

## 980 C.R Everfree Forrest

"Doctor, why did you stop?" asked Trixie, still sitting in front of the brown stallion waiting for the end of the story. "What were the things on the train, tell me!"

The Doctor was silent.

"Doct-"

"Ssshhh!" He put a hoof to her lips. "Do you hear that?" The Doctor looked around the TARDIS. All Trixie could hear were the sounds of the console whirling and dinging as they normally did.

"Doctor, I don't hear anything..." Trixie whispered, pushing his hoof away. "What is it-"

**"EXTERMINATE!"** A cold robotic sound rang out from behind her.

The Doctor tossed her to the side and dived away as a beam of dark light arched across the air with a fizzing sound. "She got one inside!" he yelled. The Doctor bent his head down and hefted Trixie onto his back, turning at a full gallop into the TARDIS interior. She was jostled and bumped as she hung on for dear life.

"What is that thing!?" the small filly shouted, looking back into the control room as he ran. The thing behind them gave chase, gliding rapidly across the floor towards them. It looked like a large salt shaker with spherical bumps spaced around the bottom. The design looked bulky and awkward, but it propelled itself with surprising speed. The upper portion looked like a horse's head with a large, single eye stalk jutting from where its face should have been. It swung wildly around, searching.

**"EXTERMINATE!"** It called after them.

"No time!" The Doctor yelled. She hung on tightly as he made a swift turn the right. "It must have been hiding, charging its power cells for an attack! We need to get away from it, quickly!"

Trixie screamed as another beam of light whizzed through the TARDIS, barely missing them as they made their way inside.

**"EXTERMINATE!"** The sound echoed after them once more, closer this time.

The Doctor made another sharp turn, diving into a hallway. Trixie, despite her fear, marveled at how large the inside of the box really was. The control room was only a small part of a much larger interior. The thing gave chase, turning just as sharply as they had close at their hooves. Trixie saw a pair of large metal doors coming quickly to meet them. The Doctor barreled forwards, galloping faster and faster, the doors remained shut as they closed the gap. Trixie shrieked, throwing her hooves over her eyes, sure they were about to crash.

She suddenly found herself airborne as the Doctor bucked her off to the side. The door swung open and he, along with the creature, went stumbling through.

Trixie landed with a thud against a wall as the doors snapped shut behind them. Mildly

disoriented, it took her second to get her bearings.

“Doctor?...” she asked, shakily getting up. Her eyes shot wide. “Doctor!!” Trixie raced over to the doors, which remained shut. She pounded her forehooves against the cold metal, but they did not shift. “Doctor!” she yelled again. “Open up, The Great and Powerful Trixie demands it! Open I say!” She pounded harder, but still they refused to yield. “Doctor! Doctor, what’s going on!? Come out at once! Come out this instant!” Her hooves began to hurt from beating against the unforgiving doors. “Doctor!” Trixie called again. “Come out.....Doctor?....” she hung her head as her vision became clouded by tears. “Doc..ter...”

Suddenly there was a sound, muffled from behind the doors. Trixie’s head shot back up as it echoed down the hallway. She pressed her ear against cool metal, straining to listen.

There was the fizzing noise she had come to know as the creature’s weapon firing. The sounds of crashing and banging followed shortly afterwards, progressively getting louder louder. More shots were fired, the sound loud in Trixie’s ears despite the thick door. The din of noise carried on for several minutes, escalating in scale. Trixie heard several strange noises and bangs as whatever was going on became more and more intense. Then, as suddenly as it had begun there was a large splash and everything was silent.

Trixie leaned against the door, straining her small ears in an effort to hear anything at all, but the silence remained. She waited for what seemed like a very long time. Then hung her head, and turned to walk away.

The door shot up open and a sopping wet Doctor flopped out, landing on the floor with a plop.

“Well,” he gasped, “that was eventful.”

“Doctor!” Trixie yelled, rushing over. “You’re alright!” She wrapped her forehooves around his neck.

“Yes...it would appear so. That’s very lucky.....But you’re choking me.”

“Ew...” She whined as released him. “Why are you all wet?”

