

Doctor and Ditzzy's Science Theater

by Rixizu

Episode 24 - Part 3

Trixie shot off, running for the rear entrance of the Court. The other five ponies followed quickly.

Ditzzy: (Lyra) This is perfect! If there are any traps, Trixie will set them off for us.

Beyond the ruined Court was a wide plaza, probably a former courtyard. The trees of the Everfree had yet to encroach on it, meaning the entire plaza was covered in slushy, melting snow that covered the tiled ground beneath them. Trixie had paused as she entered, letting out a huge sigh of relief as she did. A slight tingling sensation was running across her body,

Ditzzy: (Trixie) My Trixie-sense is tingling!

but she chalked it up to nervousness, fear, and mounting exhaustion.

Doctor: Trixie thought there was no reason to be nervous about anything.

Sitting in the plaza, near the exact center, was what looked like a sculpture made from obsidian.

Doctor: It wasn't though. The princesses were cheap and used coal instead.

Rising in its center was a pillar of the volcanic glass, about ten feet tall.

All: Hooves.

At its tip stretched more than a dozen long spikes made from the same stone, each a different length. The five longest spikes, at their ends, were impaling five stone spheres, each of which bore a different marking carved into their surfaces. It looked almost like a sculpture of a star in nova, and definitely looked far too delicate to have possibly withstood a millennium of not being tended to by master stonemasons.

Doctor: So she gave it a kick to see how sturdy it was.

The most interesting part of the statue, though, was that it was bare and smooth. Despite the low fog and the snow all around it, the statue itself was dry.

Doctor: The true power of the Elements of Harmony, demoiaturizing.

Even more so than the rest of the palace, this place seemed somehow utterly still and inert.

Ditzy: (Trixie) That's weird. Oh well. Off to find the Elements!

Trixie let out a sigh of relief as she turned around, gesturing to the statue.

Ditzy: (Trixie) I can sell this to an art museum and make a fortune!

"The Elements of – " she began, when she noticed that the other five ponies were casting their gazes around in panic, none of them looking at her.

"Where'd she go?" Carrot Top demanded as she trotted forward several paces, nearly running down Trixie before the unicorn side-stepped out of the way. "Trixie?"

"I'm right here," Trixie said, looking down at her hooves – or trying to, anyway, as her hooves seemed to have vanished, along with the rest of her body and clothing. "Or not...okay, I'm invisible, must be the poison joke – "

Doctor: (Trixie) I'm starting to realize that this heroic sacrifice thing is for the birds.

"She can't have just disappeared," Cheerilee interrupted.

"I totally can, actually," Trixie noted,

Ditzy: She uses it to sneak into ponies' houses without permission.

“but I’m – ”

“Maybe one of the traps was still active?” Ditzzy Doo asked, as she beat her wings several times, getting to the air as she searched the courtyard’s surface, presumably for any sign of a trap having gone off.

Ditzzy: (Ditzzy) There’s no blood at least. That’s a good sign!

“Everypony stay in place for a second...”

“...and I’m inaudible.” Trixie observed, eyes narrowing.

Doctor: Lucky them.

Not that anypony could see her look of consternation, apparently, but at least she knew she was making it as she trotted over to Carrot Top, who was nearest. “Except I can hear me. I can’t see me, though. That doesn’t make a lot of sense.” Trixie extended a hoof and poked Carrot Top’s neck.

“Gah!” The earth pony exclaimed, leaping sideways in fright. “Something just touched me!”

Doctor: (Carrot) It was really sweaty and clammy.

“What?” Raindrops asked, joining Ditzzy Doo in the air, though looking more like she intended to land with extreme prejudice on something rather than remain in the air for safety. “What was it?”

“I don’t know!”

Ditzzy: (Raindrops) Hey, I think I saw something moving! Let’s crush it!

Trixie sighed, looking down at the slush in the ground and drawing out a few letters – or trying to. Her hoof just seemed to pass through the slush without being able to interact with it at all – which admittedly made sense, to an extent, since nopony had noted hoof-tracks with no owner being made when she had gone up to Carrot Top.

“But I can touch you guys,” Trixie noted. She tried her telekinesis, and found it similarly unable to affect the slush, but a brush of Carrot Top’s hair was apparently

possible – eliciting another surprised shout from her, as despite her telekinesis working, the normal telltale blue effervescence was missing.

Ditzy: The what?

Doctor: The sparkle.

Ditzy: Oh.

Trixie thought a moment, then stamped her hoof – not that it made a sound – when an idea came to her. She took off her hat and cape (also rendered invisible – somehow – Trixie did not understand poison joke's rules)

Ditzy: It's probably not much more than 'Screw with Trixie'.

and threw the latter around Carrot Top's back, despite her protests, and then setting the former down on top of the earth pony's head.

