

Unwanted Attention

Scene Two: Sneaking Suspicion

Spike excitedly made his way across Ponyville towards Rarity's boutique. His mind wandered in anticipation and he walked straight into a vending cart.

"Ah, are you okay?" An unfamiliar voice called out to him from behind the cart. Spike looked up to see a red-maned earth pony he half-knew looking over him in concern.

"Yeah, I'm okay, Roseluck." The quick glance toward her ware of roses reminded him. It gave him an idea. "I could use a rose." He reached behind his scales to pick out some bits that he had tucked away.

"Oh?" Roseluck narrowed her eyes at him, then smiled. "You look like you have something important to do, so this one is on the house." With a wave of her hoof, she offered him his choice from the roses she had displayed.

"Really? Aw thanks, Roseluck." He debated a moment, trying to pick a good rose that Rarity might like. He settled on the reddest, most full bloomed one he could find. With it in his claws and a new smile on his face, he departed with a hum.

Finally at his destination, Spike rapped on the door and then gave his spines a stroke back with his free claw to tidy himself up. The top half of the door opened and the beautiful white unicorn looked down at him through her red working glasses. He felt himself stop breathing at sight and his heart skipped a beat.

"Spike! You're just in time." She spoke with urgency. With haste she opened the door and ushered the dragon inside. Unable to control his body, Spike entered and followed her with lovestruck eyes. They stopped at one of the displays where several dressmaker mannequins were outfitted with various designs.

One was wearing an extravagant jewel studded tan suit while another wore a black leather jacket, and more designs were still lined up. The middle had a dark red cape and hood with a star pattern on the back. Near the end of the row was one that was wearing a small velvet vest and two decorated back-leg shoes. The last one in the line was donned with a brown fur felt hat and dark brown jacket.

"Now then, I shall explain the situation. I just heard that Ray had returned, and that his welcoming back party is this afternoon. The thought that I could show off some of my latest designs on a royal pony was too much to pass up and I started planning several designs for a gift." She motioned to the five decorated mannequins. "Thus, which of these do you think Ray would like best?"

Spike blinked himself back out of his trance, then looked over the outfits in question. "Well, Ray always has those hoof-cuffs on, but I don't think I see him wearing anything else." He pointed to the one with just a vest and nodded approvingly. "Guys really don't like wearing frilly stuff, and I don't think he'd like too many jewels on it."

Rarity gave it a look over and starting musing to herself. "Not too many jewels... Simple simple, yes I could make it work. Thank you, Spike." She dismissed him with a nod and began to work again, fabric and mannequins moving about at her magical command.

"You're welcome." He answered on instinct, ready to be at her beck and call again. He

snapped out of it as he remembered he was holding a rose. "A gift for you, oh beautiful one."

She turned to look at it and gave him a warm smile. "Thank you Spike, I know just where this can go." The rose floated out of his hand and positioned itself perfectly on a nearby mirror. Rarity resumed work as soon as she was finished, her scissors cutting into the fabric she had just selected.

Spike half-frowned and then flexed his arms. "Notice anything different about me?"

Without looking, Rarity answered him. "Nothing unusual."

Fully frowning, Spike unflexed himself. "Nothing?"

Heaving a sigh, Rarity turned around to face him. "Well, I see you combed your spines back and cleaned your claws. Apart from that, you seem just fine." She smiled. "I would like to work on this suit, if you don't mind."

"Oh, right." Spike's shoulders slumped and he headed for the exit. He quietly muttered to himself. "I guess it didn't work."

Outside of the boutique, Spike pondered the situation while he made his way back to the observatory.

"Hi, Spike." A familiar voice called out behind him. He spun himself around to see Rarity's little sister staring at him. "Oh hi, Sweetie Belle."

"I noticed something about you!" She said excitedly, her voice in a sing-song tone.

"Oh really?" He perked up.

"Yeah, your scales are really shiny today." Her eyes never left him as she spoke.

Spike gave himself a look over. "They do, don't they? Thanks, Sweetie. I just wish Rarity would notice."

"Oh, she always gets like that when she's working. She didn't even compliment you on your clean teeth."

The dragon blinked in surprise, then sighed again. "Yeah, I guess. Anyway, I'll see you later." He barely took two more steps away before she moved to follow him.

"Wait!" She moved to be next to him, trotting alongside. "Where are we headed?"

"Um... I was planning on going back to help Ray clean up." Spike raised his eyebrow in confusion at her odd actions.

