

# Elements of Anarchy

By Undercover Brony



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# Chapter 1

## In Which the Great and Powerful Trixie Makes a Plan

"Only the Great and Powerful Trixie has magic strong enough to vanquish the dreaded Ursa Major!" Trixie smirked smugly, preparing to launch into her favourite tale.

"Oh, give it a rest, you hack." Interrupted a voice from the crowd. "We all know the real story! Not only was it only an Ursa Minor, but the 'Great and Powerful' Trixie was terrified out of her tiny little mind and had to be rescued by Princess Celestia's pet unicorn!"

Trixie fumed. How dare this no-pony insult the Great and Powerful Trixie to her face? Curse that Twilight Sparkle and her interfering ways! Why given a few more moments, the Great and Powerful Trixie would surely have vanquished that beast herself! Every town she visited now it was the same story. Just as she was getting into her stride, some neigh-sayer from the audience would interrupt with some smart-flank comment about that damnable oversized bear or that infuriating purple pest and throw Trixie right off her stride.

Well not this time. The Great and Powerful Trixie was a professional, and the show must go on. Deciding to skip the rest of the Ursa story, she ploughed forward into the next segment of her act- the challenge! "Don't believe the Great and Powerful Trixie? Well then, I hereby challenge yo-"

"Oh, pu-lease! Why would we waste our time proving ourselves against the Feeble and Powerless Trixie? Come on girls, we're leaving." The heckler turned and started trotting off, followed by half a dozen or so other ponies.

To Trixie's dismay, the rest of the crowd seemed to take this as a signal that the performance was over, and began to disperse. Boos and jeers, she could handle. Food being thrown at the stage? Why how kind of her audience to provide her with sustenance! But disinterest? How could anyone possibly not be interested in seeing the Great and Powerful Trixie in person? Just for a moment, something inside her slipped. "No! Wait!"

She stopped herself. What was that? That had sounded a little... desperate. The Great and Powerful Trixie was many things, but desperate was definitely not one of them.

It was time to exit this situation swiftly, with her dignity intact. "The Great and Powerful Trixie is needed elsewhere! Begone!" She summoned up a cloud of black smoke around her, and dived behind the curtains before it could clear. One of these days she was going to have to take the time to learn a *real* teleportation spell.

She had hoped that in Canterlot, where she had once entertained so many eager, attentive and, most importantly, properly respectful crowds, her prior fame would have protected her against these... troublesome allegations. However it now appeared that even here her reputation was in tatters.

There was now only one option left open to her. It was time to prove that the Great and Powerful Trixie was not one to be trifled with. She would challenge Twilight Sparkle, and defeat her. There could of course be no other outcome to their duel. However... perhaps it would be a good idea first to tip the scales even further in her favour. While, of course, usually the Great and Powerful Trixie would want to give her opponent a fighting chance, in a situation as dire as this there could be no risks, however small.

It had come to her attention, rather later than it might have proved useful unfortunately, that Twilight Sparkle had somehow managed to become the embodiment of one of the Elements of Harmony. The Element of Magic, to be precise. Why, such a title was clearly far better suited to the Great and Powerful Trixie! Surely that must be the source of the power that had defeated the Ursa. How had she stolen the Great and Powerful Trixie's rightful destiny away from her?

Then it came to her. Why... it must have been in this very city that Twilight had planned her coup. She was Celestia's personal student, and had left the city only a couple of days before becoming the Element of Magic. Perhaps an investigation of her old rooms would reveal some clue... With a new sense of purpose, Trixie galloped off towards the gleaming spire of Canterlot Castle.

Security in the castle was light. After all, who in Equestria would dream of committing a crime against Princess Celestia? As a result, Trixie easily found her way to Twilight's old room (with directions from a guard, no less). The door wasn't even locked.

It was a tall, open room, and Trixie quickly noticed many shelves of books on a raised platform up a short flight of steps. She'd never been much of a reader- after all, what could a mere book teach the Great and Powerful Trixie? But Twilight was definitely a big book worm, so perhaps one of these books had provided her with the secret to unlock the Elements of Harmony.

She scanned the bookshelves, trying to find one with a promising title. How on earth was she supposed to find anything useful in all this-

"H-Hello? Is someone there?"

Trixie froze at the sound of the unexpected voice behind her.

"Can I help you? What are you doing in my room?"

Slowly, Trixie turned her head, hoping to get a good view of the other pony. She spotted a unicorn's horn... and a pegasus' wings... "Princess Luna. How... unexpected. The guard said this was Twilight Sparkle's room..."

"Oh." The princess paused. "Well it was... still is I guess. But she moved to Ponyville, and I needed somewhere to stay so..." Her voice trailed off. "Are you one of her friends?"

This would require some subtlety Although Luna had also been defeated by Twilight, and as such might have been expected to hold some of the same animosity towards her as Trixie did, from what she had heard the Princess was thoroughly repentant and thus probably not a reliable ally. Still, Trixie did not much fancy trying to find what she was looking for in all those hundreds of books, and Luna most likely knew a fair bit about the Elements of Harmony...

"Why yes, the Great and Powerful Trixie is... an acquaintance of Twilight." Even as a lie she couldn't manage to refer to her as a 'friend'. "Trixie is... researching the Elements of Harmony. Trixie was hoping there would be something useful in her old rooms."

"Really?" Luna looked somewhat surprised "Surely Twilight herself would be the best pony to ask about that?"

"Er..." That was a rather obvious flaw in her logic indeed. But the Great and Powerful Trixie was nothing if not resourceful. "Of course, usually that would be true... Bu-ut you see Trixie is planning a surprise for her! So of course if Trixie asked her it would ruin the surprise"

The Princess was still looking rather confused. "Well, I'm not sure I quite understand what sort of surprise you'd be planning to do with the Elements of Harmony... Still, I don't think it's any kind of secret, not any more at least. I have some... experience with the Elements of Harmony myself." The princess blushed at this reminder of her earlier misdeeds. "What do you need to know?"

Trixie breathed a sigh of relief. Apparently, being stuck on the moon for a thousand years blunted a pony's social skills enough to make it difficult to spot even a pretty blatant lie. Just as the Great and Powerful Trixie had planned, of course. "The Great and Powerful Trixie just wishes to know how Twilight came to become the Element of Magic in the first place, rather than... some other pony?"

"Oh, is that all? It's pretty simple really. All she had to do was bring together the Elements of Honesty, Kindness, Laughter, Generosity and Loyalty- embodied in the spirits of her friends. With the spark of friendship, Twilight was granted the Element of Magic, and with it the power to defeat... er... me..." Her eyes dropped to her hooves guiltily.

Honesty? Kindness? Laughter? Generosity? Loyalty? Pah! Weak emotions, all of them! How had such touchy-feely nonsense given Twilight so much power? Still, Trixie, could now see the form of the spell in her mind. The Great and Powerful Trixie would be able to do it so much better! However, much as it pained her to admit it, she wouldn't be able to do it alone... "But how did Twilight manage to find the other elements out of all the rest of the ponies in Equestria?"

"Oh, that was Celestia's doing." Explained Luna. "She knew what was coming, so she cast a spell to find the best ponies to represent each of the elements. When she saw that they were all in Ponyville, she sent Twilight there with the instructions to make some friends. I think that after that the Elements must have been drawn together somehow, but now I'm just theorising."

"Is there any chance that you might know how to cast that finding spell?" Asked Trixie hopefully.

"Oh..." Luna thought for a moment. "Well I could give it a try, I don't see any harm in it." Her horn began to glow, and a disc of light appeared on the floor between the two ponies. Slowly, the colours began to separate and Trixie could see an image forming inside it...

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Prince Blueblood was cantering through the royal gardens, admiring the many fine flowers on display. None of them, of course, as fine as he, but pleasing to the eye nonetheless. From the corner of his eye, he spotted another fine sight- two very attractive young mares were looking in his direction. When he turned to face them, one of them giggled nervously. A natural reaction, he thought, for a mare to have when noticed by such a fine specimen of stallionhood.

He approached the pair at a slow walk. "Well hello, I am Prince Blueblood..."

"Oh yes..." The mare giggled again. "We know who you are."

"Well of course you do!" Blueblood smirked. "One is, after all, the most eligible bachelor in all of Canterlot!"

