A gazillion bats fly across an orange & black sky. Their combined screeches a cacophony being heard for miles, announcing the arrival of something or someone. The time is dusk and as their frantic and chaotic flight continues, we see a shape emerge out of thin air. It is the head of a mare, curly hair and all.

“Fluttershy! Let me see! Ooh, let me have me a look” a voice calls out loud rushing through what seems like a forest. It is a botanical garden and we see a young yellow filly with pink hair rush inside. The voice belonging to a pink pony with curly pink hair manages to catch up to her friend now hiding under a table.

“Finder’s Keepers!” declares Fluttershy showing off a stone cupcake, probably part of a larger sculpture.

The pink filly snatches it away, “Yes, and I found it silly! Ahahahaha!”

She runs off, Fluttershy hot on her tail screaming her name, “Pinkie! Um… okay… you can have it.”

As Pinkie bounces along, she forgets to watch where she was going and crashes through loose wooden boards covering up an old tunnel. She falls far and lands hard. Fluttershy’s voice above distant and fading, calling for someone named Big Mac. Meanwhile, Pinkie cowers in the darkness as a pitch black shape flies towards her.

Pinkie lies on dirty old cot, in a dirty old prison cell, in a dirty old forgotten corner of the Pony equivalent of Tibet. It has been many years and we can clearly see the signs, gone is the innocent young face now replaced with more mature features including a mustache beard combination known as a French Beard, her skin a darker shade of pink, her mane no longer curly and poufy but straight and falling.

She notices her cell mate, an old and wrinkly Mongolian war horse. He asks her, “Bad dream?”

She replies with hoarseness in her voice, “Worse, a bad dream inside another bad dream.”

The war horse continues, “Worse than this place?”

Pinkie ponders the question, looking at the sad dull textures and the sad dull faces including an especially grumpy looking pony whose head was all round and scrunched up like a potato. A few balloons & streamers could really improve the atmosphere she wondered out loud.

Prisoners are led out into the yard, muddy, yucky, icky soil under a dull grey and cloudy sky. Armed guards lined the boundary ready to slaughter if necessary. As Pinkie and her cellmate walk along the queue to where gruel was being served to prisoners under the pretense of breakfast, they notice potato face walking up to them.

The Mongolian spoke up with concern, “He wanna fight you!”

Pinkie now holding the plate in her mouth retorted with amusement, “Nah! He just wants to be friends.”

Pinkie was proved wrong as the black & brown colored stallion known as potato face grabbed the plate and smashed it into her face rubbing it in while declaring, “You are in a fanfic my little pony, and I am the author” , implying that he was in full control of her life.

As the plate fell to the ground, Potato Face was surprised to see a giggling Pinkie. She chuckled, “No silly! He

is!" pointing to somewhere in the distance, beyond the fourth wall.

As Potato Face tried to strike, Pinkie headbutts him sending him reeling and proceeded to hoof him in the stomach with all her might causing him to drop. Pinkie proceeded to smash his head with her foot while laughing, "That's a mean thing to do! This is how we make friends."

She lowered herself and to the shock & horror of other prisoners began to tickle him with all her might. Potato face laughed and laughed as he begged her to stop while the other ponies, even the Mongolian were terrified of the sight before them.

The guards had enough; they tore Pinkie from Potato Face. She protested while being dragged away by her front hooves, "Hey! What are you doing? We were just making friends!"

"Protection" said one guard in a stereotypical Chinese accent.

Pinkie giggled menacingly, "No silly! I don't need protection. THEY need protection!"

She is unceremoniously thrown into her cell. As she begins to clean herself up she notices someone else in the room, a dark blue unicorn mare with a light blue mane, wearing a tuxedo. She speaks, "Are you so desperate to make friends that you throttle them one at a time?" a hint of sarcasm in her voice.

"I can't help it! I garb one and the others run like chickens!" declared Pinkie dryly.

"If you say so Miss Pie" replied the tuxedo wearing Pony.

Pinkie is a bit taken aback at hearing her last name. She would have forgotten it were it not so short and simple. She asks the stranger how she knows her name. The tuxedo pony smiles warmly and replies, "The world is a bit too small for someone as famous as Pinkie Pie to disappear."

