MSCT3K

EPISODE 2

Welcome, everyone, to the next episode of my new solo riffing series! I hope you all enjoyed last time, because it's time to start hauling out the big guns! No more puny 3K prequels, time for an 11.8K whopper!

TONIGHT'S OFFERING:
My Little Layton: Puzzles are Magic
by sailor sunburst

The *Professor Layton* franchise is what Level-5 was doing before they made a character that's more popular than Pikachu in their native Japan (I am not freakin' kidding). Consisting of two sets of trilogies across the Nintendo DS and 3DS along with some other expanded universe stuff, these were adventures of the ever-top-hatted gentlemanly archeologist Professor Hershel Layton, and his boy apprentice Luke Triton. Together they travel to exotic locales, solve puzzles that show up everywhere like songs in an opera, and prove that there's no magic that cannot be faked with exhaustive application of steampunk technology. Yeah, these aren't exactly fairplay mysteries here, but we don't care because the gameplay focus was more on doing stuff with twelve matchsticks and Layton is the best gentleman ever and should've totally been in *Smash Bros*. Plus a new main-series title starring his daughter is going to be coming out next year, so that's something to look forward to.

Sadly, for all the professor's accomplishments and despite inspiring many imitators, he failed to meet Fan/fic/ Theater 3000's notability standards. My poll some time ago to suss out whether enough riffers knew enough to riff this story, which I submitted in the revival's earliest days, found us with ten votes, six against. Looks like it's up to me then to puzzle out what's wrong with this pony crossover. And oh look, it has an Alternate Universe tag. Because you're already crossing a TV show that takes place in a land of magic talking ponies with a game series that has only humans and, again, exhaustive application of steampunk technology; clearly that's too freakin' easy for such an *exceptional* author, so let's just *change up things at random*. I've only read the first chapter years ago, so let's see what fresh hell of anti-logic awaits us.

This riff is worth 50 / 50 Picarats.

START!

a new investigation

SC276: I should hope it's a new one. I don't care much for novelizations in general.

Luke and the professor walked through the streets of London. As they walked into the library, they saw a girl with dark hair streaked with pink and purple.

SC276: I see we're wasting no time in getting the plot going without any care for where it's taking place or who it's performing its plotty shenanigans upon.

When she saw Luke glance over she hid her face behind her book.

SC276: [Twilight?] "I don't think my Boo impression is working."

Luke raised an eyebrow. He nudged the professor in the ribs

SC276: Luke has a long way to go before becoming a gentleman, clearly.

"Professor, look at that girl over there." he told him quietly. The professor glanced over
"Hmm… she certainly is different-looking." He said

SC276: If you've seen the character designs for *Professor Layton*, you know how freakin' stupid that sounds.

"I'm sure she's here for the same reason we are."

SC276: To get the plot going? Please be to get the plot going.

However, at the café half an hour later,

SC276: OK, so the author opts to use the "move between scenes with no fanfare" method as if that's not going to make things even more confusing.

Luke saw the girl again with a girl wearing a yellow dress and light pink hair, and they were looking at the professor and Luke.
"I think we're being followed." Luke told the professor quietly

SC276: Is a dogged plot, it is.

"Perhaps…" agreed Layton. They went back to the professors flat, and Luke saw the two girls meet up with several other girls.

SC276: Inside the flat? Did they just break in or something?

The wind carried up snatches of their conversation
"I told ya'll to be careful!"
"A.J., we'll handle this!"
"Maybe we should ask someone else…"
"Nonsense, Fluttershy! They're the only ones who can help!"
"Why not just go up there and explain?"

SC276: First you stay down there and explain who's saying what.

"We might just have to…"
The next day, Luke saw the dark haired girl again.

SC276: In his dreams.

"Excuse me?" she asked, going up to him and the professor. "Are you Luke Triton and Professor Layton?"

SC276: With all due respect to the kid... *who addresses LUKE first*?!

"Yes." Said Luke
"I need to show you something. You see, my teacher sent me here with my friends because we have a bit of a problem…

SC276: [Twilight] "Namely, we're in a terrible fanfic."

and she thinks that only you two can help us." Said the girl
"Well, a gentleman never ignores the request of a lady." Said the professor "we'll try and do what we can."

SC276: [Layton] "Though I greatly fear the author's typesmanship is beyond my ability to influence."

The girl smiled
"That's great! I'll go get my friends!" later, Luke and the professor met the girl and her friends

SC276: (pant pant pant) Gheeze, slow the hell down, story...! Some of us are out of shape...!

"Ok, rarity I'll need your help with this." Said the dark haired girl
"right." Said another dark haired girl wearing a white dress. The two girls' grabbed hands and an aura shone around them. Their eyes shone with a bright light

SC276: So, uh, I see you decided to set the stage for the mystery without bothering to *introduce yourselves*.

"Almost…" muttered the girl in the white dress
"Professor, what's going on?!" asked Luke.
"I don't know, Luke…!" said the professor. Suddenly, they were transported to a grassy field outside a forest.

SC276: [Layton] "You know it's really quite rude to just *teleport* someone without saying so."

"Ugh… I hurt all over…" whined Luke. He looked at his…
"HOOVES?!" he shouted. He looked over his body "wh-wh-why am I a horse?!" he asked

SC276: I would like to point out we've had roughly the equivalent of an entire prologue of a *Layton* game and we're not even at *500 words*. Out of *11.8K*. Feeling winded yet?

"The term is `pony'" said the pony who was the girl in the white dress. She had a horn on her forehead, same with the pony who had the dark hair.

SC276: Is the word "purple" really that alien from your vocabulary?

The one who had worn the yellow dress was a pony with wings.

SC276: And no one really cared what the other three looked like.

"Ah man, it feels so good to be a pony again! I hated being grounded!" said one winged pony

SC276: *~One winged pony's only got one song / And one winged pony plays it all night long...~*

who had rainbow colored hair. She did loop-the-loops in the air "I just wanna' race around!"

SC276: Super Sonic Racing?

"Now hang on their sugar cube we gotta' explain!" said a pony with blonde hair who gave off a cowgirl look.

SC276: Because Layton and Luke know what cowboys look like. They're so common in London.

She turned to Luke and the professor "mighty sorry. My friend here has been antsy since we went to ya'll's world since she wasn't able to fly."

SC276: Don't you just need Twilight to do the explanation stuff? Let her freakin' fly.

"Of… course…" said the professor as he examined his own body.
"Come ooooon! We need to get to Canterlot! They gotta' meet the PRINCESS! Twilight, rarity, you two messed up on where to SEND US!" said one pony, who had fluffy pink hair and had a pink coat

SC276: OK, one, Pinkie doesn't talk like that, though no one is this fic is talking like how they're supposed to, so whatever. Two, with infinite universes, it's a miracle you landed in Equestria at *all*, so cut them some slack.

"She's right, twilight. We're supposed to take them to Princess Celestia and Princess Luna for them to explain." Said the blonde haired pony
"Right. Let's go gang, and remember what the princess said, no one can know about Luke and the professor." Said twilight.

SC276: Because asking Layton and Luke to pretend they're from this universe is clearly too much to ask.

A little later, they were on a train, in a compartment to themselves

SC276: Just a little? At this rate, I was sure it'd be faster.

"Phew… okay, nopony saw us…"
"I… I hope spike is doing okay watching our pets." Said the pink haired pony

SC276: Pinkie's the one who would be the *least* worried about things like that.

"I'm sure he's doing alright." Said twilight. She looked at Luke and the professor "now, it's the princess who's going to explain why you're here, but I can explain about where we are.

SC276: [Twilight] "We totally couldn't do this on the hill while nopony was watching."

We're in the land of Equestria, where all the citizens are ponies.

SC276: [Twilight] "Except for the mules, the griffons, the cows, the buffalo... You know, lesser races."

There are 3 kinds of ponies, technically four but you'll learn about that later. Those three kinds of ponies are unicorns, Pegasus, and earth ponies. Earth ponies are stronger and have more stamina, pegasi aren't as strong, but they're faster and have much more agility.

SC276: ...You forgot wings. You forgot to mention the *thing that makes a pegasus a pegasus*. Fucking hell, Twilight, I know I cast you as an uncaring asshole a lot, but you don't have to prove me right!

Unicorns are able to perform magic and can organize their minds much more quickly. You two are unicorns." Luke and the professor looked at their reflection and saw that they were unicorns. "Hey, neat!" said Luke

SC276: [Layton] "This reminds me of a puzzle. Sadly, it's not a very good one."

"As you heard my names Twilight. My full name is Twilight Sparkle, but you can just call me Twilight. The blonde pony right here is Applejack. The Pegasus with the pink hair is Fluttershy, the rainbow haired one is Rainbow Dash, the white pony is Rarity, and the pink one is Pinkie Pie."
"Hershel Layton." Said the professor
"Luke triton." Said Luke.

SC276: [Luke] "I still don't see why we had to wait until we got on this train to introduce ourselves. We should have done that back in London."
[Layton] "I have my theories about that, Luke. The most plausible one so far is that we're all horribly out of character."

When they arrived at the castle's throne room,

SC276: So *nothing of interest at all happened* between introductions and Canterlot? Can I upgrade my pass to get out of Economy description class, please? I'd like something with *substance*.

two ponies were standing, talking

SC276: Watching, waiting, ALWAYS WATCHING, WAZOWSKI. ALWAYS.

"Princess! We're back!" said twilight
"Twilight!" said the taller of the two with rainbow colored hair "welcome home, my dear!"

SC276: [Celestia] "That was much faster than any reasonable measure of speed!"

she turned to Luke and the professor "you must be professor Layton and Luke. Welcome to Equestria. I am its princess of the day, Princess Celestia. This pony right here-" she nodded towards the darker pony beside her "-is my sister Luna, the princess of the night. You've already met my student Twilight Sparkle, and her friends. They've taught you about Equestria,

SC276: Debatable.

and now it falls to me to tell you why you're here."

SC276: That's one of life's great mysteries, isn't it?

Celestia's horn glowed and a book flew off a shelf in front of the professor, who held it up with his own magic

SC276: It's possible that he learned how to handle telekinesis reasonably well in the hours worth of scenes that were cut, but if the author couldn't be bothered to get *herself* out...

"These are Changelings. There a species of creature who disguise themselves as a pony and then gain strength by feeding off your feelings for others.

SC276: [Layton] "Disguise, you say? I can't say I'm unfamiliar with going against masters of disguise."

We had problems with them before when they threatened to destroy Canterlot when their queen disguised herself as the princess of a neighboring kingdom to Equestria, Cadence, when she was about to marry Twilights brother, Shining Armor, who is now prince of that kingdom.

SC276: Author, slow down and take a breath. You're going to hyperventilate at this rate. That and/or confuse the living hell out of Luke.

We thought we had banished them for a long while, but a few have slipped out to Ponyville, and now are trying to gain strength so their queen, Chrysalis, can return.

SC276: Anyone else miss season 6? ...Oh, right, solo.

Last time she sought to take over, it was the love of Twilights brother, Shining Armor, and his wife, Princess Cadence, that saved the day when their love gave Shining Armor the strength to cast the spell needed to drive them back. But I'm afraid they're back again!

SC276: *~Guess who's back / Back again...~*

They've too-"
"I'm very sorry to interrupt you, but might I ask...why do you need our service?"" Professor Layton asked.

SC276: [Luke] "Of all the places for the plot to stall..."

“Why, they’ve kidnapped my husband, Shining Armor!” a voice said. It was a pony with many colored hair.
“You must be Cadence.” Said Layton

SC276: [Layton] “As a gentleman, I will keep all thoughts about how you probably should have been in this room to start with to myself.”

“yes.” Said cadence “As I said, the Changelings have kidnapped my husband, learning from last time.

