.*)

**Doctor:** I know about baby ponies. (*Back to Twilight; he continues o.s.*) Maybe you should try a vet.

(*Spike seizes more sugary treats as her face falls.*)

**Twilight:** (*groaning*) Okay. Thank you, Doctor.

(*Wipe to the lower half of Spike’s body stretched out on a table in a different examination room, this one showing a dog’s anatomical chart on the wall. Up comes the veterinarian, Dr. Fauna: light yellow-brown earth pony mare; two-tone light blue mane/tail tied back; brown eyes; cutie mark showing dog and cat heads and a white bird; white lab coat with a thermometer in the pocket. She speaks in a clipped, no-nonsense manner.*)

**Fauna:** Hmph. Well, I’m flummoxed. (*Pan to frame Twilight in the background during this.*) You bring me a dog, I’ve got it diagnosed in seconds. A snake, even faster. But, to be honest, I’ve never seen a real live dragon before.

(*On the end of this, cut to Twilight’s side of the room; Spike can now be seen standing on the table on all fours. Cut to a close-up of him as he angrily snorts black smoke out of his nose, then zoom out on the next line to frame Fauna patting his head.*)

**Fauna:** (*baby talk*) Who’s a good boy? Who’s a good boy? (*He smiles and drools; she picks up a jar of dog biscuits.*) Sit.

(*He sits on his hindquarters, panting and begging like Winona might if she were here, and she tosses him a biscuit. Instead of eating it, he eyes it craftily and drops it into the bowl of lollipops from the doctor’s office—having apparently taken the whole thing. Pan from him to a puzzled animal expert and a deflated unicorn.*)

**Twilight:** Thanks anyway. (*walking out*) Come on, Spike.

(*Wipe to one corner of the interior of Zecora’s hut. Spike’s head rises into view so the herbalist zebra can poke and prod it from various angles. A gold pocket watch is swung before his eyes; he eyes it hungrily and tries to snatch it, but it bounces away on its chain and he only gets a handful of air. In a longer shot, Zecora gets a hand in her teeth and flops its arm around as Twilight observes anxiously; the other arm flips up and smacks the unicorn across the face.*)

**Zecora:** Ooh, he is starting to mature.

Of this fact I am quite sure. (*Spike scratches himself.*)

**Twilight:** Mature? So he’s just growing up? (*He picks up a pot.*) But that doesn’t explain why he keeps grabbing things.

(*She levitates it away from him; Zecora approaches her steaming caldron, carrying a hoof-load of green powder.*)

**Zecora:**  A dragon’s heart is prone to greed—

(*adding some; Twilight walks up*) A steady diet to make growth speed.

Then, the resulting bigger size

(*Contents glow.*) Only makes their hunger rise.

(*Cut to a close-up of the liquid surface, with her and Twilight’s reflections visible. They disappear on the first line of the following as the rest of the powder is thrown in and forms into a glowing green silhouette of baby Spike. It grows a notch, collects several items into itself, and becomes a fearsome apparition.*)

**Zecora:** If this trait should go unchecked,

(*now o.s.*) If Spike continues to collect,

More growth will certainly occur.

He is going to turn into a monster!

(*The visage bursts into phosphorescent wisps; cut back to Twilight’s widened eyes and zoom out to frame Zecora as she gasps. Items are heard being shifted elsewhere.*)

**Twilight:** You mean, the more things a dragon collects, the bigger and greedier he gets? But how do we stop him before he’s completely out of control?

**Zecora:**  If his monstrous ways you wish to impede,

You must prevent him from practicing greed.

