

Chapter 3

There were numerous points where Spike could have easily just turned around and gone back. Back at the beginning, when he saw that page in the book, he could have just closed it. When he was about to break into Applejack's apple cellar and Rarity's, he could have just stopped. Even when he did break in, he could've just not taken anything. He could have returned the things he took. When writing the letter, he could have just not taken the letter. He could have disappeared when the Wingling Bros showed up. Sure, they'd have been annoyed, but no real harm would be done. He could've not taken the check. He could've ripped up or incinerated the check right then.

However, with each of these opportunities to turn back, the consequences would be progressively more painful. Now he was going to take another step – he was going to cash the check.

Despite the previous two paragraphs, however, he was not feeling any particular anguish. He was still pleased with himself for tricking those two into giving him a check, and now, wearing his suit, he marched right into the first bank he came across.

"Helloooooo," he said, walking up to a very bored-looking teller. "I'd like to deposit this check."

"You have an account?" she asked.

"Uhh, no," Spike said, "can I have one?"

"Just fill out this paperwork," said the teller, passing a sheet of paper and a pen.

Basic information – name, age, birthday, address, etc. Obviously, some things he had to make up.

"Thank you," said the teller, "now, we'll need to take a picture of you with your cutie mark."

"Cutie mark?" Spike asked.

The teller looked at him like he was an idiot. "Yes. Your cutie mark."

"Here? Now?"

The teller nodded her head.

"What, I just... take this suit off?"

"I don't see what the issue is."

“Well... *privacy*.”

The teller looked at him disbelievingly. “Sir,” she said, “there are other ponies waiting in line. If you-”

“Hold on, I’ll be back in a few,” Spike said, leaving. *Now* he had a feeling that resembled anguish. This was a major roadblock, and he probably would’ve given up right then. At least, he would’ve given up if he had better judgment, but he didn’t. Instead, he spotted a very cranky-looking pony who was covered in liquid rainbow.

And he got another idea.

Spike returned to his room, a bag in his mouth. Emptying the contents onto the bed, there was construction paper, pencils, scissors, a ruler, a tarp, and a can of spray paint. Taking the pencil and the ruler, he carefully drew the shape of a feather onto the construction paper. As he was not quite as precise with his mouth as he was with his hands, this took a few tries. Cutting proved to be even more difficult – scissors were fine to handle as a dragon, but it was an immense pain with hooves.

Everything was a pain without his hands – writing, cutting, piano playing...

There it was. Got the shape right this time.

He went to the bathroom and set up the tarp (couldn’t make a mess – it’d take hours to clean up). Carefully taking the construction paper, he placed it on his flank, and with the can in his mouth (which continued to be awkward for him), he sprayed a green feather on one flank, and repeated the process on the other. Taking a pen, he filled in a few black lines to make it look more like an actual feather and less like the green silhouette of one. He admired his work in the mirror.

“Thank you for doing business with us, Mr. Feather,” said the teller, “and here’s your bank statement.”

Spike took the envelope she hooved him, opening it.

“Sir?” she asked, “you might want to wait until you get home to-”

“Wait a minute,” Spike said, “I’m confused – there’s ten bits more here than I put in.”

“That’s just a little transaction the bank does. Checks to make sure it’s working, and a

little welcome present.”

Spike stopped and thought about this. “Soooooooo... you give me *money*,” he said slowly, as though trying to sound it out, “for signing up here.”

“Yes, pretty much.”

Spike had what was probably the most brilliant poker face of his entire life. “Thank you,” he said, leaving.

More paint, more construction paper.

The various banks in Cloudsdale had new applicants, but there are some who deserve a bit more recognition.

“Viola Wingling,” said the purple pegasus pony.

“Wingling?” the teller asked.

“Yeah, of the Wingling Bros.” he replied, “it’s kinda funny... my mom wanted a filly.”

“Midnight Shadow”

“The author?”

“Well.... my parents were fans.”

“Poison Punk.”

