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MY LITTLE PONY

Season 8

Father Knows Best

Ep 824

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FATHER KNOWS BEAST

Outline by Josh Haber

TEASER**SC. 1 - EXT. PONYVILLE – FIELD – DAY**

TWILIGHT gives SPIKE some flying instruction – his new wings are great, but his control is still a little erratic. The scene plays like a parent teaching a kid how to ride a bike, “Don’t look down. Just keep flapping,” etc. Twilight does her best, but for some reason, none of her advice seems to help. SMOLDER, who’s been watching, calls out from the sidelines. She points out that Twilight is teaching Spike to fly like a pony instead of a dragon. Twilight admits that she doesn’t know how to fly like a dragon. Spike wonders what the difference is and Smolder schools him, “Well, we don’t have feathers for starters.” With a few pointers, Smolder has Spike doing aerial acrobatics. Spike is grateful, but Smolder tells him it’s just dragon 101. Smolder confesses that usually dragon parents teach this kind of thing.

SC. 2 - INT. TWILIGHT’S CASTLE – SPIKE’S ROOM – LATER

Twilight knocks on the door. She’s been thinking about their flying lesson. She can’t believe she overlooked something as simple as feathers. It’s no wonder Spike was having trouble. She wishes she had more dragon-ish knowledge to give him. It has her wondering if Spike ever worries that being raised by ponies has affected him in other ways? REVEAL Spike as he looks up from the “Thank You Smolder!” THROW PILLOW he’s crocheting: “Like how?”

END TEASER**MAIN TITLES****ACT ONE****SC. 3 - EXT. PONYVILLE – DAY**

It’s a beautiful day in Ponyville and Spike walks down the street with Smolder trying to explain what a throw pillow is for. “It’s a pillow, but not for your head. It’s more of a pillow for casual use.” Smolder doesn’t get the distinction. Dragons don’t use pillows at all. As Spike grapples with this startling revelation, a SMOKING BALL OF FIRE careens out of the sky and heads right for him! Luckily, Spike’s new proficiency with his wings saves him and he’s able to flap up and out of the way just as the ball CRASHES into the middle of town. Spike and Smolder walk

up to the crater and stare in at the slightly over-weight adult dragon who's just crash landed in Ponyville.

Still smoking, the dragon wobbles to his feet, and introduces himself as SLAG. Spike asks him what happened and if he's okay, but Slag brushes it off – just an unfortunate combination of a banking turn and fire breath indigestion. Smolder asks how that ended up with him falling out of the sky in a flaming heap. Slag equivocates – he just lost control but he's fine now. With that, he starts to walk off but immediately collapses – clearly he's not fine. Spike offers to get him some help, but Slag doesn't want any charity, insisting that dragons take care of themselves. Spike understands, but he's not going to take no for an answer – he's bringing Slag home to Twilight's castle until he's recovered.

SC. 4 - INT. TWILIGHT'S CASTLE – THRONE ROOM – DAY

Spike introduces Slag to Twilight and the rest of the Mane Six. Slag continues to insist that he doesn't want anypony's help, but his injuries from the crash have made it impossible for him to refuse Spike's offer. Twilight recognizes the dragon's natural stubborn and self-reliant streak. She promises that she and her friends will only do enough to get him back on his claws.

MONTAGE

In a quick montage we watch as each of the Mane Six chip in with Slag's recovery: Dash works with him on some physical wing therapy exercises; Applejack brings him some of Granny Smith's rejuvenating apple mash; Rarity sews a fashionable sling; Fluttershy provides comfort animals; and Pinkie loads him down with gem-covered baked goods. Through it all Spike is there to reassure Slag that this is just how ponies are and he shouldn't feel weird about it. Slag doesn't know quite what to say about all the kindness other than, "Ponies sure ain't dragons."