"Who are you?" Pinkie demands.

The tuxedo pony replies, "My name is simply Tromperi but I speak for one Ra's Al Qamar. A pony greatly feared in the criminal underworld, a pony who can offer you a bath, cakes, pastries and even a party."

Pinkie protests, "What makes you think I need a bath? I'll take the rest though!"

"Somepony like you is not here by choice. You immersed yourself in the criminal fraternity but whatever you're true intentions were you have become truly lost." Tromperi answers.

Pinkie questions further, "And what path does this Ra's Al Qamar offer"

Tromperi replies, "The path of a pony that shares your love of justice, parties and hates dull mean spirited people, the path of the League of Laughter. You may refer to us as LoL."

Pinkie Pie laughs, "Seriously? That's hilarious. You people are vigilantes!"

Tromperi retorts, her voice slightly harsher, "No no! A vigilante is just a pony lost in the scramble for his own gratification as if to prove some sort of ideal or concept. Such a pony can be destroyed or banished or banished

and then destroyed."

She leans closer to Pinkie whispering, "But if you make yourself more than just another mare, if you devote yourself to an idea, and if they can't stop you, then you become something else entirely."

Pinkie's eyes light as up as she asks inquisitively, "Which is?"

Tromperi replies, "Legend, Miss Pie. A sort of pop culture icon worshipped like a god."

Then as if by magic, for the first time in over a decade, Pinkie's mane and tail explode back into their original curly and poufy shape, not only that but her skin has become a brighter shade of pink as a wave of pure excitement washes over her.

Tromperi smiles as she gets up announcing, "Tomorrow you will be released. If you are tired of your dull surroundings full of mean people then I suggest you search for a rare blue flower that grows in the eastern slopes and bring one to the top of the mountain, when you see a scary looking castle, you will have reached your destination. However handle it with caution because its effects can be rather… humorous."

The next day Pinkie is once again unceremoniously thrown onto the road from a truck bed. It did not take her long to find the flower but reaching the top of the mountain was the hard part. The flower is called 'Poison Joke' and its spores are known for playing tricks on anypony unfortunate enough to touch them.

In Pinkie's case it caused her tongue to develop polka dots, swell and hang out of her mouth giving her a lisp. Understandably this made asking for directions to the scary castle difficult and hilarious. She did eventually reach the top and knocked on the massive wooden double doors of the Chinese styled castle.

The doors open and she walks a narrow passageway lined with tables with candles on them. Faint voices can heard from the foreboding interiors and in front of her sitting on a throne with glass paneling behind it giving it an almost divine glow was an old black Chinese stallion with a white mane wearing simple brown robes.

"Rash Al Kamal" she whispers. A loud rap startles her as she turns around to see a mare lock the door behind her. Other ponies emerge from the shadows surrounding Pinkie, each one more menacing than the last. Before a fight could breakout, a voice orders them to stop. It was Tromperi, now wearing a tan colored suit.

Ra's Al Qamar speaks in some long forgotten dead language, "Nǐ yāoqiú shénme?"

"What do you seek?" translates Tromperi.

Pinkie Pie replies, "I seekh the meansh two fight injushtish. The meansh two spreadh lafter and joy. The meansh two puth pfear in the heartsh of parthy poophers and meany facesh."
She presents the flower as a sign of being successful in her quest.

Qamar speaks again and Tromperi translates, "To spread joy and laughter in the world you must first learn to master your own emotions and learn to manipulate those of others. Are you ready to begin?"

"SURE!" Pinkie announced with much cheer and enthusiasm which surprised everyone who expected her to be

exhausted and ripe for the hazing that every potential member must face. Tromperi continues anyway pushing Pinkie as hard as possible causing her to topple over and fall thanks to a pony crouching just behind her feet. A third promptly smashed a Pie into her face.

“Death or in this case misfortune does not wait Miss Pie, you must always be prepared. Make no mistake, by the time I’m done, you will be screaming for your mother” gloated Tromperi.

To everypony’s shock Pinkie jumps back on her feet and attacks Tromperi. She dodges Pinkie’s punch and lands a headbutt, “Wrestling!” she declares.