"Yeah, you're something alright." Another nervous giggle. To be honest Blueblood was already beginning to tire of them. A small amount of giggling was flattering, but too much just wasn't... ladylike. Plus there was a thought niggling in the back of his mind that something was just a little bit... off.

"We've got biiiig plans for you." The other mare continued. "How about you just follow us somewhere a little more... private."

Well well well. That certainly got his attention all right. He pushed his misgivings aside, enjoying the boost to his already bloated ego. Blueblood, you absolute stallion, he thought. You've still got the touch. He followed the mares off the main path, away into the deeper parts of the garden.

However, it didn't take long for that unsettling feeling to return to him. They really were going quite far from the path, and the weather ponies had been watering the gardens last night so the ground out here was rather... muddy. Why his hooves must be getting positively filthy! "Um... ladies, are you sure this is a good idea? The ground here is quite... damp."

"What's the matter Prince?" More giggling. Definitely NOT nervous giggling. No, he realised, they weren't nervous at all. *They were laughing at him.* "Afraid to get... dirty?"

Oh no.

The other mare kicked him, hard, knocking him off his balance, and he slipped down a nearby slope, sliding down the hill on his side, collecting a fine covering of mud all over. "My beautiful coat!" He exclaimed, dismayed.

Their prank completed, the mares left him to his wallowing, laughing hysterically all the way out of earshot. Slowly, the Prince's despair faded into anger. There was only one thought on his mind.

Rarity.

That... that... COMMONER had humiliated him at the gala. Feeding him carnival food, splattering him with cake, and having the NERVE at the end of it all to yell at HIM! And to make matters worse, it seemed that every mare in Canterlot seemed to be taking HER side! Where once he had been hounded by suitors, now it seemed nopony wanted anything to do with him!

Well this was the last straw. While he knew not how, he vowed that he would bring his regal vengeance down upon her if it was the last thing he did!

After he'd washed all this blasted mud out of his coat, of course.

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"No no no no no!" Photo Finish screamed. "Scratch behind your ear! Harder! Harder! Like a dog! A DOG!"

"Um... OK" Her model desperately tried to stretch her leg around, but she just couldn't reach. As she did so, she suddenly lost her balance and slipped over, falling into a heap and throwing her carefully prepared costume into disarray "I'm sorry..."

"Enough!" Exclaimed Photo Finish, stamping on the button to collapse her camera away. "You are hopeless! HOPELESS! I go!" She pranced out of the studio, her entourage following behind with her equipment while the hapless model slumped dejectedly on the stage.



That Fluttershy! She had invented a whole new form of modelling! And then she had just vanished! Unbelievable! Unforgivable! She had tried to recreate 'ze magic' with other models, but none of them had the poise, the presence, the PASSION to pull it off.

But there was no going back. How could she, after experiencing PERFECTION? After the other fashionista's had failed to recreate Fluttershy's performance they had returned to the more traditional forms of modelling, but not Photo Finish. She refused to be defeated, and her reputation had collapsed because of it.

There was nothing for it. She would have to go back to Fluttershy, and this time she would not be taking no for an answer. Fluttershy would shine across Equestria! Whether she wanted to or not!

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Inkimena nuzzled the rock along slowly, stacking it up onto the pile that she had been building all day. In another couple of weeks, she would be finished harvesting all the rocks from the East field. Of course, by the time she'd done that, it would already be way past the time to start harvesting the South field. It seemed that nowadays she was always behind schedule

There wasn't really anything she could do about it though, now that she was working the farm alone. Her parents were tired out from many years of rock farming, and were unable to work any more. Her sister couldn't help because she spent all day looking after them. Now it was up to her to continue the family business on her own.

Of course... there was her OTHER sister. But that was no good. Pinkamena had abandoned them years ago. She had left behind this life of good honest hard work to live a life of leisure! Partying all day and night in Ponyville while her family lived in poverty... Tears began to well up in Inkimena's eyes.

"Oh Pinkamena, how could you abandon us?" She wailed. "We need you so much, and you never even visit! Not even to see your poor frail parents..." She sniffed back a tear. Despite her family ties, Inkimena just couldn't help but hate her sister for what she had done. Why... she oughta march right on into Ponyville and confront her, let her know all the damage she'd done and... and... oh she didn't know what else.

But... she just didn't have the time. These rocks weren't going to farm themselves. She sighed, and dried her eyes. There was work to be done, and she wasn't going to shirk it like her no-good sister. She ambled off towards the next rock, trying to put her sister behind her.

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Gilda glided aimlessly through the sky. She didn't have anywhere specific to go, and she hadn't come from anywhere in particular either. The past few weeks had stripped her of her entire life. It had all started when she'd gone to visit Rainbow Dash in Ponyville. At first everything had been great, but over the course of her visit things had turned sour between them, and they hadn't spoken since.

When she had returned home, Gilda had realised something disturbing. Nobody she knew actually liked her. Oh, they were polite enough, but she could see it in their eyes- they just didn't want her around. Her only real friend had been Dash, and now even she had abandoned her.

So... she'd taken off. Left her life behind, and flown off into the sunset. It had been cool for a while- gliding wherever the wind took her, taking what she wanted, when she wanted, and generally just doing whatever the hay she wanted. But as time passed, she had started to feel a little weary. Not from flying around all day- she could handle that easy, just this odd feeling like something was... missing.

Idly, she glanced down, and spotted the last thing she wanted to see. Ponyville. Somehow her random flying had brought her here, back to where her problem had begun. For a moment, she wondered whether she should just fly on down, find Rainbow Dash, and apologise for everything. Maybe their friendship could still be salvaged.

Oh hay no. What was she thinking? There was no way in Equestria that she was going to apologise. No, what she needed was payback. She needed something big, something to show Dash that she was the boss and that she didn't need Dash or anyone else.

But what? This was going to take some planning...

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The ball curved gracefully as it flew over the net, bouncing just inside of the line. Ace focused carefully on his swing, artfully guiding the ball back

across the net in a stunning passing shot to land perfe- No, scratch that, to land just outside of the line. Horseapples.

"Out!" Yelled the linespony, raising his hoof in the air.

"Game, set and match, Topspin!" Declared the umpire. "FINALLY."

But he had spoken too soon. Ace was not finished yet. He knew that the ball had been out, of course, but he was damned if he was going to be defeated by anything as easily subverted as the TRUTH. Summoning all his anger, of which he had a plentiful supply considering how badly this match was going, he spat out his racket and launched into an angry tirade. "You canNOT be serious! The ball was clearly on the line! It was on the line!"

Unfortunately, the umpire did not seem particularly impressed by his outburst. "Not this again, Ace. You don't have to contest EVERY SINGLE POINT that you loose, you know. The ball was out, we all saw it."

"It was on the line! I'm making an official challenge. That means you have to consult Hawkeye!"

"Ugh... fine." The umpire sighed. He turned to a griffin which was hovering above the court. "Hey, Hawkeye, was the ball in or out?"

"Huh? What? Oh... I'm sorry, I wasn't paying attention." The griffin replied.

"Just let him have the point, I don't mind." Interjected Topspin. "It's just a game, after all, nothing to get all worked up about."

Just a game? JUST A GAME? That only riled Ace up even more. This wasn't just a game, this was the quarter final of Wimbridle! The most prestigious tennis competition in Equestria! And he was Ace! Five times winner! Equestrian number one (until recently), and if he lost this game he'd have been knocked out of the last three tournaments he'd entered in a row without even seeing a semi-final.

Still he shouldn't complain too loudly, as it appeared that Topspin's sentiment had had the desired effect. "You know what, fine!" Snapped the umpire. "I'm tired of arguing with you Ace. 40-15, Topspin serving for the match. Let's just get this over with already."

Ace picked up his racket with a grin on his face. Advantage Ace! He thought. Across the court, Topspin tossed the ball up in the air, raised his racket high... and smashed the ball right past Ace's face, so fast that he never even had the chance to get a glancing blow. Before the umpire could say anything, Ace spat out his racket again and started shouting. "I wasn't ready! That doesn't count! Nobody gets an ace past Ace! You all know it! It never happens! It was out anyway! His foot was over the line! I demand a rematch! Topspin should be disqualified!"

The umpire waited patiently until Ace had run out of excuses then, with great relish, delivered his verdict. "Game, set and match Topspin. No arguments, no rematches, no disqualifications." He paused. "Although having said that I may bring your unsportsponylike outbursts today to the Equestria Tennis Association if I hear another peep out of you today Ace."

