**SPIKE AT YOUR SERVICE**

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Prologue

(*Opening shot: fade in to the exterior of the library during the day.*)

**Spike:** (*from inside*) Six, seven, eight, nine…

(*Cut to him in the kitchen of the upper-story room he and Twilight Sparkle share. A low table and sitting cushion have been set up at one window, and a tall stack of books rests on the floor alongside these. He stands on a stool to count them as Twilight walks over, levitating a teapot and cup on a tray which she sets on the table.*)

**Spike:** …ten, eleven, twelve.

**Twilight:** Huh. That’s not that many.

**Spike:** Are you kidding? How are you supposed to read twelve books in one weekend?

**Twilight:** (*lifting pot/cup in her magic*) Princess Celestia obviously thinks I can, or she would never have assigned them to me. (*sitting on cushion, pouring*) I’m not planning on letting her down.

**Spike:** Well, I hope you’re not planning on sleeping then, either. (*Twilight floats a book down, open.*)

**Twilight:** Actually, Spike, why don’t you take the day off? (*He peeks out from behind the stack.*)

**Spike:** Really?

**Twilight:** Why not? These books are gonna keep me busy for a while.

**Spike:** Hmmm…I do have a long list of things I’ve been dying to do.

(*He jumps down off his stool. Wipe to him standing outside the library; behind him, Big Macintosh pulls a cart and Fluttershy is taking Applejack’s dog Winona for a walk. In his grip is a scroll, which unfurls for several feet when he lets it drop open. During the following, any words in quotation marks are his reading out loud.*)

**Spike:** “Touch nose with tongue.” (*He does so, then marks with a quill.*) Done! “Play bongos on my belly.”

(*Setting the two items down, he beats out a swift tattoo on his gut for a moment, then picks them back up and checks off a spot.*)

**Spike:** Done! “Smell my dirty feet.” (*He lifts one, sniffs, and sighs with mild disgust; check off.*) Done!

(*Cut to his perspective of the list; the three marked items are at its top, but a tilt down reveals that the rest of the sheet is entirely blank. Back to him.*)

**Spike:** Huh. (*He drops the list.*) That didn’t take nearly as long as I thought it would.

(*Fade to black.*)

OPENING THEME

Act One

(*Opening shot: fade in to a quiet Ponyville street. Spike walks into view, kicking a mushroom loose from a cluster of them in his way, and continues to boot it along idly. He no longer carries his quill and checklist.*)

**Spike:** What to do, what to do?

(*One hard kick sends the fungus out of view; the thud of its o.s. impact and a cat’s surprised yowl are heard at nearly the same time. He voices a popeyed gasp, and the camera cuts to just behind him, framing a hot-air balloon—the one Twilight and her friends have used on occasion—dead ahead. Cherry Berry is running the attraction, from which two fillies are exiting.*)

**Spike:** A hot-air balloon ride!

(*He hurries over to sneak in behind Cherry, but bumps into the post to which the balloon’s mooring rope is tied. The knot slowly comes undone before the dazed reptilian green eyes; by the time he comes to with a gasp and tries to grab the rope, the craft is already floating away.*)

**Spike:** Oh, no!

(*It drifts slowly over the village as he hurries after it.*)

**Spike:** Wait! Runaway balloon!

(*Jumping onto a stack of crates for a height boost, he launches himself onto a house’s awning but runs face-first into a towel being aired out by a mare at the second-story window. The impact pulls it out of her grip; in midair, he yanks it off his head.*)

**Spike:** Sorry!

(*The towel is thrown free, and he launches himself from the awning toward the balloon’s trailing rope. However, his grab is a bit short and he tumbles down into Macintosh’s cart, scattering apples everywhere and causing it to roll away. The red stallion has unhitched himself and is picking up a bag of produce from a nearby stand; when he turns to deposit this in the cart, he gets a nasty surprise upon seeing it hit the ground instead. Now barreling along a downhill slope, Spike looks ahead and finds himself gaining on the balloon, but suddenly yells in fright. A cut to his perspective shows the reason—Granny Smith is straight ahead, bending over to pick up an apple from the ground.*)

(*Cut back to the panic-stricken baby dragon, who wraps both hands around one wheel and hauls backward with all his might as if trying to stop a wheelchair. Smoke rises from the friction between hide and wood, and the light violet claws glow yellow-orange from the heat. When the cart is within inches of flattening Granny, its harness dips sharply and digs into the ground, causing the entire rig to flip up 90 degrees and catapult Spike over her head. The smoke and heat around his hands dissipates, giving him an easy grab for the end of the balloon’s rope, and the added weight brings it gradually down below the dense treetops outside Ponyville proper. Tilt down through these to frame a dark, overgrown stretch of the Everfree Forest, then dissolve to a close-up of Spike tying the rope to a bush with a relieved sigh.*)

**Spike:** That was a close one!

(*Cut to his perspective, panning slowly through the wild tangles.*)

**Spike:** If I didn’t know better… (*Back to him; zoom out slowly.*) …I would swear that I was in the middle of the dark and scary Everfree Forest!

(*The sound of shifting and cracking underbrush draws his attention with a small cry; back to his perspective, panning about as white-glowing eyes open in the shadows.*)

**Spike:** What was that? (*To him again, he backs up slowly.*) Come on, Spike. Just because this forest is full of wild, dangerous animals doesn’t mean that you’re gonna see one.