Ditzy: (Carrot) I'm feeling remarkably unfabulous now for some reason.

Carrot Top froze in place. "it's on me..." she said in a very quiet, frightened voice. "Whatever it is...it's on me...my back and my head..."

Doctor: (Carrot) Oh course I would be the first one to die in this!

The other ponies approached cautiously, as Trixie observed, waiting for them to figure things out on their own.

Doctor: (Trixie) Better get comfortable. These dummies might take awhile.

She frowned even as she did, though. "You walked into the poison joke first," she observed. "Why weren't you affected first?"

Ditzy: Karma probably.

Lyra had reached Carrot Top first. "Your head?" she asked softly, staring just above Carrot Top. The earth pony nodded slowly.

Ditzy: (Carrot) It's probably laying its eggs in me!

“Must be earth pony fortitude,” Trixie decided, waving her hoof through the slush again. It was a unique sensation, passing through solid matter, or solid-ish matter, anyway. “Unicorns are more delicate than earth ponies. Raindrops will probably be next, then you.”

Doctor: (Trixie) I'm basing this off of nothing with little evidence on how poison joke works, but I was trained by Princess Luna in deductive reasoning. So there is no way I'm wrong.

“Hold real still,” Lyra said, as her horn began glowing. With a shout, she lashed out with telekinesis, grabbing “whatever” it was that had perched on top of Carrot Top’s head. As her golden aura wrapped around it, it outlined the general shape of Trixie’s hat.

“There,” Trixie said happily. “See? Just my – ”

“It was trying to eat my head!” Carrot Top exclaimed as she backed away. “Look at the size of its mouth! Gah! And something’s still on my back!”

Doctor: (Carrot) I don't want to die! I'll still haven't lived! I haven't even kissed a boy yet!

Ditzy: (Lyra) What? Really?

Doctor: (Carrot) Nevermind about that! Save me!

Trixie’s eyes narrowed in annoyance. They swiftly widened, however, when Lyra threw her hat down onto the slush, and Raindrops landed on it with all four hooves, stomping several times. “You idiots!”

Doctor: Isn't it enduring how quickly Trixie is to verbally abuse anyone she gets annoyed at?

The normally blue, currently transparent unicorn exclaimed, stomping up to Raindrops. “Leave my hat alone!”

Ditzy: (Trixie) It has a wife and foals!

Raindrops paused in her stomping, hefting the hat upwards with one hoof – still grasped in Lyra’s telekinesis – and regarding the shape and feel of it. “I don’t think it’s a monster,” Raindrops observed. “I think it’s a hat.”

Doctor: (Lyra) And an ugly one too! We should burn it on principle.

Carrot Top paused. She had been wrestling with Trixie’s cape, Ditzzy Doo and Cheerilee having grasped its ends in their mouths and pulling at it as well. Trixie wasn’t as concerned for the cape, as it bore several fortifying enhancements that made it far sturdier than its plain cloth would suggest –

Doctor: So tough we had a lion try to tear it apart. Not even a scratch. Trixie’s capes. Tough as steel, soft as a feather.

but her hat did not have such protection. Worst of all, she couldn’t even see the damage.

Ditzzy: Come on. Surely you have a closet full of these things.

“A hat?” Carrot Top asked, then paused as she shifted a little, feeling the invisible thing on her. “And...this feels kind of like cloth...wet cloth, but that’s probably the slush...”

Doctor: (Carrot) It smells nasty. Does she ever wash this thing? Who knows what I just got from it!

“Thank you for that, by the way,” Trixie said, sighing as she stuck a hoof up her hat and began waving it around. The other ponies all started at the sight of Lyra’s aura moving of its own accord.

“Ith Twikthie!” Cheerilee exclaimed suddenly, though she still had a mouthful of cape. She spat it out and tried again. “It’s Trixie! She’s invisible!”

Lyra frowned at that, extending her telekinesis. Sure enough, her aura spreading around Trixie outlined the general shape of a unicorn, as Trixie set her hat on top of her head, ignoring the fact that it was now wet. Somehow. Despite her not being able to interact with the slush.

Poison joke didn't make sense.

Doctor: It probably works on the 'Because it's funny' rule.

She waved at Lyra as she grasped her cape on Carrot Top's back and retrieved it, ignoring its wetness as well.

Ditzy: (Trixie) Eww, Carrot Top is really sweaty!

What she got in return for the wave, however, was a series of annoyed stares. "This isn't funny, Trixie," Cheerilee observed.