The teller pressed his glasses closer to his face. There stood a purple pegasus pony with this ridiculous spiked green hair, a torn vest, dark glasses, and a skull as his cutie mark. “You some kind of rock artist?”

“Yeah, you probably haven’t heard of me,” he said, “I’m undercloud.”

“Um,”

“Living Color,” and he certainly lived up to that name – his coat was a mish-mash of every part of the rainbow.

This continued for every bank in the city, and for every new account he opened, he got a little bit of money. Unfortunately, this wasn't enough to be a substantial gain, and a poor follow-up to the investment scam from earlier, but it was still a clever little trick, and he was proud of himself for it.

He made his way back to the house. Time to pack up all his stuff and leave, head for someplace else, see what else he could do, and not get caught.

However, as he got to his room, he began to feel woozy. Stumbling, he grabbed onto the side of the bed, and he felt himself shrinking. Guess the growth potion wore off at the end of the day. But then he noticed that his hooves were changing back into hands. Stumbling, he grabbed onto the bedpost.

And then his foot fell through the floor.

“AAH!” he yelled, his grip tightening on the bedpost. He was turning back into a dragon. A dragon that couldn't walk on clouds.

He clinged to that bedpost for dear life, frantically climbing up to the surface of the bed, breathing heavily.

He almost died. He actually almost died. Kinda like that time with the big green dragon, and that other time with the hydra.

He sat on the bed, shaking. He was scared, and it hit him that he was completely alone. He looked at the nightstand – there was his quill and inkpot. He had to write. He didn't know what he was going to write, but he had to. He needed some form of contact with Twilight.

Dear Twilight Sparkle, he wrote. Then he stopped. He didn't know what he was going to say. He couldn't break down and start crying into the letter. But what to write?

Hey.

Better than nothing, at least.

Play it casual.

Hey. It's me, Spike.

He kept the writing vague, just saying that he was okay, and that he was having fun. He wondered what her reaction would be. Maybe it would be funny? Well, he couldn't see it.

But he got stuck near the end.

But when the going gets tough, the tough get

No. Entirely too cliché.

Tell them how I am defying gravity. And you won't bring me down.

Too cheesy.

Ready or not, here I come!

Noooooo, too juvenile. Eventually, he came up with just the right wording. Letter looked a little messy, though. Pleased (for the most part), he rolled up the scroll, and taking a deep breath, sent it on its way.

He sat there for a few minutes, and thought. *Well, now what?*

He had the suitcase on the bed. There was one more vial. He decided it was time to leave.

The tiny purple colt closed the door and walked away. He only had one suitcase with him. He turned to look at that big house one last time, the house that had been home to that kindly old couple. He'd have to send them some money after his next score. They were nice.

He walked over to the edge of the cloud, and threw down the suitcase. Down, down, down it fell.

Spike realized that was probably a stupid thing to do. He turned his head around. He realized something: he was a pegasus pony – he had wings. He spread them, flexing them a little. They seemed to work, he seemed to be able to hold them out, and he wondered... could he fly? Could he actually fly?

He lifted one foot over the edge, nervous. His breathing was deeper, now that he saw just how high he was. He closed his eyes, and taking one last breath, he dropped off the edge of the cloud.

It's said that time seems to slow down when someone is scared. This is because the brain's firing off all the neurons, trying to get the body to react more quickly. Unfortunately, that's often negated with "deer in the headlights," but that's enough trivia (might want to fact-check it).

But falling is fast. Very fast, like being inside a wind tunnel. He might've been able to control the wings on the ground (well, cloud), but now with the wind beating against him,

it was nearly painful. But then, as though something just clicked, his wings were outstretched, and the wind seemed gentler, like it was a cushion, carrying him upwards.

He was flying. He was genuinely flying, and without the pink balloon.

He couldn't contain himself.

“WOOOOOOOOOOOOO! Haha!” he laughed, elated as much by his success at flying as he had been with his scams.

He felt invincible.