

## Chapter 7: A Night At The Spleen

**Opening Comments:** For once, I don't really have anything to say. Planning a wedding is hard.

Enjoy the chapter.

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"Has anyone seen Spike?" Twilight asked as she looked up from her Applied Physics textbook. He had left to get her a drink quite some time ago, and she hadn't seen him since; of course, she had been wrapped up in her studying, so it was possible that she had somehow missed him. There was a test after lunch, and though she was already over-prepared she figured a little extra studying couldn't hurt. Across the group of desks Rainbow Dash shook her head.

"Nope, I haven't seen him since he went to get your water. Maybe he decided to run away," she said with a laugh as she finished off her can of cola.

"Rainbow Dash, that's not a nice thing to say!" Rarity snapped. "I'm sure Spike is on his way back. He's still new to the school, so perhaps he just got a little lost."

Twilight drummed her fingers on the cover of her book, thinking about what to do. *I really want to get some more studying in, but I'll feel horrible if he doesn't get to finish his lunch because he ran an errand for me* she thought to herself. With a resigned sigh, she slid her chair out and stood up. "I'll go find him. Whether he likes it or not he still has to take this afternoon's test too, and he shouldn't take it on an empty stomach."

Across from her, Rainbow Dash began to rise while saying, "I'll help you out."

Twilight shook her head and motioned for Dash to sit back down. "You don't have to do that. Go ahead and finish your lunch; I have a good idea of where he is, anyway. He only had two options for where to go: the cafeteria or the vending machine on the way to our specialty courses. The vending machine's closer, so he's probably there." She moved away from her group of friends as she finished her explanation, disappearing through the door at the back of the classroom. Once she was gone, Dash began to smile mischievously.

"So, she's worried about Spike and wants to go find him all by herself. That sounds a little fishy, don't you think?"

With a sigh, Rarity replied, "If it was anyone else, I would be willing to entertain what you're suggesting, but this is Twilight we're talking about. All she thinks about is books and research; I don't think the idea of love is anywhere in that girl's mind." She paused for a moment as she contemplated her thoughts. "Still, if it was true I suppose Spike wouldn't be a bad choice. He's not the type of guy I would choose, but he certainly isn't horrible."

"I think it would be wonderful if Twilight fell in love with someone," Fluttershy squeaked from the other end of their makeshift table. Applejack let out a loud laugh in response, causing Fluttershy to shrink down in her seat out of shock.

"It would be wonderful, wouldn't it? But it ain't goin' ter happen, sadly. We all know Twilight too well," Applejack commented, still chuckling at the notion. "I don't suspect we'll ever see Twilight hook up with someone."

Pinkie Pie sat at Fluttershy's left, completely oblivious to the conversation until Applejack had let out her laugh. She paused from the party planning that had so distracted her to say, "I don't think that's very nice. Sure Twilight has her faults, but it's not like she doesn't have

feelings. Friends should encourage each other, and you're not being very encouraging right now." The rest of the girls tried to maintain straight faces as they received Pinkie Pie's scolding, but it was a challenge. She was the last person they would ever expect to seriously lecture them, after all. "Now I want you all to think about how mean you're being while I finish planning Spike's party." As she said that, Pinkie Pie felt something tug at the back of her mind, a nagging thought that wouldn't quite surface. "Spike... Spike... why do I feel like I'm forgetting something?" she muttered to herself, scratching her head. After a few moments with no results she shrugged her shoulders, said "Oh well" and went back to her planning.

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Twilight was getting ever closer to the vending machines, and still had seen no sign of Spike. She was starting to wonder if her guess had been wrong; after all, Spike should have at least been on his way back by this point. As she prepared to round the corner to the vending machines, the sound of loud voices reached her ears, causing her to stop. Slowly, she peered around the corner to see Spike cornered by two rather large high school boys. Twilight recognized them almost immediately: they were the top two members of the school's wrestling team. More importantly, they were known for harassing new students. *Probably some sort of primitive dominance thing* Twilight thought to herself.

"Yo man, what's wrong with you? Just give us the money and we'll let you go," the slightly larger of the two was saying. He towered over Spike, almost a foot taller than the younger boy. His hair was buzzed close to his head, and his muscles were almost unreal--then

again, you didn't become the top wrestler in school without spending plenty of time at the gym.