Pinkie tries to kick her but Tromperi dodges that and delivers a karate chop to her hind leg, “Kung Fu!”

Pinkie winces with pain as Tromperi grabs one of Pinkie’s hooves and uses it to punch her in the face, “Schoolyard Bullying!”

As Pinkie lies on the floor, half unconscious, Ra’s as Qamar claps with enthusiasm at the sheer display of skill. Tromprei places a hoof on Pinkie’s chest and leans down, “You have plenty of moxie and enthusiasm but are held back by your fear. You clearly don’t fear me, so tell me Miss Pie. What are you really afraid of?”

As Pinkie loses consciousness, she falls, down into her childhood all those years ago, down that old tunnel filled with one of her greatest fears, something primal and terrifying. As they swarmed around her, she screamed, “AAAH! BATS! BATS ON MY FACE! HELP!!”

After a while, filly Pinkie sees a glimmer of hope as a handsome middle aged white stallion lowers himself into the tunnel offering his hoof. It was her father, Custard Pie. His voice soothing and calming like honey, “Pinkie! It’s okay. Give me your hoof.”

As the Custard carried his daughter up the steps towards their lavish mansion they were joined by the family butler Big Macintosh, a heavy set red stallion. He asks Custard, “Should I call the doctor sir?”

Custard declines, “No need Macintosh. She seems fine but we’ll get her an X-Ray later.”

They pass by Fluttershy and her mother who apologizes but Custard tells them not to worry, he never considered the little accident as their fault. As they pass, Pinkie returns the stone cupcake to Fluttershy.

“Quite a fall we had there Miss Pie, I am sure you were quite scared” quips Macintosh.

To which Custard replies in a sing song voice, “And what did Granny Pie teach us to do when scared Pinkie? We giggle at all the ghosties and guffaw at the grosslies.”

Pinkie lies in bed shuffling about while her father watches over her. He asks her, “The bats again?”
To which she silently nods.

Custard questions, “You know why they attacked you right? They were scared of you.”

Pinkie is surprised, “Scared of me?”

Custard replies, “Yes. All creatures feel fear, especially the scary ones. We just need a certain amount of courage to be friendly and patient around them and most of the time they reciprocate in kind.”

Pinkie smiled as did her father in return.

“I have something to show you. Do you think your mother will like it?” said Custard opening an elegant velvet box to show a pearl necklace inside. Pinkie’s eyes lit up with wonder. She answers by saying that they were beautiful and that her mother would love them.

Sometime later, we see the Pie family on the overhead metro train. Pinkie was wearing an elegant dress sitting opposite to her parents, her mother, a beautiful deep red mare with eyes like stars named Apple Pie. Pinkie looks out inquisitively at the city passing by and asks, “Did you build this train dad?”

Custard smiles, “Yes. Gotham has been good to our family but other people, those less fortunate than us have been going through some very hard times. So we built a cheap mode of transportation to unite the city. And at the center is Pie Tower, I’m sure my little self indulgence with the center will not backfire anytime soon.” He points towards a massive steel and concrete structure emerging out of the skyline with a solid gold P on all four faces with Pie written underneath each one.

Staring at the massive building Pinkie asks, “Is that where you work?”

“No. I work at the hospital. I could never stand paperwork. At least as a doctor I get to meet new people, put some smiles on their faces, and give them hope to get better. I do this especially for the younger patients.” He continues, “And I leave the company in the hands of … better ponies.”

“Better? You’re the best!” giggles Pinkie innocently as the train glides majestically through the city.

They are at the opera. The play is about a young warrior traversing the twisted and evil confines of a castle to fight its owner and free his beloved, armed with nothing but his humble whip. The hero draped in blue confronts the castle’s master, a giant of a man sitting on an elaborate throne, sipping wine. The master laughs and mocks the hero, informing him that he deals with powers way beyond his comprehension.

Suddenly the lights go dark and red spotlight shines over the villain, his voice now reverberating and echoing in the room suggesting some form of demonic presence. The lights turn off once more and as they come back on, we see the villain has transformed into a hideous bat like monster. The hero, unfazed, strikes out with his whip. The monster screeches in pain, this was no mere ordinary whip; it was imbued with the power of the gods.