SC276: *Anyone else miss season 6?*

Without him, the spell cannot be cast to drive the Changelings back to where they belong.”

SC276: So teach them to share love, and what’s the problem?

“However, there is a kind of prophecy,

SC276: [Lord Business] “Oh sure, there’s a prophecy.”

which leads to where you and your apprentice come in, Professor.” Said Celestia
“The prophecy recites thus:
When the dark ones rise and the protection has been taken, a portal to another world shall open, and two shall be found who can tell friend from foe. With those of evil found and the protection returned, the evil shall be cast back.” Recited Luna

SC276: You call *that* a prophecy? It’s not vague enough! It doesn’t even *rhyme*!

“And you think we’re the ones mentioned in this prophecy?” asked Luke
“I sent Twilight and her friends through the portal that was mentioned.

SC276: I’m not going to be stupid enough to expect the author to explain why changelings kidnapping Shining Armor opens a portal to another dimension in some location that’s just as arbitrary as its opening conditions.

It was really a spell that took them to your world, where they found you.”

SC276: Oh yeah, and she also sent all her *best ponies* into an *unknown world* with no idea of what’s on the other side. A+ monarch material, Celestia!

“I knew that we’d need to search for someone clever, and you came up many times in newspapers, Professor. We watched you for a couple of days, until finally we were sure that you and Luke were the ones we needed.” Said Twilight

SC276: [Layton] “So, you were stalking us.”
[Twilight] “Basically.”
[Layton] “I see… I would like it known that if any shipping occurs, I know how to fence.”

"I understand you're confused and might not want to help, but Equestria could be in terrible danger if the Changelings aren't stopped.

SC276: Just "could?"

Please, Hershel Layton, will you help us? Will you help Twilight determine Pony from Changeling as they work to free Shining Armor?" asked Celestia
"Well, I for one won't say no!" said Luke immidiently,

SC276: So he's *about* to say it, or…?

stamping his hoof "whether or not the professor decides to stay, I'm staying myself! I can't go back home knowing this world might be in trouble if I can do something about it!"

SC276: Um, will you still have that enthusiasm after learning that changelings are giant insects?

"Well, I can't very well go home if Luke is staying. People would notice if he disappeared, and it's my job as his temporary garden and his father's friend to look after him." Said the professor

SC276: Meanwhile, *Flora* has learned how to be a self-sustaining independent woman following the mysterious case of the professor's disappearance.

"Besides, no gentleman could ignore a request from a lady, especially a princess."

SC276: [Layton] "Even for a task as menial and stupid as being an x-ray."

"Thank you. Twilight and her friends will escort you to Ponyville in the morning, but right now it's getting late and you're probably very tired.

SC276: Well with how they had to handle going between dimensions and traveling to Canterlot in only… 1500 words, wow, that scene took its sweet freakin' time.

Twilight, could you show our guests to the rooms in the east tower?"

SC276: [Celestia] "They'll have to split the rent with that Merlin fellow, but the west tower's busy."
[Luna] "Sister, a porn stash is not 'keeping it busy-'"
[Celestia] "*Shush.*"

"Right away, princess!" said Twilight.

SC276: Also, doesn't Celestia have *guards* for doing this menial nonsense?

She showed Luke and the professor to their room "Here you go!" she said "My friends and I will be down the hall. Turn left at the end of the hallway and we're three doors down on the left.

SC276: Sure, slow down for detail *now*…

Just come by if you need anything. Good night, Luke, Professor."

“Twilight, wait! I have one more question.” Said Luke
“Your just full of them, huh Luke?” laughed twilight

> **SC276: I actually don’t think Luke’s spoken anything of substance between London and the previous scene.**

“Rarity told me more than once that me and you were alike in a lot of ways. What is it?”
“Well, I noticed that a lot of ponies have symbols on their flanks. Why?”
“Their called cutie marks.

> **SC276: *THIS was not explained on the train ride over?! Did you put it in the same category as the fact that “pegasi have wings?!” Do you have no idea how to distribute exposition or something?!***

You see Luke, when a filly or colt reaches a certain age and discovers his or her certain talent; a mark appears on their flank that shows it. It can represent their talent as well as an aspect of their personality. When your younger, it’s always fun guessing what your cutie mark might be.

> **SC276: *Gee, Twilight, thanks for telling us BASIC PONY KNOWLEDGE on the PONY FANFICTION SITE. Your audience is TOTALLY IN THE DARK ABOUT THIS TOPIC.***

There are 3 foals in Ponyville who are around your age who are what are known as blank flanks, meaning that they don’t have their marks yet. They formed a group called the cutie mark crusaders.” Twilight chuckled “their names are Applebloom, Sweetiebell, and Scootaloo. Applebloom and Sweetiebell are Applejack and Rarity’s sisters, and Scootaloo and Rainbow Dash are like sisters.”

> **SC276: *What do the CMC have to do with effing anything?! They didn’t even show up in any episode involving changelings!***

Luke looked down at his flank, but saw nothing
“I don’t have my mark…” he said sadly “I wonder why?” he went over to the professor, and saw a picture of his wax seal “aw man…”

> **SC276: Well it’s not like Luke has his own seal yet, since *Unwound Future* has presumably not happened.**

“Ah, don’t fret my boy! I’m sure you’ll have your mark by the time we return home.” Said the professor

> **SC276: Even though it’ll be completely pointless by then, since you’ll presumably stop being a pony.**

“I hope so… it’s really disappointing that I don’t have it yet…”

> **SC276: Nothing like being disappointed in not having something you didn’t know existed an hour ago.**

“Well, that’s 3 friends you’ll have in Ponyville. The crusaders are always on the lookout for foals their own age that don’t have their marks.” Said Twilight. She sighed “it’s a shame. A foal is supposed to

earn his or her mark on their own, and we know just what the crusaders should do. We can't help them because like I said, they need to figure it out for themselves."

SC276: The results may surprise you!

"What do you think their talents should be?" asked Luke as he climbed onto his bed

SC276: *THIS IS COMPLETELY FUCKING IRRELEVANT TO ANYTHING*- (takes deep breaths and listens to "Champion of Destruction" for a bit) I'm good. I'm good.

"Well, Sweetiebell is a great singer, but she's so shy about it. Applebloom can repair a home like no one's business, she even built the crusaders clubhouse, and Scootaloo does great on her scooter." Said twilight "but don't worry Luke, I'm positive you'll get your mark.

SC276: The author will make sure of it.

Like I told you earlier, my friends and I had been watching you and the professor! We know you're great at puzzles, which reminds me, I thought one up earlier and thought you might like to hear it." "Sure!" said Luke, perking up

SC276: [Layton] "Still in the room, by the way. (sips tea)"

"Alright." Said Twilight. She cleared her throat

SC276: [Luke] "Wait, how many Picarats is it worth-?"

"Four stallions go to sit by each other. You don't know their names, but each one has a different colored coat. One is red, one is blue, one is yellow, and one is green. With only these two pieces of knowledge, figure out how the four will sit in order. The first rule is that the yellow pony is sitting to the left of the red one. The red and blue ponies fight a lot if they sit by each other, so they sit as far from each other as possible. How will they be sitting?"

SC276: The answer has no attempt to be hidden below thanks to the author apparently being Sonic, but let's see... Honestly, with only two clues, it's pretty trivial. It's-

"Easy! In order, it's blue, green, yellow, and red!" said Luke, smiling

SC276: *Gheeze*, the story's going so fast, it's cutting *me* off!

"That's right!" said Twilight

SC276: Honestly, it's a little weak. You didn't specify whether the right order's from left to right, or from right to left. Or whether we're viewing the ponies from the back or the front. When you don't have a game to communicate these details with imagery, you have to pick up the slack or you end up looking like a git. Like you do now.

"Well, I'll let you two rest. If you need anything, you know where to find us. Good night." And she left the room. Luke and the professor turned out the light. Luke yawned

"This has been interesting day, huh professor?" he asked
"It certainly has, my boy." Said the professor

SC276: [Layton] "Stupid, but interesting."

as his horn glowed as he magicked off his and Luke's hats

SC276: You know, I actually don't know if Layton wears his top hat to bed or not. It wouldn't surprise me.

"You think Flora will be okay?" asked Luke "I'm kind of worried…"

SC276: Thought of her before you! I win!

"She can handle herself one night. Tomorrow we'll ask Twilight and her friends to try and bring her here." Said the professor

SC276: Yes, bring her to the world with the *love-draining bug monsters*.

"Try and rest Luke."
"Yes, professor." Yawned Luke "good night."
"Good night, my boy." Said the professor. The two quickly fell asleep, or at least…for a while.
Creeeeeak
"W-What was that?" Luke said, suddenly awake by the sound.

SC276: The plot is sneaking around!

"P-Professor, is that you?"
"Oh, sorry Luke. It was just me." Professor Layton replied.
"Oh… alright. Sorry, professor." Said Luke
"It's alright, Luke. Go on back to bed." said the professor. As Luke snuggled back under the covers, starting to fall asleep again, he had the strange feeling of something not being right…but, he just couldn't figure out what.

SC276: *Oh gee, it's a story with changelings and something doesn't feel right. I wonder what could have possibly happened.*

'Stop being so afraid Luke. It's just Professor.' Luke thought to himself,

SC276: Yes, it *totally* is.

and with that, he went back to sleep.

SC276: By now we should be at the second or third chapter of a standard *Layton* game. We just finished chapter one of this fic. Out of *five*.

friends and foes

The next morning dawned bright and early.

SC276: It was a beautiful and sunny day.

Luke awoke with a soft snore and a deep yawn "Ahh… morning, professor…" he mumbled "how'd you sleep…?" he asked tiredly.
"Good, good, and how was yours?" Layton replied.

SC276: Not very good. Everything was running before my eyes too fast and- oh wait, you were talking to Luke.

"It was fine. Except…when there was a creaking noise. It was just you though, so it was all good." Luke said with a smile.

SC276: Why does a creaking noise catch your attention so much...?

"Although…why were you up so late Professor?" Luke asked.

SC276: Probably looking over a game he made in 2012-3 like I was.

"I was up late at night? I…I don't recall getting up late at night. Strange…" Layton said as he magicked out his journal.

SC276: Changelings being in the fic ruins my "CHANGELING!" running gag...

"Interesting…Luke, what happened when this happened?" Layton asked.
"Well, I just asked who was there, and you answered that it was you. You told me to go on back to bed, so I did. Now that I think about it though, I had been pretty tired. It might have just been a dream." Said Luke as he got out of bed.

SC276: Lovely. Bad typesmanship *and* repetition! The fun never ends!

He went to reach for his cap, but paused. He smiled and closed his eyes, concentrating hard. He levitated his cap off the table and on to his head "Haha! Yes! I did it!" he cheered, laughing.

SC276: (weakly tosses confetti)

"Good job, my boy. You're learning quickly." Said Hershel as he levitated his own cap "well, I suppose first we should go see Twilight and perhaps our two hosts, princess Celestia and Princess Luna."

SC276: [Layton] "Given the average intelligence of this fanfic's characters, I assumed you'd forgotten their names."

"Right!" said Luke "this is going to be one interesting investigation, if we can even call it that."

SC276: It'd probably go by too fast for it to be called anything.

"Well my boy, we'd better get going!" Layton exclaimed. And so, the two of them walked out of the room. As they walked down the hallway they spotted Twilight

SC276: OK, I think I'm starting to recognize a couple consistent problems. 1) Paragraphs ending in narration are missing their periods. 2) Because of the details of problem 1, I can only conclude that the fic's pregnant.

"Morning Twilight." Said Luke
"Morning! We leave for Ponyville in about an hour. We have enough time for breakfast before we have to go catch our train." Said Twilight

SC276: I don't know how far the train station is from the palace, but I'm *pretty sure* you're gonna need more than an hour.

