

A New Equestria

By Mist

Chapter Three (Survival Saga)

I had passed another couple of ruined landmarks not too long ago, meaning I was getting closer to my destination. I was fairly fortunate that my first assumption of every landmark being destroyed beyond recognition was wrong. According to the crude map, I was approaching Everfree forest, which would be the final obstacle I had to cross to get to the village. A forest didn't sound like an ideal place to be considering how the animals I've run into thus far have behaved. It didn't appear as though there was any way around it though, so I would have to hope I got lucky.

Fortunately I had stocked up on food at the camp, and I had rationed it reasonably up to this point, this would help in getting through the forest as I could keep my energy up and not have to make many stops. I had doubts that there would be any kind of cover from the wildlife in the forest, and thus I was not keen on sleeping there.

I was only a few miles from that forest, when I noticed some figures in the distance. This time I was certain they were ponies. They were a bit smaller framed, but they were definitely of my own kind. My heart jumped with excitement as I approached them.

Up close they were a bit different than I imagined. There were three of them, and all three were smelly and dirty. I don't even think the animals out here were quite as unsanitary as this trio. The biggest one of the group appeared to be missing several teeth, and the remainder of his teeth were chipped and damaged. He had sort of a lazy eye as well that seemed to follow me no matter where I moved.

The other two appeared to be twins. Both dark mahogany colored colts with blonde mane. They looked equally as dirty, but their dark color hid most of the filth upon them, except their mane of course. They appeared rather dim-witted as they walked rather awkwardly and had an odd chuckle about them.

The big one stepped forward and gave the most unpleasant, clearly forced smile I had ever seen. His disgusting teeth were only made more prominent by this gesture.

"Well, what have we here? Y'all must be from them Knights, I don't often see colts of your... Condition... Out here in the ruins..." He was putting odd emphasis upon words.

The other two began to circle about me as he conversed with me. Something about this meeting was off; I began to take a few steps back, only to be blocked by the other two.

"I'm actually from Skyvale..." I commented.

He let out a loud hearty laugh, and the other two followed his lead. "City pony then? What could you possibly be doin' out here then?"

I didn't like this group already. Something about them was off, and I wanted to get away from them as quickly as possible.

"I actually came here to look for the Knights of Celestia, I don't really want any trouble..." I lowered my head.

"Trouble ya' say? Shucks, we jus' wanted to invite y'all to dinner." He gave that awkward smile of his again.

"I'm really not that hungry..." I tried to back up some more, but the other two had me trapped.

"It's a good thing that you're the meal then!" He yelled and darted towards me.

I was quick enough to get out of the way, but the two brothers grabbed me and pressed me to the ground with extreme force. They were a lot stronger than they looked. I squirmed and struggled to get free, but to no success.

My heart was beating at least five times faster. These ponies wanted to *eat* me. I panicked and offered an alternative to them.

"I have plenty of food on me! I'd be willing to share; you don't have to do this!" I pleaded.

The biggest one just laughed at me.

"I love it when they struggle! Thanks for the tip though, now we will have something as a snack after you." He grinned.

I started squiring as violently as I could. I focused all the energy in my body into getting free. Kicking and violently jerking, I was doing anything I could to at least give the two holding me a hard time keeping me there. I was hoping that they would eventually get tired and give me an opportunity to make a break for it. It might have been my mind putting me into denial about my predicament, but I couldn't tell really.

"Hold him still..." The brute said as he picked up a strip of metal sharpened into a blade from the ground.

"NO!" I yelled.

"Don't worry, it'll only hurt for a lil' while kid..." He assured.

I bit at the hooves of my captors, but it seemed to have little effect on them. Their legs were scrawny and meatless; I suppose it was easy to see how they were driven to cannibalism.

I held my eyes shut tightly with tears leaking from them. This was it; I was going to die being eaten by fellow ponies. The first ponies I had met out in this hellhole, and they wanted to eat me; Equestria really had changed. I thought for a brief moment at how I failed; I never even got the chance to meet the Knights, or show Torch the outside. I never even got my cutie mark, and now I would die without it.

BANG!

An ear shattering sound pierced the air. I peeked an eye open to see that one of the twins now lay on the ground in a bloody mess. Something had taken his head clean off at the top of the neck. His blood was everywhere, all over me, all over the other twin, and all over the big brute. My eyes couldn't believe what they were seeing. He was dead; something killed him right in front of me. The other two seemed to be just as shocked as I was at the situation. The brute turned his head in the direction that the sound originated, and then quickly averted his attention back to the other twin.

BANG!

The other twin's head was taken off just like his brother. He exploded in the same bloody mess as the one before him. The brute hesitated for a moment in shock, but then darted away probably trying to avoid the same fate, but his efforts were futile. With another loud boom he too was taken down. Seconds later he lay still in a pool of his own bodily fluid. All three of them were dead in under a twenty second period.