(*His attempt to reassure himself with a laugh falls flat as green fumes drift into view behind him; covering his nose with one hand, he stumbles and falls backward into the bushes. The view shifts to frame him lying next to an assembly of wood pieces that looks something like a clawed foot, with the reek still floating above them. He sits up just in time for a fresh cloud to billow over him, and a cut to his perspective and tilt up discloses the source. Standing over him, its glowing yellow eyes narrowed and fierce, is a timber wolf—one of the wooden predators that menaced young Granny in “Family Appreciation Day.” Two more pairs of eyes open in the darkness behind it; cut back to Spike, who gets up and bails out with a terrified yell as all three of them give chase.*)

(*He runs into a rock wall and looks up, finding it far too tall to climb; the three pursuers’ shadows slowly advance, along with their foul exhalations, as he plasters his back to it. Again he covers his nose against the stench, then cowers before one wolf’s snapping jaws. From somewhere above and to the side, a rock is flung into view, connecting with its skull and knocking one ear off; all three glare up toward it.*)

**Applejack:** (*from o.s.*) Come and get me, you big goons!

(*On the second half of this line, cut to her standing on a second ridge, the camera angled to point up toward her from the ground. The stone she is idly tossing marks her as the thrower. Spike’s terror gives way to a relieved smile, and she heaves her missile straight up.*)

**Applejack:** Run!

(*She turns around and bucks it down toward the wolves, nailing the leader between the eyes; all three start after her.*)

**Spike:** I’m running! I’m running!

(*He follows orders. Applejack leads them through a clearing; the sight of a protruding branch brings a calculating smile to her face, and she leaps up to snag it in her teeth as she passes it. Her momentum causes the branch to bend sharply, and as soon as she lets go, it whips the leader hard enough to shatter its body down to the component pieces. The other two keep after her while Spike makes tracks in the distance; she stops in a scatter of rocks, tosses up three of them with her mouth, and bucks them toward the pair. One shot destroys a wolf’s legs, leaving it to fall into a skidding wipeout that tears the rest of its body apart.*)

(*The surviving attacker keeps after Applejack, who spots a tree with a very large hole through its trunk dead ahead. She hurls herself through the opening with almost no room to spare, but the wolf is too big and smashes itself to pieces on the trunk. Its extended forelegs go flying ahead and skid to a halt in the dirt, coming up just short of the stopped and cringing Applejack and then falling apart.*)

**Applejack:** (*wiping her forehead*) Whoo!

**Spike:** (*from o.s.*) Wow, Applejack! (*Cut to him, running up.*) That was amazing! I mean, you rocketed those boulders at them like they were…rockets! Pow! Pow! Pow-pow-pow! You saved my life!

(*Zoom in to a close-up as the weight of those words sinks in.*)

**Spike:** You… (*Eyes grow huge.*) …saved my life. (*He buries his face in her chest; she pushes him back with a smile.*)

**Applejack:** Aw, don’t mention it, Spike. (*walking past him*) Come on. We should be headin’ on back now.

**Spike:** Man, am I lucky you were out here. (*She notices the balloon’s rope.*) Uh…whywere you out here?

**Applejack:** Saw the balloon floatin’ by with nopony in it. Came out here to investigate. Guess you did too, huh?

(*She leans down to release the knot; he makes to kick a timber wolf piece, but stops short so that his toes barely brush it.*)

**Spike:** Uh…yeah. I was…investigating the runaway hot-air balloon too. (*She gets the rope tied around herself; both head out.*) So, uh…now that the mystery’s been solved, let’s get outta here, huh?

(*As they make their way toward the edge of the forest, the camera focuses on the collapsed woody forelegs, which begin to glow and quiver with some internal magic. Piece after piece slowly floats off the ground as if trying to reach after the pony and dragon. Dissolve to the fence at the edge of Sweet Apple Acres, where a rather irked Cherry has taken possession of her balloon and is hauling it away by the rope clamped in her teeth. Applejack and Spike are at the gate.*)

**Applejack:** Thanks for walkin’ me home, Spike. That was mighty kind of you. But now I have some chores that need tendin’ to, so… (*walking toward home*) …see you later. (*He hurries in after her, smiling.*)

**Spike:** What chores? I’ll do them.

(*Cut to Applejack, standing among several full apple tubs in one of the orchards. The one behind her starts to vibrate.*)

**Applejack:** That’s sweet, but you don’t have to— (*It rises, balanced on Spike’s head.*)

**Spike:** (*teetering, spilling apples*) It’s the least I can do. You saved my life. I need to repay the favor.

**Applejack:** Shoot, Spike. That’s what friends do for each other. You don’t need to repay the favor.

(*The now-half-empty tub is back on the ground, and Spike dumps an armload of fruit back in.*)

**Spike:** Yes, I do. (*He hoists it on his head again.*)

**Applejack:** Sugar, it’s okay. It’s not necessary.

**Spike:** Applejack, you don’t understand. This is something I really need to do. (*He totters past her, spilling apples again.*)

**Applejack:** Well, I hate to get in the way of— (*Down he goes.*) —doin’ somethin’ you need to do.

(*The indebted dragon has wound up beneath the overturned tub.*)

**Spike:** Great! What should I do?

**Applejack:** Uh…Apple Bloom’s over yonder givin’ little Pigginton a bath. I was gonna lend her a hoof, but maybe you could lend her one instead. (*He hurries off, tub still on head.*)

**Spike:** On the double!

(*Applejack, meanwhile, goes to work picking up the scattered apples in her teeth. Dissolve to a close-up of Apple Bloom in the barnyard, using a scrub brush in her mouth to clean off a very muddy pig that is only partially in view. A bucket of soapy water stands next to her; Spike is at a fence gate behind, having disposed of the apple tub.*)

**Spike:** Applejack said I can help you.

(*Head-on view as Bloom puts the brush down. Pigginton the pig is a massive beast, sitting on its haunches and at least twice the filly’s height in this position. A small, light blue bow rests behind the pink ears.*)

**Bloom:** Great! I could use all the help I can get.

(*Spike grabs her brush, accidentally hip-checking the bucket and knocking it over. Bloom winds up with a beard of bubbles, which she shakes away, and frowns to herself as Spike starts plying the brush.*)

**Spike:** Heh. Wait ’til Applejack sees how you sparkle!

(*Wipe to the older sister, transferring bags of supplies from a cart into an underground storage cellar. A loud, happy grunt from the o.s. Pigginton catches her ear; cut to Spike and a grinning Bloom standing in front of the gargantuan porker, now spotless pink from head to tail.*)

**Spike:** Ta-da!

**Applejack:** Good job, you two!

**Bloom:** Applejack, is it okay if I get goin’? I don’t want to be late for my Crusaders meeting. We’re getting fitted for water skis!