As the epic battle continued Pinkie felt more and more uncomfortable. Seeing the bat like monster caused her great discomfort and nervousness as the fear she experienced the tunnel resurfaced, she begged her parents to leave, they agree to do so.

They leave through the back door and decide to go through one of Gotham’s less glamorous paths, affectionately titled Crime Alley. As they continue to walk they are suddenly confronted by a sickly looking golden brown stallion. He’s jittery and nervous, threatening them with a gun in one hoof and demanding money with the other.

Custard attempts to reason with the beleaguered pony. Requesting him to put the gun down and he can have the

wallet. The mugger carefully grabs the wallet, his gun still pointed at the Pie family. Suddenly, the sound of a car alarm going off startles him and his pulls the trigger shooting Apple, Custard screams in horror and is shot as well while attempting to retaliate. The mugger runs away leaving a shocked and traumatized Pinkie Pie at the foot of her dying parents.

Her father's last words to her, "Remember Pinkie, always smile, always laugh. Never cry. Promise me."
It starts to rain, drenching Pinkie causing her hail to fall straight. She just sits there silently, with the occasional tear rolling down her previously rosy cheeks.

They are inside a police station, other officers holding back photographers and journalists trying to take advantage of the trauma of a small filly. An orange earth pony with blonde mane consoles the tearful pink earth pony. A passing officer, a rather chubby and angry grey stallion looks at the scene and protests, "Let it go Applejack, the kid's butler is coming to pick her up. You hear that, a butler. She'll be fine."

Applejack shouts at the grey stallion in protest, accusing him of lacking basic pony sympathy. They are soon interrupted by the police commissioner, a large white mare who informs her that the mugger has been arrested.

The next day it is raining again. A congregation has assembled in the cemetery just outside of the Pie Mansion to pay their respects to the fallen. A young filly stands in front of two graves backed by a red stallion. Both are wearing black as custom. They are joined by a middle aged mulberry colored mare who reassures Pinkie that her and the rest of the board of directors will be taking care of the company and will be waiting for her until she is old enough to take her place, hollow words to a child who has just lost everything.

Later, Big Mac offers to serve Pinkie supper in her room. Pinkie simply stares solemnly out her window, watching her friend Fluttershy leave. Just as Big Mac turns away, Pinkie calls for him, her voice choking on her own words, her eyes watery, "It's my entire fault isn't it… I... if only I wasn't afraid. I miss them."

Mac embraces the crying filly and consoles her, "No, not at all. It was him and him alone. I miss them too Miss Pie but we must learn to be strong."

Pinkie Pie looks out over the horizon from a balcony belonging to a Chinese castle, no longer the young, naive scared little filly, now cleaned up having removed her fake moustache and beard, wearing simple robes. A voice, Tromperi asks sagely, "Do you still blame yourself for your parents death?"

Pinkie responds grimly, "Anger outweighs my guilt. My smiles and laughter mask my anger."

Tromperi leads her away to begin her training, "You have learned to bury your true emotions. I will teach you to confront them, to find joy and humor no matter the situation. A positive attitude goes a long way."

Tromperi and Pinkie Pie stand on a frozen lake circling each other while holding wooden training swords in their mouths. A nearby sign reads, Danger! Thin Ice. Tromperi announces, "You know how to handle 6 party guests, we'll teach you how to handle 600. You know how to play pranks; we'll teach you how to become a true practical jokester. We'll teach you how to fight criminals as well, so don't worry."

Tromperi attacks with all the grace and style of a ballet dancer. Pinkie defends. Wood clashes against wood as they battle while struggling to maintain balance realizing that a frozen lake is a terrible place for a sword fight.

Later, Pinkie walks into a dark room, expecting an attack any second. She attempts to listen for the slightest hint, the slightest noise that would prove somepony was there. She squints in the darkness, hoping that she was as invisible to potential assailants as they were to her. Suddenly, she hears a shout, “SURPISE!!”