"Hey, maybe he thinks he's too good for us," the second boy chimed in. "He's from Casterly, so he's probably thinking, 'Oh, I live in the royal city. I'm too good for you.' Something like that, you know?" This guy was a stark contrast to his companion--short where his companion was tall (but still taller than Spike), a head full of hair where his companion was almost bald, and lean where his companion was muscular. Twilight found herself wondering how he could possibly be number two on the wrestling team, and suspected that his friendship with the number one had more to do with it than any actual skill.

"Look, it's not like that," Spike finally replied. "If you had any idea what my life was like in Casterly you would feel a lot different. And like I've already told you, this isn't my money, so it's not my place to give it away. You'll just have to rob somebody else." He motioned to move between the two boys, but was forced back against the wall by the bigger student.

"I already told you, I don't give two shits who the money belongs to, hand it over! Don't make me take it by force."

Twilight watched as Spike's eyes narrowed. *Don't do anything stupid, Spike* she thought. She chewed at her thumb knuckle and thought, *I should do something*; but what could she do? She certainly wouldn't be any match for two members of the wrestling team, and she doubted she could find a staff member and bring them here before things turned violent. As she began to formulate a plan, she watched in horror as Spike's right arm shot out in a right-hook aimed at the bigger student's face... unfortunately for Spike, his punch fell short and landed on the larger student's chest. Whether it was a result of Spike's height (or lack thereof), a lack of skill, or a combination of the two, Twilight didn't know. She had a feeling it didn't really matter, either.

"Wrong move, kid," the number two wrestler commented as he landed a blow straight to Spike's solar plexus. The two wrestlers took turns hitting Spike for several seconds before prying the money from his left hand and walking away. Twilight darted across the hallway to his side.

"Oh my gosh, Spike, are you okay?" she asked, kneeling down next to the now sitting Spike.

Spike looked up at her and laughed. "Yeah, I'm fine." He moaned and gripped his lower ribs, where he had taken most of the blows. "Okay, maybe I'm not so fine. But it's a really my fault for throwing that first punch. Of course, I could have held my own if I had to, but I'm not supposed to hit other students, you know? Bodyguard rules and all." Twilight saw right through the lie, but decided to bite her tongue and allow Spike to preserve some of his dignity.

"I feel like this is my fault," Twilight commented as she helped Spike to his feet. "If I hadn't asked you to get me a drink you never would have run into them. On top of it, they took all of your money."

Spike let go of Twilight's hand and leaned against the wall. "Don't worry, they didn't get all of my money; that was only what you gave me to get the water. I wonder how long it will take them to realize they only got me for two bucks." This time his laugh was genuine. He lifted up his right foot and removed his shoe. Reaching down into the toe of it, he pulled out a wad of bills. "This is where I keep most of my cash."

Twilight wrinkled her nose and let out a low, "Ew", at Spike's revelation. She could only imagine what that money looked--and smelled--like after a long, hot day. Her disgust didn't seem to bother Spike, who simply pulled off a few ones, placed the wad back in its hiding place, and then put the shoe back on his feet. He hobbled over to the vending machine, put the money in,

and selected the water. As he went to reach for the bottle that was dispensed, Twilight said, "I'll get it," and quickly approached the vending machine to retrieve her drink. "No offense, but your hands were just inside your shoe. Who knows what kind of germs are on them."

Spike gave her a blank stare for a moment and then began to chuckle. "You really are an interesting one, Twilight." He winced as pain shot through his ribs. "Well this is going to make the rest of the day interesting," he muttered.

"Do you want to go back to your room?" Twilight offered.

Spike shook his head. "No, that would defeat the purpose of me hanging around you to protect you." Twilight opened her mouth to speak, but Spike cut her off before she could. "And don't even think about offering to come with me. There's no way I'm going to cause you to miss that test. You've been studying your butt off for it."

Defeated, Twilight simply hung her head. *He's going to regret this. It is a thoughtful gesture, though*, she thought. With a resigned sigh she approached Spike and placed her arm around his waist. "Come on, then. I can at least help you get back to the classroom." Spike threw his arm around Twilight's shoulders and together they began making their way back to the classroom.