(*The sound of the opening door brings their attention, and the camera zooms out to reveal that Spike has absolutely cleaned the place out. Nothing remains except empty shelves, overhead vines, and the platform on which the caldron had been resting. Twilight gives Zecora an embarrassed little giggle over her number-one assistant’s sudden kleptomania.*)

(*Wipe to a Ponyville street. Twilight gallops back and forth across it and is brought up short by a familiar young voice not far off.*)

**Apple Bloom:** (*from o.s.*) Get away from her, you brute!

(*Cut to the Cutie Mark Crusaders, engaged in a vicious tug-of-war with Spike over Scootaloo’s wheels. His voice has dropped a few more notes.*)

**Spike:** Spike want!

**Scootaloo:** You’re not getting my scooter!

**Spike:** (*grunting*) Spike want!

(*Back to Twilight, who looks around frantically, then zoom out as she spots a broom propped against a wall. This gives her an idea; back to Spike.*)

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) Hey, Spike! (*The broom floats over to him.*) Check out this amazing broom!

(*She makes it do a few un-broom-like acrobatics, distracting him from the Crusaders so that they can bail out, scooter and all.*)

**Spike:** SPIKE WANT!!

(*A new growth spurt hits right about now, increasing his size by perhaps half, and he hisses and drops to all fours in order to chase the broom. Cut to his gibbering perspective as he barrels toward Twilight; she zips down a side street, and the camera cuts to just inside the library’s front door, which opens under her power.*)

**Twilight:** (*galloping in; broom follows and stops*) Come on, big boy. (*now o.s.*) Look at this incredible broom.

(*She zips it ahead; he lunges partway in after it but comes up empty-handed, getting stuck in the doorway for good measure. A bit of straining pops him loose so that he tumbles across the reading room.*)

**Spike:** (*chasing broom*) *SPIKE WANT!!*

(*The run takes him into an adjoining room, whose door she slams shut behind him and braces with her back. The camera-shaking force of his impacts against it nearly throws her loose.*)

**Twilight:** Fight all you want. I am not letting you out!

(*The place falls silent and the door stops doing the cha-cha, to her very great surprise. Cut to its other side as she magically opens it and walks in, then zoom out. The shelves have been swept clean and all the books and furniture gathered into one giant pile, with Spike draped over it all.*)

**Twilight:** (*groaning*) Spike… (*Cut to him; she continues o.s., levitating the pile away.*) …I just re-shelved this room!

(*He gets unceremoniously dumped on his back in the process, and she brings the lot back out into the main reading room and kicks the door shut again. However, she barely has time to catch her breath before a new, louder, longer crash shakes the entire building.*)

**Twilight:** (*moaning wearily*) What now?

(*Cut to just inside the second room as she magically reopens the door. Her eyes pop; cut to a close-up of the hind-leg portion of a dragon-shaped hole punched through the wall, the camera pointing in from outside. One frazzled unicorn climbs up over its bottom edge for a look around, and the camera slowly zooms out to frame the full extent of the damage Spike has inflicted on the woodwork.*)

(*Wipe to the uppermost reaches of a totally bare tree as a few leaves drift forlornly in the wind. On the next line, tilt down to frame Applejack looking up from the base; the surrounding trees have also been stripped.*)

**Applejack:** Now who in Ponyville would steal my apples? For that matter, who would steal my leaves? (*Twilight skids up to her.*)

**Twilight:** Applejack, help! Spike’s running wild and I need you to lasso him!

(*The farmhand’s mental machinery freezes up briefly before she smiles and laughs.*)

**Applejack:** (*resting foreleg on Twilight’s shoulder*) Oh, that’s a good one, Twilight! Sweet little Spike runnin’ wild! What a laugh!

(*Zoom out slightly as “sweet little Spike” rumbles past, all the apples and leaves gathered up into one piled-high armload. Leaves flutter down to fill the screen for a moment, then clear to give a close-up of two ponies who are clearly not amused. Applejack ends up wearing a temporary mustache of two leaves stuck on her upper lip.*)

**Applejack:** (*levelly*) Twilight, get my rope.

(*Cut to one massive violet hind leg slamming down on the grass, then to a galloping Twilight with a rope end in her teeth. A pan frames Applejack on the other end, keeping pace and with the leaves gone from her face. A leap, a duck by Spike to reach for a dropped apple, and the two would-be wranglers go whirling around the nearest tree instead of roping him in. They end up lashed to the trunk, their backs against it. Rather than take the apple, the reptilian compulsive hoarder roars into Applejack’s face and thunders away. Overhead shot of the pair, zooming out.*)

