

MY LITTLE PONY
Season 9
Sweet and Smoky
EP 909
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SWEET AND SMOKY

Outline by Kim Beyer-Johnson

Logline: Spike heads to the Dragonlands to cheer up Smolder's brother, and Fluttershy tags along to watch this year's baby dragons being born, only to discover that both have surprising complications.

TEASER**SC 1 - INT. SCHOOL OF FRIENDSHIP - TEACHER'S LOUNGE - DAY**

SMOLDER <KNOCKS> and enters the teacher's lounge to ask headmare TWILIGHT SPARKLE for permission to go back home to the DRAGONLANDS for a week. Twilight reminds Smolder they're right in the middle of the semester -- and it's "be kind to your neighbor" week -- not a great one to miss. SPIKE, nearby, points out that Twilight doesn't think ANY week of school is good to miss. Twilight has to admit that's true -- but because it'll be a lot for Smolder to make up when she gets back!

Smolder asks if she could get credit for a "kindness field trip" -- see, her brother has been having a rough time of it since she's been away at school. He's such a sweet guy, she feels bad for him. Spike does a double take, *"Did you say sweet, guy, and dragon all in the same sentence?"* "Yep," says Smolder. *"Kinda like you, Spike,"* she tells a blushing Spike with a nudge. Anyway, Smolder continues, she really thinks a visit from his favorite sister is just the thing her brother needs get him out of his funk.

Twilight sees the good in Smolder's idea, but she isn't sure about sending her all the way to the Dragonlands on her own. Spike volunteers to come along -- Smolder's brother sounds great, and maybe he can help cheer him up! Smolder thanks Spike - when it's baby dragon hatching season, all the adults are so busy guarding the eggs, young dragons have way too much time on their claws, which leads to bullying, and-- *"Did you say baby dragon hatching season?!"* FLUTTERSHY asks, eyes wide and hopeful. She's always wanted to see that -- their cute little snouts poking through the eggshells, and their cute little toes and tiny twitchy tails... Twilight smiles - looks like Smolder will have TWO escorts home.

END TEASER**ACT ONE****SC. 2 - EXT. DRAGONLANDS - DAY**

Spike, Fluttershy, and Smolder enter the Dragonlands. Fluttershy sniffs the air and winces -- this place certainly smells "interesting." Smolder shrugs -- that's just the sulfur from the lava springs under the hatching grounds. She takes a deep breath -- hot, stale air, sharp rocks under your claws... It's good to be home.

Meanwhile, Spike eagerly looks around for his soon-to-be-new-best friend. He can't wait to meet Smolder's brother! He's got a whole list of things to do, and all sorts of friendly advice to share. After all, you don't live with the Princess of Friendship without learning a thing or two about cheering creatures up! Should he start with the "Smile" song, or a sharing circle? Smolder suggests they START with actually finding her brother. She flies off, leaving Fluttershy and Spike.

An excited Fluttershy asks if Spike would mind if she went to go take a peek at the cute little baby dragon eggs, and Spike smiles – no problem. *"It'll give me time to put some finishing touches on the comfort blanket I made for Smolder's brother."* He holds up a many-colored flannel blanket with fringe. *"He's gonna love it!"*

SC. 3 - DRAGONLANDS - HATCHING GROUND - DAY

Fluttershy is thrilled to see the eggs nestled in rock nests on the hatching ground. She leans down and talks to one of the eggs. *"Good morning, little dragon. I've come a long way to meet you. I just know we're going to be friends."* *"If they ever hatch,"* a voice says from behind Fluttershy. She turns to find DRAGONLORD EMBER, who informs Fluttershy there's something wrong with the eggs this season – they should be cracking by now, but nothing's happening. It's a real mystery, and Ember is beginning to worry they might not hatch at all. *"Oh no,"* Fluttershy says, before bending down once more to give an egg some encouragement. *"Don't you worry, little one. We're going to make sure you feel the sun on your back, and the breeze through your scales, and the warm hug of a pony who loves baby dragons..."* She stops, suddenly not so sure of herself... *"We just have to figure out how..."*