SC. 5 - INT. TWILIGHT'S CASTLE – THRONE ROOM – DAY

After his convalescence, Slag prepares to go. He thanks Twilight and the rest. He can see how lucky Spike is to have friends like the Mane Six. Spike admits they are more than friends. He was orphaned as an egg and Twilight raised him. The Mane Six are his family. Slag reveals that he doesn't know his family. Spike is doubly lucky. Slag might know everything there is to know about being an independent, self-reliant dragon, but Spike seems to know a lot more. Actually, Spike reveals that he doesn't know much about being a dragon and as lucky as he is, sometimes he wonders if he isn't missing something deep down and dragonish. Slag brightens at this. He's glad to hear it. He wasn't going to say anything, especially since Spike's life seems pretty much perfect, but he has a confession to make. His arrival in Ponyville wasn't an accident. He came here on purpose. He came looking for Spike because HE IS SPIKE'S FATHER!

END ACT ONE**ACT TWO****SC. 6 - INT. TWILIGHT'S CASTLE – DAY**

Everypony is SHOCKED. Spike especially is stunned. “You crashed in Ponyville on purpose?” Slag admits he didn’t intend to crash at all, but he was headed to Ponyville to find his son. After an extensive search throughout all of Equestria, he was able to track Spike down. Spike offers that he should have asked in the Crystal Empire, he’s pretty well known there. The others point out that Spike is kind of known everywhere—not many dragons were hatched by the Princess of Friendship. Slag admits the search should have been easier than it was, but none of that matters now because they’re together! Spike quickly agrees. He can’t get over it. He has so many questions. Slag is happy to oblige. Answering questions is what dads are for. He tells Spike to ask him anything. Spike’s biggest question is simple, “How did he come to be an orphan egg?” Slag wishes Spike had asked him anything else – it’s a painful memory. With a dramatic pause, Slag starts the story and we shift to VO...

MONTAGE – FLASHBACK – VARIOUS LOCALS

In VO, Slag describes Spike’s mother, who was even more of a dragon than he is. After laying Spike’s egg she flew off to explore the world, leaving Slag to raise Spike by himself. Slag didn’t mind being a single dad, but he felt like Spike should have a chance to know his mom, so he set off to find her – taking Spike’s unhatched egg with him. The trail took him well beyond the Dragonlands and even Equestria. As Slag’s story continues, we see (in brief, stylized renderings) all the places beyond Equestria his search took him – places that Spike and his friends couldn’t possibly have heard of – Mt. Aris, Klugetown, Pirate Ships, etc. But, of course, they *have* heard of (and been to) them all. Conveniently enough, Slag’s story keeps going (in almost a shaggy-dog-style) until he lands on a place that Spike and the others haven’t heard of which also coincidentally turns out to be the last place in his story. It was there that Slag met dragon hunters and faced a terrible choice – surrender himself or surrender Spike’s egg. Obviously he would never sacrifice Spike, so he was imprisoned and that’s where he’s been all these years – locked away in a far off land that all of them have absolutely, definitely never heard of.

SC. 7 - INT. TWILIGHT'S CASTLE – DAY

We cut back from the stylized rendering of Slag’s story to Spike who’s been listening with rapt attention. When it’s over, everypony is filled with questions. Where is this place, exactly? Why did Slag have to face this Sophie’s choice? Whatever happened to the mother? How did Spike’s egg make it all the way back to Equestria from this place that’s so far away? Unfortunately, Slag

doesn't have any answers and he's just as upset about it as they are – let's not forget he was imprisoned for half a lifetime. Even so, and despite the larger than life sacrifice he made for his one and only son, Slag tells them that he will never forgive himself. He set out to make sure Spike knew his mother and ended up ensuring that he didn't even know his father. He doesn't know how he'll ever make it up to him. Spike tells him he doesn't have to – it's in the past. The only thing that matters now is that they are reunited and Spike plans to make up for lost time.

SC. 8 - EXT. PONYVILLE – VARIOUS

Spike and Slag walk through town, Spike reading from a long scroll. It's a list of all the things he wants to do with his dad, but has never had the chance. Slag is impressed with the list – mostly by its length. Self-conscious, Spike starts to backtrack, but Slag insists he's determined to help his son fill the hole where his dragonishness should be and if doing every single thing on that, really, really long, list will do that, then that's what they'll do. Off Spike's excited expression...