Doctor: (Cheerilee) Well, no. It was funny seeing Carrot Top freak out like that.

"I'm not doing it on purpose!" Trixie exclaimed, throwing her forehooves in the air.

Ditzy: (Trixie) Though tormenting Carrot Top was great fun.

She jabbed a hoof at Raindrops, then Carrot Top, then herself, and proceeded to repeat the process.

Ditzy: (Lyra) I don't get it.

"Oh!" Carrot Top exclaimed. "The poison joke!"

"Thank you!"

Doctor: (Trixie) It took you three minutes to figure that out!

"It can turn somepony invisible?" Ditzy Doo asked.

"It can do just about anything, it's magic." Carrot Top explained.

Doctor: Maybe it can ignore the normal rules of magical transmutation and can alter someone's morphogenetic field however it wants.

"Like I've said, it plays a joke on you, takes something you love and twists it."

Ditzy: That makes sense. Trixie is such a raging egomaniac that the best joke is to make her unnoticeable.

“Oh, I get it!” Cheerilee said. “So I guess...it’s because Trixie always wants to be flashy and noticed, so the poison joke turned her invisible and silent!”

Doctor: (Cheerilee) I like it! It’s quiet and peaceful now. And we aren’t constantly being verbally abused by her.

Trixie made a mental note to make sure to later inform Cheerilee that she had been glaring at her after that comment.

All: (Gasp)

Doctor: The horror! The horror!

Ditzy: Don’t! I don’t know if her heart can take it!

“Probably,” Carrot Top confirmed. “It probably affected Trixie first since she’s a unicorn. Unicorns on average don’t have the same kind of toughness as pegasi or earth ponies

Ditzy: (Carrot) Knowing Trixie. She probably completely ignored her constitution stat to boost her other stats so it’s probably 3 or 4.

– no offense, Lyra.”

Doctor: Yeah, like that makes casual racism better.

“And Trixie,” Trixie appended.

“None taken,” Lyra said simultaneously.

“So Raindrops, you’ll probably be – ”

Poomf.

There was an explosion of green from Carrot Top’s mane and tail.

All: Wah wah wahhhhhhhh!

Ditzy: Oh no! That’s not a good look for Carrot Top at all!

The two of them almost instantly tripled in size,

Doctor: Supersize me Poison Joke.

at least, and changed color from orange to a dark green,

Ditzy: Ick, it's not even a good green.

shooting out from her head and dock like streamers. Even after the initial explosion of length, they continued to visibly grow, albeit at a much slower rate.

Doctor: On the plus side, there is plenty of hair to sell for wigs now.

Carrot Top had frozen in place again, eyes wide – probably, anyway, as her eyes were now covered by a mass of green. She looked behind her as well. “M...my mane!” she exclaimed. “My tail!” she tried to flick her tail, but sheer mass meant that she got nothing more than a vague twitch.

Ditzy: (Carrot) Think of the split ends!

The other ponies rushed over to her, the golden aura around Trixie disappearing as she joined them, despite not being visible.

Doctor: Forget about Trixie, this is the real crisis here!

“Are you okay?” Ditzy Doo asked, eyes wide and mostly coming into focus as she examined Carrot Top’s mane, holding it up in her hooves. The longest strands were an easy six feet long at this point. “It’s still growing!”

Ditzy: (Ditzy) Anypony have a buzzsaw?

“Where’s it coming from?” Raindrops asked.

“Magic,” Trixie said, then face-hoofed when she remembered her predicament. Fortunately, Lyra said as much a moment later.

Doctor: Magic, the perfect way to say ‘We don’t need to explain anything’ or have any rules.

Carrot Top had closed her eyes, forcing herself to calm down. "I've always been proud of my mane," she stated. "So that's how the poison joke got me."

Doctor: Sure she spends most of her life in abject poverty, but she still takes great care of her mane and tail.

Ditzy: Oh, so that is why she has nothing in her house. She spends all her free income on hair products.

"Still growing," Trixie observed, hefting up a mass of it with one hoof – eliciting a slight jump from Carrot Top. "Maybe an inch every ten seconds..."

Doctor: (Carrot) Do that one more time and I'm going to kick you Trixie.

Carrot Top stared more-or-less at Trixie. "Do you think you could keep Trixie highlighted, Lyra?" she asked. "I'm...I don't need constant scares."

Ditzy: But it's so much fun!

"Not really," Lyra observed. "I mean, I could, but then Trixie wouldn't be able to walk around on her own."

Ditzy: Like a big girl. We're so proud!

I doubt she wants that."

Doctor: (Lyra) Anypony have some paint?

Ditzy Doo trotted over to where she guessed Trixie was, extending a hoof cautiously.