SC. 4 - EXT. DRAGONLANDS - DAY

Flying above the Dragonlands, GARBLE spots Spike down below. He grins to his TEENAGE DRAGON FRIENDS. *"Whoa, look who came back. Whaddya say we give him a nice welcome home?"*

"Whoa!" Spike cries as Garble and his friends, swoop down on him, their wings buffeting him in circles. Garble stands over Spike as he topples dizzily down. *"Well if it isn't our little friend, Spike..."* Spike adamantly tells them he's big now – he's gone through the molt AND he has wings! Spike flares his wings out and stands tall. Garble looks surprised, but quickly covers, smirking. *"Yeah? So what's that you've got there?"* Garble asks. *"It's ah... a comfort blanket,"* Spike admits, trying to hide the multi-colored snuggle item behind himself. There's an eruption of laughter from Garble and his pals. *"Aww..."* Garble mocks, *"A comfort blankie. Did your Pony pals make it for you!?"* Spike clears his throat and admits HE made it. *"Crocheting is a lot harder than it looks,"* he tells them defensively. One of Garble's cohorts grabs the blanket and tosses it above Spike's head to another dragon. Spike leaps up to grab it, telling Garble and his buddies to knock it off -- that's for his new friend. *"Gee, you should've said that in the first place. Why don't I warm it up for him!"* Garble says as he breathes a blast of fire at the blanket, leaving the blanket charred and frayed.

Before Spike can protest, Smolder flies in, a smile on her face. "*Finally,*" she says, landing next to Spike, "*THERE's my brother.*" Spike panics – they better tell him to get out of here, fast. Because if Garble sees her wonderfully sensitive sibling, he's gonna have a field day teasing him. Smolder looks at Spike, confused. "*What do you mean? Garble IS my brother.*" Spike gapes. "*Your brother? Oh, brother...*" moans Spike, before he covers with a weak smile.

END ACT ONE.

ACT TWO

SC. 5 - DRAGONLANDS - DAY

RESUME as Smolder and Garble pound fists, happy to see each other. Garble suggests they go lava-diving -- just like old times. The magma pools are super-high this year, great for cannonballs. Smolder grins – she's definitely in, "*and Spike can come too!*" Garble frowns, but shrugs, "*I guess the pony-dragon can tag along. After all, we'll need somecreature to dunk!*" Smolder shakes her head – Spike is her friend, and she wants Garble to be nice to him. Spike's been planning a bunch of fun things all three of them can do together. Garble's friends now turn their hazing on Garble -- "*Yeah, like snuggle time with his blankie-wankie,*" they mock. The gang of roughnecks decide they'll leave Garble and his new Pony-pal to get better acquainted while they go off and have some real dragon fun. "*He's not my friend...!*" Garble shouts to his retreating posse.

Garble levels a burning look at Spike, then takes off into the air, headed for the Lava Pit. "*Meet you there, Smolder. Leave the runt here.*" Spike sighs and turns to Smolder, "*I thought you said your brother was sweet.*" Smolder shrugs, all the tough guy stuff is just an act. "*He's really a marshmallow,*" she says. Spike frowns -- somehow when he thinks of marshmallow, Garble isn't the first thing that comes to mind. "*Well,*" Smolder amends, "*Garble's sort of like a toasted marshmallow -- smoky on the outside, but sweet and squishy on the inside.*" Spike looks doubtful.

Smolder frowns - Spike's not changing his mind about cheering up her brother is he? "*'Course not,*" Spike bravely asserts. He came on a mission to cheer up Garble and nothing's gonna stop him! Suddenly, looking a little less sure of himself, he rubs his miserable looking blanket on his cheek, before the incinerated blanket crumbles to pieces...