Defeated, Ace trotted dejectedly off the court, shunning Topspin's offer to shake hooves. How had it all gone so wrong? Not so long ago he'd been on top of his game, best in the world, but now it seemed that nothing ever went his way any more.

Except, of course, he knew exactly where it had gone wrong. His lucky racket... ruined! He'd washed it, changed the strings, tried everything he could think of, but after that day it had somehow never felt the same again, and he had been hopeless ever since. He was sure now that the racket was *cursed*.

What's more, he knew who had done it. He'd seen it in her eyes when he'd first noticed what had happened. Guilt, that's what it was. And honestly, the clue was in the name- who else would have been responsible for smashing apples with his racket than Ponyville's own Applejack? There was absolutely no possible way that he could be wrong on this.

But maybe, just maybe, there'd be a way to break the curse. Break Applejack, break the curse! Of course! Why hadn't he thought of this before? That was LOGIC right there, plain and simple...

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"Oh dear..." Luna frowned. "I don't think that was right. None of those ponies looked like they'd be very good Elements of Harmony at all. One of them wasn't even a pony. I'm sorry I couldn't be any more help."

On the contrary Princess, thought Trixie. I think you've just given me exactly what I needed. "Well, never mind." She said out loud, trying to sound disappointed "It was only a demonstration after all. You've been very helpful." She had to go now, and find these ponies before they moved too far from where she'd seen them in the vision. "The Great and Powerful Trixie thanks you. Goodbye!" With that she galloped out of the room, eager to set her plan in motion.

"Goodbye!" Luna called after her. "Um... thanks for visiting me!" She stared down at her hooves dejectedly. It was so rare for her to get visitors, and this one had left in such a hurry. "I never did get a chance to ask who this Trixie was that she kept talking about..." She muttered to herself.

# Chapter 2

## In Which the Great and Powerful Trixie Casts a Spell

Blueblood carefully combed his damp mane, a process which usually took quite some time to get just perfect. The mud was now gone, thankfully, although the wound to his pride would likely linger for some while.

“Ahem.” A pale blue pegasus was standing in the doorway to his suite, draped in a rather ridiculous looking cape and hat. “The Great and Powerful Trixie wishes an audience with the Prince.”

His guard was up now, he wasn't about to get caught out again. “Yes, well she'll have to wait. One only just finished cleaning oneself up after the last one of you damn foals messed up one's coat. What is it this time? Mud again? Cake? Glue? That last one is in particularly bad taste I must say.”

“Oh, but you misunderstand me my Prince! In fact Trixie is here to discuss Rarity...”

“No, that's exactly what I understood you to be doing.” Interrupted Blueblood. “I must warn you that I am not above involving the guards if you intend to cause trouble, and believe me when I tell you that whatever jape you have planned will seem much less amusing from the inside of a jail cell.”

“Is that so? How unfortunate...” Trixie feigned disappointment. “Well in that case Trixie will just have to leave you to your own devices. And after all the effort Trixie put into a most excellent 'jape', as you call it. Why it would have been glorious to see that smile wiped off Rarity's horrible, uncouth, common face when Trixie's plan came to fruition, but if you aren't interested-”

“Wait!” Blueblood darted in front of Trixie, slamming the door shut before she could leave. “You're telling me that Trixie... er... you, that is, think that I am the one who was wronged?” He was warming to this unicorn. It was... odd how she kept referring to herself in the third person, but then again one did that oneself sometimes. Perhaps it was a sign that she was a bit more refined than she had at first appeared.

“Why of course! Was there ever any doubt?” Exclaimed Trixie. “She was disrespectful, rude, entirely out of line and inconsiderate of your noble position! The Great and Powerful Trixie has confronted her before, and don't you worry- Rarity was soundly humiliated! But this time, it will be even better...” She paused, to give him time to properly take this all in. “So... are you in?”

The Prince grinned. Oh revenge, sweet revenge! “Yes Indeed! I'm 'in' as you say. So what's the plan? I want to know EVERYTHING!”

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The next closest pony that Trixie had seen in Luna's spell had been Photo Finish. Her studio was in Canterlot, however by the time that the pair of them got there she was nowhere in sight, perhaps unsurprisingly since she had already been on her way out when Trixie had last seen her.

Fortunately, as they arrived, the model from the shoot earlier was just leaving. The running make-up on her face indicated that she had been crying, but Trixie had little patience for such mushiness, and didn't seem to notice. “The Great and Powerful Trixie is looking for Photo Finish. Where is she?”

“I don't know. She just... stormed out...” The model began to sob again. “Wh-what am I going to do? My career is over...”

“Yes, yes, very tragic I'm sure.” Blueblood yawned pointedly. “But that doesn't help us find her.”

“Um... she might be lunching in 'La Jeune Jument', but I'm afraid that's just a guess... I'm sorry I can't be more help... I suppose I really am useless...” The tears were flowing freely now.

“Indeed you are! What good is 'might'? I'll have you know that we are on very important business and need to find this Photo Finish at once.” Blueblood's cruel words were apparently too much for the young model, and at that point she ran off sobbing uncontrollably. “What a rude girl...” He muttered. “We ask her a simple question and she just refuses to give us a straight answer.”

Trixie sighed frustratedly; the more time they spent looking for Photo Finish, the harder it was going to be to find the others. “We should check out the café at least.”

La Jeune Jumet was a classy establishment in the most expensive part of Canterlot, save for the castle itself. It sat on a slight rise overlooking a bustling square, and anypony who was anypony could be found there. It certainly seemed like a reasonable bet to look for a fashion photographer.

As it turned out, they were in luck. On entering the café Trixie spotted Photo Finish, who had apparently ditched her assistants at some point, eating alone in the back. However, just as she was about to walk over, she found her path blocked by a waiter.

“Do you have a reservation?”

“The Great and Powerful Trixie does not need a reservation!”

“Yes she does. At least if she wishes to avail herself of this establishment that is.”

Just as Trixie was about to explode with rage, Blueblood intervened, attracting the waiter's attention with a very pointed cough. In an instant, his attitude transformed. “Oh, my unreserved apologies Prince Blueblood. I did not notice you there. Of course if you are with this... Lady then I will prepare a table once away.”

“Actually, we are here to meet with Photo Finish...” Explained the Prince.

“Oh? She didn't mention that she was expecting visitors...” The Prince shot the waiter an angry glance, and he immediately caved in. “But of course why would she bother to mention such a thing to me? I will lead you to her.”

As the waiter led them through the restaurant, Blueblood leant over to Trixie to whisper conspiratorially in her ear. “I think it would be best if I do the talking. My Princely charm will no doubt work wonders towards convincing her to join our cause.”

Normally, Trixie would have vigorously contested any suggestion that anypony could do anything better than her, but this time she decided to hold her tongue. She wanted to see what her new ally was capable of. Plus she rather suspected that the Prince was overestimating his charm, and she always enjoyed watching other ponies fail. And once he did fail, of course, the Great and Powerful Trixie would step in to save the day!



The waiter had now reached Photo Finish's table, and left the three of them alone, perhaps intuitively detecting the impending clash of egos. "Vat do you vant?" Asked Photo Finish curtly.

"Good day, I am Prince Blueblood, and-"

"Don't care. Go."

"B-But, I am a Prince of Equ-"

"Are you a model? A designer? A journalist?"

"Well, no, bu-"

"Don't care. Go."

Time for the Great and Powerful Trixie to make her move! "I know a model..."

"So? I know lots of models." Countered Photo Finish. "Go."

"May I say just one more word?" Asked Trixie, sweetly.

"You just did." Photo Finish paused for a moment, then relented. "But fine, say one more. Zen go."

"Fluttershy..."

That was the magic word, all right. All of a sudden Photo Finish was standing on the table, her face inches from Trixie's. "You can get her for me?"

"Well... no, but..."

In an instant, Photo Finish was seated once again, her disinterested expression returning to her face. "Zen go."

"Fluttershy is a shadow hanging over your legacy. As long as she is around, you will never be able to put her behind you. If she will not model for you, then you need to be rid of her. Permanently. The Great and Powerful Trixie can help you with that."

Photo finish sat in thought for a moment, before finally making her decision. "Yes.... YES! Zat could vork! Tell Photo Finish more..."