**Twilight, Applejack:** HEEEELLLLP!! (*Rainbow, flying overhead, stops short.*)

**Rainbow:** Huh?

(*A quick dive brings her down to the pair’s level; she does not untie them, but does fall on her back in a peal of hearty laughter.*)

**Rainbow:** Don’t tell me. You—you tied yourselves up? (*Cut to the pair; her laughter from o.s.*)

**Applejack:** Get us outta here right now! (*A scream drills the air; she gasps.*) What was that? (*Rainbow snaps up.*)

**Rainbow:** Sounded like Fluttershy to me!

(*Cut to the backyard of Fluttershy’s cottage.*)

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) Fluttershy? (*All three fly/gallop up.*) Fluttershy! (*They stop by a large tree.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*from o.s.*) I’m up here!

(*Tilt up quickly to follow their line of sight into the branches. One terrified yellow pegasus is hanging on for dear life, along with a few squirrels.*)

**Rainbow:** (*from o.s.*) What happened?

**Fluttershy:** (*stammering a bit*) I was helping my squirrel friends with a dance step, and all of a sudden, a giant rampaging dragon stormed through! (*Cut to frame all four on the end of this.*)

**Twilight:** That was Spike!

**Fluttershy:** Spike? But why would Spike steal my chicken coop?

(*Pan/tilt down quickly to the chicken yard. Nothing is left within the fence but a few fowl and the coop’s entrance ramp and board floor, the latter studded with nails that had secured the rest of the structure.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*from o.s.*) He just pulled it out of the ground and filled it with a bunch of apples and stuff! (*A different scream; pan quickly to Rainbow.*)

**Rainbow:** That sounded like Pinkie Pie!

**Twilight:** Come on, girls!

(*Wipe to an unoccupied bit of Sugarcube Corner, which is quickly filled by a boiling-mad Pinkie when she rises into view, a cake on each front hoof.*)

**Pinkie:** Back! (*Zoom out; she stands on a loaded display rack.*) Get back!

(*Desserts go flying across the room; cut to Spike near the stairs. He dodges her throws, holding on to the missing coop he is using as a container for the rest of his loot, and snatches one cake out of the air. This one goes in the coop as the camera pans to frame the gang of four coming in and Pinkie unleashing another salvo.*)

**Twilight:** Pinkie Pie— (*Cut to Pinkie; she continues o.s.*) —stop giving him cake!

**Pinkie:** I’m not giving him cake! I’m assaulting him with cake!

(*She lets fly with two more and reaches down to reload, but one set of jumbo violet claws darts in and grabs up all the ammo; she goes over the edge and hits the floor face first. One furious pink pony gets up alongside the other four.*)

**Pinkie:** How dare you take the cake!

(*A roar from the o.s. Spike; cut to him as he starts to grow once more, then to outside. The entire upper section of the roof breaks loose and goes airborne and one side wall bursts outward, all propelled by the greedy behemoth’s expanding body. He exits the scene, his tail wrapped around the upended coop and tearing out part of what remains of the roof. Cut to inside.*)

**Twilight:** He’s completely out of control! (*galloping off; Fluttershy, Rainbow follow*) Who knows where he’ll go next!