SC. 6 - DRAGONLANDS - LAVA PIT - DAY

Spike, Smolder, and an annoyed Garble stand on the edge of the lava pit, ready to take the plunge. "*Scales away!*" Smolder crows and leaps off the edge toward the pit below. Garble looks a little down, not really into it, as he watches his sister backstroke in the pit. "*Come on in, Garble! The lava's fine!*" she shouts up. Trying his best to make the most of a not-so-good situation, Spike offers a tentative hand to Smolder. "*C'mon. We can*

jump together.” Garble looks at Spike’s outstretched hand, then... pushes Spike over the edge. *“Scales away...”* Garble deadpans as Spike falls.

SPLAT! Spike does a massive belly flop in the lava. *“Whoaaa. That was intense. You okay?”* Smolder wonders as he floats to the top. *“Fine...”* Spike lies, then... **WHAM!** Garble flattens Spike. *“Oops!”* Garble says for the benefit of his sister. *“My bad.”* Spike surfaces, eyes spinning, *“Not a problem,”* he wheezes. Smolder smiles, a bit oblivious, and happily suggests they move on to some of Spike’s planned activities. Without letting his sister see, Garble turns to Spike with a sneer... Great idea. Spike gulps.

SC. 7 – VARIOUS PARTS OF THE DRAGONLANDS - DAY

QUICK BEATS:

- Spike hosts a tea party, telling Garble that nothing cheers him up like a good cupcake. Garble smashes a cupcake into Spike’s face when Smolder turns her back to reach for a crumpet. *“You’re right, that DID cheer me up!”* Garble sneers.
- Spike leads Garble on a nature walk, saying he thought a change of scenery might make Garble feel happier. But as Smolder moves down the trail ahead of them, Garble pulls a branch and **WHAM!** Spike is toppled onto his keester.
- Spike stages a puppet show for Garble citing that laughter is the best medicine. However, when Smolder is doubled over with laughter, Garble pulls one of Spike’s puppets over Spike’s head, leaving him squeezed into a teeny-tiny puppet get up (NOTE: Not covering his face). Smolder, thinking it’s all a part of the act, laughs even harder – *“Spike, you’re so funny!”*

SC. 8 - DRAGONLANDS - HATCHING GROUND

Meanwhile, back at the hatching ground, Fluttershy tries a number of different tactics to encourage the hatching – cuddling them, humming to them, tickling them, reading them stories. Ember watches this with a raised eyebrow. *“You do know these are DRAGON eggs, right? We’re not so big on the touchy-feely stuff. You’re probably just encouraging them to stay in there.”* Fluttershy wilts – she had no idea! Then she sees something even worse - *“Look... the eggs are trembling!”* That doesn’t seem like a good sign, Ember admits.

SC. 9 - DRAGONLANDS - LAVA POOLS - DAY

A bedraggled Spike continues his impossible kindness quest, and offers Garble a floating air mattress, complete with drink holder and umbrella cocktail. Garble just flips Spike into the lava and then heads off with Smolder to join his friends. A dripping Spike watches as a couple of Garble’s buddies pull away a boulder to let in a fresh gush of steaming lava -- nice and toasty, the gang of teens remarks -- just the way they like it.

Fluttershy arrives and asks Spike how Mission Cheer Up is going. Spike hangs his head. It's useless, he tells her – Garble doesn't want to be cheered up, he wants to use Spike as a punching bag. He asks how the egg hatching is going. Fluttershy shakes her head – *"It's not going at all... I think they're too scared to come out."* *"Scared of what?"* Spike wonders. *"I wish I knew... but first they wouldn't make a peep, and now they're shaking and trembling."*

Garble and his pals (Smolder ISN'T there) step up to Fluttershy and surround Spike. *"Hey, Spike, wanna play Dragon Shove with us?"* He asks. Spike perks a bit – Garble is actually including him in a game? *"Okay..."* He says. Garble grins. *"Good. Cause you're IT!"* Garble shoves Spike. The other dragons laugh and join in, pushing Spike from dragon to dragon. *"Hey!"* Fluttershy says, breaking in with uncharacteristic force. *"Stop that right now! He's just trying to cheer up Garble!"* Garble's buddies look at Garble, ready to pounce on this newfound revelation, but Garble heads them off by turning the attention back on Spike. *"Since when did you need a pony for a bodyguard, Spike? You're softer than I thought!"* Garble turns to his friends, *"I don't know about you guys, but I'm not hanging out with any pony dragon..."* Garble spins around and stomps off, followed by his friends. Spike signs. *"See?"* he confesses to Fluttershy.