Doctor: Right into Trixie's nose unfortunately.

Trixie tapped it back, and Ditzy used that as a guide to get beside Trixie and extend one wing over her back. "There," she said. "She's here."

"Thanks," Trixie and Carrot Top said simultaneously

Doctor: Now Carrot 'deer in headlights' Top won't be easily startled by her again.

Raindrops tapped a hoof on the ground. “So I’m guessing it’s really just random,” she said, as she, Cheerilee, and Lyra helped Carrot Top get her still-growing mane out of her eyes. “But I’m next either way.”

Doctor: (Raindrops) It won’t take me alive!

“We need to focus, though,” Cheerilee said,

Ditzy: (Cheerilee) This whole fic has gone off track at least six times now!

as Carrot Top looked morosely at her mane. “The Elements of Harmony. Trixie ran off looking for them. Are they here?”

“Yes,” Trixie responded, before sighing at her own forgetfulness.

Doctor: She was used to being the center of attention.

She gently extended her telekinesis around Ditzy Doo’s head and neck and made the pegasus nod. Surprisingly, Ditzy didn’t resist – apparently she’d anticipated that Trixie would need to do that exact thing.

Ditzy: Why are you so surprised? Come on. I’m not Carrot Top that constantly forgets you’re in the room.

“She’s making me nod my head,” Ditzy said. “So that’s a yes – ”

Poomf.

Everypony blinked at the sound, and turned to look upwards, except for Raindrops. The jasmine-coated pegasus, having grown to be more than thirty feet tall, looked down instead at the other five ponies.

Ditzy: Raindrops is Ant-Pony. Or, eh, Yellowjacket. Or, Giant-Pony. Or, whatever he’s calling himself now.

She blinked a few times. “And now we know,” she boomed,

All: And knowing is half the battle. GI JOE!

everypony else covering their ears at the sound of her voice, which had dropped several octaves and was loud enough to be felt as much as it was heard. “Sorry,” she whispered after a moment, as she backed away from them gingerly –

Doctor: Accidentally breaking a wall behind her.

her hoof-steps shaking the ground slightly – and sat down as best she could in what had suddenly become a somewhat narrow space for her.

Ditzy: And giving herself a horrible leg cramp.

“You okay?” Carrot Top asked, brushing her still-growing mane out of her eyes. It was now at least eight feet long, and her tail was even longer.

Ditzy: (Carrot) Bleh, it's hard not to accidentally eat my mane.

“Fine,” Raindrops whispered, though her size meant that it was still as loud as a normal-sized pony's regular speaking voice.

Doctor: And yet had a very appealing bass voice.

She looked between each of them.

“Why are you a giant now?” Cheerilee asked.

Ditzy: And why is that a bad thing? I think being that big would be awesome!

“Insecurities about being a big, clumsy oaf when flying, probably,” Raindrops observed.

Doctor: (Raindrops) Roofs, walls, windows, you name it and I've crashed through it.

“Either that or insecurities about my anger problem and the possibility that I might hurt somepony when I'm being a big, stupid ball of fury.”

Ditzy: Look fic. You don't really need to explain all of this. You could easily just imply it and that would probably work better.

“You have an anger problem?” Lyra asked. “But you seem...calm.”

Doctor: (Raindrops) Are you kidding? I almost beat Trixie to death yesterday over that stunt she pulled.

Ditzy: She's surprisingly open about her personal problems.

"Oh, she has them," Trixie confirmed, vividly remembering the events of – stars above, had it really only been yesterday afternoon? It seemed like forever...

All: Tell us about it.

Trixie stifled a yawn, then realized that nopony could really see her anyway so there wasn't much point.

Ditzy: (Trixie) Hey! This means I can pick my nose and nopony will notice!

Raindrops also nodded in confirmation to Lyra's question. "I've got a lid on it. Mostly."

Doctor: (Raindrops) Have 12 accounts of assault and battery on my record, but I'm handling it.

She looked to Cheerilee. "Anyway. You were saying?"

The earth pony blinked a few times at how well Raindrops was taking her new size,

Ditzy: Why would it be a big deal? And, hey, it's better than having a super growing mane and being invisible.

then shook her head and looked back to Ditzy Doo, or rather Ditzy's left, where Trixie was still under the pegasus' wing. "So the Elements are here," she said. "Where?"

Trixie pointed at the obsidian statue, paused, slapped her face with her hoof, and then grasped Ditzy's hoof and made the pegasus point.

Ditzy: I'm an invisible interpreter pony now! I wonder if it pays well.

The other ponies all looked at the statue, Lyra's horn beginning to glow as she examined the statue. "...don't feel anything," she said.