“The swimming pool.” he said flatly.

Trixie raised an eyebrow.

“Darlocks can’t swim.” The Doctor said, as though this explained everything.

“What’s a Darlock?”

“Ah yes,” The Doctor got shakily to his ho. “I was just getting to that part, wasn’t I? But first, I’ve always wanted to do this. I’d back up if I were you.”

“Wh-” Trixie cowered suddenly as the Doctor shook himself, much like a large dog, sending water everywhere. “Doctor!” Trixie yelled plaintively.

“Sorry, couldn’t resist.” He started back towards the control room. “Come along, we’ve got a story to finish, haven’t we? The Mage in the Magnificent Magic Box keeps his promises after all. Now, where was I?”

“The part with the metal cylinders,” Trixie reminded him, trotting after him.

“Ah yes! Okay then, so, Twilight and the others had just stumbled upon something terrible in Twilighttwo’s factories, deep in the caverns of Dragon Mountain....”

### **35. T.R Dragon Mountain**

"What are they?" asked Rainbow Dash walking into the large room. It was filled with strange machines slightly smaller than she was. The upper portion resembled the head of a horse, like a chess piece. From its head protruded a singular eye on the end of a long stalk. The lower portion was surrounded by bronze bulbs spaced around the bottom. "There's a hundred at least." She observed turning to Applejack. "They're kind of funny looking. Do you think they're weapons?"

"I haven't got the foggiest idea Rainbow, but I get the feeling they certainly weren't made for the fun of it." She walked over and poked one with a wary hoof. "You know anything about this, Twilight?...Twilight?" Applejack turned to find the purple unicorn pressed against the side of the cavern, terrified.

"Those things...shouldn't be here," she whispered.

"You've seen them before?" asked Applejack. She stopped examining the machines to stare at Twilight, who was shivering at this point.

"No, I-I've never seen them before in my life. But, I know they shouldn't be here." Twilight tried to press herself further into the wall closing her eyes. "They're evil."

"You're not makin' sense, Twilight." Applejack took a step closer. "Do you know what they are or don't you?"

"I-I don't know, it's like, I can see them in my head. I've never *seen* them before, but I know what they are, at the edge of my mind."

"She's cracked." Rainbow scoffed.

"Quiet." Applejack hushed her. "I'm afraid you're going to have to do better than that, sugarcube."

"I don't know how.... all I do know is this is bad, very bad. I'm scared." she said shivering. "Can we go? Can we go back to Spike please?"

Applejack reached out a comforting hoof. "Alright, it's okay, Twilight. We'll head back." she turned to Rainbow Dash. "Come on, we've seen enough. Maybe Spike can tell us more about these things."

The blue pegasus had already wandered off among the cylinders, her voice rang back towards them. "I'm not turning back because *she's* too scared to investigate! for all we know she's trying to throw us off!"

Applejack sighed. "Stay here." she said firmly. She turned and was lost in the darkness.

Twilight stood alone in the cavern. The only sounds were the occasional clip-clop of hooves as Applejack pursued the rambunctious Pegasus. She looked around the expansive room at the neat rows of machines. Their cold dark eyes looking out into the darkness, unmoving. She could not place exactly why but at the moment those eyes scared her more than anything she could remember. She wanted nothing more than to put as much space between herself and them as possible.

"Applejack?" she called. "Rainbow Dash?"

There was no reply.

Twilight got to her hooves and peered into the gloom. She strained her ears but she could no longer hear them in the dark "Hello?" she called again, a bit softer than she'd intended. "Are you there?"

Still no reply.

Twilight suddenly felt extremely vulnerable. She took a few tentative steps forwards, giving the cylinders a wide berth as she did. She couldn't hear anything beyond the sound of her own hooves hitting the floor. It grew darker as she progressed, she could hardly see anything after while. Still Twilight felt those singular eyes staring at her in the darkness. She tried to ignore it, but the feeling persisted.

Suddenly something reached out of the darkness and grabbed her. Twilight tried to scream as she was roughly hauled into a corner behind the machines but she could only get out a small squeak before a hoof was placed quickly over her mouth.