"That sounds great, can I come with you?" Her sing-song voice returned.

"I guess."

"Yay!" Sweetie Belle started humming as the two strolled through town.

"What are you thinking about, Spikey?" She asked him.

"Oh, I was wondering if there was a way to get Rarity to notice me." Spike admitted, then stopped. "Wait, Spikey?"

"Oh, can I call you that?" She stopped in front of him and gave him a glance of big-sweet-pony eyes. "I'll tell you how to get Sis to recognize you."

"Well, I guess that's a fair trade off." He was willing to go that far if it meant winning Rarity's attention.

"Okay, Spikey." She sung his name and then twirled. "Sis likes famous ponies, so you gotta do something that will make you famous. Not that you aren't already super famous." She gave him a big smile.

"Me? Not as famous Twilight or Rainbow Dash."

"No no, you're much better than them. You're the only dragon in Ponyville."

"Oh yeah, I do have that." He beamed.

"You just gotta show it off more."

"Yeah." He felt more motivated and picked his head up from its slump.

"Is that Spike?" An unrecognizable voice spoke from nearby..

"It is! He's right there." Another voice spoke loud enough for Spike to hear.

Spike ceased the walking and turned to investigate. There were many ponies following him and Sweetie Belle, and they had all stopped when he stopped. All of them also kept looking at him with an odd grin. He scratched his head, turned to keep walking and the group moved with him. "I feel like we're being followed."

"I think we are. But I think that's just 'cause I'm hanging out with you." Sweetie's tone was very strange. Strange enough that Spike had to pause to take another look at her and the collection of mares behind him paused with him.

"Spike!" Roseluck called out to him again as they passed through the merchant area of Ponyville again. "Would you like another rose?" She offered him another pick but he shook his head. She frowned sadly. "That's alright, but you're welcome to another if you change your mind." He glanced back to see her leaning on her cart and staring at him. In fact, all the ponies who had just until now been shopping or selling were staring at him.

"Spike!" A rainbow flash swooped in from the sky and plucked him up from where he was. Before he could protest, the pegasus who snatched him interjected. "No time. Let's go." Leaving a cloud of dust, she carted him away.

"Aww..." Everypony in the area sighed dejectedly at his departure.

"Rainbow Dash, what's the big idea?" Spike managed to ask once they landed. He spotted Applejack's farmhouse across the ridge and figured he was on Sweet Apple Acres.

"What? It's not like you were busy doing anything. Aaaaand--" She spoke suggestively, "--I wanted you to be the first one to see my new trick." Already off the ground, she shot herself up with a burst from her wings and then spiralled downward. Altering her approach, she twisted herself up and then did a sharp loop-de-loop in the air. She repeated and then landed on the ground, posing dramatically at the finish.

"Woah. That was cool!" Spike gave applause.

"Please, that was just the warm up. Now I'm ready to do the Rainbow Spike Loop." She leaped from the ground and was about to fly upwards when..

"Rainbow Dash!" Applejack's voice boomed through the air. At breakneck speeds, she galloped straight at the two and skidded to a halt in front of them. "I don't believe this." The look of frustration on her face was enough that Spike instinctively flinched as she closed in on them. "You know full well that you can't hog Spike all to yerself."

"Hey, I got to him first." Rainbow Dash flew in close to confront her. "Besides, I wanted

to show off my new trick that I made just for him.”

“Well I was going to have him taste test some new apple treats that were made just for him! And since he’s on my farm, I think that’s what he should do.”

“Um, girls?” Spike felt thoroughly confused.

“Yes Spike?” Both of them answered in unison as they gave him their attention. The stares gave him chills.

“Both things sound good, but I should really be going. I’ll catch ya later!” He made a hasty retreat towards the observatory.

“Ugh... See what you did? You scared him off!” Rainbow raised a hoof in anger and it was met by Applejack’s.

“I’ll show ya who scared him off!”

“What was that all about?” Spike thought aloud again, having made his escape from the pair of ponies. He hurried through the strangely empty streets of Ponyville and glanced to the clock to check his time. “Woah, and what happened to the time?. I’m late!” With more haste than before, he ran to get back to the observatory in time for the party.

Upon opening the door, all eyes were turned to him. Ray was in the middle and was the first to speak. “Hi, Spike.”

In a singsong state, all of the ponies that were at the party had their eyes on the dragon and said in unison, “Hi, Spike.”

The dragon gulped.