Raindrops groaned. "They're fake?" she demanded, forgetting to whisper.

Ditzy: (Lyra) Thanks a lot Trixie! Guiding us here and risking our lives for nothing!

Lyra shook her head quickly lest she anger Raindrops the Titan.

Ditzy: Attack on Raindrops.

Doctor: (Lyra) Please don't kill us! I'm sure we can find the Elements elsewhere!

"No. I don't feel anything. Magic is supposed to be everywhere and in everything. Even when I was overchanneled I still had a bit left in me and always would...but looking at that statue, it's almost like all the magic has been stripped away from it." She shivered slightly. "I didn't know that was possible. I was happier not knowing that was possible."

Doctor: From then on Lyra suffered PTSD flashbacks and nightmares.

Ditzy: Gee, what would happen if she entered a world with no magic at all?

Trixie nudged Ditzy Doo slightly, and the two began trotting forward, up to the statue, stopping within a few feet of it. Trixie reached out telekinetically and began yanking on one of the orbs. It came free surprisingly easily –

Ditzy: Eat that Princess Luna!

when it reached Trixie, it was completely smooth stone, except for an arcane mark carved into its surface.

Ditzy: (Carrot) A 'like me' button?

The spot where the obsidian spike should have been impaling it had simply disappeared "Kindness," she stated, handing the orb off to Ditzy Doo.

Doctor: Subtle.

The other ponies, sans Raindrops and with Carrot Top now lugging an easy twelve feet of mane and tail, crowded around, looking at it.

“That’s...Kindness, I think?” Cheerilee remarked, with Lyra nodding. “Lyra, Trixie, do you think you could get the other four down?”

It took only a few seconds for the two unicorns to take down the five orbs, setting them down in a pile that the ponies quickly surrounded, looking over. “Generosity,” Lyra said, pointing to the one in front of Carrot Top,

All: Get it! Get it!

then began counting them off “Honesty, Laughter, Kindness, and Loyalty,” she finished with the one in front of her. “At least that’s what they told us in Canterlot.”

Doctor: (Lyra) Of course it could just be Night Court manipulation and lies.

“We’re missing one,” Cheerilee noted. “The sixth Element.”

“Which one was that?” Carrot Top asked.

Doctor: Carbon.

Cheerilee, Lyra, and Trixie all shrugged. “It’s a mystery,” Cheerilee explained. “Nopony knows. And whenever anypony asked Princess Luna, the rumors say that she just smiles.”

Doctor: Oh that little minx.

“It’s not a rumor,” Trixie said. “Luna loves being mysterious. It’s annoying.”

Doctor: (Trixie) Personally I think she does it to appear smarter and more cunning than she actually is.

Ditzy: Hey! Just like you Doctor!

Doctor: (Glares)

Nopony heard her, of course. Instead, Cheerilee began trotting around the statue. “I don’t see the sixth Element...”

"It's not here," Trixie said. "It wasn't last time, either. When I asked Luna where it...why am I bothering?"

Ditzy: It's okay Trixie. Ponies barely listen to you anyway.

"Did somepony steal it?" Raindrops asked, as she squinted and leaned forward, looking closely at the nearest Element to her, Honesty.

Doctor: They're really banging us over the head with this. You're not going to keep this secret until the big reveal?

Ditzy: Yeah, only two of them have had a test so far!

Trixie once again grasped Ditzy Doo's head, though this time she made it shake. "Trixie says no," Ditzy Doo answered.

"So where is it?" Lyra asked. After a moment, she realized her mistake. "Right, yes or no questions...is it nearby?"

"Maybe?" Trixie asked, sighing. She tried to conjure up an illusion of words with her horn, but like her telekinetic aura, it was invisible, and nor could she conjure ghost sounds.

Ditzy: Aww, not even the Grudge death rattle?

"Just write in the slush already," Lyra insisted.

"You're being added to my list of 'ponies I'm going to glare at later,'" Trixie responded.

Ditzy: Trixie, you couldn't scare a panicky rabbit away.

She shook Ditzy Doo's head.

"I don't think she can," the pegasus said, as her head shook. "She'd probably have thought of that already if she could."

Doctor:(Lyra) Oh, so she isn't as dim as I thought she was.

"I like you the most, Ditzzy Doo," Trixie said

Ditzzy: (Trixie) When I rise in the Night Court, I'll give you at least a country.

as she got out from under her wing, then put a hoof to her shoulder and used the point of it to trace out a letter on Ditzzy's coat. She continued doing this a few times, until Ditzzy Doo put the idea together.

Doctor: (Ditzzy) I might have picked up sooner if she didn't use the letter 'I'.