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The end of the school day had come at last, but Twilight had needed to make a quick stop before leaving the building. Simply put, she drank too much water during the day, and couldn't wait to get back to her dorm room. So, she stepped into the girls' room and left Spike waiting

outside. As she was finishing up and preparing to walk out of the stall, though, she heard two girls talking outside of the door.

"You know that new guy, right? The one who just joined our class this week?" asked the first girl.

"Yeah, you mean the one with the long hair?" her friend replied.

"That's the one. Have you ever noticed how he's always staring at that one girl? I mean, he's fixated on her. He couldn't be any more obvious if he wrote 'Date Me' on his forehead," the first girl laughed.

*They're talking about Spike, Twilight realized. Looking at a girl?* She could only assume they meant her; after all, Spike was her bodyguard, and he had been paying her a lot of attention. *I should go out and clear this up, she told herself. I don't want anyone spreading bad rumors about him.* She stopped just before she opened the stall door, though. *What if they get mad about me eavesdropping? Well, it was just an accident, right? Still, they might get mad.* She ended up staying in the stall.

"I think it's cute," the second girl replied. "He's too nervous to admit his crush, so he just stares in silent admiration. It's like something out of a romance novel." She squealed and shouted, "Hey, don't splash me with water!"

The first girl chuckled. "Sorry, but I had to get you out of those daydreams of yours. If you keep reading those romance novels your brain will turn to mush. Come on, let's get out of here."

Twilight listened for the door to open and close before finally stepping out of the stall. She approached the sink and began to wash her hands. *Geez, why does everyone have to gossip*

*in the bathroom?* she said to herself. *Still, what if they're right? Spike having a crush on me? Wouldn't that make things awkward?* She reached for a paper towel and dried her hands. *Still, I can't say that anyone has ever had a crush on me. It's kind of... flattering? Oh come on, Twilight, you have more important things to worry about than romance!* She chuckled at her own inner monologue and tossed the paper towel away before walking out of the door. Despite her quick dismissal of the situation, though, she still found it a bit awkward to look the waiting Spike in his eyes.

## **Saturday**

"No, no, that banner is supposed to go over *there*," Pinkie Pie said, frustrated. She had been at Cranston Bakery for three hours now, trying to get everything set up for Spike's welcome party. When a group of girls from her event planning classes offered to help her out, Pinkie Pie was delighted. However, she was now starting to think of them as more of a hindrance. Something piqued her interest from the corner of her eye. She turned, and then shouted, "Stacy, no! You can't use those kinds of adhesives! They'll pull the paint off the wall!" Damages to the shop were the last thing she needed. Cranston didn't usually rent out its space for private parties, but since Pinkie had spent so much money in cakes over the past year alone they had decided to make an exception. Any damages were likely to impact her reputation with the shop, and that was something she certainly couldn't afford. She continued to watch Stacy, who was now staring absently at the adhesive squares in her left hand and the banner in her right. After several moments, it was clear that she didn't know what to do, so Pinkie Pie sighed and approached the



bottom on the ladder on which Stacy stood. "Climb down, I'll take care of it," she said.

*This is ridiculous. We still have a bunch of decorating to do, and I still need to hide the random pranks. Everyone seemed to love it the last time I did it... or the last time the other me did it... ah, this is confusing* she thought to herself as she ascended the ladder, grabbed the roll of scotch tape that was lying next to the adhesive squares, and taped the end of the banner to the wall.

She descended the ladder to examine the banner, which had been inspired by the logo for Spike's old band. The logo he had shown her had a dragon weaving its way through the band's name, 'The River Dragons', with the letters done in a watery font. Pinkie Pie had removed the band name so that the banner simply showed a dragon over a field of water. As she admired her handiwork a thought raced through her mind. As it began to settle in her eyes began to grow wide, and after a few seconds she shouted, "That's it!" before darting out of the shop, leaving the rest of her crew completely bewildered.

Spike was lying on his bed, completely engrossed in the ridiculously large fantasy novel he was holding. The book was the fifth in a series, and had taken several years to come out, so Spike intended to spend his Saturday savoring the long-awaited story. As he was reaching the climax of a particularly brutal fight scene, he heard his door slam open as someone screamed, "You're Spike!" Out of instinct, he sat up and cocked his arm, prepared to launch his book in defense. Only the sight of bright pink hair stayed his arm.