The changing rooms at Wimbridle were well appointed, luxurious and, most importantly for Ace in his current mood, closed to the public. So it was quite an unwelcome surprise when three ponies that he didn't know burst in on him, interrupting his busy afternoon of moping around feeling sorry for himself. "How did you get in here?" He asked angrily. "I told security I didn't want to speak to anypony!"

"Those amateurs could not prevent a pony as brilliant as the Great and Powerful Trixie from going where she pleases!" In fact, it had been Blueblood's royal heritage which had opened doors for them once again, but Trixie never let an opportunity to brag pass her by.

"If you're journalists, I'm not doing any interviews." Ace snapped.

"I, Photo Finish, do not stoop to journalism!" Cried Photo Finish incredulously. "Certainly not SPORTS journalism!"

"Then what *are* you here for?" Ace asked exasperatedly. "I'm a busy pony you know..."

"Really?" Prince Blueblood scratched his head. "Surely you should be free all week since I thought you'd just been knocked out-"

Trixie swiftly stuffed her hoof into the Prince's mouth. She didn't need him antagonising potential new recruits. How to play this? The tennis player was superstitious to the brink of insanity, best to work off that. "You have problems with a curse, correct? The Great and Powerful Trixie can help you with that."

As she had planned, that prospect perked him up immediately. "You can? How?"

"Simple, for one as powerful as Trixie." Trixie smirked. "All we have to do is eliminate the source of the curse, and then the curse itself will just fade away. I take it you know who placed this curse on you?" She already knew his mind, but thought it better to let him think this was a collaborative effort.

"Applejack..." Ace grinned. "Funny, I had the same idea myself... But how?"

Like putty in Trixie's hooves! "Don't worry yourself, the Great and Powerful Trixie has formed a plan already!"

It was turning dark at the rock farm by the time that Trixie and her new allies arrived, but Inkimena was still out in the fields working. It wasn't often that anypony visited the farm, so she was quite surprised to see four arrive at once. "Hello, are you lost?" She asked. "Ponyville is on a different road, if that's what you were looking for."

"Oh, we're on our way to Ponyville all right." Admitted Trixie. "But the Great and Powerful Trixie does not get lost! You see, before we headed there we needed to talk to you first..."

"M-me?" Her jaw dropped. "Wh-what could you possibly need to talk to me about?"

"Why, about your sister of course..." Prince Blueblood explained.

Ah. Well that explained it. They weren't interested in her at all, they were after Pinkimena. "I HAVE NO SISTER." Wait... no that wasn't right. Her sister was busy looking after her parents right now. "I mean... I do have a sister. But not the same sister that you're thinking of."

"Let Trixie do the talking, Blueblood. It isn't your strong suit..." Hissed Trixie in the Prince's ear, before switching to her best attempt at a sweet and reassuring voice as she turned back to Inkimena. "Trixie knows how terribly your sister has treated you. That's why we're here! With your help, we can get her back for all the trouble she has caused you."

The glimmer of a smile appeared on Inkimena's face as she considered the offer these strange ponies had placed before her. Could this be it? A chance for Pinkimena to finally get her comeuppance? Then her head sank. No... of course it was too good to be true. "I'm sorry, but I can't help you. I can't leave the farm, not when I'm already so far behind."

"No, no, no!" Exclaimed Photo Finish. "Ve need you for ze magic! You simply must! You must!"

"Magic you say? Why yes of course!" Trixie grinned triumphantly. "The Great and Powerful Trixie's magic will once again save the day! You need these rocks moved, yes? Where?"

Inkimena gestured towards a large rock pile. "But even if you all help it will take several days to finish this field, and then I'd have to get started on the next one."

“Oh, but you underestimate the Great and Powerful Trixie! Just watch!” Her horn began to glow, shining from beneath her hat, and the rocks began to rise around them, and throw themselves at high speed towards the rock pile. “Blueblood, while Trixie is quite capable of doing this alone, your assistance would speed this along!”

“Surely you cannot expect a Prince to-”

Trixie interrupted him before he could even finish his complaint. “Do you want your revenge on Rarity or not?”

With a sigh, Blueblood summoned up his magic. His horn began to glow as well, and more rocks joined the aerial procession towards the rock pile. With the two unicorns working together, the harvest was complete in a matter of minutes. “Are we done now?” He asked. “We don't have all day...”

“I... I don't believe it...” Inkimena was dumbstruck. She dashed up to Blueblood and Trixie and embraced them. “It would have taken weeks for me to do that on my own!” Her joyful expression hardened into one of fierce determination. “Now I can come with you, and teach Pinkemena a lesson she won't forget...”

“Yes, yes very good.” Blueblood pulled himself away and brushed himself off. “Now can we please get out of here before all this dust ruins my mane?”

-

Gilda was gliding along absent mindedly when suddenly something whizzed past her face at high speed. “What the?” Again, on the opposite side. Something small, round and yellow... She looked behind her, trying to see where they were coming from. Down below, she spotted a group of five ponies gesticulating at her. One of them was holding a tennis racket, presumably the source of what she now realised had been balls hurtling past her.

With a sudden burst of speed, she dived down towards them, landing right in front of them in a skid. Pulling herself up to her full height in an attempt to look as menacing as possible, she growled an angry greeting. “What in the hay do you want?”

“I want the curse on my racket to end!”

“I want somepony who can model for me like Fluttershy could!”

"I want my sister to pay for abandoning her family!"

"I want Rarity to rue the day that she humiliated me!"

"The Great and Powerful Trixie wants to destroy Twilight Sparkle and show the whole world that Trixie is the greatest pony that has ever lived!" She paused, trying to regain her composure. "But that's really not important right now, what really matters is what do YOU want?"

"Right now?" Gilda glared at them angrily. "Right now I quite fancy banging five dweebs' heads together for nearly knocking me out of the sky!"

"OK, yes, anger is good..." Trixie giggled nervously. While of course the Great and Powerful Trixie was scared of nothing, an angry griffin a few inches from her face was rather... unsettling. "But perhaps you could channel it better towards a certain pale blue pony with a mane all the colours of the rainbow?"

Well that was interesting. Almost as if this pony could read her mind... Gilda leant back, her fury subsiding for now. "Fine, you've got my attention. Tell me more..."

-

It took a while for Trixie to lay out her full plan for the others, and it was nearing midnight by the time the explanation was drawing to a close. "OK," said Gilda, trying to get her head around it all. "So I get that we each have a bone to pick with one of the Elements of Harmony? What you're saying is that there are these opposing elements..."

"The Elements of Anarchy, yes..."

"And we can use these to get our revenge?"

"Yes, that's all very interesting and all," Blueblood interjected before Trixie could reply. "But where exactly are we supposed to get these Elements from?"

Oh, she had been looking forward to this moment... Saving the best till last. "Why, don't you understand? The spirits of the Elements of Anarchy are right here!" As she spoke she began to summon up her magic, however instead of glowing, her horn seemed to absorbing light into itself, shrouding their moonlit surroundings in a growing darkness.

“Ace, who when faced with defeat resorted to lies and coercion in a desperate attempt to gain victory, represents the spirit of... DECEPTION!” As she spoke, the darkness spread towards him, surrounding him in a black mist.

“Photo Finish, who thinks nothing of shattering a pony's dreams with nothing more than a word represents the spirit of... CRUELTY!” Now she too was coated in the fog, fanning her hooves uselessly to try to clear it away from her face.

“Inkimena, who has, Trixie must say, possibly the dullest and most uninspiring existence imaginable, represents the spirit of... DEPRESSION!” Unlike Photo Finish the grey pony seemed resigned to the darkness now engulfing her, and made no attempt to resist it.

“Prince Blueblood, who cares about nopony but himself, represents the spirit of... GREED!” The Prince stood tall as the wisps of smoke curled around him, his chest swelling with pride.

“And Gilda, who by joining with us is turning against her oldest friend, represents the spirit of... BETRAYAL!” The blackness was flowing around all of them now, so thick that they could no longer see the fields, the stars, or the moon, only each other.

“When those elements are ignited by the spark of common hatred that resides in the heart of us all, it creates the sixth element. The element of...”

“POWER!”

# Chapter 3

## In Which the Great and Powerful Trixie is Great and Powerful

Fluttershy always awoke a little before the dawn. She had to feed the nocturnal animals before they went to sleep, and then prepare breakfast for the other animals so that it would be ready for them when they woke up. This was her favourite time of day- most of the other ponies in Ponyville would still be asleep, and so the town was so quiet that it almost felt like she was the only pony in the world. Fluttershy *liked* quiet.