"Shhhhh." whispered Applejack, keeping Twilight's mouth shut. She pointed somewhere out into the darkness. "Raggedy."

Twilight stopped struggling and Applejack released her. She noticed Rainbow Dash huddling next to her looking terrified. They froze, being very quiet for several minutes, no one dared to breath, fearing the creature in the dark.

Eventually Rainbow Dash stood up.

"Maybe it's gone?" she asked.

Twilight suddenly heard a familiar shuffling sound, followed by several more getting closer fast. "And maybe it just went to get friends." she said quickly. "Run!"

### **35 T.R Cantorlot**

Rarity sauntered over to the train's guard, pushing a large wagon covered in cloth in front of her. She turned to him fluttering her eyelids. "Hello, Mr.Iron Hooves."she said sweetly. "I need to go into town to pick up some fabric. Would you mind if I," she stepped a bit closer. "came along for the ride?"

The guard looked mildly terrified, but quickly regained his composure. "Um.... No can do Ms. Rarity."

"Really?" Rarity asked, pouting. "But you've let me on before, what's one more time?"

"Sorry Ms. Rarity," the guard stepped back. "I'm under Twilight's express orders to make sure that this train takes only the absolutely necessary. Ponies included."

"Oh, I see.." Rarity said softly.

"Glad you understand Ms.Rarit-"

Rarity suddenly collapsed to the ground in tears. "You're saying I'm unnecessary!!!" she wailed. "I knew it! I just knew it! Nopony likes me! Why would they? I'm....I'm...." she sobbed. "Unnecessary!!!"

"No, no! That's not what I meant at all!" said the guard looking around frantically. "I like you and the castle couldn't get on without you!"

"You liar! You said it yourself just now! Nopony needs me, I'm not even useful enough to get on a train! You probably wouldn't miss me if I just ran away to live in the forest! Then the animals might appreciate me. But why would they?" she sniffed. "You said it! You said I'm about as useful as a chipmunk! Less useful even! I'm a worm! A lowly worm! Why would anyone want

me around?!" She broke into a new bout of sobbing cries.

"No, no!" The guard urged. "Please stop crying, Ms.Rarity! Please! You're a great seamstress, I just can't let you on tod-"

He was interrupted as she wailed at the top of her lungs. "Oh just never mind, I'll just go up into my room and lock myself away! I'll throw away the key. Who would care? No one would even notice I was gone! An exile doomed to die ugly and alone!"

"Okay! Okay! I'll let you on, just please, stop crying."

"Thanks darling." Rarity was on her feet immediately. "Could you load my waggon onboard? That passenger car on the far end should be empty, yes? That would be just fine."

The guard stood dumbfounded.

Rarity began to sniffle again. "Well....what are you waiting for?"

He grabbed the wagon and was off like a rocket.

"Works every time." Rarity whispered under her breath.

She was quickly ushered into the passenger car she'd requested along with her wagon. The guard left as soon as he was able.

"Did you really have to do that to the poor man?" asked the wagon.

"Well, you wanted to get on board the train didn't you Doctor?" Said Rarity huffily. "You'll find I'm just as good as any psychic paper."

The Doctor disentangled himself from the various fabrics and thread getting to his feet. "Psychic paper is a lot quieter though." he remarked, shaking a loose of string from his mane. "In anycase, I'm glad we're on board. Things are a lot more serious than I'd realized, and that's saying something."

"Quite, you're ever so good at getting into trouble after all." Rarity chuckled.

The Doctor looked offended "No, I'll have you know I'm not just good at getting into trouble, I'm the *best*. Which is the reason why we need to hurry."

"How so?"

"I'm also the best at getting *out* of trouble. But as I explained, Twilight's here too." The Doctor paused for a moment. "The *good* Twilight. She's clever, I'm sure she can handle herself. But everything is starting to make sense to me now, and if I'm right, and oh I hope I'm not right, things have just reached a new level of bad."

"How bad is that?"

"Think of the worst thing you can think of." The Doctor waited a moment. "Got it?"