**Applejack:** Heh. You definitely don’t want to be late for *that*. (*Bloom gallops across the fields.*)

**Bloom:** Water-skiing cutie mark, here I come!

**Applejack:** Spike, you can head on out too. I reckon you have repaid me in full, so we are officially even-steven.

**Spike:** (*taken aback*) What? Oh, no. We aren’t even close to being even-steven. (*He zips over to her; she keeps unloading the cart.*) Please, Applejack. You must allow me to assist you further.

**Applejack:** I don’t know, Spike. (*She closes the cellar.*) Just don’t feel right to have you, uh, doin’ things for me. (*He drops to his knees.*)

**Spike:** Please?

**Applejack:** Really, you don’t—

**Spike:** Pretty please? (*Close-up of Applejack.*)

**Applejack:** It’s just not necessary.

(*The sound of a grab brings her eyes toward her own foreleg, now gripped by one beseeching baby dragon.*)

**Spike:** Pretty, pretty, pretty please? (*She sighs heavily; Pigginton is wallowing in her mud pit.*)

**Applejack:** Oh, all right. You can help Granny Smith and me bake some—

(*Cut to the kitchen, in which Spike is enthusiastically mixing up a bowl of dough. Perhaps a little too much so, judging from the liberal splatters on the counter, floor, ceiling, stovetop pans, and himself; a few eggs are dripping down one wall as well.*)

**Spike:** Pies! Pies! I’m helping Applejack make some pies!

(*Pan away from him to frame Applejack and Granny watching him with marked unease from farther along the counter. Both cringe in unison, but Granny follows it with a humoring smile.*)

**Granny:** Uh, Spike, little feller— (*Cut to him; she continues o.s.*) —could you get us some more eggs?

(*He looks in the opposite direction, the camera panning and zooming in quickly on a bowl of eggs sitting in a small, high shelf near the door.*)

**Spike:** (*from o.s.*) Coming right up!

(*His jumps for it are nowhere close to the mark. Granny watches for a moment to make sure he is fully occupied, then turns to Applejack and gives a knowing wink, the camera panning to frame them and put Spike out of view. The two take advantage of his distraction to do a little proper pie prep—but a sudden thud and the crackling of eggshells and ceramic stop them both cold. Cut to a close-up of smashed eggs and bowl fragments on the floor at Spike’s feet.*)

**Spike:** (*from o.s.*) Uh…oops. (*Tilt up to him.*) Sorry, Applejack. Heh. (*running to a mop and bucket at the wall*) Let me get something to clean that up.

(*The bucket overturns when he grabs the mop, and he loses his balance while swinging it overhead so that it knocks a sack of flour off a shelf. The resulting dust cloud dissipates to show him trying to clean the floor; however, the flour quickly absorbs into the mop’s water trail, creating gluey sludge. His first attempt to yank the mop loose is no good, while his second causes it to flip up and adhere to a ceiling beam. Tilt down from the suspended cleaning tool to frame Applejack and Spike.*)

**Applejack:** (*sighing*) Appreciate all your help today, sugar cube, but…I can take it from here.

**Spike:** Don’t be ridiculous! (*bowing*) It is my honor and my duty. Today’s just the beginning.

**Applejack:** What’s that now?

**Spike:** You saved my life.

(*He thumps himself in the gut to bring up a little flaming belch, which solidifies into a business card. He catches this and holds it forth to show a crude picture of himself.*)

**Spike:** According to the “Spike the Dragon” Code…

(*Cut to just behind his hand, framing Applejack as she runs a puzzled eye over the card.*)

**Spike:** (*from o.s.*) …I owe you a life debt and must serve you.

(*It is lowered out of view, revealing Granny looking on as well.*)

**Granny:** Uh, now, what about Twilight? (*as Applejack nods agreement*) Doesn’t she need your help and such? (*He burns the card away.*)

**Spike:** Huh. You’re right. I better break the news to Twilight. I just hope she doesn’t take it too hard. Be right back!

(*Off he goes, scaly feet pistoning through the mushy expanse that used to be the kitchen floor, and Applejack and Granny watch the stuck mop slowly descend under its own weight. Wipe to the exterior of the library as Spike steps up to the front door; he reaches to open it, but pulls his hand back. There follows a brief, indecisive silence.*)

**Spike:** Come on, Spike! This is your personal, moral, ethical Dragon Code we’re talking about! (*gripping handle*) You have to do this. (*letting go*) It’s not like you and Twilight won’t be friends anymore… (*sadly*) …but it won’t be the same. (*resolutely, pushing door open*) But it has to be done!

(*Cut to a head-on view of Twilight at the kitchen window, deep into one of the books from her stack. Behind her, Spike reaches the top of the stairs and enters the room.*)

**Spike:** Twilight, Applejack just saved my life from horrible dragon-eating timber wolves.

**Twilight:** (*not paying attention*) Mmm-hmm.

**Spike:** (*pacing*) And, as you are aware, I adhere to my Dragon Code, and this means I must serve her for the rest of my natural-born days. I’m sure you understand.