"Okay," Ditzzy said. "Hang on, Trixie's going to write on my coat...sort of. I get the idea, Trixie, just go slowly."

"It's my first time too..." Trixie said under her breath, chuckling a little,

Ditzzy: That isn't suggestive in any way.

as she began to 'write.'

Ditzzy: (Ditzzy) Suck it Lyra? Hey!

"No pony...knows," Ditzzy read. "Luna...didn't...tell...me. Just...gave...stupid...riddle."

Doctor: (Luna) What's in my pocket?

"What was it?" Cheerilee asked.

"Said...it...was...right...beside...me."

The ponies all thought about that one. "That?" Raindrops asked, extending a massive hoof and pointing at the statue. "The statue itself?"

"No," Ditzzy responded as Trixie 'wrote.' "That...was...behind...me..."

"Oh!" Cheerilee exclaimed. "Magic! Like your cutie mark? Get it? Because it's beside you?"

Trixie rolled her eyes. "No," she had Ditzzy say.

"That's...on...me...not...beside...me."

Ditzy: Oh, I get it. Air! Wait, that doesn't really answer anything...

Cheerilee deflated somewhat. "Oh..." she said. "Right..."

"Maybe it was Princess Luna?" Ditzy guessed, then 'read' out her response. "No, she says Luna was in front of her." The pegasus paused. "And that she hates Luna right now."

Doctor: (Trixie) Somehow I think I would have been happier as a homeless stage magician on the streets.

"Gotta admit I'm not too fond of her right now either," Raindrops whispered.

Ditzy: (Raindrops) She's worst princess for sure.

"Saving the world shouldn't be this hard. The steps shouldn't be something like journeying through a deadly forest to a ruined castle past death traps

Doctor: Which have not put you in any danger whatsoever.

in order to retrieve ancient artifacts and then figure out how to use them. It should be something simple. Like 'push this button.'"

Doctor: And now where is the fun in that? The hair raising danger makes it exciting!

"Trixie agrees," Ditzy said as Trixie made her nod her head,

Doctor: (Trixie) Thinking is hard! Why can't the world just save itself.

then 'read' as Trixie wrote. "Trixie says she's tired."

Ditzy: (Raindrops) Just have an energy drink and get over it! We have a world to save!

Cheerilee sighed at that. "She's got a point. We need to rest.

Ditzy: (Cheerilee) That way Lyra can have all her spells back..

We've all been up too long and aren't thinking straight.

Ditzy: (Trixie tired) Get the princess and banish the Elements!

We should just take the Elements and hide them somewhere..."

Doctor: (Cheerilee) Anypony have a train station locker we could use?

Trixie sighed. "Can't move them, remember?" she asked as she hefted one at random – the Element of Generosity – and threw it. After about thirty feet, it hit some kind of barrier and bounced back.

Ditzy: Right into Trixie's face.

Trixie caught it as it did, and set it down in front of Carrot Top.

Doctor: Oh, so that is why Luna couldn't just take them. Why didn't you say so earlier?

"I think Trixie just showed us that we can't take them from here," Lyra observed. She sighed. "And we still don't know who set off all those traps..."

Ditzy: Yeah, if it was Corona, who was it?

Doctor: You are going to explain this right?

"We'll rest while we can," Cheerilee said. "Corona will be tied up for days dealing with Canterlot and all the other cities and towns in Equestria, we have time.

Doctor: Funny, you didn't think that earlier. You've been rushing like you've had a short time limit with no time to spare.

Two of us will stay awake, the rest of us should sleep for a few hours, then those two can rest."

Doctor: Any particular reason we need two people to stand watch?

"I'll stay awake," Raindrops volunteered, as she blushed slightly – and a look of embarrassment was the last thing anypony had ever expected to see on her face. "I, um...snore. Given how big I am right now..."

"And me," Ditzy Doo volunteered. "I'm used to not getting a lot of sleep."

Ditzy: (Ditzy) I often spend all night playing Ponycraft.

“Okay,” Cheerilee confirmed, as she trotted forward. “Let’s see if we can’t save the world once we’ve got clearer heads...”

Ditzy: Wait, what is stopping them from drowning in Carrot Top’s hair?

Celestia alighted atop a tall ridge that overlooked the Palace, about a half-mile away from it.

Ditzy: (Corona) Hey I can see thy house from here! Heh, a little joke there.

Truly, the place had seen better days – far, far better days.

Doctor: (Corona) When was the last time anypony mowed the lawn? It’s completely unruly!

To see the once proud structure fallen into disrepair and ruin, fighting a losing battle against the encroaching vegetation of the Everfree Forest, nearly broke her heart.