"Not with Luke." Said Layton, chuckling
"What? I'm a growing boy with a big appetite!" laughed Luke
"That, my dear boy, is an understatement." Said Layton, shaking his head with a smile

SC276: So being a gentleman means making fun of your apprentice? Given what I know about Confucianism, that's not that far off.

"I wouldn't be surprised if your Cutie Mark is a plate of food, hearing what's going on." Twilight added in with a chuckle. "I know a great place called Sugar Cube Corner, it's in Ponyville!"
"DID I HEAR SUGAR CUBE CORNER?!" cheered Pinkie Pie, bouncing around the corner "It'd be a great place to take Luke and the prof!"
"Sugar Cube Corner? Even the name sounds tasty!" said Luke, his mouth watering

SC276: I can't believe I'm saying this, but *can you hurry up*?!

"It's where I work! It's run by Mr. and Mrs. Cake. It's the town bakery and sweet shop!" said Pinkie Pie

SC276: Well, at least it's not a café or something...

"Professor, can we please go?!" asked Luke "please!"
"Well…" said the professor, thinking
"Pleeeeeeease!" begged Luke. Layton laughed
"Alright my boy, I suppose so."

SC276: [Layton] "Screw doing the thing we were brought here to do."

"Yes! Thanks, professor!" cheered Luke
"Come along! This way! To the train station!" Pinkie Pie exclaimed as she bounded her way to the Train Station.

SC276: Um, they haven't had breakfast yet. Ah well, the fic's back to normal speed, I'll take it.

"Hmm, it appears as if the train is late." Twilight said as she checked the times.

SC276: [Chuggaaconroy] "*THE TRAIN IS LATE!*" I honestly have no idea where that comes from...

"I believe you are mistaken. It just didn't reach its intended destination in a timely manner.

SC276: …Isn't that what being late is?

Even trains make mistakes!" Layton added on. Almost on cue, the train arrived. And so, the four of them went off the train to Ponyville.
-ONE TRAIN RIDE LATER-
"Here we are!" said Twilight as they arrived.

SC276: [Applejack] "We can see that, Twilight."

"Now, before we settle you guys in here in town, let me give you the grand tour." And she led Luke and the professor through the town.

SC276: [Twilight] "We could have given this to you yesterday and have the princesses visit here to explain the situation, but we didn't because the author hates his audience."

"Up there-" she said, pointing to a large house up in Ponyville's low clouds where a beautiful house was "-is rainbows house."
"Is it made of… clouds?!" asked Luke
"Yup! Lots of Pegasi have their houses made of clouds, especially since a lot of Pegasi live in Cloudsdale, which is the Pegasi city in the clouds." Said Rainbow Dash, flying up ahead
"Cool!" said Luke

SC276: [Layton] "Indeed, though it sounds like something that should have been explained on the initial train ride to Canterlot."
[Twilight] "Remember the whole 'hate audience' thing? I wasn't joking."

"Towards the edge of town is my cottage. Which reminds me, I hope you don't mind if I leave? I'd like to join you, but Angel is probably very upset because I was gone." Said Fluttershy

SC276: You know you don't have to put the who-said-this indicator at the *end* every time, right? Vary it up. It makes it look less like you converted this from its original scriptfic to fit these site rules.

"Of course not. But, who is Angel?" asked the professor
"Oh, Angel is my pet bunny rabbit. She's such a sweetie, but she gets very grumpy without me around." Said Fluttershy

SC276: Trust me, he's plenty grumpy *with* you around.

"Spike should be watching them at my house.

SC276: Because that worked out so well last time.

You can go and get Angel, Fluttershy." Said Twilight
"Oh, thank you so much, Twilight." Said Fluttershy. She walked towards Twilight's house to get her rabbit.

SC276: Behold, evidence that there are more characters being used than necessary: Fluttershy hasn't actually *done* anything this entire story so far. *Maybe* being extra

eyes for finding Layton and Luke, but all that means is that she didn't need to come to Canterlot. Sure, she may be kept close to make sure the changelings don't replace her, but "where the words end, the world ends." The casual reader shouldn't have to figure this out by themselves. ...INSERT JOKE HERE.

"Now, we'll stop at my place last, since you two will be staying my guest room. Our next stop is the market, where we have rarity's boutique-"
Rarity gasped "MY WORD! I just remembered! I have a dress to finish for a very important client, and she's coming tomorrow! Sorry girls, but I simply must run!" she said

SC276: And you weren't remembering this *yesterday*? Or *before* you went to *another dimension*?

"Well, we'll stop by the boutique first." Said Twilight, and they walked towards Boutique Carousel. Rarity magicked open the door quickly, and they continued onward.

SC276: Rarity didn't go in, she just opened the door. Because fabric needs to breathe or something, I don't know.

"Next stop is Sugar Cube Corner!" Twilight said with glee, followed by a whoop of joy from Pinkie Pie and Luke.

SC276: This entire chapter is going to be a Disneyland Park tour, isn't it...

When they arrived, pinkie bounced in "Mr. and Mrs. Cake! I'm back!" she said
"Oh, Pinkie, we're so glad your back! We have a big order that needs to be filled, and could really use your help!" said Mrs. Cake
"I'll get the sugar and-" started Pinkie
"No, pinkie, we need you to watch the twins." Said Mr. Cake
"Oh, sure thing! Are they upstairs in the nursery?" asked Pinkie Pie
"Yes, dear. They just had their snack. Could you be a dear and put them to bed, please?" asked Mrs. Cake
"Sure thing!" said pinkie. They went upstairs where the twins were playing.
"Okay little ones, it's time for your nappy!" said Pinkie Pie "so be good babies for aunty Pinkie!" she said as she put them in their cribs. They whined a bit "Aww! It's okay kiddies, we'll play later, I promise!" said pinkie pie "now go on to bed now." And they all went back down stairs

SC276: Good to see that the presence of two new ponies changes *absolutely nothing*. Quantum mechanics, eat your heart out.

"I reckon we should check on the fillies. Who knows what trouble they got in to while we were gone?" said Applejack. When they arrived at the farm, Applebloom was bucking trees to get apples for her and her friends

SC276: Can't they just catapult up there while trying to be Cutie Mark Crusaders Siege Weapon Builders Yay?

"Hey, Rainbow Dash! Ready to start our flying lessons today?" asked one of them, who had an orange coat and fuchsia hair
"Sorry Scoot, can't right now. Maybe later, alright?" said Rainbow Dash

SC276: [Rainbow Dash] "You know, once you're capable of flight."

"Aww… ok…" said Scootaloo. She saw Luke who was just around their own age and gasped when she saw he didn't have his mark "GIRLS! HE'S A BLANK FLANK!"

SC276: Just what this fic needed. Luke being a Cutie Mark Crusader. Because being the apprentice to the smartest gentleman in the world isn't good enough apparently.

the two other girls, one with a white coat and lavender hair and one with a yellow coat and bright red hair rushed over to Luke and started questioning him at super-fast speed

SC276: So, normal speed then.

"What's your name?" asked the one with red hair
"Where'd you come from?" asked Scootaloo

SC276: *~Where did you come from, where did you go / Where did you come from, Cotton-Eyed Joe?~*

"I really like your mane!" said the one with lavender hair

SC276: *References are hilarious!*

"Ummm… uh…" stuttered Luke
"Girls! Girls!" said Applejack "Leave him alone!" she said "He just got into town! What did we tell ya'll fillies about pestering new foals that don't have their marks?

SC276: [Applebloom] "I dunno, the fic hasn't told us yet."

Besides, Luke's only visitin'. He won't be in town any more than a few weeks."
"So?" said the girl with bright red hair "Babs started a branch of the Cutie Mark Crusaders in Manehatten!"

SC276: I refuse to believe Twilight is an alicorn by now. I'm pretty damn sure she isn't. It's honestly hard to tell with how everything's just zooming past me.

"Luke's from really far away, Applebloom. They don't worry about cutie marks where he comes from." Said Applejack. "Now you fillies apologize for pestering him."
"Sorry…" said the three girls
"Its… it's alright." Said Luke

SC276: [Luke] "It's not like your status quo is going to change for another two or three seasons or so."

"Applebloom, did ya' finish your chores?" asked Applejack
"I sure did!" said Applebloom
"Chickens are in the coop?"
"Yup."
"Apples are bucked?"

"Yup."
"Kitchens' clean?"
"Yup."
"I can check?"
"Uhh…"
"Didn't think so. Go do your chores, Applebloom."
"Fine…" mumbled Applebloom. "Come on girls…" and Applebloom and her friends walked off

SC276: And away from the plot with them.

"I swear, those fillies are a handful." Sighed Applejack
"They were certainly… friendly." Said Luke
"They're the only ones in their class who don't have their cutie marks. Mine and Applebloom's cousin in the town of Manehatten, Babs Seed, doesn't have her mark and started her own Cutie Mark Crusader group there. They're always excited to make friends with foals who don't have their cutie marks." Said Applejack

SC276: *Unless Babs shows up, this has no influence on the plot whatsoever! Why are you telling us?! Why do Luke and Layton need to know this?!*

"Let's get back to the Sugar Cube Corner shall we?" Twilight said.
"I think I need to watch Applebloom do her chores. Who knows what she's going to do." Applejack said as she walked into the house.

SC276: And another one outside the circle of changeling protection.

And so, the group backtracked to Sugar Cube Corner once again.
"Look at these cupcakes, professor!" said Luke, his mouth watering

SC276: [Luke] "I somehow didn't notice these the first time I was here!"

"Luke, we haven't even had lunch yet." Laughed the professor "but I promise, I'll get you one later."
"Okay…" said Luke. When they went out to the marketplace to get to Twilights home, Luke saw a Pegasus with curly brown hair and a cutie mark that was the image of a golden-colored apple
"Flora!" said Luke, rushing over
"Luke!" said Flora. The two hugged

SC276: *ummmmmm* why is she here *already*

"It's so good to see you!" they told each other
"Professor! It's so good to see you too!" said Flora, noticing the professor
"Good to see you too, my dear." Said the professor, looking at Flora.

SC276: Look, Flora followed the professor onto a train and into the past before, but I refuse to believe her tagalong abilities allow her to *cross dimensions*. Worst part is I'm pretty sure she's not a changeling because they would have no idea what she looks like.

"Oh, Flora, this is Twilight, Rainbow Dash, and Pinkie Pie." Said Luke
"It's a pleasure to meet you all." Said Flora, smiling.

"Nice to meet you too." Said Twilight
"Hey there!" said Pinkie Pie
"What's up?" said Rainbow Dash

> **SC276: I can't believe a fic that goes *this* fast can drag *so much*.**

"Come on, I know a good café nearby where we can get some lunch." Said Twilight
"Oh, I'm not really hungry…" said Flora
"I'll show you to where we're staying." Said the professor.

> **SC276: The *least* she could do is complain about how they scampered off to another dimension without her!**

As he led Flora to Twilights home in the library, she turned down another street
"Flora, dear, it's this way." Said the professor
"I saw something down this way. I want to check it out." Said Flora.

> **SC276: *Oh it IS a changeling, how the fuck could they know what her pony form looks like.***

When the professor followed, the sound of insect wings filled the air
"Flora…" said the professor. Suddenly, changelings burst out from the shadows. The professor narrowed his eyes "I had a feeling… where's the real Flora, imposter?"