**Twilight:** Mmm-hmm.

**Spike:** (*voice breaking, walking out*) It’s…been an honor…being your faithful assistant.

**Twilight:** Sounds good.

(*The green eyes grow and fill with tears, and he sighs heavily and walks downstairs. Dissolve to a close-up of the oven in the Sweet Apple Acres kitchen—now squeaky clean—and zoom out through the door to the barnyard. Applejack and Granny are out here, the mop and bucket in front of them indicating the work they have done to put it all shipshape, and they trade a satisfied nod. Spike pops up to address them, facing away from the camera to block them from view.*)

**Spike:** She said it was okay. (*They peek out to either side.*)

**Applejack, Granny:** (*incredulously*) Really?

**Spike:** (*walking in, taking mop from Applejack*) So, with Twilight’s blessing, I am free to follow my code and serve you until…

(*A crash, and dust clouds fly out the door; cut to inside as the mares look in and Spike straightens up into view facing them.*)

**Spike:** …well… (*Head-on view; the kitchen is a shambles again.*) …until… (*Zoom out slightly.*) …forever!

(*Cut back to Applejack and Granny and zoom in slowly as they exchange “this won’t end well” glances. Snap to black.*)

Act Two

(*Opening shot: fade in to an open barn window, seen from outside. Spike leans into view from within and sets a steaming, freshly baked pie on the sill. The gray tinge on the crust indicates, however, that this dessert spent a little too much time in the oven. He breathes in the aroma, knocking the pie over, but Applejack quickly lunges up outside to catch it on her head.*)

**Applejack:** Listen, sugar cube. (*replacing it on sill; Spike ducks away*) I completely respect your Dragon Code… (*Zoom out; he walks out the door and she turns to him.*) …truly I do, but I just can’t cotton with you permanently servin’ me.

(*His eyes pop and he claps his hands pleadingly.*)

**Spike:** Please, Applejack. My Dragon Code is a part of me. I have to be true to myself. If you don’t let me do this, I won’t be a noble dragon anymore.

**Applejack:** (*uncertainly, but smiling*) Oh, well, I can’t have you feelin’ like you’re not a noble dragon now, can I?

**Spike:** Great! Then from here on in… (*bowing*) …your wish is my command.

(*A long silence while Applejack sorts this out in her mind.*)

**Applejack:** Oh…uh…okay. I would like you to…

(*She cuts her eyes toward a plow standing idle in a field, then a partially painted fence, then a hatchet stuck in a stump next to a pile of logs needing to be split. Each sight brings up a groan or mutter of unease, marking her growing inability to find a task suited for the little servant. Next she glances back at the overcooked pie.*)

**Applejack:** (*zipping over, carrying it back*) …help me take some of the pie you made to… (*She passes it over; cut to him.*)

**Spike:** Rarity?

**Applejack:** (*from o.s.*) Uh… (*Back to her.*) …sure, why not?

(*Wipe to the kitchen of the Carousel Boutique. One unicorn, one earth pony, and one dragon stand around the pie, which has been placed on the dining table. A slice has been cut from it and set on a plate in front of Rarity, who aims two very puzzled blue eyes across at Applejack.*)

**Spike:** I helped bake it.

(*Close-up of the dessert in question: misshapen, half-collapsed crust, bits of grass or twigs protruding everywhere. Rarity voices a soft noise of disgust, but gets a sideways head jerk from Applejack that focuses her attention on the expectantly smiling cook. She forces a polite grin onto her face, levitates a fork, and cuts off a small corner of the slice to bring to her mouth. Eyeing it with the clearest revulsion, she grimaces and sets her features before Spike’s big-eyed smile, then uses all her will to make herself lean in and bite off the tiniest fragment from her forkful. As she chews, doing her best not to vomit on the spot, Spike leans in close.*)

**Spike:** (*dreamily*) You even look good when you’re chewing! (*He doubles back to Applejack with a laugh.*) Who looks good when they’re chewing?

(*Rarity takes advantage of his distraction to spit the crud out; by the time he turns back to her, she has put her grin back on and floated a napkin up to wipe her mouth.*)

**Spike:** Aren’t you gonna have some more?

**Rarity:** I…had a big lunch.

**Spike:** It’s ten in the morning.

**Rarity:** Breakfast. A big breakfast.

**Spike:** Ohhhh! Okay.

**Applejack:** Maybe you could take her plate back to the kitchen and wash it off.

**Spike:** (*grabbing plate, backing off*) As you wish!

(*Once he is well out of view and earshot, Rarity steps toward Applejack.*)

**Rarity:** What was *that* all about?

**Applejack:** (*groaning, taking hat off*) I saved Spike from some timber wolves in the Everfree Forest, and now he thinks he has to serve me forever. (*Rarity squeals with delight.*)

**Rarity:** (*leaning against Applejack, foreleg over shoulders*) Oh, what I wouldn’t give to have somepony forever in my debt. (*She backs off; close-up.*) I’d get them to organize my closets and give me pedicures and help me with my sewing and—

(*Cut to frame both mares; Applejack has her hat back on.*)

**Applejack:** Okay, I get it. Havin’ somepony to do things for you would be a dream come true. But I don’t feel right havin’ Spike thinkin’ he owes me somethin’. You tasted that pie. Sometimes his help isn’t that helpful.

(*A commotion from o.s. ends the talk, and both look across the kitchen to see a tide of bubbles oozing in from the door to the adjoining laundry room. Spike stands in the middle of it, slowly being engulfed by the soap.*)

**Spike:** Do you have a broom I could borrow?

(*One white hoof points out the broom propped next to the doorway; he grabs it as the farmer and dressmaker stare speechlessly. Behind them, Rainbow Dash swoops down to the kitchen window, whose top half is open.*)

**Rainbow:** AJ, Rarity! (*They turn toward her.*) What’s happening?

**Rarity:** Applejack saved Spike’s life and now he has to serve her forever.

**Rainbow:** Sweet! (*to Applejack*) What are you having him do? Wash your laundry? Clean your room? Help you with your unfinished novel? (*Applejack’s eyes pop.*) Mine’s about this awesome pegasus who’s the best flyer ever and becomes the captain of the Wonderbolts.