MONTAGE - VARIOUS

In a quick series of shots we watch as Spike and Slag do everything together: A gem-eating contest—like a county fair-style pie-eating contest and Slag is especially good at it, eating both his *and* Spike's helpings; High-diving into a pool of lava – Spike doing a cannon ball to splash Slag, who's laying by the side of the pool sunning himself; Climbing a mountain to a very high and dragonish cave, Spike hauling Slag, who relaxes in a hammock, as Spike pulls them both up – Spike only falling once before remembering he can fly; etc. Through all of it, Spike eagerly does the lion's share of the work while Slag kicks back and basks in his son's appreciation of him just being present.

SC. 9 - EXT. PONYVILLE – LATER

At the end of their father/son day, Spike wonders what things Slag has always wanted to do with him. Maybe they can do those next. Slag changes the subject. He can't get over how non-dragon Spike is. If Slag had Spike's life – friends and a castle and all the gems he could eat – he'd probably just lay around all day doing nothing—most dragons would. He can't believe Spike came up with a whole day's worth of activities. Spike tells him that's just the start, he's got tons more days worth. Slag says he's "impressed" and tells Spike that clearly Princess Twilight and the other ponies have rubbed off on him. In fact, Spike is barely recognizable as a dragon at all. The words Slag uses make it seem like he's giving a compliment, but for some reason, Spike doesn't feel like he is.

SC. 10 - INT. TWILIGHT'S CASTLE – SPIKE'S ROOM – DAY

Spike confronts Slag and his dad admits that he's worried Spike's is more pony than dragon. Not that he's judging—and it's his own fault for going and sacrificing himself and getting imprisoned—but he just wishes they had more in common. Spike takes his dad's words to heart and wonders what he can do to be a better dragon. Slag doesn't hesitate to tell him – IN SONG! Slag sing-convinces Spike that the best way to embrace his dragon side is to do just that. Dial back his exposure to the soft pony lifestyle – a few less throw pillows in his life would do him a world of good. Even better, let his old man take care of them—and everything else. As Spike weans himself from the indulgent accouterment of the pony world, Slag will take it all off his hands – then he'll be able to show Spike what a real dragon would do with the life he's been given. Spike rushes off, delighted to start embracing his new dragonish self by giving everything he has to Slag. In the last verse of the song, Slag falls back into Spike's bed, delighted himself. He's finally got it made, thanks to his “son.”

END ACT TWO**ACT THREE****SC. 11 - INT. TWILIGHT'S CASTLE – SPIKE'S ROOM – MORNING**

Twilight knocks and sticks her head in. She was wondering how things have been going between Spike and his dad – it's still weird to hear herself say it. But as she magically pulls open the curtains, she sees Spike isn't there and it's Slag sleeping in the bed. She apologizes for barging in, but Slag tells her not to worry, “Mi casa es su casa!” He gets up and greets the day with some obnoxious stretching, scratching, and yawning. Embarrassed, Twilight exits and immediately runs into Spike who's headed inside – loaded down with stuff for Slag. Twilight asks where Spike's been so early and Spike tells her that he actually slept in the woods to get in touch with his dragon side and now he's bringing his dad the best breakfast that Ponyville has to offer so Slag can show him what a real dragon would do with it all. Excited, Spike heads in leaving Twilight to stare after, curious.

SC. 12 - INT. TWILIGHT'S CASTLE – THRONE ROOM – LATER

Slag is sprawled out across a couple of the thrones while Spike gives him a pedicure. Twilight enters and is a bit taken aback. Spike explains that his dad is just showing him how a real dragon would act in Spike's place. Dragon's sprawl when they get their claws done. Twilight points out that Spike's never had a pedicure in his life. Slag, “Then it's a good thing I'm here.” With that he excuses himself to take a bath. Spike, “Isn't he just the best?” Twilight is at a loss as Spike goes on to tell her how excited he is to be learning some honest to goodness dragon behavior first

hand – Slag sticks his head back in, “Um... Spike? The bath isn’t going to fill itself, son.” As Spike eagerly rushes off, Twilight’s concern is palpable.