> **SC276: [Layton] "This is the *second time* this has happened, and I *still* don't know how Don Paolo shrunk that much!"**

"You'll sssssssee sssssoon enough!" hissed one changeling as the others chuckled. Suddenly, everything went dark. The professor woke up on a stone floor with a splitting headache. "Wh-Where am I…?" he said as he got up

> **SC276: In the realm of bullshit, obviously. Author you spend like ten paragraphs in a dialogue about things fans already know and the professor goes down *without a fight* to changelings in *two sentences*?! Your sense of time is more out of whack than mine!**

"Why, the crystal catacombs beneath Canterlot." A voice said.

> **SC276: Talk about going back to the scene of the crime.**

There was a changeling who, in a way, looked like Celestia. "By now my minions have already tricked that naïve 'apprentice' of yours."
"you must be the changeling queen." Said the professor.

> **SC276: [Layton] "I assume queen and not princess because... it was mentioned before, but screw this story anyway."**

"you're not as dumb as you look, Mr. Layton! Give up on getting out though, barely anyone even knows these caverns exist."

SC276: Two do. One of which is supposed to be keeping an eye on the guy you just kidnapped.

"I'll find a way out, or Luke will find me." Said the professor
"you're as naïve as that adorable little friend of yours, professor! Who knows, maybe when I take over, I'll keep him as a pet!" laughed Chrysalis

SC276: Whose name was never mentioned I think, but I've stopped giving a shit.

"Hurt him, and I won't hesitate to hurt you." Said the professor, his horn glowing
"Oh please. You can't hope to stand up to me! Enjoy your time here, Hershel Layton. You'll be here for a while." And chrysalis vanished. The professor's eyes narrowed.

SC276: [Layton] "This plot is getting stupider by the minute, and given how fast it's going, that's *really* quite stupid."

"Hello?" called a man's voice "Who's there?" the professor turned towards the voice as a white stallion with blue hair walked in. When he spotted the professors hat, his eyes widened "You must be professor Layton!"

SC276: Apparently Layton's top hat is recognizable even across dimensions.

"I am. And who are you?" asked the professor
"I'm Shining Armor!" said the stallion. "Hang on, wait right here." He walked around a corner in the cavern and said "It's okay! It's him!" the professor heard a girl gasp, and the real Flora ran around the corner

SC276: OK, I'm going to assume that no one is going to discuss the ramifications of the changelings apparently being able to access the human world on their own, so I'm not.

"Professor!" she cried, hugging him "Oh, thank heavens!"
"Flora, dear! Are you alright?" asked the professor, putting a hoof around her shoulder
"As alright as I can be.

SC276: [Flora] "You know, given I was mugged by bugs shaped like horses."

When you and Luke never came home last night I went out to search for you when these people came and grabbed me! I woke up here as a pony.

SC276: I hate that magical bug horses from another dimension were probably the *best* things that could've kidnapped a young woman off the streets at night.

Mr. shining here has explained everything about where we are and what's going on." Said Flora
"Professor, where's Luke? Is he alright?"
"oh no… Luke…! The changelings ambushed me, and their queen said by now they've tricked Luke… one changeling disguised itself as you, and they've no doubt already done the same with me." Said the professor

SC276: [Layton] "Don Paolo's annoying enough when it's just *one* man."

“this means we need to find a way out even more now! Luke could be danger, professor!” said Flora
“I know, my dear.”

SC276: [Layton] “I’m the genius around here, remember.”

“when Chrysalis disguised herself as Cadence, she and Twilight used a mining tunnel to make it back to the surface to stop Chrysalis in time. There has to be something like that around here somewhere.” Said Shining Armor

SC276: [Shining Armor] “Everyone in this story is an idiot, so she probably didn’t block it off.”

“If we don’t make it back soon, we’ll be too late to stop the changelings before I can get to Cadence. Without her, I can’t cast a strong enough spell to drive all the changelings back.” He looked at the professor “Professor, I have to know; How’s my sister?”

SC276: Not so good; she’s trapped in a terrible fanfic.

“Twilights just fine. Cadence is as well.” Shining armor sighed with relief
“That’s good. It was only because of her intuition about Cadence that we stopped Chrysalis the last time.” He said

SC276: Also because Celestia’s dismissive and more-or-less exists to job. I’m of the impression that no one really liked that episode. I blame the commercials having an announcer.

“I just hope Luke is okay…” said Flora “I don’t want anything bad to happen to him!”
“Flora, I told you, you can’t show your feelings for those you care about. Changelings feed off your feelings for others.” Said Shining Armor

SC276: I’m… *pretty* sure they strictly go off love. Besides, it’s not like there’s any changelings around *now*.

“I know, but I can’t help it…” said Flora
“First things first, we need to find a way out.” Said Shining Armor “Twilight and Cadence followed an abandoned mineshaft to just outside the castle.”

SC276: Convenent how that worked out, really.

“Chrysalis has sealed it up by now, I’m sure.” Said the professor
“Maybe, but it’s our best lead.” Said Shining Armor.

SC276: [Shining Armor] “Besides, you’d be amazed at how much a story can turn someone into an idiot.”

“let’s try searching around and seeing if we can’t find anything.” The three got to work on finding a way out
Meanwhile, Luke and Twilight had just arrived home. “Professor, we’re here!” called Luke
“hi Luke!” called the changeling Flora “How was lunch?”

SC276: I see the author has decided to minimize confusion among the audience by throwing away any attempt at third-person objective. Good to know.

"this kid ran me 30 bits for lunch. I can see what you meant earlier, professor." Said Twilight

SC276: <u>Let's see, um…</u> using the real-world interpretation because closest to *Layton*, that's… $105. For lunch. Twilight, that's just irresponsible. You should've capped that forever ago.

"Totally worth it." Sighed Luke happily as he sat down "I've never exactly been a vegetarian, but I think being turned into a pony helped."
"I would expect so." Said the changeling professor. Twilight was searching her desks "Spike! Where's that book on changelings I asked you to pull for me?" Twilight called up the stairs.
"I'm trying to find it!" Spike replied. "It's almost like it disappeared off the shelf!" Spike exclaimed.

SC276: *Gee, I wonder how THAT happened.*

"Maybe I accidently left it in the bedside drawer! We need this book!" Twilight replied.
"It's not like it's been stolen or anything! Professor and I have been in the house all day!" Changeling Flora exclaimed.
'Hmm…' thought Luke, getting suspicious "All day, huh?" he asked

SC276: Boy, changelings *suck* at studying for their roles.

"Mhm." Said the changeling Flora.
"Say, Flora, remind me because this was a couple of years ago, why didn't you take that money from St. Mystere again?"
"well, because I didn't want it…" said Flora. Luke frowned
"Not completely." He said
"Well…"
"and what was the big secret of St. Mystere, again?" he asked
"Well…"
"and remind me of this Flora, what was the Golden Apple?" asked Luke "or maybe I should just call you, changeling!"

SC276: Y'know, if changelings could get the knowledge of whoever they're copying, they wouldn't suck so badly at this.

the changeling Flora frowned and turned back to normal
"You're not assss dumb as you look!" the changeling hissed

SC276: You're just as dumb as he's not. ...Or something.

"You're too late though! Your little girlfriend issss ssssomewhere you'll never find her!" and it fled.

SC276: And Luke calls after it, "Who are you calling my girlfriend, you bloody shipper?!"

"These changelings are everywhere, I'm telling you Luke." Changeling Layton said to Luke.

SC276: [Layton!changeling] "I WARNED YOU ABOUT STAIRS, BRO!"

"Yes, but how didn't you see that that wasn't the real Flora?" said Luke, turning to the changeling professor, raising an eyebrow
"Now Luke, you're just getting ridiculous." Said the changeling professor.

SC276: He's not the only one.

"I…I suppose so." Luke replied. 'I have a feeling Flora wasn't the only one changed…' Luke thought to himself.

SC276: Considering how the Flora changeling gave up immediately when she was exposed, I'm not sure what the benefits are of not blowing the cover on *this* one too.

Rotten Heart and Discord

SC276: Rotten *Fic* and Discord, more like...

"I can't find any passageways! Did you two find any passages?" Shining Armor asked to Layton and Flora.
"I believe we are stuck, because I can't seem to find anything." Professor Layton replied.

SC276: [Layton] "Granted, at this pace, I couldn't exactly look in detail..."

"But Professor! We must find a way out, we simply must!" Flora replied. "If we don't, Luke could be in great trouble!"

SC276: He's in a terrible fanfic. He already *is*.

"And the whole of Equestria would be in great danger as well!" Shining Armor added on.
"Now, now, settle down. We'll find a way out, I know we will." Layton replied.

SC276: [Layton] "The plot demands it!"

"Now, you said that there was an abandoned miner's shaft somewhere? One that your sister and your wife traveled down to stop you from marrying a fake bride?" Layton asked.
"Yeah. But you said it might be blocked off." Shining Armor replied. He and Layton started discussing on how to find a way out.

SC276: Seriously?! You didn't go for the mineshaft *immediately*?! Even if it *was* blocked off, that would be something that should have been verified right away! Gheeze, even Professor Layton's not immune to this fic's stupid!

Flora sighed and walks off, laying down when she was far enough away *'oh Luke… I hope you're okay…'* she thinks to herself. She hears the buzz of insect wings. She looks around, thinking that a bug was nearby. She then saw the figure of a changeling pass by. He sat down himself, not seeming to notice flora.

SC276: ...Why is there a random changeling in the prison?

She looked behind her, where shining armor and the professor were still talking, and said quietly to the sad-looking changeling "are you alright?" the changeling looked up. It seemed to be a foal changeling.
"y-yeah…" he said "I'm fine…"

SC276: If this is going to be the equivalent of Thorax, I'll... be not surprised because if any MLP species is going to get "My Species Doth Protest Too Much," it'd be changelings.

"no you're not. You're obviously upset about something." Said flora
"shouldn't you be the one upset? You're the one locked in there." said the changeling

SC276: Plus you're both in a terrible fanfic.

"true, but I'd hate it if I was stuck underground all the time. I mean, at least I have a chance of being able to leave." Said flora. The changeling frowned

SC276: [changeling] "...What? No seriously, what was that supposed to mean?"

"sorry… that was the wrong thing to say" she continued, blushing

SC276: *why are you blushing*

"doesn't make it any less true…" said the changeling
"hey… why don't you talk like the other changelings?" asked flora
"what do you mean?" it asked back
"well, the other changelings hiss with their S's,

SC276: Because the one English-speaking changeling to this point spoke like that- oh wait.

why don't you?"
The changeling shrugged "everyone knows I'm different. All of us changelings want out,

SC276: Wait, I'm a changeling?

but I don't think we need to do anything bad. It's because we do bad things that the equestrians don't like us and won't give us a second chance above the ground."

SC276: "Pokémon bad because master bad."

"the professor says it's important to give second chances." Said flora
"is that professor guy your father or something?" asked the changeling
"no… but some time ago, he adopted me. He and his apprentice were investigating a mystery surrounding my home village. He adopted me from my step mother when they solved what we call "the mystery of the golden apple." Said flora.

SC276: [changeling] "OK cool, uh, I didn't ask for all that-"

She pointed to her cutie mark "which, actually, was me. Whoever was smart enough to discover that I myself was the villages golden apple would be able to be my guardian. Papa died when I was younger, so the professor has always been like a father to me ever since he adopted me."

SC276: Now see, if *this* scene was before that last scene and there were changeling observers to pass information back and forth, then that one wouldn't have been outed like a freakin' wimp!

"ponies are so weird…" muttered the changeling

SC276: You should see the stuff Fan/fic/ Theater 3015's done lately...

"and I could say the same thing about changelings." Said flora
"…okay, I see your point." Said the changeling, chuckling "you know, you're kind of funny."

SC276: No, humor requires timing, something this author sorely lacks.

"you're not like the others. You're… nicer." Said flora, smiling.
"…thanks." Said the changeling, giving a small smile as well
"flora?" called the professor
"coming professor!" flora called back. She turned to the changeling "I have to go…"
"come back again tomorrow? It's nice having someone to talk to." Said the changeling
"I'll try." Said flora.

