

MY LITTLE PONY
Season 8
Molt Down
Ep 811
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MOLT DOWN

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Logline: When Spike starts to go through “The Molt” (basically dragon puberty) he worries that growing up might mean moving on.

Spike has a “stone scale” (i.e., a pimple) on his face and he’s self-conscious about it as he leads the CMCs through the Everfree forest. Spike enjoys being in charge until Sweetie Belle points out that Twilight told them all not to go too far because they are all young. Spike leads them a little farther in—he’s in charge after all—and a FLAMING BIRD descends on them with a horrible SCREECH! They are all terrified until the phoenix lands on Spike’s shoulder and gives his cheek a peck-right on his stone scale. After a pain induced FIRE BURP, Spike realizes the bird is PEE WEE, his old pet! Spike explains to the CMCs how he raised the bird for a time, but ultimately returned him to his parents’ nest. But when Pee Wee leads them back to a different nest, Spike is surprised. The CMCs point out that baby birds can’t live in their parents’ nests forever. Everypony grows up eventually. Spike would agree but he’s too distracted—he’s just discovered two more big stone scales on his back. Yuck!

Back in Ponyville, Spike’s stone scale affliction gets worse. What’s more, his fire burps get more and more intense – he accidentally torches half a wall in Twilight’s Castle trying to deliver a message. At the school he’s supposed to give an orientation to a few new students, but his stone scales make him so self-conscious, he tries to get out of it. Twilight tells him not to worry – nopony will even notice. Eventually he goes through with it, but during his speech he can’t control the volume of his voice – which alternates between normal volume and uncontrollable shouting. Embarrassed by the whole ordeal, he runs off. “What’s wrong with me!?” Spike wonders aloud. Blaze (the other dragon at the school) tells him she’s seen dragons go through The Molt before, but Spike has got it bad. Spike doesn’t know what she’s talking about and even if he did, he doesn’t want to talk about it. She realizes it must be hard for him without other dragons around to explain things. Basically, she explains, he’s growing up.

Spike asks what she means. Blaze, “You didn’t think you’d stay a baby dragon forever, did you?” She explains that one day he’ll become a Dragon, dragon and the molt is part of it. Spike is concerned, the last time his body went through changes like this he turned into a giant greed monster, but Blaze assures him that greed-induced premature molting is a completely different condition. What he’s going through is totally natural – and totally mortifying. All dragons feel super awkward and embarrassed by it—her stone scales were awful. She tells him the worst part is feeling like an alien in your own skin, like you don’t belong anywhere. Spike can relate. As a dragon in a pony world he doesn’t even know what growing up will mean. Blaze tries to commiserate, “Yeah. It’s not like you’re going to be Twilight’s sidekick forever.” This throws Spike for a real loop. He’s never considered the idea that one day he’d grow up and move out of the Castle. The idea is utterly terrifying. Blaze tells him not to worry about it. His Fire Animal will clear everything up. Spike,

“My what?” Blaze keeps forgetting how little he knows about being a dragon. Blaze explains that during the Molt, every dragon is drawn to their Fire Animal. Communing with that creature helps dragons figure out who or what they’re going to be. Spike, “So it’s like getting a cutie mark?” Blaze looks at him. “Sure.”

Spike is distraught and resigned to what he thinks is the inevitable—growing up and moving out. He can’t bring himself to tell Twilight in person, he’s too upset. He leaves her a note and sneaks out to go find his Fire Animal. He ends up in the Everfree Forest where he meets Pee Wee. He tells Pee Wee that he can’t visit. He needs to find his Fire Animal so he can figure out what he’s supposed to do or where he’s supposed to go now that he has to move out of the Castle. The whole time, the stone scales on his back are really itchy and bugging him. Finally, Pee Wee flies in front of him and bursts into flames in a ball of light that envelopes Spike. Spike realizes that Pee Wee is his Fire Animal and he immediately understands—his calling is to take care of creatures just like he took care of Pee Wee. That’s not all that different from what Twilight does—he’s with her for a reason. When the flaming ball of light recedes Spike’s stone scales are gone. Twilight and Blaze burst into the forest clearing. She read his note and went to find Blaze who brought her up to speed. They’ve been searching for him ever since. Spike starts to share his realization, but none of them are listening because Spike is hovering in the air! The two big stone scales on his back have sprouted wings. Spike is flying! “Oh, yeah,” Blaze tells him, “that happens sometimes too.” At first, Spike can’t believe it, but then it all makes sense. Now he’s even more certain that he’s where he needs to be—with Twilight—they’re birds of a feather after all!