(*After they have gone, pan back to Applejack, who grabs Pinkie’s tail in her teeth and begins to drag the limp, shell-shocked baker away. Dissolve to an upper-story window of the Carousel Boutique and zoom in through it to Rarity’s upper-story workroom/living quarters. She has put on the pink/magenta cape she showed off during Spike’s party and looks herself over in the mirror while humming happily.*)

**Rarity:** Hmm…perhaps some more ruffle.

(*Cut to a close-up of her, the window now visible in the background; her fire-ruby necklace can now be seen underneath the clasp holding the cape on. One huge green eye with a slitted pupil looks in this way, then that, and fixes on her. Seen from a different angle, she turns away from the mirror, lets her face turn into a slack-muscled caricature of itself, and cuts loose with a high-intensity scream of unmixed terror. Spike reaches in through the window, his palm blacking out the screen.*)

Act Three

(*Opening shot: fade in to a close-up of a pair of red loudspeakers mounted on a yellow/black-striped pole in a Ponyville street. These sound off with an air-raid siren, but they have barely reached full volume before Spike reaches into view and yanks the rig out of the ground. He has grown yet again since taking out Sugarcube Corner. Pandemonium rages up and down the block; two ponies run into each other and barely get clear before one colossal foot slams down where they were standing. When Spike straightens up, Rarity is seen wrapped in his tail, while he has shifted Fluttershy’s coop to one hand. His roar is now a bellowing screech that gives no hint of the sweet little guy he used to be, and the babyish contours of his head and face are gone.*)

(*Rarity screams and pounds her front hooves against the scaly violet coils. He picks up a cart, realizes that it will not fit in the coop, then gets an idea and runs off. The town’s water tower is swiftly yanked off its base in his mouth, the contents gushing down as a tidal wave that sends ponies galloping for cover. As Spike drops his previous haul into the emptied shell, Rarity’s voice is heard from below and he lifts her into view.*)

**Rarity:** Put me down, you brute!

(*His deep-set eyes fix on her indignant ones and he uncorks a deafening roar that leaves her entire mane blown straight back from her head.*)

**Rarity:** How rude. (*Rainbow flies past, followed by Fluttershy.*)

**Fluttershy:** Don’t worry, Rarity! We’ll save you! (*Cut to Rainbow, by Spike’s ear.*)

**Rainbow:** Put her down right now! (*Pan to Fluttershy at the other one.*)

**Fluttershy:** I-If you wouldn’t mind, that is. (*Back to Rainbow.*)

**Rainbow:** I mean it, dragon boy! (*To Fluttershy.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*rapid fire*) Uh, we’ll be ever so grateful if you’d be so kind as to possibly consider— (*To Rainbow.*)

**Rainbow:** Drop her, scaly!

(*“Scaly” just backs up a bit and lashes his tail at them. Rarity is not happy, but her mane is back to normal.*)

**Rarity:** (*during swings*) Hey!…Now I’m not some…sort of common…flyswatter!

(*The next swing takes her so close to the two pegasi that they get tangled up in her cape, which rips loose and plunges them screaming into the stream running near Ponyville. The torn pink fabric floats to the surface, followed by a pair of sodden and very puzzled heads.*)

**Rarity:** (*shocked*) Girls!…My cape!

(*She puts hooves to mouth as Spike cranks off another Force Ten bellow, after which the camera pans quickly to an open patch of sky. Three tiny specks appear in the distance, flying toward the camera, as Rainbow looks up toward them with a smile.*)

**Rainbow:** Look! (*Pan to follow them; she continues o.s.*) The Wonderbolts!

(*They have come close enough to clearly frame the goggles and blue/yellow jumpsuits used by the elite crew. One by one, they peel off and swoop toward the large-scale wreckage Spike has caused, flying straight up the length of his neck and past his head. Another close pass sends him into full “protect” mode; he growls after the trio, then shifts his attention to a not-too-distant mountain. Cut to a close-up of one slope as he digs a set of claws into it, then zoom out; he is climbing on all fours, water tower in mouth and screaming, terror-stricken unicorn in tail.*)

(*Here come the three Wonderbolts, one of whom zooms past so close that Spike gets the tips of his head spines shaved off. A quick pat apprises him of the extreme trim and annoys him all over again; cut to his perspective of a high cave and zoom in, then back to him. The ill-gotten goodies are swiftly dumped into this spot just before the three flyers swoop past his head again. Flipping onto his back, he plasters himself over the cave and narrows his eyes with sudden animal cunning. Up go the three pegasi, silhouetting themselves against the sun and then going into a screaming dive. Spike just holds his position; when they are almost on top of him, he lifts the water tower and holds it with the open end toward them. All three clang neatly into the vessel, and he jams it into the rock face, open end first. A nasty grin toward the imprisoned heroes is followed by a triumphant bellow.*)

