

Twilight and Luna stood in front of a large building. A tacky sign with the words “The Flower” stood above its two large front doors. It was much bigger than a newspaper office needed to be. Twilight had passed by the building before, but she had never been inside. It was clear that the newspaper was connected with the strange events, yet Twilight had no idea what to expect inside. She looked at Luna with an uncertain expression. Luna simply nodded at her. As nervous as she was, Twilight had to find out what was going on inside. She gathered her courage and pushed the door open.

Twilight stepped inside the lobby, with Luna beside her. The cold interior made Twilight shiver. It was a simple lobby, with a counter at the end and some seats for waiting in. There was only one door in sight, right ahead of them. Twilight's heartbeat sped up as she heard footsteps from the other side of the door. The door opened slowly. Lily was in the dark room on the other side. Her eyes widened as she saw Twilight. Lily retreated and spoke to somepony in the other room.

“I-it's her! She's come to bully me again! Help me!” Lily said.

“I'll handle this. You can go work on the newspaper, you don't need to listen to our conversation.” A firm voice said. Footsteps echoed as a pony walked towards the lobby. The pony walked from the shadows. Twilight recognized her cream body and dark red mane. It was Rose.

“Ah, Twilight Sparkle. I've been expecting you.” Rose said while grinning.

“You got me wrong. We're not here to bully anypony, we'd like to see the back room.” Twilight said.

“I'm afraid I can't let you do that. It would ruin my plan. You've already gone too far off the script. Everything would've gone perfectly if it wasn't for you.” Rose said and glared at Luna.

“What are you talking about? I've only been helping Twilight.” Luna said, confused.

“That's exactly the problem, Princess Luna.” Rose said. Luna and Twilight gasped in surprise.

“You know me?! That means...” Luna began.

“You're from our dimension!” Twilight finished.

“Of course I am. You weren't supposed to survive for so long, though. If only I knew you had connections to the princess...” Rose said.

“You know everything, don't you?! Tell us!” Twilight said.

“Why should I? I'm not your friend. In fact, you're exactly the kind of pony I hate. If you're as intelligent as you claim, you should figure it out yourself.” Rose mocked. She was full of herself. Seeing the way she acted, Twilight got an idea.

“You know what? You won. Your plan is so brilliant that I'll never understand it. I want to hear how you managed to come up with all of this. Will you teach me how to be as clever as you are?” Twilight said in a depressed voice.

“What are you doing? You can't admit defeat now!” Luna whispered to Twilight's ear.

“I know her type. You just have to feed her ego and she'll do whatever you say.” Twilight whispered back.

“Oh, you finally came to your senses and realized how much better I am. I pity you, so I'll tell you everything.” Rose said proudly. She cleared her throat and began her story.

Back when Rose, Daisy and Lily were in high school, they ran the student newspaper together. They had always dreamed of being famous reporters, thanks to a comic book they liked as children. When they realized everypony in the school read their paper, they knew it was their destiny to start a daily newspaper. After they finished high school, they bought an old factory building in Ponyville and ran The Flower from there. They soon realized it wasn't as easy as they expected. There was a lot of competition from foreign newspapers. The Flower's information network and writing skills were nowhere near as good as their competitors. In order to sell any copies, they had to make their headlines as eye-catching as possible. They didn't care about how accurate their articles were, they simply wanted The Flower to be as famous as possible. It worked at first, but they were soon criticized for being sensational. The sales plummeted and they almost had to abandon the paper.

Rose had to come up with a plan so the paper would survive. She would do anything to relive her youth, when everypony praised her paper. It became an obsession for her. Every day, she would think of ways to get ponies to read her paper. A long time passed before she came up with her brilliant idea. What if the sequence of writing a newspaper

would be reversed? Instead of the newspaper being written according to real life events, reality would be written according to the newspaper. If this would happen, her newspaper would always be accurate. All of their competitors would be late, since theirs is the only one that can decide what happens. She spent three long years researching and planning for a way to accomplish this. After all that time, everything was ready. Seven days ago, she executed her master plan.

Rose contacted the royal castle in Canterlot to get a press pass inside the castle. She claimed to be doing research for an article on the security in the castle. The castle had always been very accepting of the press. Despite the paper's questionable reputation, she easily got a pass. Their only condition was that two guards would follow her movements. Rose wandered around the castle, writing notes she would never use. The last location she went into was her actual goal, the entrance to the underground vault beneath the castle. She asked the guards to open the door so she could do research in the tunnel. Her press pass gave her permission to enter, so the guards opened the thick door. Standing at the entrance of the deep tunnel, she turned back at her escorts. She looked around the hallway to make sure nopony was around, then dug into her bag. Under the reporter's equipment was a secret compartment. She had prepared it to get the tools she needed past the security check at the entrance. The two bags inside contained all of her savings split in half. She offered them as a bribe to the guards. The guards gave into temptation and agreed to wait at the entrance. If anypony asked, they would have simply lost sight of her for a moment. Rose smirked as she entered the dark tunnel.