"Geez Pinkie Pie, you almost took eight pounds of epic fantasy to the face!" he exclaimed, lowering his arm and placing his free hand over his palpitating heart. "Now what's so

important that it couldn't be preceded by something like, oh, I don't know, a knock at the door?"

"Sorry, it's just that....you're Spike!" Pinkie blurted out, though much quieter this time.

"I...realize I'm Spike. We established that on Monday. Not quite sure why that was worth the invasion of my privacy." Pinkie Pie shook her head.

"No, I mean you're THE Spike, the dragon! Twilight's little helper! Why didn't I see this before?" She walked over to him and put her hands on his shoulders. "Why didn't you say something before?"

Spike pulled away from Pinkie Pie and gave her a quizzical look. "Pinkie Pie, I have to be honest. You're starting to freak me out a bit." A thump overhead caused him to pause. "Well, we're about to get our butts handed to us."

Pinkie didn't need to ask what Spike meant; it was fairly obvious. Twilight's room was located directly above Spike's, which meant any loud noises from Spike's room would easily carry up into Twilight's room. Given that it was the weekend, it was safe to assume that Twilight was deep into her studies, which all of the loud noise had undoubtedly interrupted. Put all of that together, and it was only logical that they were about to face the wrath of Twilight. The thought to book it out of the room occurred too late, for when Pinkie turned to make her exit she found herself face-to-face with a red-faced Twilight.

"You two do realize you're in a *library*, right? On top of that, you do realize that there are people trying to *study* don't you?" Spike and Pinkie both nodded in unison. "Then why, might I ask, are you down here making so much noise?" Twilight fumed, her glare bouncing from Pinkie to Spike and back again.

Stone-faced, Spike raised his hands and shook his head, as if to say 'It wasn't me'. Before

Twilight could say anymore, though, Pinkie cut in with, "Twilight, don't you realize? This is SPIKE!"

Twilight cocked an eyebrow at her eccentric friend. "Yes, Pinkie, I'm well aware that this is Spike. He's my bodyguard, after all. It would be pretty messed up if I forgot his name."

Pinkie shook her head. "Nooooo, you don't get it either! This is Spike! Dragon spike! Purple dragon, green spikes, with a tail?"

Twilight's mind shot back to a dream of a rainy day spent in a tree library with a short, bi-pedal dragon. She shook the image from her mind. "Pinkie, I thought we had moved past all of this pony and dragon stuff. You were sick and hallucinating or...something. Yes, I will admit that it is an odd coincidence that we would meet someone by the nickname of 'Spike' a few weeks later, but that's all it is--a coincidence."

"B-but Spike...dragons...I..." Pinkie stammered, unable to find the words to form an argument. Spike patted her on the back and smiled at her.

"It's okay, Pinkie. It's probably my fault for letting you listen to my old band's album. I didn't realize you were having hallucinations like that. I'm sure the song about the woman finding a dragon's egg coupled with my nickname probably contributed to it." He walked over to the laptop sitting on his desk and brought it out of sleep mode before opening several folders. Twilight still stood in the doorway, analyzing the situation. While Spike's theory seemed to have a solid logical foundation, she couldn't help but notice that there was a hint of forced assurance in Spike's voice, as if he wanted Pinkie to accept that as the answer. *Could he be hiding something* she thought to herself. She quickly shook the thought from her head. *Come on now, Twilight, you're getting as bad as Pinkie. Next you'll be thinking that he's a dragon or something,*

*too*. The sound of heavy drums and loud guitars pulled her from her thoughts.

"Gah, Spike, what is that?!" Twilight snapped, covering her ears.

"Oh, sorry, I guess I should have turned the speakers down some," Spike replied, adjusting the volume to a more comfortable level. "This is the song I was talking about. Pinkie was asking about the album the other day, so I gave her a copy."

Twilight found herself paying attention as the vocals came in. True to Spike's description, the song was about a young girl who stumbled upon a dragon's egg and took care of it, eventually hatching and taming the dragon within. Slowly but surely, her attention became focused on something else--the production value of the song. While it wasn't anywhere near the quality that she would expect from a professional band, it was still fairly decent, especially considering that Spike's band had only been a local group. "Hey, Spike, how did you guys record this?" she found herself asking.