So it was somewhat of a surprise when she heard someone knocking on her door. It was a very impatient knock, a constant drumming that made it very clear that whoever was outside was just going to keep on hitting the door until someone answered it.

Well, she certainly didn't want to keep anyone waiting. She rushed over to the door and pulled it open. "I'm sorry... I wa-" She stopped short as she saw who it was. "Oh... hello Photo Finish. Can I-"

"Help me? Yes of course! But in fact it is I, Photo Finish, who vill be helpink you!" Photo Finish pushed past her and into the cottage. Around the pony's neck was a necklace, set with a pitch black jewel. "This, Fluttershy, is your very last chance to shine across Equestria! I varn you, refuse me now and you vill not have the chance again!"

"Um..." Fluttershy bit her lip. Her natural reaction was, as usual, to meekly acquiesce to whatever request was made of her, no matter how much she didn't want to. She concentrated hard, trying to remember the advice Rainbow Dash had given her about being more assertive. "No." She'd done it! "I'm sorry, I- I just can't."

The other pony sighed. "Vell, nopony can say I didn't try. Come, Fluttershy, your destiny awaits." She strutted outside, looking back behind her at the pegasus, who hadn't moved. "I told you, no more chances. No photos, I sveal!"

Well, she supposed that if Photo Finish wasn't going to be making her model any more then she might as well go with her and see what else she

wanted. It seemed a little rude to refuse two requests in a row. She followed Photo Finish outside, but when she saw what was waiting for her out there she froze.

It seemed that Photo Finish was not alone. Fluttershy recognised Trixie, though her hat and cloak were now pitch black. There were also three ponies that she didn't know, and one griffon who she definitely knew all too well. All of them were wearing necklaces like Photo Finish's. "S'up dweeb?" Asked Gilda as she detected Fluttershy's gaze upon her.

"Hello..." She squeaked, so quietly that it was barely audible. "What is it that you wa-"

"I gave you every chance!" Snapped Photo Finish. As she spoke, the sun was just beginning to rise above the horizon, however for some reason the area around Fluttershy's cottage seemed to be getting darker and darker. "All I ever wanted was to make you a star!" Fluttershy gasped as she noticed that a black smoke was rising around her. She flapped her wings to fly away, but her hooves seemed to be rooted to the spot. "But you refused! Threw my generosity in my face not once but twice now!" The cloud was all around her now, and she could see nothing of the world around her. She tried to yell out an apology, a cry for mercy, but her voice had failed her. "Now... You go!"

The darkness collapsed inwards, and in an instant Fluttershy was gone.

-

It was... night-time again? Fluttershy looked upwards into the black sky. It was dark, but there were no stars... hesitantly she turned her head, then swiftly averted her gaze from the blinding brightness of the sun. No, it was daytime, but the sky was pitch black. A rising feeling of dread welled within her. Below her the ground was grey, an endless desert of rock which seemed to stretch to infinity in every direction. Above her, a beautiful blue green ball. Beautiful, yes, but oh so very far away...

*She was on the moon...*

Now she really was the only pony in the world. It was quiet, alright, but too quiet. Usually right now she'd have been listening attentively to the dawn chorus, waking all her animal friends and preparing for another day. And even though she did like to be alone sometimes, she would always



look forward to meeting Rarity, Applejack, Twilight, Rainbow Dash, Pinkie Pie... and all her other friends in Ponyville.

Tears were welling up in her eyes. Now that she realised that she'd be alone forever, it suddenly seemed that it was the worst thing imaginable. She sobbed into her hooves. "Oh Fluttershy, why did you have to go and be so assertive..?"

-

It was coming up to harvest time at Sweet Apple Acres, and Applejack looked out over the orchards with pride. So many lovely juicy apples just hanging there waiting to be picked, why she could hardly wait to get started.

"Hello there.... Applejack." She almost jumped out of her skin at the unexpected sound of a voice behind her. She spun around, splaying her front legs wide preparing to pounce on the intruder.

However, once she saw who it was she relaxed. "Well, Howdy, Ace! Ah must admit you gave me a mighty fine shock fer a moment then, sneaking up on me like that! Are you here for some apples? Ah tell you, lovely healthy apples are a fine dish for a sportspony like yerself!"

"Enough games Applejack!" Growled Ace. "I'm tired of beating around the bush! I know it was you who destroyed my racket!"

"Your racket? That's what all the fuss is about? Hay, that weren't me! It was Applebl-" She stopped herself. Now that she thought about about it, Ace looked awfully upset. There was no way that she was going to expose Applebloom to his anger. If he was really serious about having it out over this, then it was going to be with her, not her sister. "Ah mean, yeah, you got me. But t'aint nothing to get all bent out of shape over! It's only a little apple juice, surely you can just wash it off and it'll be as good as new!"

"Oh please, I know you cursed it! What other reason could there be that I keep LOOSING?"

"Oh lordy..." Applejack sighed. "Ah did what exactly? Listen mister, ma friend Twilight, who's one hella lot smarter than this here pony, says there's no such thing as curses, and even if there was then ah sure as hay wouldn't have anything to do with them! Maybe you lost because the other pony played better than you could!"

"I said no more games Applejack!" Ace started to cackle. "I have friends! Powerful friends! You're going to regret crossing me!"

"Friends? What friends? Ah don't see any-"

"Ahem." A voice behind her again? Once more she span around, ready to charge, and this time she did not relax once she saw who it was.

"Trixie." She growled. "Ah see that you brought some backup this time. What's the matter, not feeling so 'great and powerful' after Twilight whupped your flank last time so that you need an army to take on lil old Applejack in the rematch?"

The unicorn snorted. "Oh, believe me, if you were all that the Great and Powerful Trixie was up against then Trixie would not require assistance to defeat you. Do you not recall our previous encounter? No, you are merely the prelude to Trixie's grand plan!"

"Ah've had just about enough of you, Trixie." With a growl, Applejack leapt forward... or at least she tried to. She seemed to be anchored to the spot by strange black tendrils that were now spreading across the rest of her body. "What in Equ-" She was cut off mid sentence as the darkness collapsed around her, and she vanished. On the ground, spinning slightly for a moment before coming to a stop, was a Stetson hat.

"Game, set, and match!" Ace grinned, smugly.

Blueblood groaned. "Oh, please tell me that that wasn't the 'grand send-off' that you kept going on about..."

-

"-estria?" Applejack looked around herself in confusion. *Whelp, looks like ah'm stuck on the moon then...* "Oh... horseapples."

Any thought of her own predicament, however, was swiftly banished when she heard another pony sobbing. "Oh no... Fluttershy, they got you too?" She rushed over to her friends side. "Are you all right there sugar-cube?"

For a moment, the tears stopped flowing from Fluttershy's eyes, and the faintest of smiles appeared on her face. "A-Applejack? Oh, I'm so glad you're here!" Then, she started weeping again. "I'm so sorry! I mean... I'm

glad I'm not alone any more, not that I'm glad you got banished to the moon... I'm such a terrible friend..."

"It's all right, ah know what you meant. Don't you fret any more, we'll get through this together, okay? Everything'll be alright..." *Though ah don't right know how...*

-

"Wow, Rainbow Dash!" Gasped Soarin. "You're the most amazing flier I've ever seen!"

"Please, we're begging you..." Spitfire pleaded. "Join us. Join the Wonderbolts."

"Aw schucks guys!" Rainbow Dash preened herself. "Of course I'll join you, it's no problem at all."

Soarin looked down at his hooves dejectedly. "I guess I'm out then... there's no way I can possibly be in the same team as someone as cool as you, Rainbow."

"It's alright Soarin, I'm sure that if you hang with me some of my cool will rub off on you. You don't have to leave."

"Wow Rainbow Dash..." Spitfire couldn't help but gape in awe at Rainbow's kindness. "You're such a wonderful pony! Say, I don't suppose you could WAKE THE HAY UP YOU LAZY PILE OF FEATHERS!?"

Rainbow's eyes shot open as her dream was rudely interrupted. She stared angrily at the cause of her awakening, her anger only intensifying (by way more than just 20%) when she realised who it was that had woken her. "Gilda. Just what the hay do you think you're doing here? If you aren't here to apologise then you'd best leave right now before you get hurt..."