**Rarity:** (*from o.s.*) Oh, be quiet! (*He lifts her into view.*) You’ve got nothing to be proud of! (*Bored, he mimics her scolding with his hand.*) You steal everypony’s things, terrorize the town, and use me as a weapon against my own friends—which, as horrible as it is, I can almost understand because you’re a dragon and all. (*indicating her cape*) But *this!*

(*She rips the scraps off, fully exposing her necklace, and levitates them in front of herself.*)

**Rarity:** *This* is a crime against fashion!

(*He hoists her up to the level of his eyes, which widen in time with his surprised grunt. Cut briefly to his perspective of her and zoom in on the necklace, then back to him—jaw hanging slightly open at the sight of such riches.*)

**Rarity:** (*covering necklace with hooves*) Oh, no. You are not getting *this* gemstone! (*Puzzled grunt.*) This was given to me by my dear friend Spikey-wikey—the kindest, sweetest, most generous dragon ever. (*fiercely*) And it is too precious to me to give to a greedy old beast like you!

(*On the end of this, cut to a close-up of the narrowed green eyes, which register surprise at these last words. The view then shifts to another close-up of Rarity’s necklace, then an extreme close-up of his wavering eyes before zooming in through one dilated pupil. Within the black, the camera arrives at a softly focused memory image, seen from his perspective: he offers the fire ruby to Rarity in the library. She, it, and his hand are in full light, while the backdrop is dimmed, and the next three lines echo slightly in his mind.*)

**Spike:** Here, Rarity. You take it.

(*Though he is holding it in the upside-down-heart position in which he originally showed it off, he turns it over before setting it on her hoof.*)

**Spike:** It would mean even more to see you happy than to eat it myself.

**Rarity:** I…I don’t know what to say. (*floating it to one side*) This is just so generous!

(*She leans close to the camera and kisses his cheek, whereupon the camera zooms out as quickly as it went in. The image resolves into the massive dragon’s face, now saturated with regret; he shakes his head clear and puts a hand to the spot she kissed. Zoom out to frame her, still being held at his eye level, on the start of the next line.*)

**Rarity:** Oh, what now? (*Spike starts to tremble.*) I suppose you’ll be eating *me* or something.

(*One full-body spasm causes him to release his grip on her, and a split-second later he has shrunk back to his original size. The laws of physics choose this moment to take five, leaving both suspended in midair as Rarity notices the reversed metamorphosis.*)

**Rarity:** Spike? *You’re* the rampaging dragon?

(*Gravity returns to its post; both drop screaming out of frame. Cut to a close-up of Pinkie peering through a set of binoculars and zoom out to frame Twilight and Applejack behind her. The three are standing on a bridge over the stream. The lenses are lowered and Applejack covers her face with her hat.*)

**Pinkie:** Somepony do something! (*She falls on her back; Rainbow flies up.*)

**Rainbow:** On it!

(*Stretching a foreleg out like a rubber band, she reaches o.s. and drags Fluttershy into view. They swoop down toward the stream and retrieve the torn section of Rarity’s cape, then fly ahead at full speed with opposite ends clamped in their teeth. Fluttershy begins to drop back slightly, but catches up with an embarrassed little smile as Rainbow glares over at her.*)

**Spike:** Rarity, I need to tell you something, just in case we don’t make it! (*Fluttershy and Rainbow continue their approach.*) I’ve always sort of had a crush—