The tunnel was pitch black. Rose walked next to the cold wall. The sounds from the castle gradually became quieter, until it was completely silent inside. When Rose was sure that nopony could see her, she took a torch from her bag. She dropped the torch to the ground and lit it up using the matches she'd brought along. The tunnel lit up in a red light, revealing the metal walls that surrounded it. Rose put the torch into the portable stand on her back. The heat from the torch made the tunnel much warmer. Rose kept walking on the long, straightforward tunnel. The trip felt even longer than it really was. With every step she took, she wished she'd see something other than darkness ahead of her.

At last, Rose saw two thick, steel doors ahead of her. Both of them had a large and rusty keyhole on them. The two princesses held the keys required to open the doors. Despite her brilliant planning, Rose hadn't been able to figure out a way to get them undetected. She had come up with an alternative way inside. Rose dug into her bag in the dim light. In the secret compartment were two blocks of plastic explosives. They

were molded into the same shape as the keyholes, only a bit smaller. Rose took the first one in her mouth and carefully inserted it inside the keyhole. After all the trouble it took to get them, she couldn't afford to waste any. She took the other block in her mouth and put it as close to the locking mechanism as she could. The power of the explosives was calculated so it would destroy the locking mechanism, allowing the door to be opened without the keys. Rose backed away from the door while counting her steps. She stopped after she had gone far enough that the shockwave from the blast wouldn't affect her. She faced away from the door and took the detonator from her bag, carefully placing it on the ground. She took a deep breath and stepped on the detonator. A loud explosion rang from behind her. As loud as the explosion was, the tunnel was so deep that the sound shouldn't have been loud enough to reach outside of it.

Rose went back towards the door. The smell of smoke became stronger as she got closer. The light from the torch reached the door, allowing her to see the effects of the explosion. The deep hole inbetween the keyholes made her feel relieved. Nothing but pieces of metal were left of the locking mechanism. Rose took several pieces with her as a memento. Pushing the middle of the doors made them open with a creak. Rose stepped inside the underground vault.

Rose had reached the room she worked so hard to get in. She was overjoyed, but forced herself to calm down. Her mission wasn't complete yet. She looked around in the large, square room. It contained many artifacts on golden pedestals, sealed inside glass cases. Rose was only interested in one of them, she paid no attention to the rest of them. The light from the torch had a short reach, so she had to walk close to the cases to see what was in them. She looked at the cases one by one as she went past them, until one of them caught her eye.

Inside the glass case was an eerie object. The organic surface shaped like a brain flickered in wild colors. The eyes etched onto its surface stared at Rose. It was just as the book on ancient artifacts had described it. The day had finally come. What Rose had been searching for was right in front of her. All she had to do was reach for it and it would be hers. She lifted the case with her shaking hooves. She dropped it to the ground, causing it to shatter to pieces. Nothing stood in the way of her precious artifact. She grabbed the slimy object and put it inside the hidden compartment.

"After that, I simply walked out of the castle. The guards acted their part and no pony suspected a thing. What a bunch of naive fools." Rose said with a satisfied look.

"So you're the one who broke into the vault!" Luna said.

“Yes, it wasn't much of a challenge. You should hire better guards. Not that you'll ever get the chance to. You'll never escape on your own and I have no intention of letting you go.” Rose said.

“Why did you drag me into your plan? I barely even know you!” Twilight said.

“You were a last minute addition. It's the only flawed part in my plan. You know what they say, even geniuses make mistakes.” Rose said.

Rose was euphoric on her way back to Ponyville. The hardest part of her plan had gone perfectly. The rest would be much easier. She was confident she could do anything. It wouldn't be long before her dream would come true. She would leave all those naysayers behind and become the famous reporter she wanted to be. It would be so satisfying to see them get what they deserve. In fact, she could do that. To represent them, she chose a pony she truly hated. Twilight Sparkle, the pony whose face was full of disgust when she was introduced to Rose's beloved paper.

The moon had risen by the time Rose got to the library building. All of the lights in the building were off. Rose climbed the back of the tree onto the balcony. Rose gently pushed the balcony door. It wasn't even locked. Rose quietly opened it and went inside.