"Apologise?" Gilda snorted. "As if. But if YOU feel like apologising I MIGHT just be willing to forgive you."

"Not on your life." Replied Rainbow incredulously. "What do you want? If you're here to cause trouble again, then you'd best be ready for a fight. Upset Fluttershy like you did last time and I won't be held accountable for what I do to you..."

The griffon smirked. "Whoops. Too late."

“What? What did you do to her? Tell me!”

“Same thing I did to Applejack, of course!”

“Applejack as well? What have you done Gilda?”

“If you want to find out, you'll have to catch me!” Gilda span around and dived out of the clouds towards the ground, with Rainbow following close behind. She realised that they seemed to be heading towards a group of ponies waiting down below. Dash gasped as she recognised Trixie. There was definitely something fishy going on here.

Gilda landed neatly alongside her allies, and Dash dropped down in front of them. “Is this supposed to scare me, Gilda?” She asked. “If you think I'm going to back down just because I'm outnumbered six to one then you've got another thing coming!”

“Oh, I know you're not going to back down, Dashie.” Gilda grinned. “You're stupid like that. You know, this really is all your fault. If you'd only apologised to me then none of this would have happened.”

“Sure, I'll apologise!” Dash yelled. “I apologise in advance for the terrible things I'm about to do to the whole lot of you! Take this!” She leapt into the air... then immediately came crashing down again, her legs splayed around her. “What the?” It was only now that she noticed the dark smoke swirling around her. “Gilda? Wh-what did you do?” Then, she was gone.

“Sorry Dash. Guess payback's a bitch, eh?”

-

“Oh no you don't, nobody gets the better of Rainbow Dash!” Dash set her aim for the globe above her and took off, eager to return to the fray.

“Whooooaa there Nelly!” Yelled Applejack, grabbing Rainbow's tail to hold her down.

The pegasus span, only now noticing that she wasn't alone. “Applejack! Fluttershy! Thank Celestia you're alright! I was worried Gilda had done something terrible.”

“Um... well I think she sort of did...” Muttered Fluttershy.

“Yeah, well that's why I've got to get back there right now to teach her a lesson! So let go of my tail already so I can go kick some griffon flank!”

“Hear me out first before you rush off, alright Rainbow?” Said Applejack, releasing her hold. “Don't you realise how far away we are? Even with your speed, it'll take you forever to get home, and where does that leave me and Fluttershy? Besides, Nightmare Moon was stuck up here for a thousand years- don't you think if it was as easy as just flying back she'd have done that herself?”

“Well we can't just do nothing! I am not hanging around on this rock for a millenium!”

“Ah wasn't suggesting waiting that long. Aint you noticing a pattern here? First Fluttershy, then me, then you? Photo Finish has a grudge against Fluttershy for quitting modelling, Ace has a grudge against me for some reason ah can't quite fathom, and Gilda definitely has a grudge against you. Then there was that male unicorn, ah think he was the one that Rarity had that obsession with at the Grand Galloping Gala, if you remember that ended pretty badly. Plus Trixie definitely has a reason to hate Twilight. Ah don't know who that grey pony was, but ah'd be willin' to stake Sweet Apple Acres on her having some sort of problem with Pinkie Pie.”

Rainbow shrugged. “So what?”

“So,” Applejack continued. “They'll be going after the others next. You won't be able to get back to warn them in time, so let's just sit tight up here until the rest of them get here and we can work out a solution together, OK?”

“OK, fine.” Dash crossed her front legs. “But just for the record, I could totally have dealt with those losers on my own.”

-

Rarity was just setting up shop for the day when there was a knock on her door. “Co-ming! We're just about to open, so if you just hold on a moment I'll be right wi-” As she threw open the door, her expression suddenly changed to one of annoyance. “Oh. It's you. What do you want?”

“Lady Rarity, I was hoping that you would accompany me for... a short trip.” Blueblood was doing his best to pile on the charm. He planned to build up Rarity's hopes, then crush them and send her to the moon.

He had rather overestimated his abilities. "Not if you were the last stallion in Equestria." Snapped Rarity. "Goodbye." She slammed the door in his face. The knocking immediately started up again. "Go away! I'm not int-"

The door suddenly crashed open. "The Great and Powerful Trixie does not have time for this!" This was the critical phase of her plan- everything hinged on divide and conquer. The first three targets had all been away on the outskirts of town, but now she had been forced to come to the centre, and every moment wasted increased the likelihood of being discovered and having to take on three opponents at once. While the Great and Powerful Trixie would of course be victorious, she wanted to take as few risks as possible.

"YOU!" Growled Rarity. Trixie was the last pony that Rarity wanted to see. Aside from Blueblood of course, who was now following her in, along with the rest of her allies. "Get out of my shop! All of you! We are CLOSED!"

With his original plan scuppered, the Prince decided to skip straight to the 'crushing' part. "You are the most horrible, dirty, uncouth pony that I have ever had the misfortune to meet!"

"Hah! Well YOU are the most inconsiderate, stuck up, conceited pony that I have ever had the misfortune to meet! Now get out of my shop!"

The Prince smiled the most horribly self satisfied smirk that Rarity had ever seen. "Ladies first..."

"Whatever do you mean?" Rarity had been so caught up in her argument that she hadn't even noticed that she had been completely surrounded in Trixie's dark magic. The realisation dawned rather too late. "Oh..." She vanished.

-

For whatever reason, while the others had appeared on the moon's surface, Rarity arrived just a short distance above it. Not far up for the weak gravity to cause her any harm, but far enough up for her landing to be rather lacking in grace. A small crater had formed around her, and the moon dust that had previously been settled there was now distributed all over her coat and mane.

"Are you OK Rarity?" Asked Applejack, with some concern.

"OK? OK?" Replied Rarity angrily. "No I am not OK! First that terrible Prince showed up, along with that braggart Trixie, and now I'm covered in dust and stuck on the moon!" She paused, only now registering the strangeness of her friends presence. "Wait, what are you doing here?" Suddenly she gasped happily. "Ah! You must be here to rescue me! About time, I feel like I've been here forever!"

"We've been here longer than you have!" Exclaimed Dash angrily. "Those creeps seem to be running around sending everypony they meet to the moon!"

"Say, Rarity, ah don't suppose you have any spells that might help us out here would you?" Applejack suggested, hopefully.

The unicorn shook her head. "No, I'm afraid not. Not unless you all have a burning desire for some hairstyling..." She suggested hopefully.

"Ah think we have bigger problems right now." Replied Applejack.

"Um... actually," interjected Fluttershy quietly. "If we're just going to be waiting around for Pinkie and Twilight to get here anyway, I wouldn't mind..."

That perked Rarity up somewhat. "Well, I might as well, to pass the time."

-

Bounce! Bounce! Bounce! Pinkie Pie bounded downstairs into the shop, eager to start her day. "Morning Mr. Cake! Morning Mrs. Cake!"

"Morning Pinkie, are you going out?" Asked Mrs. Cake, looking up from her morning baking.

"Yep!" Pinkie grinned. "I just got up this morning and I suddenly thought-hey! It's a great day for a party! So I need to go out and let everyone know!"

"OK dear, well let me know if you need any cake baked."

"Okie Dokie Loki!" Pinkie bounded over to the front door and outside, almost bowling over a pony that had been about to knock. When she realised who it was, her smile somehow got even wider. "Inkie! I knew it was going to be a greate day for a party, and now I know why! My sister's here to visit and we'll have a super duper party to celebrate!"

"My name is Inkimena." Her sister growled through pursed lips.

"I know that silly!" Pinkie laughed. "But I call you Inkie because it's more fun! Inkie Pie and Pinkie Pie together again! Oh this is going to be so great!"

Inkimena sighed. "You know what? Just send her to the moon already, I can't stand any more of this..."

"Are you sure?" Asked Ace. "I thought you wanted to let her know about how angry you are at her for abandoning your family?"

"What's the point? I'll just tell it to my rocks later, they'll pay about the same amount of attention and at least they won't try to talk back."

"Did you say you're sending me to the moon?" Pinkie Pie bounced around Inkimena happily. "I'd love to go to the moon! I've never been to the moon before! Have you been to the moon? Oh! Oh! We can go together! It'll be a GREAT place for a party!" Suddenly she stopped bouncing, as Trixie began to cast the spell. "Huh... I seem to be stuck... Oh well! "

"SHUT UP!" Yelled Inkimena. "I HATE YOU! I HATE YOU! I HATE YOU!"

