

PRODUCT PLACEMENT

by GeodesicDragon

"I'm pleased that Equestria has chosen our company to market the goods which it produces. I'm sure we can all agree that this agreement will be mutually beneficial to everyone... I beg your pardon... everypony."

The human leaned back in his chair and cracked a smile at the six mares in front of him. They smiled back and a dull silence soon descended on the room. Eager to break it, one of the mares spoke up hesitantly.

"Beneficial how exactly, er... Simon?" she asked.

"I'm glad you asked, Twilight!" Simon replied. "It will benefit our company as it will improve our PR, and it will benefit Equestria because of the extra revenue this deal will generate."

Twilight nodded in understanding.

"Now, your Princess told me that you would be bringing along some samples of the products?" Simon said, raising an eyebrow. "I don't want to sell anything in my stores without sampling it for myself first. That way I'll know if it is good enough for my customers."

"Oh I can assure you darling," Rarity chimed in, "that these items are *more than suitable* for your customers. I for one do not tolerate shoddy merchandise."

Simon nodded as each mare reached into her saddlebags and took out an item from it. Simon could make out a bag of apples, a dress bag and a small bottle among the items now being displayed in front of him.

"I like the look of those apples." he said, "My customers sure do buy a lot of them. What kind are these?"

"Equestria's finest Red Gala and Golden Delicious!" Applejack said proudly. "Ah guarantee that yer customers will really like these apples, on account o' how sweet and ripe they are!"

"I'll be the judge of that." Simon replied. "Pass one over, if you would be so kind?"

Applejack took an apple from the bag and tossed it over to Simon, who caught it in his outstretched hand and polished it along the front of his suit. Bringing the apple to his face, he studied it for a moment before biting into it expectantly.

His face suddenly contorted into a look of disgust and he spat chunks of apple into a bin at his feet, much to Applejack's chagrin. Simon wiped his mouth and glared at her.

"They're sweet, all right!" he snapped. "That level of sweetness is probably fine for ponies, but it is *far* too much for the human tongue to handle. I felt like I was sucking on a hundred lemons! So I'm afraid that's a definite 'no' on the apples."

Applejack hung her head as Rarity approached, the dress bag slung over her shoulder. She gave Simon a smile as she removed a large dress from it. It was adorned with gems and gold threading, and Rarity seemed very proud of it.

"This is the first dress I've made which is designed to be worn by a human." Rarity said. "As you can see, it is the most elegant piece one could ever wish for!"

Simon scoffed.

"Yeah, and those gems would make any woman wearing a prime target for muggers. Sorry, but that's also a 'no'. I will in no way endanger the safety and well-being of my customers in such a fashion... pun intended."

Rarity glowered at him as Rainbow Dash stepped up and passed Simon a small bottle filled with a multi-coloured substance. She grinned and winked at him, clicking her tongue as she did so. Simon rolled his eyes and took the bottle from her.

"That," said Dash, "is liquid rainbow, straight from the factory in Cloudsdale. It's no secret that humans love to party. But nopony likes the morning after and the hangovers. With this stuff, hangovers will be a thing of the past."

Simon eyed the bottle curiously, bringing it to his face, turning it this way and that — admiring how the light shone through and projected a rainbow onto any surface it could.

"Hmm..." he mused, "... I have to admit that I do enjoy a good night out. If this stuff is as good as you say it is, then I for one would welcome it in my store. The customers would go ga-ga for it... that said, I still need to try it."

"But you're not hungover." Dash replied. "It only works if you've had too much to drink."

"True," Simon stated, "but I still want to taste it. Unless of course you want to get me drunk first."

"I can help with that!" Twilight said excitedly. "I happen to know a spell which can create the effects of being drunk. The Royal Guard use it to train new recruits in how to handle intoxicated suspects."

Simon nodded.

"Well then," he said, "be my guest and intoxicate me."

Twilight's horn glowed as she prepared the spell. Soon, she had fired a small beam of light at Simon's forehead. He grunted as the spell took effect.

"Ugh, wha' didja do ta me, ya bazza?" he slurred. "Hey, thish shpell sheems to be working. Pash ush that rainbow shtuff, wouldya?"

"You've got it in your hand." Dash replied.

Simon looked at where the bottle lay nestled between his fingers.

"Oh yeah," he said, "sho I do... hehe, multicoloured horsey..."

Dash ignored the comment as Simon took a deep swig from the bottle, the warm liquid trickling down his throat. He brought the bottle down onto his desk and stifled a belch. Suddenly, he groaned and clutched the sides of his head.

As the six mares watched in horror, he fell out of his seat and began thrashing around on the floor, screaming in agony. Rarity poked Twilight roughly.

"Do something!" she snapped. "Reverse the spell!"

Twilight complied and charged the spell, hitting Simon in the face with it. He stopped thrashing and slowly got to his feet. He looked at the ponies for a moment before dropping to his knees and vomiting into the bin at his feet.

"Holy..." he muttered, "... no way in Hell am I letting that anywhere near my shelves. I'd much rather suffer the hangover. At least then I won't feel like my insides are about to boil out of my eye sockets!"

Dash groaned as Simon slowly stood up. He glared at his guests before sitting down in his chair.

"So," he said, "do you have any *more* potentially life-threatening products you would like to show me?"

Pinkie Pie raised a hoof.

"Ooh, I do!" she chirped. "Except without the life-threatening part!"

Simon sighed.

"Very well Miss Pie," he said sullenly, "show me what you've got."

Pinkie reached into her saddlebags and produced her Party Cannon, much to Simon's alarm. She set the object down in the middle of the room and grinned.

"Dashie is right," she said, "humans do love to party. Well, why spend all that time setting one up when you can create one in a matter of seconds using a Party Cannon? It comes pre-loaded with everything somepony would need for a party — balloons, streamers, banners, silly hats, confetti — and can be customised to suit the needs of the party at hoof. Simply press the button her, and you unleash party goodness wherever, whenever!"

And with those words, she pressed the button. A deafening bang resounded through the room, the office block it was located in, the street the building was located, and even the entire city. When the smoke cleared, Simon was still sitting in his chair behind the shattered remains of his desk while six mares lay in a dazed heap in the middle of the room, next to a smouldering piece of slag that had once been a cannon.

Simon coughed.

"I'm assuming that thing is run by magic?" he asked, getting a nod from Pinkie. "I thought so. You're forgetting that magic doesn't exist here, so I think you'll find that your cannon is actually packed with explosives. And even if it was legal for me to sell it, I wouldn't. It is far too dangerous."

The only reply he got was a chorus of pained moans.

"However, looking at you all now has given me an idea for a new product." Simon continued. "A product that will benefit all of us."

Twilight got to her hooves clutching her horn, which was in danger of falling off. She put on a weak smile.

"What idea would that be?" she asked.

"Never you mind about that just now." Simon replied. "Right now, you are all injured and in need of curing."

The rest of the ponies got to their hooves and bowed.

"Well at least our failures have got a silver lining." Rarity chipped in. "I'm glad we were able to inspire you with our... frankly awful ideas and demonstrations."

Simon grinned as he leaned forward in his chair.

"Why thank you, Miss Rarity." he said. "After all, as our company motto goes..."

He laughed heartily.

"... *every little helps.*"