SC276: She'll... try to return to the place she's being *held prisoner*? OK, my head hurts something fierce.

She went back to the professor and shining armor.
With Luke and the others in Ponyville, spike and twilight were searching hard for the book.

SC276: Meanwhile, Luke's doing bugger all.

"Agh!" groaned twilight "you know what spike? Just send a letter to princess Celestia for me please? I think she has a copy."
"sure thing." Said spike. Just then he burped out a puff of flame, a scroll falling into his claw. Twilight levitated it over and read it, her eyes darting to and fro across the parchment "ah, no!" she groaned
"what's the matter?" asked Luke

SC276: [Spike] "The princess has discovered we're in a terrible fanfic-!" OK wait, how many times have I used that joke in this riff alone?

"discords on his way…" sighed twilight "the princess is sending him because she thinks he might be able to help."
"whose discord?" asked Luke
"a spirit of disharmony and chaos. We've fought with him a couple of times, but we finally managed to get him to use his powers properly and NOT cause trouble everywhere." Said twilight.

SC276: I dunno, last time Discord and changelings shared an episode, they needed to threaten Fluttershy to get him to- oh right, mid-season 3.

She walked upstairs and came down a minute later, wearing a tiara and levitating a box beside her. "I'll be back in a bit, I need to go stop by each of my friends' homes and give them their element of harmony.

SC276: Yeah, just go alone with the most powerful artifacts in Equestria, it's not like *changelings* have infiltrated Ponyville or anything.

Spike, while I'm gone, write a letter to the princess and ask her if she has a copy of that book on changelings."
"you got it, twilight!" said spike as twilight headed out the door.
"spike, what are the elements of harmony?" asked Luke.
"Ummm…" said spike,

SC276: [Spike] "You've been here *how long* and you haven't heard of them? Gheeze, this author really does hate his audience."

going over to a shelf "ah, here it is!" and he pulled a book titled 'the elements of harmony' "here, that book will explain it all." Said spike as he handed it to Luke, who got to reading it.
"The Elements of Harmony…the most powerful force in all of Equestria. There are 6 Elements, and they embody all that's good. But will only work for the one who has that particular trait. There's kindness, honesty, loyalty, generosity, laughter, and magic. But, also known as friendship. Hmm…interesting." Luke said as he read aloud.

SC276: [Luke] "This sounds like what wasn't in the show, given no one knew the Element of Magic existed prior to the series starting."
[Spike] "Um, how do you know that?"
[Luke] "Hell if I know."

"Yep! Twilight has friendship, Fluttershy has kindness, Rainbow Dash has loyalty, Rarity has generosity, Applejack has honesty, and Pinkie Pie has laughter." Spike explained.

SC276: OK honestly, since *when* was the Element of Magic ever referred to as the *Element of Friendship*?

"so if this discord person is on our side, why is twilight giving the elements to her friends when I assume she normally keeps them here?" asked Luke
"well, the girls don't exactly trust discord yet. Well… except for Fluttershy." Said spike "her and discord actually get along pretty well, since Fluttershy was the only one who actually bothered to give discord a second chance.".

SC276: *You know his name is capitalized, right?* Also, who wouldn't give Discord a second chance the way everyone talks about how Skype's getting worse.

A bit later, twilight came home
"there. each of the girls have their elements and are getting ready. They should be here soon." Said twilight.

SC276: If they were coming here, why didn't you just bring them with you?

"the letter said that discord would also be here soon."

“let’s hope he doesn’t cause trouble.” Said spike
“please. Discord is all about attention. If there are changelings stealing his spotlight, he’s going to want to drive them out like us.

SC276: Only if they hurt Flut- damn this fic being half a series behind.

The problem is getting him to do it RIGHT.” Said twilight. Each of the girls arrived fairly soon

SC276: Almost as if they should have arrived with Twilight in the first place.

“I can’t believe the princess is sendin’ discord…” said applejack
“oh come on applejack, we did reform him.” Said Fluttershy “and personally, I’m glad he’s coming.”
“that’s because you got all buddy-buddy with him!” said rainbow dash

SC276: Well it freakin’ *worked*, didn’t it?

“I don’t care if the princess thinks he can help, we can do this without him!”
“he may be able to help find changelings with his powers.” Said twilight. Luke became interested then, but didn’t show it too much.

SC276: Yeah, Luke, keep on not participating in the scene.

A bit later, there was a knock at the door. When twilight answered it, she saw a unicorn with a brown coat, tail, and beard streaked with gray.

SC276: Oh look, the John de Lancie pony, I wonder who it *really* is.

“umm… can I help you?” she asked
“what, you don’t recognize me, miss sparkle?” asked the pony
“oh my, discord, is that you?” asked Fluttershy
“at least somepony recognized me.” Said discord
“did the princess make you do this? I highly doubt you’d disguise yourself on your own.” Said applejack

SC276: My thoughts exactly. Discord, hide his appearance?

“as clever as ever, aren’t you applejack? Yes, Celestia did make me disguise myself. She said ponies would be scared to see a draconoquis around. So this was the disguise we agreed upon.” Said discord.

SC276: [Discord] “Completely matching to a fan-drawing because conformity is what I do.”

He spotted Luke coming down the stairs “and you must be Luke. I was expecting a human.”
“and I wasn’t expecting a pony.” Said Luke
“how clever. You’re not as proper and behaved as Celestia made you out to be.” Said discord

SC276: [Discord] “After all, that would require you to have a personality.”

“we just might get along, you and me, Mr. triton.” He saw the professor and frowned, sensing something… off.

"say, twilight, I've had a bit of a tiring journey, you wouldn't mind if I got something to eat, would you?" he asked
"she wouldn't mind at all, would you twilight?" asked Fluttershy
"no. I suppose not.

SC276: [Twilight] "Not sure why you didn't say hello to the professor, though."

You eat what we eat though." Said twilight

SC276: Is there actually a difference?

"and we have our elements, so if you cause any trouble-"
"twilight dear, I'm reformed remember? Your words cut me like a knife!" said discord, staging a hurt look.

SC276: What, no dramatic spotlight?

He walked towards the kitchen, giving Luke a small look
"I'm thirsty myself. I'll go join discord." Said Luke. He followed discord into the kitchen
"you have suspicions as well?" Luke whispered to him

SC276: [Discord] "Yes, the plot warned me this would happen."

"something is off about him. There's something off about you, but with him it's… different. I know you're really human, which explains you, but from your friend, I'm not getting that same off feeling. It feels…" said discord

SC276: It feels like we've gotten two authors in a row that can't write Discord.

"darker?" finished Luke. Discord nodded
"your intuitive kid. I like that about you." He said
"thanks, I guess." Said Luke

SC276: Also, how does Discord know that *Luke* isn't a changeling?

"so… any ideas on how we can find out whether or not that's the real professor?"
"I may know a handy little spell. If we're right, it will break the changelings disguise and show it for what it is. If we're wrong and that's the real professor, it won't hurt him and no one will have to know."

SC276: *Well that's convenient. It's not like Luke could do the same thing he did with the fake Flora. That will clearly only work one time.*

Luke nodded
"I don't like doing anything behind the professors back, he's like family to me, but if that's a changeling, then I don't have much of a choice. We need to make sure to capture it before it gets away though." He said
"be ready then. If it's a changeling, then we won't have much time once I cast the spell" said discord.
"alright. I trust you." Said Luke

SC276: This would prove to be his greatest mistake.

They went back a minute later. As the girls discussed ideas on their next plan of action, Luke and discord snuck upstairs to where the changeling professor was.

SC276: Interesting how the girls are planning without the advice of the genius they brought.

Discord took a deep breath and closed his eyes. His horn glowed as he prepared the spell

SC276: And *why* wouldn't Discord drop the disguise once he was at Twilight's again?

"get ready, kid." He said.

SC276: You're never really ready for bad fanfiction.

When the spell was cast, the changelings disguise was lowered. It hissed in anger as it realized what happened. Luke quickly ran, ready to tackle it.

SC276: [Discord] "Um, you know you have a horn, right-?"

The changeling knocked Luke against a wall, where he fell to the ground. The girls went quiet as they heard the commotion. As the changeling went to get away,

SC276: Apparently the upper floor of the Golden Oaks doesn't have windows. Who knew?

a purple light shown around It as twilight kept it in place
"not so fast!" she said

SC276: 

"you big meanie! Tell us where the professor is!" said Fluttershy
"yeah! And where's shining armor too?!" said rainbow dash
"I'm sssssaying nothing!" hissed the changeling "sssshe'd have my head!"
"who, chrysalis? You're dead if you talk, and you're dead if you aren't!

SC276: Are they threatening to *actually kill him*?! Who does this author think he is, fifteen-year-old me?!

if you don’t talk, we’ll take you to Celestia and she’ll make you talk.” Said discord

SC276: [Discord] “And trust me, her ways of making you talk could not be shown on the show itself. Make of that what you will.”

“so, you have nothing to lose right now.”
“catacombssss beneath Canterlot. I’ll ssssay no more!” said the changeling “do what you will, but I’m done talking!”
“always the catacombs…” muttered twilight

SC276: [Twilight] “It’s like Chrysalis is being written by someone with no creativity.”

“discord, make it so this thing can’t get away.

SC276: [Discord] “On it! (ties it to Twilight)”

I need to send a few letters.” Discord imprisoned the changeling

SC276: Probably by encasing it in obsidian. I doubt changelings just carry diamond pickaxes on them.

as twilight started sending letters and everyone prepared to trek through the catacombs.

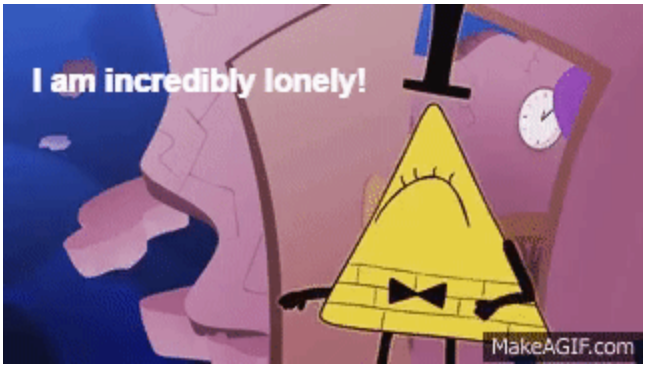
SC276: Because those are totally less than a day’s walk from Ponyville.

With flora, the professor, and shining armor the next day,

SC276: *Have they checked out the fucking mineshaft yet?!*

flora had kept an eye out for the changeling from the previous day. Finally, he came.
“you came! I was worried you’d forgotten.” Said flora, sneaking over
“sorry it took me so long. My mother had a lot of tasks for me.”
“I wasn’t aware changelings could have children.” Said flora
“we’re not too different from you ponies…

SC276: Does anyone else miss season si-? Oh. Right.



it’s just that we look so different we’re forced to cause such trouble… I’ve long given up on trying to convince my mother that we should try for peace. She won’t hear a word of it…”
“it’s always sad when we can’t along with family…

SC276: To along is to lead someone to something that’s not as terrible as this story.

in life, family is all you have.” Said flora.

SC276: Good to know Flora has no confidence in friendship.

The changeling nodded
“what’s your name?” flora asked
“oh… umm…” said the changeling “it’s… umm…”
“what?” asked flora “don’t you have a name?”
“I do… I just don’t like it… its Rotten Heart…” said the changeling quietly

SC276: I sympathize. I don’t like it either.