**Rarity:** (*sarcastically*) However did you come up with that ingeniously woven, intricate plotline?

**Rainbow:** (*not noticing Rarity’s tone*) Just came to me.

**Applejack:** Thing is, I don’t really want him to serve me forever, but I don’t know how to get him to stop.

**Rainbow:** That’s easy! Just make him help you with something really, really hard.

**Applejack:** I don’t know. I don’t want him to get hurt.

**Rainbow:** Puh-lease! He’ll quit way before there’s even a chance of getting hurt.

(*A second, much larger commotion brings this exchange to a halt, and in short order Spike walks over, a piece of the sink’s drain pipe in his clawed grip.*)

**Rainbow:** (*softly*) Leave this to me. (*aloud; Spike drops the pipe*) So, Spike, Applejack was gonna help me stack some hay so I could practice smashing through it. But I’m feeling extra-extra-powerful today.

**Applejack:** (*puzzled*) You are?

**Rainbow:** Yeah! I am! So instead of hay, I’m gonna smash through rocks!

**Spike:** Rocks? (*She swoops in and down to him.*)

**Rainbow:** Yeah! (*foreleg across shoulders*) A huge tower of rocks! And you’re gonna build it! (*She starts to fly off.*)

**Spike:** I am? (*Stop.*)

**Rainbow:** Yeah, I mean, unless you don’t want to help Applejack. (*Out she goes.*)

**Spike:** I do! (*bowing*) It is Spike’s Dragon Code! (*Rainbow stops at the window.*)

**Rainbow:** Then get to it!

(*The baby dragon straightens up and exits, leaving Rarity to poke hesitantly at the dropped pipe.*)

**Rainbow:** Trust me. This is gonna work like a charm.

(*Dissolve to an overhead shot of Applejack and Rainbow, the camera pointing down at them from what might be a sizable pile of rocks partially in view. The two stare upward with no small degree of bewilderment as Spike clambers up, a fresh stone wrapped in his tail; Fluttershy arrives on the scene.*)

**Rainbow:** Huh. I was sure he’d give up after, like, three rocks. (*Spike climbs down without the one he was carrying.*)

**Fluttershy:** Oh, goodness. If it had been me, I’d have just pretended I didn’t have anything for him to do. (*Up he goes with a fresh one.*)

**Applejack:** (*irritated*) Why didn’t I think of that?

(*Cut to a long shot of the entire assembly, a very unstable-looking tower of rocks that stands perhaps ten times as tall as the mares. Spike balances atop the pinnacle.*)

**Spike:** IS THIS HIGH ENOUGH?

**Applejack:** THAT’S PLENTY HIGH! COME ON DOWN, SPIKE! (*Ground level; he crosses to them.*)

**Rainbow:** Bad news—he actually ended up building the whole rock tower. (*He bows.*) Good news…

(*Very long pause, during which she looks as if she might be interested in trying to break the wind speed record from Ponyville to Appleloosa.*)

**Rainbow:** (*reluctantly, lifting off*) …I’ve got a rock tower to knock down.

(*She gains a bit more altitude as the others back up and Spike laughs.*)

**Spike:** Yeah! You can do it!

(*Close-up of Rainbow, who hovers with great trepidation; zoom in slightly.*)

**Spike:** (*from o.s., laughing*) Hey-hey! All right! Yeah!

(*The stunt flyer backs up slightly and charges the structure at full speed. Just before impact, cut to a small pavilion in which the three observers have taken cover; the hit shakes them but good and sends Fluttershy cowering to the ground. Rock fragments clatter down around them.*)

**Spike:** That…was…*awesome!*

(*The timid yellow pegasus stands up as a particularly large boulder slams down, hiding him from view; he peeks up around it.*)

**Spike:** Want to do it again, Rainbow Dash? Applejack can rebuild it for you… (*He slides over the rock and leans against it, tossing a small one.*) …and when I say “Applejack,” I of course mean me.

(*Cut to the pile of stones that used to be the tower. Rainbow is sprawled out atop it on her back, badly dazed as chunks patter down around her. The last one bonks her in the head.*)

**Rainbow:** (*woozily*) Sure…why not? (*She passes out.*)

**Applejack:** *No!* (*She races over and up to Rainbow.*) I mean…I don’t think Rainbow Dash needs any more of your help…my help. She doesn’t need it. Right, Rainbow Dash? (*Rainbow shakes her head clear.*)

**Rainbow:** Yeah. (*rubbing head*) I guess I’m good…for now?

**Applejack:** And so am I. I just can’t think of one more thing I need help with, so…

(*Cut to Spike, with Fluttershy stepping closer from behind.*)

**Applejack:** (*from o.s.*) …you don’t have to do anythin’ else.

(*The yellow mare nods encouragement, unseen by Spike, whose eyes pop before he keels over.*)

**Spike:** Wh…what do you mean, you can’t think of anything else I can help with? (*Down comes Applejack.*)

**Applejack:** Exactly that. There’s nothin’ else. (*So does Rainbow.*) I don’t want you to do anythin’. (*Spike sits up.*)

**Spike:** If I don’t help you… (*standing up, fidgeting*) …how will I know I’m a noble dragon?

**Applejack:** Well, uh—

**Spike:** Maybe there’s things you need help with, that you don’t ever realize you need help with!

**Fluttershy:** If she needed help, I think she’d realize it.

**Spike:** Maybe not. (*He climbs atop the tower ruins.*) Maybe Applejack needs help realizing what she needs help with. Like… (*Jump down on Applejack’s back, flattening her.*) …maybe your back itches.

(*He proceeds to scratch it thoroughly, eliciting groans of relief from the farm pony.*)

**Applejack:** That *does* feel good. (*He laughs and jumps off.*)

**Spike:** See? Or… (*putting an arm around her neck*) …you might need help remembering your favorite song.

***A cappella sea chanty melody, fast 4 (F major)***

**Spike:** A dragon is the finest creature ever

(*He lets her head flop onto the dirt and dances around her.*)

There’s more to him than just guarding treasure

***Song ends***

(*Fluttershy steps up to the pair.*)

**Fluttershy:** I don’t think that’s her favorite s—

**Spike:** Or…you might need help breathing! (*He dashes off; close-up of Applejack.*)

**Applejack:** (*testily*) Breathin’? I certainly do not—

(*Zoom out quickly to frame Spike, who has returned with a bellows; he stuffs the nozzle into her mouth and pumps with gusto, inflating her like a balloon. The pressure buildup finally pops him loose, and she expels the air with enough force to throw the bellows clear and him into a nearby bush.*)

**Spike:** See? There are plenty of things I can help you with, and you don’t even have to trouble yourself with thinking of them.