Spike, who was caught up in memories from his singing days, didn't process the question right away. After it sunk in, though, his attention snapped to Twilight and he responded, "Oh, our bassist, Matt, was going to college for music production. He had some recording equipment that he had gotten at a liquidation sale, so we recorded it in his basement, or as I liked to call it, his BASSment." Spike began to laugh at his own joke, but quickly stopped when he noticed Pinkie and Twilight rolling their eyes at the weak pun. He cleared his throat. "Anyway, I think that should clear up the issue of Pinkie's dragon dreams." He paused and reached into the second drawer of his desk, producing a CD. "Here, Twilight, why don't you take a copy for yourself? Give it a listen." Spike walked over and pressed the album into Twilight's hands.

"Well...okay, I guess it won't hurt. I'll listen when I have some free time. Should you

really be giving these away like this, though?"

That seemed to amuse Spike. "Relax, I have two boxes of the darn things back home. We barely sold any of them at our shows, so we got stuck with a surplus that was divided amongst the band. We were supposed to hand them out to promote the band, but then some things happened, I had to quit, and who knows what happened with the rest of them. We basically fell out of touch. I've been trying to get rid of these things since then, so you're doing me a favor."

Content with the explanation, Twilight excused herself and turned to leave. "Wait!" Pinkie Pie cried out. "You guys are trying to change the subject and avoid the situation! I know the situation looks weird, but can you really say this is just a coincidence?"

Twilight sighed and began to speak, "Pinkie, you had a fever hallucination or dream or something that we were all ponies and that there was a dragon named Spike. You got over the fever and everything was good. Then we met someone who uses the name Spike who happened to play in a band that wrote a song about a dragon. Your mind took the name "Spike" and the word "dragon", dredged up that hallucination, and that's how you got to this point. That's all. Perhaps you're subconsciously insecure about the whole situation and think that we're still judging you for the fever situation, so you thought this would be proof. Trust me, though, we are not judging you." She finished her thoughts and watched Pinkie, who seemed to slowly digest everything.

"You don't understand, on the other side of--nevermind, you're right Twilight. Your explanation makes perfect sense, or at least it sounds like it does. You know more about that kind of stuff than I do." She slumped her shoulders in defeat and made her way to the door. "Anyway, I'm going to go finish what I was doing before. Remember to be there by five." With that, she

was gone.

Twilight turned to Spike and said, "Well, you heard her, I have to be somewhere at five, and since you're playing the whole bodyguard role you'll have to come with me. If you want a shower or anything I'd suggest you consider taking care of it soon." Without another word she walked away, headed for her own room.

Spike crossed to the doorway and pushed the door closed, leaning against it with a heavy sigh. "That was crazy," he thought aloud. "I'd better keep an eye on Pinkie. Things could get complicated."

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A few hours later, Spike found himself standing in the center of Cranston Bakery, surrounded by faces new and familiar alike. He had to admit to himself that he was quite nervous, but he was used to dealing with the nervousness thanks to his time in the band. The welcome party had been a complete surprise, and he hadn't known how to initially react. Besides Warrel, an old friend from Casterly, no one had ever done anything this nice for him before. Rainbow Dash had joked that Spike looked as though he was about to cry, and though he laughed it off as a joke the truth was that he had been fighting back tears of joy. Once his emotions subsided he began to take in the atmosphere around him.

To say that Pinkie Pie had outdone herself would have been an understatement. The crowd was incredibly huge, with faces both new and familiar in the crowd. She had decorated the entire space with an assortment of banners, balloons, and ribbons, all somehow connected to

him. There were even hints of his old band logo on some of the banners. Even the music playing had been tailored to his tastes, which explained why Pinkie had been so interested in his music library all week. *For someone who's supposed to be a bodyguard you sure are bad at picking up obvious clues*, he chided himself. He felt truly bad for all of three seconds, and then he found the boneless hot wing platter.

It was some time before he realized that Twilight was no longer with him. With a sinking feeling in his stomach, he began making his way through the crowd of people, calling her name. It was almost impossible to hear anything, though, between the music and the endless chatter. After a few moments he found Pinkie Pie standing at the center of a group of girls he didn't recognize, smiling from ear to ear while she was discussing something that he couldn't quite make out. If she was still bummed about the situation earlier she wasn't showing it.