“well, my names Flora.” Said flora
“flora, huh? That’s a pretty name.” said the changeling
“oh, thank you! My mother loved flowers, and her name was a flower too. Her name was violet.” Said flora. The changeling chuckled
“did your family own a flower shop?”

SC276: Oh god no, not more clumsy backstory, *why are you going slow again*

“no. my father was a baron. He and mother died when I was little.” Said flora “I lived in a nice house for a while, and then I met the professor.”
“you know flora, you’re… umm… your very pretty…” said rotten heart

SC276: *I WAS JOKING ABOUT THE SHIPPING!!*

“oh!” said flora, blushing “well… Ummm… th-thank you…”
“I-I’m sorry! I shouldn’t have said that!” said rotten heart “I’m so stupid!”

SC276: Well at least we know who the author self-insert is now.

“no, it’s okay!” said flora “it’s just… the only other person who’s said that is my best friend Luke… he’s the professors apprentice.”
“yeah… mother says that changelings will be sent after him soon… just as soon as she can find a suitable one to take his place and trick the element bearers…” said rotten heart

SC276: Given this fic, she has a crap selection process.

“poor Luke… I hope he’s okay…” said flora. She paused “oh, my! I really shouldn’t be so worried about Luke, it will strengthen my changeling self!”
“actually, that changeling was forced to flee. Your friend Luke figured her out… same with the changeling we sent to take the professors place.

SC276: [Rotten Heart] "We thought for sure it would keep working because hey, it wasn't like the *adult* didn't see it until it was too late."

We can't send more because now they know you guys are here…" said rotten heart
"that's good then! They should be here soon!" said flora, smiling
"well… there are traps set for them. My mother even set them herself…" he turned away, looking guilty
"and… and… Luke's being saved for last…

SC276: For no real reason.

I've been given the task of brainwashing them to serve the changelings when he's separated from the others…

SC276: Well, "them" or "him," which is it?

we're going to force him to kill you and all the others!"

SC276: ...Why? No seriously, why? Why not just cocoon them just like the last time changelings showed up? Hell, why not cocoon them *before now*? Chrysalis only shoved Cadance underground because her in a cocoon would've been impossible to smuggle out of Canterlot. I think the author wasn't paying attention to the last quarter of the whole episode.

flora's world seemed to stop. she had always thought heartbreak was just a word, but there was a pain in her chest.

SC276: Yes, because it's not like she's had to leave home before.

"l-Luke…" she whispered "no! no! Luke will fight it! He won't hurt us!" she said, shaking her head "no! no! it can't be!"

SC276: Stop repeating yourself. Stop repeating yourself. Stop repeating yourself.

she turned to rotten heart "please! Please! I know I barely know you, but you have to get us out of here! Even if you can't free us yourself, surely there's some hidden passage?!"

SC276: [Flora] "I mean, you got down here *somehow*!"

"I don't want you hurt flora… I don't want to disobey my mother, though…" he looked down, his eyes closed. "I'll tell you where the hidden passage is, but… you have to try and get me my freedom!" he said, looking at flora

SC276: ...What? If you're telling her where it is, that implies you're not going, so how are you expecting her to get you out?

"please! You know I'm not like the others, and I'll prove it to however many people I need to!

SC276: Maybe it'll be like Snow Day and you'll become an instant celebrity, I don't know.

Take me with you! I hate being down here in the dark, I want to run around on the surface with other ponies!"

SC276: *Then why aren't you?! You can clearly come and go as you please!*

"I'll do my best." Said flora "I give you my word. Now, tell me where the passage is. I can't let anyone get hurt."

SC276: Too late, I'm already wounded from your whiplash pacing.

entering the catacombs

SC276: The sequel to "Enter the Dragon" that no one wanted!

"Did you send out the letter yet?" Luke asked to Twilight.
"Yep! I sent it to Celestia, and they'll be on their way to the caverns." Twilight replied.
"I think we should get going to the cavern under Canterlot." Discord suggested.

SC276: Wait, I can't tell. Are Celestia and Luna going to rescue them, or are you guys?

"Alright team, is everyone ready?" Twilight asked.

SC276: *Are you ready, kids?*

"Ready!" Everyone but Luke replied.

SC276: *I can't hear you!*

"Wait! I need my bag!" Luke said as he dashed out of the room and to the guest bedroom.

SC276: Can't be that important if you forgot it that easily.

He looked around, and eventually, found his bag on the floor. But, there was something missing…
"Oh no! I lost my teddy bear!" Luke said.

SC276: …Teddy bear…? (Googles) OK, one shows up in the fifth puzzle of *Diabolical Box*, "Luke's Trunk," so I can buy he has one, but that's still a weird random thing to reference.

He heard someone laugh and Luke blushed
"now, discord! That isn't very nice!" said Fluttershy. She flew up "do you know where you might have lost it, Luke?" she asked.
"I-I thought it was in my bag…" Luke said shyly, hearing Discord laughing in the background.

SC276: [Discord] "Your agony is hilarious!"

"Hmm…well, maybe it fell out." Fluttershy replied. She then looked under the bed. "Nope, not under here."

"Is this the teddy bear you're looking for?" Pinkie Pie said as she came into the room holding the bear. "I found it in Professor Layton's room!"
"The Professor's room? I wonder what it was doing in there. I mean, I know he doesn't mind me having it, it's just odd that it would be there in all places." Luke said as he magicked out his notepad and began to write.

SC276: Instead of, you know, taking the bear that's important enough to not leave to save Equestria without.

"Hey Luke, there's some sort of…golden hat shaped thing on this bear's ribbon. Was that there before?" Applejack said as she looked at the bear.
"A gold hat? I don't think so…" Luke said as he magicked the bear in the air in front of him. There was indeed, a flat, golden hat on the bear. "P-Professor's hat?

SC276: Have you *seen* Layton's hat?



You call *that* "flat?"

And…and there's writing on the back!"

SC276: Can't be a lot of writing on the back of a flat hat.

"Oooh! There's some writing? Maybe…it's a secret message! Read it! Read it!" Pinkie Pie exclaimed with glee.
"To Luke, as a reminder to all of the great times we've had, I've taken the effort to make this little tag for your bear. That way, you'll always have a piece of me with you. Keep doing what you do my boy, I'm proud of you. –Hershel Layton" Luke read aloud.

SC276: Well that's... endearing, I guess. Way too much text to fit on the back of a flat hat, though.

"Thanks Professor. I'll always have a piece of you with me!" Luke said as he put the bear back into the bag.
"Alright, now that everyone is ready,

SC276: [Twilight] "Now that that pretty much pointless distraction is over with..."

let's go to the cavern!" Twilight said to everyone. And so, they headed off to the cave.

SC276: Because Twilight has seen the season finales and know Celestia exists to job everything.

~~~~~~
"So this is the way out?" Flora asked to Rotten Heart, looking into a small tunnel.
"I…I think so." Rotten Heart replied. "Although, I'm not really sure to be honest with you. It's just been rumors I've heard."

SC276: From who, other changelings that know how to get in and out of places?

"Well, it doesn't hurt to try! …Err, I hope." Flora said nervously. "If it leads outside, I don't mind!" Flora said as she started to go into the tunnel.
"Wait, I'll go with you! L-Like I said, I don't want you to get hurt!" Rotten Heart said as he followed her.

SC276: Luckily she's a pony right now… Though that may or may not actually make it worse…

"You remind me a lot like Luke, Rotten Heart." Flora said with a giggle. "He's always protective of me."
Rotten heart blushed slightly

SC276: I keep forgetting, in Fanfiction Land, there's no such thing as friendship between two people of roughly the same age.

"also, I don't think it would be wise. What if the professor or shining armor find out about you? If they find out I know about the passage because of a changeling, they'll get suspicious and there goes our only way out." Said flora

SC276: I would question how they haven't found out about him already, but they can't even check a mineshaft in this story.

"I suppose…" said rotten heart "but, don't forget your promise to me!"
"I won't. A true lady never goes back on her word." Said flora
"alright. I'll try and meet up with you once you're on the surface." Said rotten heart. Flora nodded "agreed.

SC276: Too bad I can't agree on your paragraph structure.

Now, get going! I need to get the professor and shining armor so we can leave." She said
"what if your friends come while you're gone? Even if I tell them the truth, how will they know they can trust me?" asked rotting heart. Flora thought
"umm…" she wondered aloud "tell him… tell him that this place reminds me of Folsense. He'll understand.

SC276: Namely because you were never actually *in* Folsense? I mean, I know it's a trust keyword, but still.

If you can get that to him, that should at least get his attention." Said flora. Rotting heart nodded
"alright. be careful, flora. I'll see you soon." He said
~~~~~~

"you be careful too." Said flora "now get going!" rotting heart left and flora went to where the professor and shining armor were

SC276: Where? The author doesn't know either!

"professor! Shining armor! I found a way out!" she said excitedly.
~~~~~~

SC276: *<u>~Squiggle, squiggle, squiggle, squiggle, squiggle squiggle…~</u>*

"Cadence!" Twilight said as she ran to her.
"Twilight!" Cadence replied as they ran towards each other.
"Sunshine, sunshine, ladybugs awake! Clap your hooves and do a little shake!" The two of them said in unison.

SC276: Oh right, we're not at the point where that's old yet.

"It appears we have found out where the changelings have taken them. A little changeling friend of ours told us." Discord said with a smirk. "He was very good at pretending to be the Professor."

SC276: [Discord] "It helps when no one in the fic has a personality."

"He's told us that they're in the Crystal Catacombs, you remember that place?" Twilight asked
"how could I not? I spent weeks trapped in there thanks to chrysalis!" said cadence

SC276: Um... author, how long did you think that wedding prep *was*?

"should have guessed that chrysalis would keep them there…"

SC276: [Twilight] "I mean, it makes no *actual* sense, but let's just roll with it."

"you coming with us to rescue them?" asked rainbow dash
"of course!" said cadence "with my love spells, I can lead us straight to shining armor, and no doubt the professor is nearby as well."

SC276: Love tracking spells…?! What I wouldn't give for a time machine right now…

"let's hope." Said twilight
'we're on our way professor…' thought Luke. When the group arrived at the entrance, cadence led the way. Luke, rarity, and twilight all had their horns aglow to light the way.
"this place gives me the creeps…" said Luke

SC276: You've been in a *sewer* before. Not to mention a castle with maybe a vampire.

"Ick! Gross! What did I just step in?!" whined rarity
"rarity, quit whinin'!" said applejack
"I was not whining!" said rarity. "thiiiis is whiiining!" she whined loudly.
~~~~~~

SC276: *REFERENCES ARE HILARIOUS!*

Everyone chuckled.

SC276: Good to see *someone's* enjoying this.

As Luke looked around, following the others, he spotted rotting heart watching them
"changeling!" he said,

SC276: Hey, no meme stealing!

everyone immediately turned to it
"wait! I'm not going to hurt you, I promise!" said rotting heart
"like we'd trust you, a changeling!" said cadence

SC276: Well I don't trust anyone in this fic to make a sane decision, so...

"don't hurt me, please!" said rotting heart. He looked at Luke, a pleading look in his eyes "I met flora. I didn't hurt her, I promise. But you all have to leave. M- chrysalis has set up traps for you all!"

SC276: [Rotten Heart] "Not sure *how* she got them all in within enemy territory, but..."

"traps or not, we're not leaving without our friends!" said Luke
"I already showed flora the way out, I promise! She's just fine, same with Shining Armor and the Professor." Said rotting heart, backing up, scared

SC276: [Rotten Heart] "I mean, I'm guessing that because I wasn't there!"

"please, you have to believe me!"
"if you've met flora, prove it!" said Luke
"she said…. I asked her if there was something I should say to prove that I at least met her. She said to say that this place reminded her of Folsense…" said Rotting Heart. Luke raised an eyebrow

SC276: He's been infected with Dreamworks Face.