I peered in the direction of the sounds thinking myself to be next, certain that I escaped being eaten to be blown apart. Atop the hill to the right of me was an older looking mare, probably a couple years older than myself. She had an obnoxiously pink coat, and a wild poof ball of a mane to go with it. Her blue eyes seemed to not match the look of solemnness on her face. There was a scar planted right on her forehead inching closer to the left than the center.

Attached to her right hoof was a very odd mechanical looking device. It was a metal plate with a long canister looking scrap of metal sticking out of the back of it. Near the bottom facing towards the foot of her hoof was a cylinder that appeared to be retracting in after it had finished its task, it was probably responsible for the loud banging that felled my three attackers. Right on top of that cylinder was what appeared to be a retractable blade. My guess was this was some kind of weapon, though I was not sure what kind of magic controlled it.

On her other front hoof she had a black metal band around it. The band was giving off a teal glow, but one that was slowly fading and returning it to a plain black band.

The mare leaped off of the hill top and positioned herself right in front of me. Glaring me up and down, she leaned in extra close and put her eyes only inches from my own. She nodded and retracted her head back and turned around to begin walking away. Then with a sudden jerk she turned back around and extended her blade to my throat.

"So, they finally sent an assassin to lay me to rest have they? It'll take more than that to slay me!" She yelled rather delusional-like.

"I'm no assassin!" I protested with fear on my breath.

She raised a brow and sat back retracting her blade. "Of course you're not an assassin, why in Celestia's name would you think such an odd thing?" She questioned.

I blinked. Was this mare serious?

"You just accused me of being an assassin!" I reminded, lowering my guard. If she wanted to kill me, she'd have done it already.

“Well, have you eaten any onions lately?” She asked with a rather serious tone.

I was confused. “Um, no?” I replied.

She smiled rather heartily and pulled me close for a deep hug; squeezing so hard that I was having trouble obtaining air. She was far stronger than she looked.

“This is great news! That means you’re not a cabbage! I can’t tell you how many cabbages I find out here. Really terrible things they are.” She was nodding while speaking.

Cabbages? I had no clue what she was talking about. It all seemed like incoherent nonsense to me. Either something was wrong with her, or she was speaking in some kind of code or language that I wasn’t too familiar with.

“A cabbage you say?” I responded.

“Indeed, everyone knows that cabbages eat onions, so if you don’t eat them, then you must not be a cabbage. It’s a good thing to, I’d have had to shoot you then plant you in a cornfield then. So where are you heading to stranger?” She seemed a little bit more excited now.

I was hesitant to tell her, but then figured I may as well, no harm in it. “I’m heading towards a place called Ponyville, perhaps you’ve heard of it?” I said.

“Only in fairytales have I heard of such a place; however I do know how to get you there; right through Everfree forest right?” She said.

I couldn’t tell if she was messing with me, or being serious. She acted stupid and clueless, but somehow was still able to keep a conversation going. Perhaps this was her idea of a joke? Who would have guessed that anypony out here would have a sense of humor. Then again it would probably drive one to madness just accepting the depressing state of things out here all the time. Maybe this was her way of coping with the harsh reality she lived in.

“Yeah, that’s the one. Is it safe to go through the forest though?” I questioned.

She shook her head. “It’s far from safe, and the only ones who have ever made it through were the talking rock and me of course!” She seemed rather proud of herself.

“R-right... I don’t suppose you could tell me a way through the forest quickly then could you?” I really was starting to get nervous around this mare, she was clearly mentally unstable. There was no telling what she’d do next.

“I couldn’t allow you to go alone, you’re ill-equip, thus an easy target for space snakes to just snatch you up. If you’re not careful, they’ll grab you when you’re not looking and take you back to Jupiter where they’ll conduct evil alien experiments on you!” She answered.

“I think I’ll take my chances...” I replied.

She stepped closer and put a hoof around me and pulled me in for another awkward hug. She let on a bright smile as she pressed her cheek close to mine.

“Nonsense, I’ll lead you right through the forest with most of your body parts still attached. You’ve nothing to worry about friend, as the great White Falcon will lead you through the forest. No wait... That’s not right... What was my name again...” She tried to find the words.

“It was Pink something...” She added.

Taking a glance at her blade out of curiosity I read the words “Pinkie Pie” engraved on it. It looked like it was scratched in crudely with another blade. Not exactly the mark of good craftsmanship, but the device was still effective enough to kill three cannibals.

“Pink Giraffe? Pink Waffle...? Pink Rock...?” She was in deep thought.

“Pinkie Pie?” I suggested.

“YES! THAT ONE! THAT’S IT!” She waved her hooves around furiously in excitement. “THAT’S ME! PINKIE PIE!” She added.

“Right, well are you sure you are up to going through that forest...” I was cautious about this situation; after all I just met this pony, and she didn’t appear to have all of her marbles.

She stomped a foot on the ground and nodded with determination. Her entire expression changed within a millisecond. This mare was quite sporadic.