Spike squeezed his way into the circle of girls until he was at Pinkie's side. He tapped her on the shoulder and she turned to look at him. "Oh hey Spike!" she said happily. "How do you like the party? I really went all out for this one!"

"It's great!" Spike replied. "But I seem to have lost sight of Twilight. Have you seen her?"

Pinkie pointed to her left and said, "Yeah, she's right over at the drink table with Applejack! You shouldn't worry so much, though! This is your party, have fun!"

After thanking her and assuring her that he would, in fact, have fun, Spike made his way out of the gaggle of girls and over to the indicated drink table. Sure enough, Twilight and Applejack were standing there talking, just like Pinkie Pie had said. He waved and called out to them, until he took a good look at Applejack. She was dressed in a pair of cut-off jeans and a button down shirt; much less than he was used to seeing her in. Her down-dressed appearance,

combined with a lack of experience with girls, caused him to blush. Twilight and Applejack had already noticed him at this point, along with his blushing.

"Well lookee here. Spike's got himself all flabbergasted!" Applejack laughed, patting the boy on the back. "Not used ta seein' girls in casual wear?"

"W-well, not that kind of casual wear," Spike commented, looking to Twilight, who was dressed in a pair of jeans and a t-shirt.

"Aw, yer just used to that city girl look. This is how we farm girls do casual, though. You'll get used to it." She ruffled his hair and chuckled again. "So whaddaya think? Does it look good on me?" She teased.

"Um, yeah, well, sure," Spike stammered. "I mean, it's not necessarily my type but um...it does you justice...you know...um...yeah..." He fumbled around for words that just wouldn't come to him. The more he flailed, the more Applejack seemed to be amused.

"Ah, so ya have a type, then? Well come on, spill it! What's your type?" She patted him on the back and shot him a huge grin, making it all too obvious that she was enjoying this.

Spike blushed and looked at his shoes. "W-well, I always thought girls with glasses were cute. Not those big coke-bottle glasses, mind you, but smaller glasses. A-and I like girls who don't try to hide who they are, you know, girls who are just honest and straightforward." His face was bright red at this point.

"So that's what ya go for, eh?" Applejack smiled and stroked her chin. "Ya wouldn' happen ta have yer eyes on--" Twilight cut her off before she could finish.

"Come on, Applejack, haven't you teased him enough? You're even starting to make me uncomfortable now," she commented, laying a hand on Spike's shoulder. "Don't make him feel so



embarrassed at his own welcome party."

Applejack chuckled and waved her hand in the air. "Alright, alright, you win. I was just havin' a bit o' fun is all. I'm gonna go check out the food table. You guys have fun now!" With that she wandered off into the crowd, leaving Twilight and Spike alone.

"Are you okay now?" Twilight asked, turning to look at Spike.

He turned his eyes to her and smiled. "Yeah, now that the pressure's off me I'm good. Geeze, what was that all about, anyway? You think Applejack's got a thing for me or something?"

Twilight laughed and then quickly apologized. "Sorry, but trust me, you're not Applejack's type. She's more into the handyman type than the musician-bodyguard-schoolboy type. Actually, by that description I think you are your own unique type," she teased, sparking a chuckle from Spike.

With the previous tension finally dissolved, the two began making their way through the crowd again, stopping to talk with people that they recognized. At one point, Pinkie Pie announced to the whole party that she was going to play a "special song", which turned out to be one of the songs from Spike's album. He found himself blushing again when she revealed this, as the entire party seemed to turn its attention on him. A few people complimented the work, but most seemed to quickly go back to what they were doing, allowing Spike to breathe a sigh of relief.

"You know, for an ex-singer you sure don't like having a lot of eyes on you," Twilight commented.

"Well, it's different when you're on stage. With all of the lights in your face it's really hard

to see much of anything, so my focus isn't really on the people watching me. Plus some things have...changed...since then."

Twilight was curious as to what he meant by 'things have changed', but before she could voice her question Spike had motioned for her to follow him and then walked off. When he finally stopped, he was in front of the shop's main counter, waving hello to Rainbow Dash. "Hey guys, this is a pretty awesome party, huh?" she asked, smiling and turning back to the shop's owner. "I have to say, it was really cool of you to let Pinkie hold this here."