"should we hear what he has to say?" asked discord
"I guess. There are only 3 people in this world who know what Folsense is. Me, flora, and the professor." Said Luke

SC276: And this guy, obviously.

"Well then changeling, tell us your queen's plan!" Twilight said to Rotten Heart.
"I have to? Alright then." Rotten Heart said as he looked at Luke. "The Queen is planning to separate you from the others one by one and capture them.

SC276: Somehow, given this tunnel has shown no indication of having branches.

Then, when it's just you… she's going to have you brainwashed, and make you… make you…" rotting heart paused and shook his head "I… I can't…"

SC276: Yeah, sure, you can say it to *Flora*...

"Oh lord… please don't tell me. I think I know what you're saying…" Luke said to Rotten Heart.

SC276: [Luke] "They want to feast on my organs!"
[Rotten Heart] "...Yeah, sure, let's go with that."

"good. Because I really don't want to say it… but you all need to get out of here, before other changelings show up. If they find out you're here, we'll all be in trouble. I showed flora the way out. She's probably already shown shining armor and the professor out already." Said rotten heart, looking around "but please, you have to leave right away! There could be other changelings coming here any minute!"

SC276: Three, two, one...

just then, the sound of insect wings filled the air and changelings, hissing, ambushed the group.

SC276: [Rotten Heart] "I WARNED YOU ABOUT CHANGELINGS, BRO!"
[Luke] "What is with changelings and shouting warning reminders...?"

"Excellent work, rotten heart." Said a voice as chrysalis came from the shadows.
"chrysalis!" said cadence
"well, hello again cadence." Said chrysalis, smirking "I'm glad you all have my son, rotten heart."
"SON?!" they all shouted.

SC276: I see the author doesn't know how *bugs* work.

Iris

SC276: Can we just iris-out of this story now, please?

"you're the prince?!" said Luke "to think we almost trusted you!"

SC276: "Lyin' Changeling," the newest hit single from that guy in the first case of *Spirit of Justice* with the unruly long name.

"no, I was telling the truth!" said rotten heart
"take rotten heart away from here." Said chrysalis. "his job is done."

SC276: Whatever the fuck that was.

"no!" said rotten heart as he was led away. He tried to fight them, but they kept getting him back. Rotten heart jumped over the guards, his wings spread wide. He ran towards the entrance to the surface
"after him!" said chrysalis.

SC276: [Chrysalis] "Did you idiots forget that you have wings too?!"

Changelings rushed after him, but rotten heart was able to evade them. He found flora leading the professor and shining armor out of the passageway

SC276: [Layton] "Still not entirely sure how we missed that."

"flora!" he called
"rotten heart!" called flora
"it's Luke and the others, they were ambushed at the entrance to the catacombs!"
"oh no!" said flora "quick, show me the way!" and flora raced after him
"flora, wait!" called the professor

SC276: [Layton] "We just finished crawling through a tunnel half our size and my suit is out of order!"

"no time, professor!" flora called back. "go on! I'll be okay! Just trust me!"

SC276: I'm not sure what exactly you hope to accomplish alone.

when they arrived at the main entrance to the catacombs, the changelings had the group surrounded. Flora spread her wings and glided over the changelings

SC276: Because she totally knows how to use her wings.

"Luke!" she called
"flora?!" said Luke as flora landed by him. Flora faced chrysalis "get away from him, you witch!"

SC276: [Flora] "Get over there with the missing paragraph breaks!"

"how adorable! The little girl comes to the rescue!" laughed chrysalis
"I know what you had planned, and I'm not letting you hurt anyone!" said flora
"flora, just get out of here!" said Luke
"no way!" said flora

SC276: [Luke] "No seriously, we have more qualified fighters here and you're blocking their aim!"

"your quite brave, little girl." Said chrysalis "my changelings told me you were quite scared when they captured you."

SC276: Let's see, young woman snatched off the streets in the middle of the night, *what other emotion are you expecting*?

"I'm brave when I need to help my friends." Said flora,

SC276: A.K.A. when it's convenient to the plot.

but she looked around at the changelings surrounding them
"well, let's see how brave you can be when it's your friends whom your fighting." Said chrysalis. Her horn glowed dark green and Luke gasped as his head suddenly felt ready to be torn apart.

SC276: Let's see, you have the entire party surrounded by changelings, a large group of which were able to subdue the Mane Six in your only canon appearance by this fic's release. Clearly, the most logical option in this situation is *experimental brainwashing*.

"Agh…" he muttered "what… what's going on?!"
"no!" gasped flora "fight it, Luke!"
"I… c-cant…" muttered Luke.

SC276: [Luke] "No one's told me what I'm fighting!"

Chrysalis smiled evilly.
"Luke!" shouted the professor as he and shining armor rushed in
"professor, he's being brainwashed!" said flora as twilight and cadence tried to help Luke.
"Luke! Can you hear me?" asked Layton as he turned to Luke
"p-professor, take flora and run!" muttered Luke
"no, we're not leaving you!" said flora
"go!" said Luke. He let out a shout "just go!"

SC276: Yes, leave him with the main villainess.

"but…" said flora quietly, crying
"I'm sorry flora, but I can't… Agh… fight her off much longer…" said Luke "but I'll always be your friend… right?"
"right…" replied flora, sniffing
"Friend…friend…" Professor Layton said, as he thought for a moment.
"Professor Layton! Now isn't the time to think deeply!" Shining Armor said to Layton.

SC276: [Layton] "Don't speak such blasphemy to me, young man."

"I've got the answer!" Layton exclaimed. "It may just work…it just may."

SC276: It probably will, there's only like four pages left.

"What is it Professor, tell me!" Flora exclaimed.
"I remember…I put a gold chain shaped like a hat on Luke's bear. If we can read what's on it, it just might make Luke to his former self again." Professor Layton explained.

SC276: ...Somehow.

"But Professor…where is his bear?" Flora asked worryingly.
"…In his bag." Professor Layton said grimly. "And I'm not sure if we can get to it…"

SC276: Didn't he make a point of *bringing* said bear?

Suddenly, Luke growled and his horn glowed
"perfect!" cheered chrysalis. Luke turned to the professor, a dark look in his eyes.
"Luke…?" he asked
"don't waste your breath, professor. Your former apprentice is now all mine!" laughed chrysalis darkly as twilight and cadence panted, ready to faint

SC276: For some reason, since they haven't really done anything all scene.

"cadence! Twili!" said shining armor
"we… we couldn't do it…" panted cadence.

SC276: Be in a better story? You most certainly can't!

Luke fired out a blast of magic at the professor, who quickly dodged it
"Luke, no!" cried flora "please, snap out of it!"
"Luke, please!" said the professor. Chrysalis watched on, smiling evilly "say goodnight, professor Layton. Your mystery solving days are over. Actually, your days in general are over!" she said, laughing.

SC276: I'd give credit for that line if I was willing to give this author credit for anything.

Luke walked towards the professor, who had been cornered by changelings
"Luke, stop! you're the professor's apprentice, remember?!" cried flora "you're his apprentice number one!" Luke paused for a second, a memory flashing through his mind
"you better get used to it Luke, if you want to be the professors hehe second assistant!"
"I am NOT his second assistant! I am his apprentice, and I am his apprentice number 1!"

SC276: That may be from the games, but I'm far beyond caring.

He's stopped! Thought flora "please Luke, just try to remember!"
"remember… that's it!" said twilight suddenly. She quickly whispered something in fluttershy's ear. She went over said quietly to him "umm… Luke… is it okay if I hold you down against your will for a second?" rainbow dash groaned and quickly flew over to Luke pinning him down changelings hissed and went to attack twilight and the others, but shining armor cast a small protection spell.

SC276: Unfortunately, he left Rainbow and Luke *outside* the shield.

Twilight went over to Luke, her horn glowing as she cast a memory spell. However, it didn't seem to work on Luke completely.
"why didn't it work?" asked twilight "it worked all the other times I did it, back when the girls were turned the opposite of their elements…"

SC276: Because the way Chrysalis brainwashed him didn't use subversion of memory to make him do her bidding?

chrysalis laughed "silly unicorn! My spell on the boy is too powerful to be broken by a mere memory spell!"

SC276: Or, y'know, the stupid reason.

her horn glowed again and shining armors barrier was broken "for the record, I could have done that at any time. I just wanted to see you fail." She said

SC276: You ain't exactly in your own kingdom, lady. Chill the hell out with the superpowers.

"no…" said flora as changelings surrounded them again. Tears fell from her eyes as she looked at Luke, remembering the last time they had spoken back in London

SC276: Boy, if triggering memories is *this* easy, he should've snapped out of it forever ago.

"I'm just so nervous…"
"it'll be alright flora! No one can match your singing! You'll sweep the competition!"
"thanks Luke!"
"say, I never actually heard the song you're singing."
"I thought I sang it for you already? Well, the professor won't be back from teaching for a bit. I suppose we have a bit of time..."

SC276: Oh for fuck's sake, *another* fanfic with a song...

"from the first time that I saw you, across the floor, your gold hair in the moonlight, as bright as the sun…

SC276: (Googles) ...Good news: it's a song from *Professor Layton and the Diabolical Box*. Bad news: these lyrics are a translation that didn't bother to try and rhyme it.

you would tell me I'm special, and how my cheeks would glow! I felt just like a princess, that made you my prince…" she sang softly.

SC276: I've forgotten how I feel about how shipping Luke and Flora, but right now I'm hating it out of spite.

Everyone turned to look at her, even Luke paused and looked
"you took my hand and I touched your cheek… your eyes, your smile… so sweet to me… I felt so warm, although it was cold… I just need your presence in my life…" flora continued to sing.

SC276: Look, the year's almost over, and I want this to fucking *end* already. Where's the breakneck pacing?!

Twilight and cadence looked at each other, and nodded. Cadence took a deep breath and her horn glowed it's soft pink. Twilight's horn glowed it's standard purple, but suddenly her eyes glowed a soft red as she cast the memory spell again.

SC276: Why does casting it *now* make her eyes glow?

Luke gasped and shook his head
"wha… what's going on?" he asked.
"Luke, are you alright?" asked the professor
"yeah…" he said as he shakily got up. Twilight let out a pant as she finished the spell.
"take that!"

SC276: The part of Twilight Sparkle will be played by Phoenix Wright.

she taunted to chrysalis "too powerful for a memory spell, huh?!"
chrysalis growled "get them!" she ordered. The changelings attacked

SC276: [Twilight] "Oh. Right. Celebrated a *little* early there."

"are you sure your alright, Luke?" asked flora, going over
"I'm fine." Said Luke. "but I want to show her what happens when you mess with my head

SC276: "-in ways which will not be explained-"

and turn me against the professor and my friends!" he let out a magic blast and knocked back several changelings "and that's just what I'm going to do!"

SC276: And once again, we're in a fighting manga.

"We'll help you Luke, we've had past problems with these guys before…" Twilight said.
"Yeah, BIG problems." Shining Armor added on.
"Add one Professor, and Luke my boy, you've got a team." Professor said with a smile. "Flora, stay back. I don't want you to get tied into this."

SC276: Should've thought of that before the final chapter then.

"Alright Professor…I understand." Flora said to him.
"Alright, now that we have a proper team, LET'S CHARGE!" Shining Amor shouted.

SC276: Let's see... Luke, Layton, Cadance, Shining, and the Mane Six vs whatever changelings are down here. This can *clearly* go either way.

And so, the war had begun!

SC276: Yeah, I'd be hard-pressed to call that a war, more like a big ball of violence.

Twilight and her friends worked together to destroy groups of Changelings, and Professor and Luke as well. But the main blow was from Shining Armor and Cadence, who took out half of the entire army.