The moonlight only barely reached the house. Thankfully, Rose didn't need to see anything. Her hearing was enough. She heard snoring from two different sources. The louder, low pitched one came from upstairs. The quieter one came from near the entrance. The quieter one was likely her target, as it sounded feminine. Rose slowly sneaked towards the sound. Her eyes gradually got used to the dark. She could make out the source of the snoring. It was a purple, sleeping unicorn. The unicorn laid on her stomach, using an open book as a pillow. Rose quietly began her operation.

Rose opened her bag and dug into the hidden compartment. She took out the artifact and placed it on the floor. The bag had a knife Rose always carried with her. She took it into her mouth, with the sharp edge pointing ahead of her. She crouched next to the artifact and cut out a small piece of the slimy substance. It looked like the eyes of the artifact cringed as she did so, but Rose thought she must be seeing things. She put the knife away and took the flickering piece of slime onto her hoof. Keeping the hoof up, she crawled next to Twilight. She used the free hoof to slowly raise her mane and stuck the slime onto her neck. It was slippery and kept falling off. That wouldn't do, it needed to stay still.

Rose had to improvise. She couldn't hold the slime still by herself, she needed something else to do it with. After some thought, she picked up one of the pieces of metal she took from the tunnel. She put it on the ground and stuck the slime on it. One of the pockets in the bag had a stick of strong glue in it. Rose applied it at the edges of the piece of metal. This should hold the slime still. All she needed to do was to get it onto the unicorn's neck. Rose took the piece of metal onto her hoof, while raising Twilight's mane with the other hoof. She stuck the piece of metal on the neck. It easily held in place.

Only one step left in the plan. This was the moment she'd been waiting for so many years. In her impatience, she decided to perform the last step right now. She stood in front of the artifact and mentally prepared herself. She would leave this world behind and live out her dream. All it took was one simple move. Rose crouched next to the artifact. She poked its eyes with her hooves. She stuck them as deep as she could reach, feeling the goo inside. The artifact shook and flickered rapidly. The goo wrapped itself around Rose's hooves, pressing against them. It hurt, but Rose did her best to stay still. After a moment, the artifact calmed down and stood still. Rose took her hooves off the artifact. Nothing seemed different, yet Rose knew everything had changed. She was overjoyed. She quickly packed her bag and sneaked onto the balcony. She recklessly jumped off the roof. The landing hurt her hooves a bit, but she barely noticed.

Rose ran on the road leading to Canterlot. Ponyville was the same as before. Judging by the surroundings, everything had gone perfectly. There was only one way to make sure the artifact worked. In order to confirm that, she dashed at the road. Just as she expected, she soon hit a wall. This was proof she wasn't living in reality. This was her dream.

Twilight was nothing more than a guest who overstayed her welcome. Rose tortured her by ruining her trust in herself. Twilight's intelligence was useless when the world played by Rose's rules. One day, Rose would have the satisfaction of watching Twilight destroy herself. She simply modified her dream in ways that would make her lose confidence in herself. The newspaper she so hated would become her doom. The plan would've succeeded if it wasn't for the one thing she couldn't predict. Princess Luna's arrival. The two princesses were the only ponies powerful enough to enter her dream. Rose had no idea Twilight knew them. Magically sent letters can cross dimensions, one must have given away the location of her dream. A third being from reality entered the dream, siding with Twilight. Luna made Rose's goal of driving Twilight insane much harder. Twilight was no longer alone. Luna's comfort allowed her to stay sane.

“That’s how my brilliant plan went. Before you say anything, I’d like you to know that tomorrow’s headline has already been prepared. Twilight Sparkle Dies a Gory Death. I’m sure that’ll be our new best seller.” Rose said and chuckled.

“You’re crazy! This dimension makes no sense, just like your articles! This isn’t a dream, it’s a nightmare!” Twilight said.

“It’s my dream, not yours. Everything is just the way I want it to be.” Rose said with a mad grin. “You two are the only thing that stands in my way. All I have to do is get rid of you and things will be perfect. You know what? I’m not going to wait for tomorrow. I’ll kill you with my own hooves!”

Rose leaped at Twilight. Twilight barely had enough time to react and dodge to the side. Before Twilight could do anything else, Rose grabbed her neck. She pushed her to the ground and strangled her with her front hooves. Twilight struggled to get away, but Rose had her in a tight grip. Twilight was about to run out of breath, when the pressure on her neck went away. The hooves were still around her neck, but her grip had loosened. Rose was standing still, as if she was frozen. Twilight got up and looked at Luna, whose horn had just stopped glowing.

“I paralyzed her with my spell. I had to cast it quickly, so it won’t last too long. We don’t have much time. We have to stop tomorrow’s The Flower from being printed!” Luna said.