The shop owner, an older, portly gentleman, chuckled and replied, "Well how could I say no to Pinkie Pie? She's my best customer! Besides, with all of these kids here, there's a good chance that I'll attract some future customers as well."

Rainbow Dash nodded her agreement and then turned back to Spike and Twilight. "Oh yeah, guys, this is Mr. Cake. Mr. Cake, this is Spike and Twilight."

"Mr. Cake? Well, I don't know if my cake is good enough for that kind of a nickname, but I think it is pretty good," he laughed, patting Dash on the back.

"Mr. Cake? That's not what I said, is it? I could have sworn I said Mr. Cranston," she thought aloud, looking to Twilight and Spike for support, but they only shook their heads. "Huh, I guess it was just a slip of the tongue. Oh well." She began to turn back to Mr. Cranston, but then quickly snapped her head back around to Spike. "Hey, Spike, what's up with the tail?"

Confused, Spike turned to look at his backside, thinking that someone might have put something there as a joke. When he saw nothing, though, he looked back at Dash with a confused look and asked, "Are you feeling alright, Rainbow Dash?"

Dash blinked and rubbed her eyes. "Wow, I must be going crazy. Too much training, I

guess. We have a lot of indoor meets coming up, so I've been putting in a lot of extra practice time." She chuckled nervously and rubbed the back of her head. "Well, I'm gonna go get something with a lot of sugar. Maybe that'll wake me up for a bit, huh?" With that she sauntered off into the crowd, leaving her now confused friends behind. After a moment, though, they shrugged it off and went back to enjoying the party.

The rest of the evening continued on in a blur of music, cake, and dancing. Rarity had humored Spike by dancing with him to some old heavy metal ballad while Twilight watched. She wasn't much of a dancer and preferred to not embarrass herself in front of all of these people. While Rarity clearly wasn't into the style of music, she still danced elegantly--or at least as elegantly as one could dance to such music. *I'm a bit jealous*, Twilight had to admit to herself. She had read about dancing, sure, but her feet didn't seem to like the actual application of the dance moves.

The sound of breaking glass and flesh connecting with flesh ended the revelry, though, as a fight broke out between students from the local public high school and students from Perryville Academy. Apparently, the public school students had invited themselves to the party, and had started goading on members of the Perryville Academy football team. After a few choice words, the situation had quickly devolved into a full-blown fist fight, and the rest of the party goers were in full retreat mode. Spike had to throw his arm out to prevent Twilight from trying to get involved. "Trust me Twi, it's safer to not get involved," he said sternly.

Twilight tried to push past him as she said, "Fighting is strictly against school rules, whether on or off campus. Someone has to stop them!"

In response, Spike produced his cell phone and held it out to her. "If you really want to

intervene, then call the cops. No offense, but they'll be more effective than you or I could hope to be."

Seemingly satisfied with Spike's solution, Twilight quickly dialed the local emergency number and reported the incident. It didn't take long for two police cars to show up and drag the dueling high schoolers away. Unfortunately, the police also put an end to the party for the 'sake of public safety'. Slowly but steadily the partygoers dispersed, until only Spike, Twilight, Pinkie Pie, Applejack, Rarity, and Fluttershy were left at the bakery.

"Hey, where's Rainbow Dash?" Pinkie asked, looking around to see if she somehow missed her.

"Oh um...she left a little while ago. She said she wasn't feeling too good...she kept seeing weird marks on people or something. I think she was really tired," Fluttershy replied in her usual soft voice.

"Well poo," Pinkie spat. "I wanted all seven of us here for a private after party." She gave an exaggerated pout, which only served to amuse her friends.

"Well, Spike, I hope you will enjoy your time at Perryville Academy. It really is a wonderful school," Rarity commented.

"Yeah, this was really fun. Well, minus the fight that ended it all, of course. I haven't done anything like this in a long time," Spike replied. *I just wish the rest of my life could be this laid back and casual*, he thought. *Damn my luck.*

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**Afterword:** Well, that about wraps up Chapter 7. I wanted to use the chapter and the party

setting to integrate Spike into the world more. Along the way there were some small advances, as well, but nothing too earth-shattering. If you're starting to wonder when something big is going to happen, though, then you'll definitely want to stick around for Chapter 8. Well, that's all for now. I hope you enjoyed Chapter 7, and I hope you stick around for Chapter 8.