Ditzy: (Corona) Not my magnolias!

Perhaps, once Canterlot was dealt with, she would rebuild the Palace, and make her capital. Yes, it would be in the midst of the Everfree forest, but for all its peculiarities, the Everfree was still made of leaves and wood, which would burn as easily as in any other forest. It would be a small matter for the rightful Queen of Equestria to shape the Everfree to her desires...

Ditzy: (Corona) I demand an amusement park! And it must have a Merry-go-round!

Doctor: Wait, so you aren’t going to have the center of your government surrounded by deadly forest like last time? Why is the insane alicorn making more sense?

Ah, but she was getting ahead of herself. Glancing over her shoulder, she set down her hostages, surrounding them in fire once more, albeit this time it was as much for their protection against the savage monsters of the Everfree as to keep them contained.

Doctor: And it gave them plenty of opportunity to make s'mores.

Having done thus, she turned around once more to the palace, or intended to, but her intention was instead drawn to a more interesting sight much closer – just at the bottom of the ridge she stood upon, in fact. Approaching her was a zebra, wearing a brown cloak, though as the zebra approached she threw off the cloak, revealing, emblazoned on her flank, a cutie mark of a spiral surrounded by outward-pointing triangles – a sun.

All: (Gasp in horror)

Ditzy: No wonder she's a monster!

Doctor: And because of it, she was obviously born to be evil!

The zebra – Zecora, Celestia supposed – knelt when she had drawn close enough, head pressed to the ground.

It took a considerably amount of effort on Celestia's part, despite how un-Queenlike it would have been, to stop herself from exclaiming Finally! at the sight.

Ditzy: So she settled on a 'Yippy!' instead.

"Queen Corona, it gladdens me to set my eyes upon your majesty!" The zebra exclaimed whole-heartedly, as she looked up.

Doctor: And Corona got uncomfortable when the zebra started fluttering her eyes at her.

That ruined Celestia's good mood, though only a little. "Thy respect is genuine enough," Corona announced, "but thou shalt not address me by that name. Corona is a false title invented by my treacherous sister to assuage her own guilt over her betrayal. I am Celestia."

Doctor: A very valid accusation against her sister.

Ditzy: Yeah, if Princess Celestia didn't make up that name, where did it come from?

"As you wish it to be. I shall follow your decree."

Doctor: Great, now she has to repaint all those 'Hail Corona! Queen of the Equestria!' signs she made.

Celestia noted with some further dissatisfaction that Zecora seemed to have the same poor grasp of Equestrian that everypony did these days.

Doctor: The public education system gets worse and worse every year.

Celestia was no stranger to the evolution of languages – she herself did not know precisely how old she was,

Doctor: That way she could always pretend to be a young mare.

as neither she nor Luna had bothered to keep track of the first few millennia of their existences –

Ditzy: It thankfully made making birthday cakes easier.

but Equestrian had reached a certain nobility a thousand years ago, a nobility which had fallen far by the wayside in the intervening years of her imprisonment, it seemed.

Dissatisfied or no, however, this zebra's intentions were pure enough, and Celestia had far more pressing concerns right now.

Ditzy: What they would call their cool new villain team up group. She was thinking the 'Celestia's Blazers'.

She looked up from Zecora, to the ruined palace. "They have arrived?"

"It is so, my Queen," Zecora said apologetically. "In the palace they convene. I would have stopped them before, but my skills are not those of war. I beg forgiveness of your majesty."

Ditzy: She is the worst bad guy. Not only did she accidentally save thousands of lives, led the good guys to the exact weapon they needed to beat her mistress, and completely failed in stopping them from getting said weapon.

“What skills dost thou possess then, Zecora?” Celestia asked, surprised that the zebra had not rhymed the last thing she had said. Had that peculiar zebra quirk also begun to fall by the wayside?

Ditzy: Either that or the author is slipping.

“My queen, I am blessed with the gift of prophecy.”

Doctor: (Zecora) I run a psychic hotline for all those seeking a comforting commodity.

Ah, there it is, Celestia noted, as one eyebrow raised. Aloud, she continued. “Prophecy?” she inquired. “Certainly thou couldst have taken greater steps to prevent any from challenging my right to rule with such a gift.”

Ditzy: Another thing she’s terrible at.

The zebra bowed her head. “Forgive me, your highness, for being unable. But for some time the future has been unstable. Your return has been all I could see with my gift of prophecy.

Doctor: She’s a bit of a one trick zebra.

I do have other talents, brewing potions and rituals I can run – I used the last to aid your escape from the sun.”

Ditzy: (Blinks) Really? I find that hard to believe.