Spike has an idea. Maybe they need to switch it up – Fluttershy seemed pretty good at handling Garble. Maybe Spike should see what he can do about the eggs, and Fluttershy can take dragon cheer-up duty. As Spike heads off, a determined expression comes over Fluttershy. *"Just you wait, Garble. You're dealing with Fluttershy now. And she's packing a whole lifetime of kindness."*

SC. 10 - DRAGONLANDS - HATCHING GROUND - DAY

Spike looks down at a clutch of shivering eggs. *"Aw, what's going on? There's nothing to be scared about..."* Spike picks up one the eggs, then reacts. *"Wow... you're **cold**."* Getting an idea, he bends and touches the ground, as Ember walks up. *"Aren't the hatching grounds supposed to be warm?"* Spike asks her, *"To help the eggs hatch?"* *"They are warm..."* Ember informs Spike, but Spike has her feel the ground.

"These eggs aren't shaking because they're scared, they're cold," Spike tells her. Ember is confused -- the hatching grounds lie above a series of underground lava rivers. They've always been warm before. Spike looks across the hatching grounds. *"Where do those underground rivers flow to?"* Spike asks. *"They don't flow,"* Ember says, *"that's the point. We dammed them up a long time ago so they can keep the hatching grounds warm,"* Ember tells him, still confused. Spike looks thoughtful. *"C'mon,"* he tells the Dragonlord, *"I think I might know what's going on."*

SC. 11 - LAVA POOLS - DAY

CLOSE ON one of Garble's pals as he removes another boulder, releasing a gush of lava from a river connected to the hatching ground. *"I think we just figured out why the*

hatching grounds are cold," Spike says. "Those dragons must be draining the rivers for their lava diving." Ember snarls and flies over to shoo away the young dragons. But then she shoots a worried look at Spike. Once a river is drained, there's no way to get the lava back to the hatching ground. What do they do to keep the eggs warm now? *"I haven't figured that part out yet,"* Spike apprehensively admits.

SC. 12 - DRAGONLANDS – ROCK PILE - DAY

Fluttershy searches for Garble, but she can't find him. Suddenly, she hears the sound of beating bongos, then an impassioned voice punctuating the beats of the drums. *"Fire, dragon, wig and wagon... Feelin' lately like I've been saggin'... Ragin' lava, balaclava..."* Fluttershy stops and wonders aloud to herself *"Is that... poetry?"* Fluttershy hears the beat of drums again... she steps around a rockpile. There, hidden from sight, banging out his beats on the bongo and wearing a beret is... *"Garble?!"* Fluttershy gasps. Off Garble, as he quickly hides his beret and bongos behind his back and offers Fluttershy a sickly smile...

END ACT TWO.

ACT THREE

SC. 13 - DRAGONLANDS – ROCKPILE – DAY

Garble goes on the offensive, *"What are you doing sneaking around here, Pony?"* Despite appearances, Fluttershy is no pushover when it comes to creatures that need care. She's not sneaking. It looks to her like the only one who is sneaking is Garble -- she didn't know he was a poet. *"I'm not!"* Garble objects. Flutterfly picks up the bongos and beats out a poem of her own, *"Words, rhythm, sometimes rhyme... Weird punctuA--tion... Bongos keeping time."* She puts down the drums and looks at him: *"sounds like poetry to me."* Garble relents, *"Okay, fine. But I'm not a flowery namby pamby poet..."* he snatches back the drums. *"I'm a beat poet... dig?"* Fluttershy giggles. She does indeed dig. But Garble is still defensive -- Fluttershy better not tell his friends about this. Fluttershy doesn't see why he should want to hide it. *"Are you kidding me? My sister's the only dragon that doesn't think poetry's soft. If my friends ever found out I like this junk, they'd make fun of me. Forever."*