**Applejack:** No, I’ll think of ’em. Let me think of ’em. (*He hurries over and bows.*)

**Spike:** As you wish.

(*Dissolve to the exterior of the library; the faint clopping of hooves can be heard within.*)

**Applejack:** (*from inside*) Twilight…

(*Inside, she reaches the top of the stairs leading to the bedroom.*)

**Applejack:** Twilight, are you there? (*She spots Twilight, still reading at the kitchen window.*) Twilight!

(*No response, so she runs an eye over a nearby desk and spots three empty inkwells laid out in a neat row. Smiling to herself, she eases a hoof up and nudges one of them to produce an audible clatter; the effect is to cause Twilight to cry out and let her levitated book drop.*)

**Applejack:** Sorry, I didn’t mean to scare you. (*Twilight crosses to the desk with a sigh.*)

**Twilight:** No, it’s okay. I need to take a break anyway. (*She repositions the inkwell.*) What’s going on?

**Applejack:** I know Spike told you that he was gonna follow his Dragon Code, and serve me forever for savin’ him from the timber wolves, and that you were okay with it, but—

(*Cut to a caught-off-guard Twilight and back on the end of this.*)

**Twilight:** Wait. *What?!?*

**Applejack:** He said he told you all about it.

(*The unicorn racks her brain for a long moment.*)

**Applejack:** (*crossing to her*) I’m guessin’ maybe you were a little distracted when he told you.

**Twilight:** (*moaning sadly*) Maybe a little.

**Applejack:** (*sighing*) Shoulda realized you wouldn’t have let him go so easily. Well, now that you know what’s goin’ on, maybe you could talk some sense into him.

**Twilight:** Oh, Applejack, I wish I could, but…this is Dragon Code we’re talking about. Surely you know how important the Dragon Code is to a dragon.

**Applejack:** I sure am startin’ to.

**Twilight:** Hmmm… (*smiling, touching Applejack’s shoulder*) …there’s only one other way Spike is gonna fulfill the debt he feels he owes you.

(*Dissolve to a close-up of Spike lying on a patch of grass and counting individual blades.*)

**Spike:** Seventy, seventy-one, seventy-two…

(*Zoom out. He is just outside the Sweet Apple Acres barnyard, and Applejack is watching from the open barn door.*)

**Spike:** …seventy-three, seventy-four, seventy-five…

(*She turns and goes in; cut to the other five mares inside the barn as she approaches them.*)

**Applejack:** All right, y’all. (*Cut to behind them; slow pan along the line.*) Here’s the deal. Spike needs to save my life.

**Pinkie Pie:** And you want us to… (*rapid fire*) …shoot you out of a cannon towards a hornets’ nest and give Spike a butterfly net so he can catch you mere seconds before you hit the nest and are stung by a thousand angry hornets!

(*She punctuates this line with the following actions. Zip o.s.; return with her party cannon, a beehive, a beekeeper’s hat with protective veil, and a butterfly net; plunk the hat on Twilight’s head; toss the hive aside; stuff the net handle into the mouths of the two pegasi; pull down a screen with a stick-figure drawing of Applejack launched from the cannon toward the hive and caught in the net by Spike; reel this back up and out of view. In close-up, she resumes her normal speaking rhythm and stick a curly black mustache onto her snout.*)

**Pinkie:** (*grinning evilly, rubbing hooves*) I’ll wear this mustache.

**Applejack:** No. (*smiling*) I am gonna be attacked by a timber wolf!

(*Gasps all around. Fluttershy and Rainbow drop the net, while Rarity is now up to her belly in the cannon’s muzzle; as Applejack smiles smugly to herself, Pinkie sidles up to her.*)

**Pinkie:** Can I still wear the mustache?

(*All she gets for this is a very dirty look. Snap to black.*)

Act Three

(*Opening shot: fade in to a long shot of the six next to the tumbled rock tower, which lies close to a hill on the outskirts of the Everfree Forest. Zoom in; all have done away with the props from Pinkie’s ridiculous scheme, including the mustache.*)

**Applejack:** When I give the signal, Pinkie Pie and Rarity will come runnin’ out of the woods, being pursued by the timber wolf. I’ll start to run too—

(*Cut to a close-up of a rough drawing of herself scratched into the dirt; she steps toward a pile of rocks.*)

**Applejack:** (*from o.s., pointing to it*) —but then pretend to get my hoof stuck. (*Pan to another drawing as she points: Spike shifts the rocks, freeing her.*) I’ll ask Spike to help me dislodge it, and he will, and I’ll be able to get away— (*Pan to a third picture, of a timber wolf, as she points.*) —from the terrifyin’ timber wolf.

(*Back to her; zoom out slowly to frame the others.*)

**Applejack:** Havin’ saved me from certain doom, Spike will then consider us even. Everybody get it? (*Close-up of Fluttershy and Rainbow.*)

**Fluttershy, Rainbow:** (*nodding*) Uh-huh. (*Pan to Twilight.*)

**Twilight:** I’ll do my best.

(*She teleports herself up onto a limb of a tree on the hilltop, levitating a pair of marionette control bars to which a crude figure of a timber wolf is attached. It is positioned to be hidden in a patch of bushes underneath her. Pan to Pinkie and Rarity.*)

**Rarity:** (*nodding*) Mmm-hmm.

**Pinkie:** Just one question. (*Cut to Applejack.*)

**Applejack:** Yes?

(*Cut back to the last two helpers, the pink one now wearing her mustache.*)

**Applejack:** (*testily*) No.

(*Pinkie sighs dejectedly as the disguise falls off her snout; zoom out to frame the party cannon standing next to her, the butterfly net and beehive riding in its barrel.*)

**Pinkie:** Suit yourself.

(*She gives the lot a buck to send it rolling away, after which Rarity clears her throat.*)

**Rarity:** We’re all ready to play *our* parts— (*Clear again.*) —but are you sure you are ready to play *yours*, Applejack?