"Yes I think so." Said Rarity

"Good, now forget it, because there's no way it could possibly be as bad as this." He trotted over to the cabin door, peeking through the circular window at the top. "Do you by any chance know how many ponies are on this train?"

"The guard said only the most necessary ponies were allowed onboard. I don't know the exact number, but I only counted two."

"Good." The Doctor reached into his coat pocket, pulling out his sonic screwdriver. "I need to get a closer look at those things under the tarping. I'm sure they're what I'm thinking of, but something's...*different*." Wind blustered into the cabin as the door slid open. "Come on."

The two ponies cautiously made their way to the next car. Trying to remain unseen by the guard ponies on the ground. The Doctor quickly opened the door to the next cabin, ushering

Rarity inside. It was dark. The air smelled faintly of disinfectant, like a hospital. They walked quietly inside, making sure there were no guards in the car. As their eyes acclimated to the darkness the Doctor saw the machinery from earlier, still under thick tarps nailed to the floor. He wandered over warily.

"The coast is clear." he lit the gas lamps on the wall using the sonic screwdriver. There were tools spaced around the cabin rather messily on top of various work tables, and the floor was black with soot.

"Someone needs to do some cleaning in here" said Rarity. "It's absolutely filthy."

The Doctor eyed the silhouettes under the tarp. "The floor's the last of our worries at the moment." he grabbed the edge in his mouth and tore it away. Upon seeing the creatures underneath he paused for a moment. "Oh no. Oh this can't be right."

"Doctor! What are those things?" Rarity cried.

"You know...I'm not quite sure..."

"What!?"

"I thought they were an old enemy of mine, something called a Dalek. The most evil creatures in the universe."

"Well are they?" Rarity backed up slightly.

"Well....If you look sideways and squint maybe.... Tell me, Rarity, In your time traveling with me, did I ever comment on the numerous improbabilities of your world?" asked the Doctor, walking over to one of the worktables.

"Constantly."

"Well this is one of those times." The Doctor found a notebook, he quickly nosed through and shut it with a sharp click. "Oh come on." he sighed.

"What is it, Doctor?"

"They're not exactly what I thought." The Doctor took in a breath. "They're called..."

"What?" asked Rarity impatiently.

"They're called...." The Doctor strained to get the word out.

"Well, out with it!"

"Darlocks." He said resignedly. "They're called Darlocks." He spun on his hooves to face one of them. Gas lamp's flickering light cast shadows around its horse like head. Its eyestalk lay dark and dormant in the center of its face. "I bet she made them just for me. She's taken my greatest fear, and made it into a joke." He stared into its eye for a long time. "I'm sorry, I really am." He whirled to face Rarity before she could ask what he meant. "Still, though it looks like a demented chess piece, according to those notes it's just as dangerous as ever. She's made an army of them at the factories."

"An army?" asked Rarity "She rules half the world at this point, what does she need an army for?"

"A very good question." The Doctor put a hoof to his chin. "I've heard a lot of good questions today. It's time to get some good answers." He examined the Darlock. "There's a discrepancy in the notes about the firing mechanism." He noticed Rarity's confusion. "That tubey bit next the the plunger. In anycase, normally it fires a concentrated burst of energy, instantly killing what it comes in contact with. In the notes it appears to have been modified for some other kind of energy. I can't quite work out what it is though. This math doesn't make any sense."

It's like they're measuring something that isn't the-

The Doctor was interrupted as the cabin door swung open.

Two scientist ponies walked in, deep in conversation with one another.

"It's amazing really!" said one. A blue unicorn stallion with thick glasses. "These creatures are almost completely self sustaining."

"I know!" said the other, a pink earth mare. "They're completely impossible! The one wh-"

They paused as they noticed Rarity and the Doctor. The four ponies stared at each other in silence.

"Ah, hello!" said the Doctor "I'm....Clockwork." he cringed at the name. "And this is my assistant Glimmer."

Rarity shot the Doctor a look, then quickly plastered on a smile. "Yes that's me, Glimmer. It's simply fabulous to meet you."