The lights turn on and four ponies drop a net on top of Pinkie ensnaring her. Pinkie starts to laugh with much gusto. Tromperi walks in clapping, “Happy Birthday Miss Pie. I hope you now understand what the element of surprise truly entails.”

The sword battle on the ice continues. Pinkie’s movements are hampered by the slick ice but still managing to defend while Tromperi literally skates around her attacking with full ferocity.

Pinkie stands precariously on a set of poles jutting out of the floor. In her hooves are darts with pony tails on one end and a sharp point on the other. Tromperi walks out onto one of the balconies on either side and announces, throwing up framed pictures of tailless ponies, “Pin the tail on the pony Miss Pie.”

Pinkie braces herself and begins flinging darts. A task made that much more impossible when other ponies attempt to pull her off using cartoonish and large candy canes. She is successful nonetheless to the point that Tromperi is quite impressed.

Shifting back to the sword fight we see that the status quo has not changed. Pinkie slashes frantically hoping to catch her opponent off guard but Tromperi deftly parries each blow. Her attacks have such force and power behind each blow that Pinkie falls down at one point while Tromperi gloats, “Always mind your surroundings.”

Tromperi shows off some fireworks announcing that something so simple can have a multitude of uses. She sets of a rocket causing it to fly up and explode on the ceiling creating a shower of sparks. When asked about their uses, Tromperi declares them to be effective methods of distraction and as well as non-lethal weapons, “Theatricality, deception, pulling pranks makes you more than what you are in the mind of your opponent.”

A prisoner in a wooden cage is hauled up to the balcony where they are standing. A sad looking green skinned pony with a pink mane. Pinkie asks for her identity, Tromperi answers coldly, “A neighbor came to her with a party invitation; this pony was apparently irritated by the random act of friendliness and killed the neighbor. Her defense was that she was constantly pestered by her neighbor and just snapped. Regardless, she must be punished.”
“Society seeks to understand criminals; I seek to destroy them all.”

Returning to the sword fight, Pinkie swings with all her might but Tromperi ducks. Her own direct blows however are expertly blocked. Pinkie ends up exhausting herself while Tromperi takes the opportunity to strike hard and fast. Pinkie falls once more while Tromperi walks away, “Your parent’s death was not your fault. It was your father’s.”

This angers Pinkie as she runs up behind Tromperi attempting to strike but is surprised to see her sword stuck in the spikes of a gauntlet Tromperi was wearing. She pulls away tearing the sword from Pinkie’s mouth leaving her disarmed and at Tromperi’s mercy. She grabs Pinkie as she attacks with her hooves and drops her to the ground, blade to throat as she protests, “The pony had a gun.”

Tromperi walks away again waiting for her opponent to get up and asks, “Would that stop you?”

Pinkie answers, “I need training first.”

Tromperi makes a quick turn and rushes Pinkie who attempts to block using the gauntlets on her hooves. “Training is nothing. The will and desire to act is everything.” shouts Tromperi striking with all her might causing Pinkie to drop once more, her feet sliding on the ice.

Pinkie pushes herself along the ice surprising Tromperi. As she slides around she manages to grab her sword and block just in time. Pinkie uses her hind legs to sweep and cause Tromperi to drop as she gains the upper hoof and places the blade to her throat while declaring, “Party’s over!”

Tromperi laughs, “You haven’t beaten me! You’ve sacrificed your footing for a killing stroke!”
She slams her gauntlet against the ice sheet. To her shock and horror she notices that Pinkie was standing next to the sign that warned against the thin ice. Tromperi herself was behind it. Before she could utter a curse word the ice cracks and drops her into the freezing cold water.

Later we see the dynamic duo sitting near a campfire. Pinkie was trying as hard as possible to stifle her laughter. Tromperi draped in a blanket, hot water bottle on head, fore legs wrapped around herself, hind legs in a bucket of hot water and a thermometer in her mouth. She spoke bitterly, “Not. One. Word. This never happened.”

As Tromperi continues to shiver, Pinkie ponders a question Tromperi once asked her, “Vengeance helped me find peace in the face of loss. On the other hoof, why did you never avenge your parents Pinkie?”

--- TO BE CONTINUED ---