Doctor: Please tell me you are going explain this. That’s fascinating.

Ditzy: Don’t hold your breath Doctor.

Celestia had been looking again to the ruins of the palace, but froze slightly as she heard Zecora finish speaking, and looked down at the zebra. “What?” she demanded. “Thou...thou believeth that I required thine aid to free myself?”

Ditzy: (Zecora) Y-yes?

Zecora blinked. “The possibility of your return has been known to me for some time,” she said cautiously, “and so we journeyed to the site of your sister’s crime...using

ancient testaments, I worked magic over the Elements, created a storm of great power at the appropriate hour – ”

“Silence!” Celestia exclaimed,

Doctor: Oh come on!

as she leapt down from the ridge and landed evenly in front of the zebra. “I required naught from thee! My escape was under my own power! The Elements are strong, but I am the Sun! Thou didst nothing!”

Ditzy: (Corona) My alicorn over 9000 leet haxness is what freed me!

“H...hey! Leave Z alone!”

Celestia had been glaring down at the zebra - to the mortal’s credit, she didn’t flee from the wrathful alicorn – but at the sound of the small voice from several dozen feet away, she looked up. Charging towards her was a small, green-and-purple creature. He stumbled, however, when her gaze fell upon him, and looked terrified when a white aura wrapped around him and dragged him before Celestia.

Doctor: (Spike) I immediately regret doing this!

“What have we here?” Celestia asked as she held the creature in place, leaning down. “A little dragon? And thou knows this zebra?” The alicorn looked to Zecora. “Thy familiar?”

Ditzy: (Sighs) No! Spike isn’t a familiar, a pet, slave, servant, or anything like that!

Zecora eyed the baby dragon, who was now looking like he had seriously reconsidered his suicidal charge.

Doctor: (Zecora) Sorry my dear old friend of mine, but you are on your own this time.

Celestia, however, only laughed as she leaned back, releasing the dragon from her grip. “Misplaced courage seems to have grown in abundance in mine absence,” she observed.

Ditzy: (Corona) I expect thy subjects to wet thyself with a glare.

“Stupidity as well, but with my sister in charge for a thousand years, this is hardly surprising.

All: Zing!

What is thy name, little dragon?”

The dragon stared, eyes wide. “Spike,” he said.

Ditzy: (Spike) The princess is recognizing me! This is the best day of my life!

Celestia tapped a hoof to her chin in thought. “Spike. A simple name. For that I am grateful – far too many dragons pick names of unnecessary length,

Ditzy: (Corona) Seriously, how does one pronounce Paarthurnax easily?

as though the number of syllables in their names somehow grants them power.”

Doctor: (Corona) Don't they realize that 'Ted' would be just fine?

Celestia turned once more to Zecora. “Thou art in error, my servant. I did not require thy aid. But...what is the saying...’tis the idea that matters.”

Doctor: Yes Zecora, you're a very special Zebra. Here's a gold star to how just how special you are!

Spike looked for a moment like he wanted to speak, but then thought better of it. Celestia turned, leaping once more onto the ridge and looking back to the palace. She had wasted a significant amount of time dealing with the zebra and the dragon. For all she knew, the treacherous ponies – perhaps prepared by her sister for this very eventuality? – already had the corrupted Elements and were waiting for her even now to strike. Regardless, the Elements would be protecting the Palace from any great works of magic, at least from this distance – she could not simply call down a solar flare and immolate the Palace, no. She would need, instead, to test the waters somehow, something that would be enough to reveal whether or not the ponies already had the Elements but which would not put her in danger.

Ditzy: Just send in a shadow clone?

Not that she was in the least bit afraid. Just...cautious.

Doctor: (Corona) Nope, not afraid whatsoever. Some mortal ponies with the power to trap me again for several millennias and put me in never ending isolation doesn't worry me at all! I am the sun after all. And it burns brightly, never cowering in a bush. But, that bush does look rather cozy. I think I take a little rest there. I am quite weary now after all.

Celestia's eyes once more turned to Zecora, and then to Spike. They lingered on him for some time, before she smiled, and her horn began to glow.

Ditzy: Oh come on! Really?! Why can't it be Zecora?

Doctor: I'm surprised you're not more angry about Spike being on the bad guys' side.

Ditzy: Doctor, this whole fic good has been evil and evil has been good. I would have to blind not to see this coming.

Doctor: Anyone else find it a little uncomfortable that anyone in this that isn't a pony is either evil or on the bad guy's side?

Ditzy: Super uncomfortable. I bet you're like the Master in this universe. Or worse!

Doctor: (Sighs) Probably.

[Part 4](#)>