"Now, now, Glimmer, we're hear on business, remember? No time for pleasantries." The Doctor walked over and examined the pair of exceedingly confused scientist.

"Who are you?" asked the stallion.

"A very good question! Isn't it, Glimmer?" laughed the Doctor jovially.

"Yes, yes it is Doc-...I mean Clockwork!" She joined in the laughter, a bit too loudly. "Very good indeed!"

"They don't know who we are? Isn't that funny?" The Doctor laughed a bit louder.

"Hilarious!" said Rarity.

"Oh, that's a good one. Really, you two had me going for a minute there!" The Doctor was practically in stitches. "Don't know who we are! Can you imagine, Glimmer?"

"That would be simply too funny, Clockwork!" The Rarity laughed woodenly.

The scientist stared at the two ponies in front of them, more confused than ever. Then the mare began to chuckle. The unicorn stallion gave her a severe look. He couldn't hold it long and he himself burst into a bout of giggling. Soon the four of them were rolling on the floor laughing.

"Wooo, that was a good one." The Doctor wiped a tear from his eye. "But really," he continued, his jovial tone gone. "I'm going to tell you who I am."

The laughter stopped immediately.

The Doctor got up and walked towards the Darlocks. "But first, I want you to tell me a few things."

The stallion got to his feet. "Hey, wait a minu-"

The Doctor was on him in a second, his nose inches away.

"You know what? No. I will not wait a minute, you're quite lucky to have seconds at the moment, so take what you've got and don't try my patience."

The stallion gulped.

"First question, what is your name."

"I-it's Bunsen....Bunsen Burner." He replied, trying to shrink into the wall.

"Very good, Bunsen," The Doctor stepped away, looking towards the pink mare. "Second question. What is your name?"

"Delta...it's Delta" she backed away, huddling beside Bunsen.

"Good," The Doctor walked back towards Rarity. "now, Bunsen, Delta, it's time for a third

question, a very important question.” He turned to look at them over his shoulder. “These things, these Darlocks, are you responsible for making them?”

“N-no...” said Bunsen. “We’re just here to monitor them during the trip, make sure everything’s alright.”

“What do you know about them?”

Delta leaned forwards. “We don’t know anything. The Queen keeps them top secret.”

“Ooh, now don’t tell me that. You two are scientist, I’ve never met a scientist who wasn’t curious. No way ponies like you would let a mystery like that sit around un-snooped into. So tell me, did you ever look into something you weren’t suppose to? Poke it with a stick? Just take a peek behind that forbidden door?” asked the Doctor raising an eyebrow.

The pair looked at one another for a moment. Then Delta got to her hooves.

“Fine.” she sighed. “When I was working in the lab, I may have seen some shipping orders I wasn’t supposed to. I don’t know more than this, but these things aren’t created at the Queens factories.”

“So they’re not made there?” Rarity chimed in.

“No, they’re only completed there, according to the order they’re made somewhere else.”

“Where, and is there anything else you can tell me?” asked the Doctor, going over to the worktable and grabbing the notebook.

“As far as I can tell- I only took a peek- they come from somewhere outside of Ponyville, in the forest. I don’t know anything beyond that. They come here to be checked out by the queen, then to the factories at Dragon Mountain to be....activated as far as I can tell. I couldn’t see much, we’ve only been on the job a few days.”

“Well, now we’re getting somewhere!” The scientists’ stepped back as the Doctor whirled to face them. “So, these aren’t ready yet. There’s another element, and someone else involved. Someone who knows things that definitely don’t belong in Equestria.”

“Good! You’ve got what you wanted, now leave us alone!” Said the Bunsen, bolstering his courage. “Don’t hurt us.”

The Doctor looked confused. “Hurt you? Now why in the world would I do that?”

The blue stallion faltered. “Well...aren’t you with the resistance or something?...I’ve heard the stories!”

“Resistance? Never heard of them. Now come on.” The Doctor hopped over to the cabin door, Rarity followed close behind.

The two scientist stood dumbfounded.

“Well come on then!” he turned back to them. “Don’t stand there with you mouths open, are you going to help or not?”