Fluttershy takes a long look at Garble -- is that why he picks on Spike -- to prove to his friends he's not a weakling dragon? *"No!"* Garble insists. Fluttershy stares him down. *"Maybe?"* Garble amends. Spike is kind of a weakling, after all. *"Hmmp!"* Fluttershy snorts. *"I'll have you know Spike is STRONGER than you are. Any day!"* Garble just laughs. *"Are you kidding? That little show-tune-singing, blanket-cuddling pony-dragon? Gimme a break."* Fluttershy is quick to set Garble straight -- first of all, there's nothing WRONG with being a pony. Garble, cowed, nods. And second, Fluttershy continues, Spike isn't afraid to be who he is, no matter WHAT Garble... or anycreature thinks.

That's REAL strength... Not like somedragon she knows who seems to care an awful lot about others' opinions.

Just then, Smolder rushes up, calling for Garble to join the rest of the dragons -- they're using their fire breath to warm the eggs, and everydragon needs to help if they're going to get them hot enough to hatch! As they all rush off...

SC. 14 - DRAGONLANDS - HATCHING GROUND - DAY

Dragons throughout the hatching ground blast their fiery breath toward the eggs, but they're still not cracking. *"There must be something else we're missing,"* Fluttershy worries. Garble takes a long look at Fluttershy and then at Spike, gathering his courage. *"Maybe what they need is inspiration. Like...A poem!"* he announces with a confidence he doesn't quite feel. His friends turn in a collective *"Huh???"* But Garble doesn't let himself hesitate for fear he might lose his courage. He pulls out his bongos and starts in. *"Eggs. Come. Burst into the light. Break through shells that... bind! At first, Spike is stunned, but quickly begins to snap out the rhythm, lost in this unexpectedly cool cat Garble poem. "Break free. Explore! Stuck... between... rock... and harrrrrrd place!"* Garble says as he finishes his masterpiece with a bongo flourish. *"Dig!"* Spike shouts.

A pregnant pause ensues as Spike and Garble turn to the others for a reaction, then... the dragons burst into huge guffaws. Garble shrinks back, embarrassed, but Spike comes alongside his new pal. *"Don't worry,"* Spike says. *"Let them laugh. I think it's awesome. Go on... keep it up,"* Spike encourages. *"Yeah, keep it up!"* one of Garble's friends mocks. Garble narrows his eyes, steels himself, and bravely carries on.

As he does, the dragons laugh harder -- and harder still! But as they do, their laughing pushes more flame from their bellies, and it spews from their mouths to surround the eggs. Suddenly... *"Garble, look!"* Fluttershy says, pointing to the eggs. The dragons stop laughing to stare in awe.

One by one, the eggs begin to crack! *"You did it!"* Smolder says to Garble. Spike chimes in, *"The more they laughed, the hotter their breath got! You made the eggs hatch! Or at least your poetry did!"* Dragonlord Ember lands by Garble and tells the gathered dragons that he's a hero! Garble gapes, then grins as the dragons, cowed by their leader, applaud. *"And it's all because you weren't ashamed to let everydragon see who you are,"* Fluttershy points out quietly to Garble. *"That's what happens when you're strong enough to accept all parts of yourself."* Garble smiles, and genuinely thanks Fluttershy. For an instant, we see the "sweet" side Smolder was talking about.

"I'm so proud of you, Garble!" Spike says. *"How 'bout we hug it out?"* But that's still a bridge too far for Garble. *"What? You think I'm a soft pony-dragon?"* Garble sneers, and flies away. Smolder shrugs -- baby steps, right? Fluttershy, oohing and ahing over the adorable toddling hatchlings, couldn't agree more... *"Yes! Aren't they adorable!"*