SC276: So, the entire point to keeping them apart was so they couldn't do the giant love shield thing. Why are they not doing that now?

After 15 minutes and the dust settled, there were only a couple of Changelings left, who started to flee.
"You fools! Fleeing from the scene like that.

SC276: They want out of this fic. Very reasonable of them at this point.

Very well, if my Changelings can't get you, then I will myself!" Chrysalis said to them.

SC276: There's *ten of them*. And for some reason Discord's not doing shit. *Where is Discord, by the way?* He hasn't shown up since Rotten Heart showed up to Luke.

“go ahead and try.” Said cadence, her horn glowing. Chrysalis’s horn glowed dark green as the two circled each other. Everyone there watched as the young alicorn faced the age-old changeling queen.

SC276: And they’re not doing anything because *why* now?

They fought, dodging and firing blasts of magic. Suddenly there was a bright flash of light and Celestia and Luna appeared, flying down

SC276: Aren’t they underground...?

“princess!” said twilight
“Celestia. Come to save the day, have you?” asked chrysalis, her wings buzzing
“in a manner of speaking.” Said Celestia “I discovered a couple of rather… interesting pieces of information.”

SC276: Namely, headcanons convenient for the plot.

“like what?” asked chrysalis
“first, that changelings just don’t feed off emotions of love from someone they disguise themselves as. They feed off positive emotions from all around them. The disguise is just a formality.” Said Celestia

SC276: Um, I’m not sure why you thought changelings needed to be disguised to feed at all. The disguise is so they can get close enough to it and have it directed at them.

“second, a missing piece of the prophecy was found.”
“a missing piece?” inquired Layton “how curious.”
“’but peace will only truly come when the two who lead seek to rectify their mistakes.’” Recited Celestia

SC276: How the fuck did you miss *that*? Were two pages stuck together or something?

“get to the point, Celestia!” said chrysalis
“I am willing to allow the changelings to leave these catacombs, and live their lives on the surface.” Said Celestia “I realized, with my sisters help, that it was unfair of me to allow discord a second chance, but to not offer a chance to your own people, chrysalis.”

SC276: Not sure how it’s unfair, exactly. I mean, they were kinda defeated by a giant love shield wall and flung out of Equestria. It’s not exactly easy to negotiate when they’re miles away.

“you truly mean this?” asked chrysalis as changelings slowly started to come out, interested.
“I do. So long as the changelings don’t cause trouble, they will be allowed on the surface in disguise. What do you think, chrysalis? Would you and your people like that?”
“yes…” said chrysalis, smiling slightly “yes, we would.”

SC276: Anyone else miss sea- *AUGH*.

Later, after everything had been arranged,

SC276: Because the author doesn't know how either.

Luke, flora, and the professor prepared to return home
"thou art always welcome in this land of Equestria, flora, Luke, and professor Layton." Said Luna

SC276: Not by me, I'll tell you that much.

"yeah! It was fun hanging out with you guys!" said pinkie pie

SC276: What little hanging out there actually was.

"you totally kicked those changelings' butts, Luke!" said rainbow dash
"I'm just honored to have friends like you!" said rarity, smiling. her Persian cat, opal, jumped off rarity's back and nuzzled Luke's leg, purring
"meow! Meow!" went Luke. Opal meowed back. Fluttershy gasped happily
"you can talk to animals too?!" she said, flying over

SC276: Yeah, sure, have this revelation *during the fucking falling action*.

"I can! Yourself?" said Luke happily
"of course! That's how I got my cutie mark!" said Fluttershy, pointing to the mark on her flank that showed an image of 3 butterflies. Luke looked down at his own flank and gasped "professor, look!"
"well well, my boy!" said Layton happily
"oh, wow! It looks almost like the professors!" said flora

SC276: it *is* his seal isn't it even though he barely did anything luke-like this entire story

"well, I'm satisfied!" said Luke happily. Everyone laughed.

SC276: Of course he's going to lose it as soon as he goes home, but... he had it at all, I guess?

"before you go, a little parting gift." Said Celestia. She handed flora, Luke, and the professor each a kind of necklace "these necklaces were based off of the elements of harmony.

SC276: oh fucking hell

You see, their new physical forms are those of necklaces with designs that correspond to each of these girls marks. Luna and I decided that those 6 elements carried by twilight and her friends just didn't completely show all that's good. So, Luna and I made these. 3 new elements, and the three of you are their carriers.

SC276: *OH FUCKING HELL YOU CAN'T JUST* MAKE *ELEMENTS OF HARMONY EVEN IF THE TREE DOESN'T EXIST YET*

To you, professor Layton, the element of intelligence." Said Celestia, handing the professor his element "to you, Luke the element of reliability."

SC276: *YEAH RELIABLE, CERTAINLY, HE STOOD BY DURING HALF HIS SCENES DOING NOTHING AND FORGOT TO PACK HIS BEAR*

She continued as Luke took his own element
"and me?" asked flora excitedly. Celestia smiled
"to you, flora Reinhold, I give the element of determination.

SC276: *INSERT UNDERTALE JOKE HERE.*

It was your quick thinking in the mines and your determination and courage to help Luke that helped to save the day." Said Celestia as flora took her own element

SC276: *WHAT DO ANY OF THOSE HAVE TO DO WITH FRIENDSHIP-?!* (takes deep breaths and listens to "Objection 2016" for a bit) Peace be inside me, tolerance around me, forgiveness in my path... This is *almost done*...

"shouldst thou ever wish to return to Equestria, simply make a wish on your elements to return, and thou will return here to where thou wish to go." Said Luna

SC276: [Luna] "You know, if the author ever gets stupid enough to write a sequel."

"wow! Thanks!" said Luke
"thank you for all your help. Remember, you're always welcome here." Said Celestia. She cast the spell that sent Luke, Layton, and flora home.

SC276: Because apparently the portal closed?

They found themselves back in the professors flat
"oh, it feels so good to be a human again!" said Luke, stretching
"I must agree." Said Layton.

SC276: [Layton] "Please excuse me a moment. My hands are filthy. (goes to wash them) Odd, the taint isn't going away..."

Flora quickly looked at the date and time
"oh, thank goodness! My contest isn't until tomorrow!" she sighed with relief

SC276: *What* contest? Nothing of the sort came up at all except for that memory bit.

"wait…" said the professor, looking at the date. He chuckled "it seems while we were gone, no time had passed."

SC276: Relative Time And Ridiculous Dimensions In Space. Otherwise known as the ReTARDIS.

"what?!" asked Luke. He looked at the clock "wow! Your right! Celestia sent us back to when we supposedly left!" he rubbed his forehead "you know, I'm going to miss being able to do magic."

SC276: Even though you did nothing with it beside levitate stuff and shoot magic missiles at your mentor. Say *that* three times fast!

"I liked being able to fly." Said flora.

SC276: The most you did with *that* was a high jump.

She looked at herself wearing her element necklace "do you think this necklace goes with the dress I'm wearing to my contest tomorrow?" she asked

SC276: Only if it's a contest for stupidest jewelry.

"I think it might." Said Luke, straightening his cap. He sat down on the sofa "you know professor, this will be the one adventure we've had that I won't be able to tell my parents about. If I sent them a letter about Equestria, they wouldn't believe a word!" he said, laughing

SC276: I still need to play any of the prequel trilogy, so I can't be sure, but given that in the first games Luke is writing the letter that starts the story to the *player*...

"that's true, my boy. I think for all our sakes, we should keep our latest investigation between the 3 of us." Said the professor
"agreed." Said Luke and flora

SC276: [Layton] "And definitely no posting it on the Internet."

"now, how about I make us all some tea?" asked flora, smiling.
Uh oh! Thought Luke *don't let flora in the kitchen!* "err.. flora, I think you should let me do it." He said, getting up
"no, it's ok." Said flora "I can do it."
"no, you just go make sure you have everything ready for tomorrow. I'll make tea." Said Luke

SC276: I'm inexperienced with tea, but isn't it just putting some leaves or a packet in water and letting it heat up? How do you expect her to screw up *tea*?

"alright then." Said flora, going to her room. Luke sighed with relief "close one, eh professor?"
"handled like a true gentleman Luke." Chuckled the professor.

SC276: ...Eh, I'm too tired to argue with this.

Luke went into the kitchen and started making tea. As it boiled, he went back into the living room. He traced a circle on the arm of the couch.

SC276: Riveting.

"something on your mine, Luke?" asked the professor as he selected a book from the shelf

SC276: And then they exploded.

"it's just… back in the catacombs…" started Luke. He sighed "professor-"
"no need to apologize Luke." Said the professor

“I almost killed you professor.” Said Luke
“it wasn’t your fault. You were under chrysalis’s control. You weren’t yourself.” Said the professor

SC276: You’re being written by the author. None of you are yourselves.

“doesn’t make me feel any less bad about it…” said Luke.
“it wasn’t your fault Luke. Flora and I are just glad you’re yourself again.” Said the professor.

SC276: [Layton] “You know, relative to this story.”

Luke gave a small smile “alright, professor.” He said.
Later that night, Luke sat in his bed, writing in his journal. His pen moved across the page.

SC276: It wasn’t touching it, but it *was* moving across it.

When he finished, he yawned and placed his cap on his bedside table. He lay in his bed, looking out his window at the stars.

SC276: “I see an angel, dancing in the stars!”

He yawned again and reached for his teddy bear.

SC276: You need a freaking cork board with string to figure out this bear’s movements.

As he hugged it close to his chest, he thought *and so ends another investigation by professor Hershel Layton, and his apprentice number 1, Luke triton…* he yawned again and closed his eyes, falling fast asleep.

SC276: And hopefully, come morning, he’ll wake up in a better story.

Finish!

Well that’s finally done and over with, and good riddance! Sorry this took so long - so glad I’m keeping to a 15K limit.

This story is terrible on so many points. The most obvious is its shitzophrenic pacing. It alternates between breakneck and snail’s pace in inverse proportion to how much the audience should be invested in it - it speeds through necessary scenes, and slows down for detail that is completely irrelevant to the plot or that the average FIMFiction reader should already know from it being MLP. In addition, the characters have no character - they all just move through their roles in the blandest way possible, and never say anything that makes me think it’s them talking. This is, of course, most obvious with Discord, who shows up halfway through the plot and vanishes from it soon after, who’s not even in his natural form for bullshit reasons and clearly acts nothing like Discord.

The typesmanship is terrible. Capitalization is all over the place, and the author leaves out more periods at the end of paragraphs than all the comic strips in the world. There’s also a number of plotholes, the most obvious being that Shining

Armor and Professor Layton don't ever explicitly check whether or not the way Twilight and Cadance escaped in the show was blocked or not; they just assume she did and don't bother to verify because it's not like Equestria is being threatened or anything.

The ending just caps off on the rest of the horribleness. The changelings agree to stop being bad guys - and the only reason they didn't go blasting off again like Team Rocket is because of a prophecy and not their own merits like this show would do half a series after this fic came out. Did the author forget he had Rotten Heart say Chrysalis would not take peace if she was offered it? I wouldn't be surprised. And of course the Layton trio get, not only the fandom cliché of a seventh Element, but also eighth and ninth Elements as well, for *things that have nothing to do with friendship*. That were *explicitly stated to be artificial*. Even if the Tree of Harmony wasn't introduced until a season later, why would the author even entertain the idea that these Major Artifact-class objects could clearly be made on a whim as mere rewards, *three at a time*?

And of course *no one questioned how the changelings kidnapped Flora in the first place*.

There's ways to do a *Layton* crossover right. There's plenty of other attempts on FIMFic, including one complete one. I haven't read it, so I have no idea if it's good or not, but this story is basically trash that I hated having to go through alone.



Couldn't have said it any better myself, Luke.