"You can't hate me silly! I'm your sister!" With one last giggle, Pinkie was gone.

"Thank CELESTIA for that!" Moaned Prince Blueblood. "I don't blame you for wanting rid of her, she was quite frankly intolerable..."

Well, there was no going back now... "Goodbye, sister..." Muttered Inkimena, under her breath.

-

"Wheeee! Wheee!" On the moon, Pinkie Pie could bounce higher than she had ever dreamed of before. "This is the best day ever! First I got to see my sister, now I get to visit the moon, and soon we'll all have a super duper party! There'll be singing, and dancing, and pin the tail on the pony! It's going to be the bestest party ever!"

"Pinkie, stop that!" Yelled Applejack desperately. "You'll hurt yourself!" Suddenly, it hit her. "Wait... did you say your sister? Grey coat? Straight mane?"



“Yep! That's Inkie Pie alright! I haven't seen her for years, but I knew it was her the moment I saw her! And she had lots of new friends!”

This was a shock to Applejack. She tried to imagine someone from the Apple family turning against one of the others, but it just didn't make sense to her. It seemed to make even less sense when you considered that Inkie must share at least some traits with her sister... Applejack couldn't imagine Pinkie doing something as cruel as that.

Or could she? She remembered how strangely Pinkie Pie had started acting when they'd thrown that surprise party for her and she'd got it all twisted up and thought they didn't want to be her friends any more... What Rainbow had told her about that pile of rocks and the turnips sent a shiver down her spine. She knew that Pinkie never really stayed in contact with her family any more. If Inkie had thought that Pinkie had abandoned her... maybe it wasn't so far fetched that she'd turn against her own sister...

Still, no point worrying about the whys and hows any more. There was only one more of them left now. “Come on Twilight...” Applejack muttered. “We're all counting on you.”

-

The door to the library sprung open. “Beware, Twilight Sparkle! For the Great and Powerful Trixie is here to defeat you!”

“Who?”

Trixie gasped. Who would dare mock the Great and Powerful Trixie in her hour of triumph? “Why, the most incredible, majestic, magical pony who has ever lived, of course!”

“Who?”

She cast her gaze around the room, and spotted an owl perched on a coat stand off to one side of the room. “Listen feather-brain, there's plenty of room on the moon for you too if you dare insult the Great and Powerful Trixie again!”

“If you've quite finished arguing with Owlowsious, I presume you're here for me?” Twilight was standing at the top of the stairs, looking down into the library. “Now what was that about the moon?”

“Oh, you'll find out soon enough, Miss Sparkle!” Trixie cackled. “The Great and Powerful Trixie will now demonstrate why Trixie is the most magical pony who has ever lived! Elements, assemble!”

The rest of the Elements of Anarchy filed in, and formed up behind her. “A little overblown, don't you think Trixie?” Suggested Gilda.

“Silence! Trixie let you have your moment with Dash, do not interrupt this!”

“What? What have you done with Dash?” Twilight was really worried now. Trixie had seemed different the last time she had met her. Annoying and big headed, but ultimately harmless. Now, there was a real aura of malice around her.

“The Great and Powerful Trixie already told you that you would find out soon!” Trixie laughed. “It is time for you to experience true power!” Darkness flooded into the room. Twilight gasped as she gazed into Trixie's eyes and saw nothing but blackness.

“Wait! Trixie! This is dangerous magic!”

“Trixie knows that! Dangerous for you! That's rather the point.”

She tried to lift her hooves out of the mist that was now swirling around her, but it would not budge. “Oh no, I'm not going down that easily.” She concentrated, and her horn began to shine. With a flash, she had teleported down in front of Trixie. “Don't do this, Trixie. This is a step too far. There's no coming back from here...” Even as she spoke, the mist was upon her again, holding her down.

Once again she teleported away, but it seemed that the darkness was moving more quickly now, and it was instantly on top of her again. “You won't get-” FLASH “-away with-” FLASH “-this!” It was everywhere now. There was nowhere left to run. So she went on the offensive. With a blast of power, she knocked Trixie backwards into the shelves.

The unicorn was covered in a pile of books. For a moment, light returned to the library, and Trixie's eyes were back to their normal colour. But it did not last. “No!” Yelled Trixie. The books around her exploded away. “It is you, Twilight, who will not be getting away!” The candles lighting the room were snuffed out, and the whole library now turned blacker than a starless night. For what seemed like an eternity, there was nothing. Slowly,

the light from the windows returned, revealing five ponies, one griffon and an owl. Twilight was nowhere to be seen.

“Yes!” Cheered Trixie. “The Great and Powerful Trixie is victorious! None now remain to challenge me! Was there ever any doubt?” She began to laugh manically. “Ahahahahah! Ahahahahahahahahaha! Ahahahahahahahahahahahaha!”

# Chapter 4

## In Which the Great and Powerful Trixie Faces a Dragon

"Ahaha... ha... ha." Trixie's laugh tailed off as the light returned to the room. She coughed, suddenly feeling just slightly self-conscious. "Well... good. That's that then."

"Are we done now?" Asked Gilda. "Revenge served, foals banished, job done?"

"Served! Yes!" Ace yelled suddenly. "Of course! I need to know- is the curse lifted? Do any of you know how to play tennis?"

"If we really are finished here, I suppose I could partake of a quick set or two..." Blueblood sighed. "It does feel like rather an anticlimax though. What was the plan after this, Trixie?"

There hadn't really been a plan. Somehow, she had felt that once Twilight was gone then that would be the end of it, but thinking of it now she found that she still wanted more. She had tasted so much power, and she certainly didn't feel like giving it all up just because the original quest was over. Even if it meant having to keep hanging around with these idiots. Still, she could certainly use a break from their constant wittering. "It may not be over quite yet. The Great and Powerful Trixie needs time to plan our next move. If you wish to... play tennis, or whatever, then now might be a good time to do so. Be back here in an hour."

The others filed out. From their expressions, it appeared that Trixie wasn't the only pony with a lot on their mind. Inkimena was the last to leave, and then Trixie was alone in the library. Apart from Owlowsious and, as it turned out, one other. "Forgetting someone, Trixie?"

At the top of the stairs was a small purple dragon. Trixie scolded herself for not remembering that Twilight had an assistant, but maintained her outward composure. A dragon so young was no threat to the Great and Powerful Trixie, even without the others to support her. "The Great and Powerful Trixie does not concern herself with such minor matters as

yourself. After defeating the Elements of Harmony themselves, you are but a tiny bug to crush under Trixie's hooves."

Spike scowled. He didn't like being talked down to, especially not by Trixie. "I have in my claw a piece of parchment," as he spoke, he pulled his hand out from behind his back, to reveal a scroll tightly coiled and sealed. Ready to send. "It says: 'Dear Princess Celestia, a pony named Trixie has done something terrible to Twilight and her friends. Please come immediately to assist. Sincerely, Spike.'" There was a determined expression on Spike's face now. "One quick breath, and it'll be on its way to the Princess. Bring Twilight and the others back now, any maybe I won't have to send it."

The threat did not seem to have had the effect that Spike had hoped. In fact, Trixie seemed rather amused by the suggestion. "Is that supposed to scare the Great and Powerful Trixie? You foal! The Elements of Harmony were powerful enough to end Nightmare Moon, and the Elements of Anarchy are more than powerful enough to deal with her sister. I admit that revolution was not part of my original plan-" Although now she thought of it... why not? But that was for later, deal with the dragon first. "-but if you force my hoof then I will not hold back. Perhaps I'll banish her to the moon as well. Or perhaps to the sun! Do you really want to be responsible for the death of Equestria's most beloved princess?"

At this, Spike faltered. The idea that Trixie might have the power to defeat even Celestia hadn't even occurred to him. Trixie did not let his hesitation go to waste. She snatched the scroll from his hand with her magic, throwing it safely out of breathing range. Then she levitated him up into the air with her magic. She smirked, taunting the unfortunate dragon as he writhed around helplessly. "Of course, had you sent that letter while we were separated, that might have been problematic. Don't you worry, Trixie will deal with your Princess in her own time! Now... is there any chance that Twilight has any rope lying around here?"