**Applejack:** What do you mean?

**Rarity:** (*patting her mane*) Show us your best damsel-in-distress move.

(*Cut to Applejack and both pegasi; Fluttershy now has four upside-down buckets strapped to her hooves.*)

**Applejack:** Uh…oh, well, uh… (*laughing weakly*) …how’s this?

(*She makes a “darn it” gesture with one foreleg while voicing a moan that can in no way be mistaken as piteous.*)

**Rarity:** Absolutely horrendous! Okay, this needs some serious work! Now first, you must lift your foreleg up to your forehead, like so.

(*She demonstrates and gasps as if to start a plea for help, but the next voice cuts her off.*)

**Spike:** (*from o.s.*) APPLEJACK! (*Cut to the other four; he is coming over a distant hilltop.*)

**Applejack:** No time! Here he comes!

(*A moment later she is the only pony in the clearing.*)

**Applejack:** (*waving to him*) Uh…over here, Spike! (*He runs to her.*)

**Spike:** You said you had something else you needed me to do?

**Applejack:** Oh…yes, I… (*pointing*) …I was just hopin’ you could maybe, uh…

(*Cut to a nearby scatter of leaves. The other five mares are looking on from the forest’s undergrowth, but quickly duck out of sight.*)

**Applejack:** (*from o.s.*) …sweep up all those leaves for a compost pile and— (*Back to the pair; she now holds a rake.*)

**Spike:** (*bowing*) But of course. (*She gives it to him.*) Oh! (*walking to leaves*) By the way, there are exactly twenty-four million, five hundred and sixty-seven thousand, eight hundred and thirty-seven blades of grass at Sweet Apple Acres.

**Applejack:** (*softly*) I can’t believe you counted every single one of them.

(*She winks; cut to Fluttershy and Rainbow in the bushes, the latter winking back.*)

**Spike:** (*from o.s.*) You asked me to.

(*Rainbow sucks in a huge breath; Fluttershy covers her ears. On the start of the next line, cut back to Spike, now raking, and Applejack.*)

**Spike:** And as a noble dragon and follower of my Dragon Code, I—

(*A thunderous roar shakes the air, the camera zooming out quickly to frame the nearby forest—and a sky-blue head standing up from the underbrush to provide the sound. Deep within the thick growth, Rainbow’s roar causes several pairs of white eyes to appear in the shadows; at the scene, she winds down and drops behind the bush.*)

**Fluttershy:** (*terrified*) That was very convincing. (*Spike has frozen in his tracks.*)

**Rarity:** (*galloping out with Pinkie*) Timber wolf! (*She huddles in front of Spike, sobbing; Pinkie prances happily around.*) We are doomed!

(*Her partner in crime throws in a good hearty scream, but forgets to wipe the smile off her face first. Both trot away past a thoroughly hacked-off Applejack.*)

**Rarity:** See? Like that.

(*Up in the trees, Twilight magically lifts her control bars and maneuvers the timber wolf dummy out of its hiding place. The thing is little more than several logs strung together on cords, with a few smaller pieces hooked on to provide features and paws—but it is apparently enough to put a shot of fear through Spike. Fluttershy gallops in place, the buckets on her hooves creating a sound similar to that of the actual beast’s movement as Twilight eases the dummy forward. A flick of one control causes the jaw to drop open; she grimaces at the absence of an accompanying roar, but Rainbow is too busy laughing herself stupid to provide one right away. Only when she stops to catch her breath is Fluttershy able to point and get her attention, and she lets one go to scare the daylights out of Spike all over again.*)

**Applejack:** (*from o.s., stilted*) Oh, no! I…

(*Cut to frame her as well; she trots up to a small pile of rocks, then jams a foreleg into them as she continues.*)

**Applejack:** …seem to have got my hoof caught in between two rocks! (*The dummy comes toward her.*) I cannot run away! I am a damsel in distress! (*It stops right next to her.*) Help me, Spike!

(*She shoves her head into its open jaws; Spike cringes at the sight, but terror quickly gives way to indignation.*)

**Spike:** Wait a minute.

(*Applejack pulls her head out, staring right along with the three mares hiding in the trees and bushes.*)

**Applejack:** No, no, don’t wait a minute. (*Fluttershy and Rainbow duck away.*) Save me from the terrifyin’ timber wolf! (*Spike strolls over, smiling smugly.*)

**Spike:** Well, he would be terrifying if he wasn’t a *fake!* (*examining paws*) You got the clomping of his claws… (*One falls off; he moves to the jaws.*) …the roar is spot on… (*Fluttershy and Rainbow trade a high five.*) …and the detail on his face is pretty good.