SC. 13 - INT. TWILIGHT’S CASTLE – LIBRARY – LATER

Twilight finds Spike scouring the shelves for an entertaining bedtime story he can read to his dad – before heading off to sleep in the woods again. She tries to express her conflicted emotions and concerns about Slag. While she’s pleased Spike has a dragon influence in his life, she’s just a little concerned about this specific dragon. He doesn’t seem like a good influence. Spike’s not having it. He finally has something he’s been missing his whole life and he’s not letting it go. He wonders if Twilight isn’t just feeling threatened by the presence of his real parent. A little hurt, Twilight assures him that isn’t what’s going on. She’s glad Slag is there, she just wishes he wasn’t such a... “Dragon?” Spike asks. Of all ponies, Spike can’t believe Twilight would be so judgmental about his heritage. Angry, he storms out.

SC. 14 - EXT. PONYVILLE – FIELD – DAY

Frustrated with Twilight, Spike finds Smolder to get a dragon’s perspective. Twilight just don’t understand what being a dragon is all about. He and Slag do all the things he’d always imagined he and his dad would do: fire breathing competitions, telling gross jokes, coming up with cool nicknames for each other, etc. Actually, Spike admits that’s just stuff he’s mentioned to his dad. Slag hasn’t really done any of it yet, since he mostly just lays around—he’s such a real dragon. Spike hopes to get as good at laying around and doing nothing as his dad—though that’s hard since he has to keep bringing Slag all the food and gems and entertainment he wants. Smolder is confused. So, Slag just lays around while Spike waits on him claw and tail? That doesn’t sound right. Dragon’s aren’t lazy. Dragons are rude and rebellious but they aren’t jerks who take advantage of their family. It sounds to Smolder like Slag is more interested in living the high life in Twilight’s castle than in having any kind of relationship with his son. Off Spike considering...

SC. 15 - INT. TWILIGHT’S CASTLE – SPIKE’S ROOM – DAY

Slag, wearing a bathrobe and eating a gem-covered-cup cake, walks into Spike’s room to see Spike is packing the place up. He asks what’s going on and Spike explains that he told Twilight they’d be moving out. She doesn’t seem to appreciate dragon culture and since his dad is back the two of them should probably be living together anyway, especially since everything in this pony castle is super non-dragonish. Slag balks saying that he really doesn’t feel like he’s fully demonstrated all the dragonish ways Spike should be living here, but Spike is adamant. He’s ready for the real dragon experience. They are both going to move into the woods—or maybe that cave they climbed up to. With that, Slag comes clean: “Yeah. I’m out.” He admits to Spike that he’s not his dad. He made it all up to get in on some of Spike’s sweet, sweet castle life, but

now that the gravy train is over, he's gonna move on to the next town. Maybe he can find a "daughter" there. With that, Slag exits. Smolder flies in from the window where she's been listening. She tells him she's sorry their plan worked. Spike admits he's disappointed, but it's a lot better knowing the truth. Besides, he still has his real family.

SC. 16 - INT. TWILIGHT'S CASTLE – LIBRARY – SOON AFTER

Spike walks in to find Twilight who hesitantly asks about Slag. Spike explains that he's gone and that he wasn't even really Spike's dad. Twilight admits that she isn't surprised – there's no way a dragon like that could be related to Spike. Even so, she's sorry. Spike apologizes for losing his temper earlier. He knows she's only ever had his best interests at heart. Twilight tells Spike that if he still feels like he's missing something dragonish, she'll understand if he needs to spend more time in the Dargonlands. Spike appreciates it, but tells her he already knows the best things about himself *and* where they came from. Twilight smiles then, "You're talking about me right?" Spike returns the smile and admits that Twilight is the only family he'll ever need.

FADE OUT