(*A white hoof placed gently over his mouth cuts him off, and Rarity gives him a tender smile as her eyes well up with tears. This is her first full acknowledgment of the way he feels about her, and he smiles behind her hoof in reply. Meanwhile, the rescue mission continues at full throttle, and Fluttershy and Rainbow flash across the screen to pick off the pair with only a few yards to spare. The four descend to the bridge, with Rarity and Spike cradled in the fabric, and are met by Twilight, Applejack, and Pinkie. Applejack has her hat back in its proper place. Surprised, happy gasp from Fluttershy.*)

**Fluttershy:** We did it! (*hovering*) I can’t believe we did it!

(*Up on the mountain, the water tower comes loose and tumbles away, exposing three scared Wonderbolts huddling together. Once it crashes down o.s., they come out of their panic, look around, and snap to hovering attention as if their botched takedown attempt was business as usual. They proceed to clear out as fast as their wings can carry them; cut back to the bridge.*)

**Rainbow:** All in a day’s work.

(*Rarity glances down at her necklace and what used to be a fine cape, then over toward the rail. Cut to Spike, sitting on it and staring glumly out over the devastation he has inflicted on Ponyville. He holds one of his own hands out so that its image is superimposed over one gargantuan footprint; in extreme close-up, his eyes quiver a bit at the thought that he could have turned his home inside out. On the start of the next line, pan slightly to frame one very happy white unicorn standing behind him.*)

**Rarity:** Spike, I just have to tell you how absolutely proud I am of you. (*Cut to frame both; he looks back at her.*)

**Spike:** Proud of me?

**Rarity:** Yes. It was you who stopped…well, you…from destroying Ponyville. (*Cut to him; she continues o.s.*) You are my hero, Spikey-wikey.

(*Now it is his turn to tear up and smile, and she gives him a kiss on the left cheek as during the birthday party. Zoom out from them to frame the other five ponies gathered at one end of the bridge, then dissolve to a close-up of a blank scroll and quill in Spike’s hands.*)

**Spike:** (*from o.s., writing*) “Dear Princess Celestia: Today I learned a great lesson about friendship.”

(*Dissolve to a close-up of Rarity outside the Carousel Boutique. She has donned a fresh cape, with the fire ruby on display as a gold-framed brooch, and she levitates five others in different colors and styles around herself.*)

**Spike:** (*voice over*) “Well, you might think that it would feel good to get lots and lots of stuff…”

(*Cut to a head-on view of Twilight and Pinkie. Twilight gets a blue one with white fur trim and gold cord collar ties.*)

**Spike:** (*voice over*) “…but it doesn’t feel nearly as good as giving something special to somepony you really care about.”

(*Pan slowly away from Twilight. Pinkie receives a lighter blue cape with fluffy white trim and a pink heart brooch. Fluttershy and Rainbow are already wearing theirs—light blue with white trim, a white bow at the neckline, and a daisy on the lowered hood for the former; blue with yellow hem and a red collar secured by a gold star brooch for the latter. The collar and hem on Rainbow’s cape are styled to resemble flames.*)

**Spike:** (*voice over*) “But I learned that it truly is better to give than to receive—”

(*The camera stops on Applejack, at the far end of the line and feeling a bit left out for the moment. Her mood brightens when the last cape settles on her shoulders: red, with a green collar and brown leather shoulder trim, held by a black bolo tie with a red-jeweled gold brooch.*)

**Spike:** (*voice over*) “—and that kindness and generosity are what lead to true friendship.”

(*On the end of this, cut to a longer shot of all six. Fluttershy now has her hood up, and Twilight and Pinkie have donned their capes; this angle reveals stars on the back of Twilight’s. From here, dissolve to a close-up of Spike’s message as he keeps writing.*)

**Spike:** (*from o.s.*) “And that’s more valuable than anything in the world.”

(*After he has signed it, zoom out to frame him in close-up, seen from the right side.*)

**Spike:** Well…

(*He turns around, exposing the lipstick print from Rarity’s second kiss—with a little picture frame stuck around it.*)

**Spike:** …almost anything.

(*“Iris out” to black around it, the iris taking the shape of the print’s outline. When this is the only thing still visible on the screen, it disappears to the sound of a kiss.*)