(*Now the entire head drops unstrung to the ground as he turns back to the “trapped” mare.*)

**Spike:** But you forgot one thing—his breath. (*Green fumes drift into view.*) You can smell a real timber wolf’s breath from a mile—

(*Both faces go slack and both eyes pop as all four lungs get a dose of the stuff; Spike is first to recover with a derisive laugh.*)

**Spike:** Too late. I’m already on—

(*A flash of light, and Twilight has teleported down to them, galloping away with a scream.*)

**Rainbow:** (*from behind bushes*) TIMBER WOLF!!

(*One pair of yellow eyes appears in the dark, then two more, and two wooden forelegs advance out of the brush. They are attached to one of three very angry timber wolves. Applejack’s jaw falls open in the face of their infuriated roars, and both she and Spike waste no time in bugging out.*)

**Spike:** TIMBER WOLF!!

(*The mare climbs the rock pile and takes up a position behind a boulder on a high edge, letting Spike run past as bait. When the wolves come through, she springs her trap; the tumbling weight bounces into all three wolves and smashes them to kindling. Spike gives Applejack a thumbs-up and gets a salute in return; the celebration is short-lived, though, as the slab on which Applejack is lying promptly collapses under her.*)

**Applejack:** Whooaa!

(*Cut to Spike, who cringes at the sound of a very loud and very final crash, then back to Applejack—flat on her belly, a few last rocks sliding down around her hind legs.*)

**Applejack:** Ow!

(*Her prone position gives her an excellent view of the smashed pieces knitting back together, gripped by the same glowing magic that took hold of the ruined forelegs in Act One.*)

**Spike:** Uh-oh.

(*A single massive limb knits itself together from the debris.*)

**Spike:** Applejack! Come on! (*She is now upright, but cannot pull her hind leg from the rocks.*)

**Applejack:** I can’t! I’m really stuck!

(*More fragments come floating out of the forest.*)

**Spike:** No more messing around!

(*A gigantic face takes shape from the fallen wood.*)

**Spike:** Let’s go!

(*Sharpened stakes and chips fit themselves in as teeth for the gaping mouth, and a glob of spittle falls free before the eyes open in a feral glow of yellow-green. Applejack continues struggling as the shadow of this behemoth extends toward her.*)

**Applejack:** Come on…

(*The spittle lands right in front of her; cut to a longer shot of the area. Now this gargantuan timber wolf can be seen in full—big enough to easily chomp down both Applejack and Spike in one bite. It unleashes a deafening, stinking roar into their faces.*)

**Applejack:** Forget it, Spike! You gotta get outta here! (*One huge paw comes down and crushes a stone; he falls on his back.*) Would you just forget your Dragon Code already and go?

(*A pebble slips into his outstretched hand as he comes to his senses; he regards it confusedly for a second, then comes over with a new, steely resolve. The fingers curl around the fragment.*)

**Spike:** No! (*He gets up.*) I have to save you!

(*The pebble is hurled across the expanse of open air and drops neatly into the wolf’s open maw. Its sudden gasps for breath, and the paws scrabbling at the throat, speak to his success in blocking off its airway. A couple of hacking coughs send bits of wood raining down; Spike grabs a stick and hurries to Applejack’s trapped leg.*)

**Spike:** Let’s get outta here!

(*He jams the stick into a crevice and leans on it like a crowbar, she strains to pull loose, and the arboreal monster pounds itself in the chest in an attempt to dislodge the pebble. Finally the rescue efforts pay off; as Applejack gallops and Spike runs like sixty, the choking wolf topples forward and smashes itself to splinters on impact with the ground. Dissolve to the pair hurrying through one of the family orchards.*)

**Twilight:** (*from o.s.*) What happened to you guys back there?

(*On the end of this, the fleeing pair catches up to her and the rest of the gang; Fluttershy has ditched the buckets she had on her hooves.*)

**Twilight:** Thought you were right behind us! (*Cut to Applejack and Spike.*)

**Applejack:** (*lifting a hind leg briefly*) My hoof was stuck! And that timber wolf was comin’ right at me!

**Rarity:** (*from o.s.*) Wait. (*Cut to her, Twilight, and Pinkie.*) You were actually stuck?

**Spike:** Uh-huh! (*Applejack nudges him in the chest, knocking him down.*)

**Applejack:** But Spike picked up a pebble and rocketed that thing right at the huge timber wolf’s mouth, and saved my life.

**Spike:** (*blushing*) Aw, it was nothing.

**Applejack:** (*walking to him*) It was somethin’, all right. (*extending foreleg to help him up*) ’Course, I wouldn’t-a needed help if I hadn’t been tryin’ to stage a fake timber wolf attack in the first place.

**Spike:** (*dryly*) Yeah. What was *that* all about?

**Applejack:** (*sighing heavily*) I know this Code thing’s important to you, but if somethin’ like this comes up in the future, think maybe we can go back to my code, say “that’s what friends do”— (*Cut to him; she continues o.s.*) —and leave it at that?

(*He turns this over very carefully; back to her.*)

**Applejack:** I promise I won’t think of you as any less noble.

(*The brown cowboy hat comes off and is held to her chest, and he gives her a satisfied nod.*)

**Spike:** Sounds good to me. (*Twilight smiles warmly.*) But maybe let’s just try to avoid situations where one of us actually *needs* the other one to save their life? (*Cut to Applejack, hat back on.*)

**Applejack:** (*extending a foreleg*) You got yourself a deal!

(*Close-up of that hoof and the clawed violet hand reaching out to shake it. The fingers stop uncertainly, all curling in except for the index; in time it too curls in, and the little fist thumps solidly against the hoof. Dissolve to the upper-story room in the library, where Twilight is still deep in her reading; there is no light except for what comes in through the window from the night sky outside. Zoom in slowly, then cut to a head-on view of one badly fatigued unicorn. Footsteps approach in time with the arrival of a lit firefly lantern just above her head; she looks up in surprise, and the camera zooms out to frame Spike, holding the lantern on a pole.*)

**Twilight:** Thanks, Spike.

**Spike:** Happy to help. (*Close-up of her.*)

**Twilight:** Don’t know what I’d do without you.

(*A sudden grab brings her away from the book; cut to a close-up of the little guy now holding tightly to a hind leg.*)

**Spike:** No, really. (*Zoom out to frame both.*) I’m really, really, really happy to help you.

(*She chuckles gently before the camera cuts to the exterior of the library, zoomed in on the only lit window—the one with the hanging lantern and balcony. Zoom out slowly.*)

**Twilight:** (*from inside*) Ohhh…

(*Fade to black.*)