“Help!? Why!?” Delta cried incredulously.

“Because you want to know just as badly as I do.”

Delta deflated a bit.

“Come on,” the Doctor chided. “A mysterious process involved in creating the most advanced machines you lot have ever seen? Don’t you want to know? Isn’t that why you signed up? That old scientific curiosity?” He gestured over to Bunsen, “Him I’m not so sure about.”

“Hey!” Bunsen got to his hooves incredulously. “I’m just as curious as her!”

The Doctor smiled. “Good.” He opened the door with the sonic screwdriver. “Then come



on.”

“Where!? Why!?” Asked the scientists in unison.

“The head car of course. We're making a slight detour.”

### 35 T.R Dragon Mountain

Applejack leapt over a row of Darlocks, hitting the floor at the full gallop, Twilight and Rainbow right behind her. At the sound of their hooves running through the dark the raggedy mares converged on them. Twilight looked around wildly, there were at least five by her count, spaced around around the factory, gaining fast, their loping gait covering twice the ground they did with every step. Applejack risked a backwards glance.

“Quickly, back to the door!” she yelled.

“Oh really? Do you think?” Rainbow Dash overturned a table of equipment in an attempt to slow the pursuing creatures down. One of them stumbled, falling headlong onto the floor. The others quickly made up the difference, undeterred. “You’d better think of something better than that or there’s no way we’re going to make it!”

Applejack looked back at the pursuing raggedies. She stopped suddenly, turning to face them.

“What are you doing!?” cried Twilight skidding to a stop. “Run!”

Rainbow Dash held up a hoof. “Quiet you’ll break her concentration! Keep running!”

Twilight noticed Applejack was whispering something. The orange earth pony concentrated and the box around her neck started to glow.

Suddenly the floor in front of her was covered in banana peels.

The Raggedies went slipping and sliding in all directions. Their fabric sagging and stretching grossly as they struggled to right themselves.

“Don’t just stand their gawkin’ Twilight, get a move on!” Applejack ran past the dumbfounded unicorn. “That won’t slow them down for long!”

Twilight regained her wits and quickly followed the two towards the door. “That was amazing!” she yelled. “Conjuring up so many things at once. You never told me you were *that* good at magic.”

“I’m not.” said Applejack. “But I’m a farmer. If there’s one thing I know, it’s fruit. Now stop flappin’ your gums and run!”

Behind them their pursuers had regained their footing and were coming after them with a fresh burst of speed. Twilight could hear their cloth hooves hitting the ground behind them. A sound she knew far too well. The door was still a ways off, and she knew they weren’t going to hold their lead much longer. She could hear Applejack and Rainbow Dash huffing beside her. Twilight’s own legs were on the verge of quitting on her. The door still seemed so far. She had to do something .

This time Twilight stopped.

“Girl! What’re you doing!” Applejack yelled.

"I have a plan! It's a long shot, but it might work!" She held her ground. The raggedies were only a few feet away. The one in the lead paused in front of her, rearing up its belly seams opened to take her inside.

As it descended towards her Twilight took in a deep breath, closed her eyes, and yelled. at the top of her lungs.

"Stop!!"

The raggedy mare stopped mid lunge. The others' stopped as well, tripping over one another as order echoed back. Soon it was completely silent.

Rainbow Dash stopped running. "Woah...."

Applejack trotted up to Twilight, who was still standing extremely still her nose almost inside the opening in the raggedy mare's chest. "Why didn't you tell us you could do that?" she asked.

"I didn't know till just now." Twilight sighed, slumping to the floor in a heap. "I wish I'd figured it out earlier. They're this Twilight's minions, so I figured they might listen to me, no matter the timeline."

"Well, lucky thing you were right then." Applejack gave Twilight a rough hoof on the back. "That was close."

"Yeah," said Rainbow Dash quietly. "good job egghead, your minions still obey you."

"Hush now Rainbow!" said Applejack. "This girl just saved us. If she was evil, why would she do that?"