“I’ll get you through faster than goats on a roof! Don’t even worry about it for another second, just follow me and I’ll get us safely to the other side where Ponyville is only about a 10 minute walk from there. You’re in good hooves with me!” She assured.

I didn’t quite get her analogy, but nodded anyways. She had a weapon, and I didn’t, so I really didn’t have much of a choice in the matter. If I wanted to cross safely I wanted somepony that could at least fend off anything that could try and sneak up on us. Even if I had a weapon I doubt I’d be much use with it as this mare was. Before the war weapons were only reserved to the Equestrian military, and even then they were very simplistic blades and spears, nothing like this magical armlet of hers that appeared to be able to cause ponies to get decapitated merely by pointing it at them.

I nodded and she gleefully took the lead. I decided to remain silent for a while, as this girl clearly had plenty of entertainment talking to herself.

The forest was more of a swamp it seemed. Most of it was flooded and there was only one real path in getting through it, clearly pony-made as well. Perhaps Pinkie Pie was the one who cleared this path for travelers? The fact that there was even a distinguished path at all means that somepony else had gone through here, which means I wouldn’t be alone when I arrived at Ponyville. Whether or not that was a good thing was left to be decided, after all the only ponies I’ve met so far were either mentally unstable, or wanted me for lunch.

Pinkie Pie was unpleasantly cheerful during this walk through the forest, nothing seemed to

bother her. I decided I might as well see if she had any useful information.

“Say Pinkie Pie...” I started.

“That’s Dr. Pinkie Pie.” She corrected.

“You went to medical school?” I asked curiously.

“I did!? Wow, that’s so cool! What kind of doctor am I!?” She was overly excited at the remark.

“I was only kidding...” I took a step back from her.

She frowned and drooped her head a little. “Aww, that sucks... I bet I would have been a really cool doctor...”

I honestly was hoping that she was joking with me at this point, and that she wasn’t just completely out of her mind. Ignoring the previous discussion I moved back into what I originally meant to ask her.

“Were you in the war?” I asked quite straight forward.

She perked her head up and tilted it in confusion. “War? What war? There was a war?” She acted sincerely dumbfounded.

I sighed.

“I guess that means you wouldn’t be able to tell me anything about the Knights of Celestia, or Rainbow Dash then would you...?” I admitted defeat in this conversation.

She jumped and tackled me to the ground with an exuberant smile on her lips. “Well why didn’t you say so!? I know Rainbow Dash!”

I blinked and started to get a little excited myself. “So you mean she’s still alive!?” I was almost yelling.

She giggled like a foal and nodded. “Of course she’s still alive, it takes a lot to take down Rainbow Dash; I’ve known her for a long time. She lives not too far from here-“ She cut herself off.

Lifting her right front hoof, she aimed it in the distance. The band on the opposite hoof glowed again, and the device strapped to her extended appendage seemed to be activated now. The cylinder at the end let out a loud bang with a small fire igniting from the tip for a split second. When the fire subsided, a tiny amount of smoke escaped it. In the distance there was some kind of animal that was felled by the action. I couldn’t get a good look at what it was, but I could safely assume that it wasn’t too friendly. Pinkie Pie just tilted her head back down to me and continued talking as though it didn’t happen.

“I can tell you how to get to her after we get out of this forest if you want?” She smiled innocently.

“That would be great; I would really appreciate that, though I’m curious as to why you’ve been so kind to me...” I said.

She got off of me and I pushed myself back up. Kneeling in, she touched her nose to mine and just gave me a sugary smile and a wink. Then she turned back around and gestured for us to keep trotting. I decided that was the best answer I would be getting out of her, so I shrugged and decided not to make much of it.

It was nearly an hour of Pinkie Pie talking nonsense about how she suspected that gnomes were planning to attack her, and that was the reason she didn’t sleep much. I was only paying half attention, and giving short answers to give the illusion that I was listening to her. After it was finally over, we had reached the other side of the forest, only getting attacked twice by what appeared to be bears.

I could see a village off in the distance, it wasn’t more than a mile from here it looked like, an easy journey on foot.

“This is as far as I go stranger, but if you’re looking for Rainbow Dash, you just need to keep heading towards town. She’s held up in Twilight’s old library, you can’t miss it; it’s the big hollowed out tree with all the book-thingies in it. Just watch out for those pesky cabbages, I lost my left hoof stepping on one...” Pinkie Pie instructed.

I wasn’t sure exactly what to say, so I left it at a simple, “thank you.” She smiled in response and gestured the way to me. Despite being a lunatic, she was at least fairly kind.

Not wasting any more time I darted towards the town at full speed. I didn’t want to stop for anything now that I was this close. My blood was pumping faster than ever, but this feeling was interrupted abruptly. A sharp pain was felt in my back leg. It was unbearable; I had never felt pain like this before. I collapsed onto the ground, unable to run any further. I could hear the grunts and chuckles of other ponies before I passed out.