"Why indeed." came a voice from the dark. "Oh well, a few lessons ought to fix any of that sentimental nonsense."

The three of them froze.

"Lucky me," the voice continued. Twilight noticed it sounded vaguely familiar. "I happen to come to the factory just in time to catch your little 'Spy mission.'" the voice giggled. "That's so cute. And will you look at that! I'm doubly lucky. You're just the pony I was looking for, Twilight."

Twilighttwo sauntered out of the darkness. "We have so much in common."

Applejack and Rainbow Dash stepped protectively in front of Twilight, taking up fighting stances.

"Oh, now that's no good. I deplore violence you know." said Twilighttwo sweetly. "You two might get hurt and I wouldn't want that to happen to my *closest friends*." she clicked her tongue. "But still, can't have you two messing up my plans now can I?" Twilighttwo put her hoof to her chin and looked at the ceiling. "What to do...what to do...Oh this is a conundrum. Oh wait! I know! This is the perfect time to test out the new guys isn't it? They are ever so eager to please." The alicorn's horn began to glow a dark purple. "Twilight, step away from them please. This could get messy."

Twilight looked on, open mouthed at the pony in front of her. She was lovely, her mane and tail the same dark purple of the twilight sky, her coat perfectly groomed. Twilight was mesmerized. She stared in awe of her future self, powerful, intelligent, beautiful everything she could have hoped for. Until she looked into her eyes. They were the same dark eyes from the painting in the library, the same eyes that had haunted her since she'd arrived and the same dark eyes that kept the sun from rising.

"No." she said quietly.

"What's that?" asked Twilighttwo, putting a hoof to her ear. "I can't hear you sweetie."

"No." she said again.

"Oh, Twilight, there's no use fighting it. I'm you after all, who knows you better than yourself? Now come, let me show you your kingdom."

"No!" Twilight shrieked.

Twilighttwo's mocking smile vanished.

"You're not me and I'll never be you! You're evil, vile, and nothing like me at all! I will not step away." Twilight came up between Rainbow Dash and Applejack. "These are my friends, something I would never forget." She looked directly into Twilighttwo's dark eyes. "And I'll never abandon them."

Twilighttwo scowled, but her smile returned immediately. "Fine, I see I'll have to work with you a bit. In the mean time I'll just have to tell my boys to aim very carefully. They are ever such good shots." Her horn glowed even brighter and suddenly the room was filled with the sound of whirling machinery. "Last chance Twilight." She smiled.

"I said no." Twilight took a defiant step forwards.

"Very well then." Twilighttwo took a deep breath. "Wakey wakey boys! I have something for you to play with." his smile grew wider than Twilight thought possible.

Suddenly the Darlocks started to shake. The three ponies threw their hooves over their ears as the cavern was suddenly filled with noise. It grew louder and louder as they shook ever more violently. The ground began to quiver beneath them as the force escalated. Rainbow Dash screamed.

Then as suddenly as it had begun everything stopped. Rainbow's scream echoed in the silence.

"They're awake." said Twilighttwo sung happily.

The room was filled with blue lights, all of them fixed on Applejack and Rainbow Dash.

"You know what to do." Twilighttwo reached out a hoof and stroked the nearest machine.

**"EXTERMINATE."** It said.

"Good boy."

Then the world exploded.

### **35 T.R Dragon Mountain**

The explosion knocked everypony off their hooves. Twilight and the others were tossed in different directions as the cavern wall burst inwards in a shower of rocks and debris. Twilight lost sight of Twilighttwo as she was knocked end over end into a wall.

Her body ached as she got up, shaking away the stars in front of her eyes. Dust hung heavy in the air. She stumbled forwards to find an eyestalk inches from her face. She yelped and backed away, tripping over a rock dislodged in the explosion. Twilight looked up, and realized that the rest of the Darlock had been crushed by a falling boulder.

"I thought you said you could drive a train?" said a voice in the debris.

"I in fact said we were taking a detour my dear Rarity. Technically that is still true."

Twilight's ears perked up as she heard the second voice. She quickly turned in it's direction. "Doctor!"

"Twilight!?" called the voice.

"Doctor, I'm over here!" she raced off in the direction of the sound.

"I'm coming! Just keep talking, I'll find you!"

"I'm coming!"

"No! Stay still, I don't want t-" The Doctor was interrupted as they ran headfirst into each other. They both fell to the ground rubbing their heads. "Bump into you..." he finished.

"Ow..." Twilight moaned. She quickly regained her wits. "Doctor, what happened! There was an explosion! And there are these things! These robot things! I don't know how I know it, but they shouldn't be here, Doctor! How did you escape? Where are the others?"

"Well hello to you too." Said the Doctor. "I'm glad you're alright, you really should be more careful." the Doctor examined their surroundings. "To answer those questions, I know about the 'things', you're right, they shouldn't be here. They're called Darlocks. To answer the second question I have no idea where everyone is, Rarity's here somewhere, but I lost her in the smoke. Oh! And Delta and Bunsen, I'll have to introduce you later. To answer the third question of what happened here, I crashed a train into the side of the factory."

"A train?! Are the rail-ponies okay?" Twilight looked around in the disaster.

"Rail-ponies?"

"The ponies that pulled it here. They're probably hurt!"

"Twilight, your concern is wonderful, but I have no idea what you're talking about." The Doctor raised an eyebrow. "There were no 'Rail-ponies'."

"Then how did the train move?" asked Twilight, confused.

"Wait....let me wrap my head around this, you have trains in your time, right?"

"Of course."

"But they're **pulled**, by these 'Rail ponies'."

"Yes, that's how it's always been."

"So, just making sure I've got this straight. In this world, you invented the train....*before* you came up with the steam engine?"

Twilight looked at the Doctor, more confused than ever.

"And you see nothing wrong with this?"

"No....should there be?"

Twilight was surprised as the Doctor pulled her into a hug. "Oh I missed you, Twilight Sparkle!"

She returned the hug. "Yeah, I missed you too."

Rarity walked up through the smoke. "Is now really the time for pleasantries?"

"Rarity!" Twilight yelled. It suddenly dawned on her that something was missing.

"Applejack! Rainbow Dash!" she yelled. "Are you alright?"

There was a groan in the dark. "I reckon I'll live."

"I'm okay." called another.

Twilight let out a sigh of relief. The two ponies wandered over to the group, a little unsteady on their hooves, but otherwise okay.

As the Doctor opened his mouth to say something, Twilight's voice rang out through

the darkness. "Get them! All of them! This will not stand!"

"Oops, looks like introductions will have to come later." said the Doctor as a few damaged Darlocks activated again in the dark. "Time to run."

As he finished the sentence, a ray of dark light parted the curtain of smoke, inches away from his face.

"Like I said, run!"

The five of them, galloped behind the Doctor, leaping over fallen rocks and pieces of the train. The Darlock's fire whizzed through the air after them, sending flashes of deep purple light crackling through the darkness.

**"EXTERMINATE!"** Called several metallic voices in unison.

"Oh, well at least she got the catch phrase right." remarked the Doctor.

"Shut up and run!" yelled Applejack.

They came to the hole in the cavern made by the train. Bunsen and Delta stood waiting by the wreckage.

"Hey where are you going!" asked Delta as they streamed past.

**"EXTERMINATE!"** she ducked as a bolt of light whizzed above her ears.

"Away from that!" called the Doctor. "Run!"

The two scientist were hot on their hooves as they followed behind. Twilight and the Doctor running in the lead.

"Where are we going?" asked Twilight breathlessly.

"There's another train on the side of the mountain." replied the Doctor. "I saw it before we hit the side. It leads into the forest, and I have a feeling I know where."

"Where's that?" asked Rarity.. "I hope it's better than your last stop!"

"If I'm correct, those tracks lead to the Lantern Castle. In that case, I think we'll find the answer to this whole mess."

The five of them put on a new burst of speed as the Darlocks began to stream out of the cavern. A hundred calls of **"EXTERMINATE!"** chased them into the night.

"If we make it...." said Twilight.

***To be continued in: Impossible Happenings***