-

Blueblood watched with little interest while Ace speedily erected a makeshift tennis court. A large piece of cloth 'borrowed' from Rarity's store had been strung between two houses to act as a net, and Ace was sketching out some lines to mark out the court itself. Fortunately the tennis pony had been carrying a spare racket and some balls so at least they didn't have to improvise those.

Despite his aloof response to Ace's request, Blueblood actually did feel like a game. He had played tennis in his younger days, and right now he fancied a bit of sport to settle his mind. There was something... off. He couldn't put his hoof on it, but he just had this feeling that he had missed something important. "Are you quite finished?" He asked.

"All ready now." Ace tossed Blueblood a ball. "You serve. I am a world champion after all, might as well give you a sporting chance..." He dropped into a ready position, as Blueblood tossed the ball into the air and launched it across the net. Time seemed to slow for Ace as the ball bounced- his instincts kicking in as he plotted the ball's trajectory in his mind, pulling his racket back ready to connect at the perfect point to send the ball sailing into the far corner of Blueblood's side of the net-

Just as he was about to strike, an image of Applejack, wrapped in darkness and struggling to escape, shot into his head. Shocked, he swung the racket violently. The ball went flying off sideways, smashing into a window with an almighty smash. *Stay focussed Ace...* he thought to himself. "A-an unlucky hit," he stammered. "I just need to adjust this..." He fiddled with his racket, although he knew that it was strung just fine.

Once he had finished messing around and indicated that he was ready, Blueblood served once again, his trademark insufferable smirk now firmly entrenched on his face as he sensed Ace's weakness. Ace vowed to wipe it off, lining up a fast, curving shot to take the unicorn off guard. However, just as before, in the instant that he was about to swing his racket his thoughts were invaded by another vision of Applejack, this time collapsed in tears on the surface of the moon. The ball thudded uselessly into the base of the net.

That was how it continued. Every time he tried to hit the ball, he would suddenly be distracted by a guilt-inducing image of Applejack's suffering, and lose his concentration. Each time, Blueblood got a little more smug, and Ace got an awful lot more annoyed.

"You know," quipped Blueblood sarcastically. "I may not be a world champion, but I do believe that the aim of the game is to land the ball on the opposite side of the net, within the guidelines. But then, I bow to your professional knowledge, of course."

His opponent tossed his racket aside. That was the last straw. "It's no good! This wasn't supposed to happen! Now the curse is worse than ever!"

He was panicking now. How could he have been so stupid? A million furlongs or so of empty space was no obstacle to a curse! His actions had only angered Applejack further, and now he couldn't even beat some nopony prince! He'd been going about this all wrong, but maybe there was still some way to salvage it... He broke into a gallop, rushing back towards the library.

"Where the hay do you think you're going?" Asked Blueblood, but Ace didn't seem interested in answering. He sighed. He was going to have to follow, wasn't he?

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Meanwhile, Inkimena had been wandering aimlessly through Ponyville. She needed to be alone with her thoughts. Back on the farm, she had imagined that getting her revenge on Pinkimena would solve everything, but now that it had actually happened she was struggling to see how anything had changed at all.

There was still nopony else to help her on the farm. Her sister was still not going to come home, in fact now she couldn't even if she had wanted to. And this time... this time it was Inkimena's fault, not hers.

But far more than this feeling of futility and wasted effort, there were Pinkimena's final words to her. *You can't hate me silly! I'm your sister!* It wasn't true... was it? She'd certainly thought that she'd hated her... but deep down that feeling had arisen from how much she missed her. Why would she have missed her if she hated her so much?

And what did that mean for how Pinkimena felt about her? Inkimena had thought that her sister had left because she hated the farm, and worse; her family. But if what she had said was true, then that didn't make any sense at all. She'd certainly seemed pretty pleased to see her... Even now, after she'd been betrayed and banished to the moon, deep down Inkimena knew that Pinky would still not hate her. She would... forgive. Yes, that's what sisters should do for each other.

This was all wrong! She hadn't wanted to send her sister away! She'd wanted her to come back! A steely expression of determination formed on Inky's face. "I'm coming for you Pinky!" She declared, loudly. "Cross my heart and hope to fly! Stick a pebble in my eye!"

-

With Ace, Blueblood and Inky all having left, the unlikely couple of Gilda and Photo Finish found themselves sharing each other's company. For a while, they stood in silence, without much common ground for conversation. Then Photo Finish started staring at the griffon with a studious expression on her face, as if she was thinking something over.

"What do you want, four-eyes?" Snapped Gilda. She wasn't in the mood. Not that she was ever really in the mood for being stared at, but she was especially not into the mood today.

"Have you ever thought of modelling?" Asked Photo Finish. "Zere are definitely some things I could do vith ze griffons..."

"Yeah, well do it with some other griffon." Scoffed Gilda. "I ain't modelling for you or anyone else."

"Zats what Fluttershy said at first! But zen I made her a star!"

"Yeah, quite literally. I don't have much interest in following her particular career path, thank you very much." Gilda snorted. "Frankly, if that's the way you usually treat your models, I'm surprised that you have anyone to model for you at all."

Oh, no. Photo Finish was not going to stand there and take that. Not from this griffon. "Really? Vell vat about you? Zis Rainbow Dash, she vas your friend, no? You vill not be making many friends, I think, if you send zem off to the moon over some petty disagreement!"

That stung all right. Gilda couldn't believe that this prissy little pony had the nerve to question her! "Hey! You don't know me! Don't you go talking about things you don't understand! Rainbow turned on me! Abandoned me right in front of her lame new friends! All Fluttershy did was quit her job and somehow you think that gives you the right to send her to the moon? In some ridiculous attempt to clear your head of her or some such nonsense? How's that going by the way, made any difference at all?"

"I-" Photo Finish paused. The griffon had a point. She was still obsessed with Fluttershy. She could banish her from Equestria, but she couldn't seem to banish her from her own head. "Vell... no. But zen how exactly did launchink your friend to the moon help you exactly?"

"Well it... Shut up!" No, it hadn't really changed her situation either. It was just how they'd always done things. Dash would prank her, she would



prank Dash back. Harder. Then Dash would prank her back even harder again, and so on until eventually they just gave up and called a truce or something.

Only this time there was no chance to call a truce, was there? Dash was gone forever. Was that really what she had wanted? Hay, she'd paid Dash back well and truly for all those gags at the party now! Perhaps it really was time to call a truce and make up. If it wasn't for the fact that Rainbow was stuck on the moon, of course.

The two of them stared at each other for a long moment then, in unison, vocalised the thought they had been sharing. "We have to get them back!"

At that moment, Inky appeared around the corner, almost bumping into them in her rush to get back to the library. "We have to get Pinky back!"

Ace, too, was running up to join them, yelling out at the top of his voice: "We have to get Applejack back!"

The four of them looked at each other, surprised and relieved that they all appeared to be in agreement. They all charged towards the door, falling over each other in their haste to correct their mistake. It was at this point that Blueblood arrived, dragging himself along lethargically, gasping for breath. A sportspony he was not, and he had been pushing himself to the limit trying to keep up with Ace. He saw the scrum in the doorway, just as the group finally sorted themselves out and burst inside. "Would somepony PLEASE explain what the hay is going on?"

Trixie was just tying the last knot on the ropes that were now restraining Spike as her co-conspirators entered. She was rather taken aback at their sudden appearance, sensing already that something was wrong. "What are you all doing back here so quickly? It can't have been an hour already!"

"Listen Trixie." Gilda explained. "I think I've got Dash back good and proper, but now it's time to end this prank and bring her back."

"Yes!" Interjected Photo Finish. "And now zat Fluttershy understands properly vat ze alternatives are to her moddelink, I think zat she vill be vanting to vork vith me again! So ve need to be bringink her back as vell."

"I should never have turned on my sister like that." Inky's head hung in shame, tears running down her face. "Please, help me to bring her home..."

Most ponies would have been hesitant to follow Inky's sad plea with a matter of personal interest. Ace was not most ponies. "This whole thing has been a complete waste of time." He complained. "My curse is worse than ever! I need to bring Applejack back and ask her to lift it!"

Unbelievable! Trixie fumed. After all this work, they expected her to just undo everything that she had worked for? Not likely! She was just about to say as much, but Blueblood got there first. "No, no, no, no, NO!" He shouted, angrily. Well, at least she still had one ally left. "Absolutely not; there is no way I am ever going to agree to bringing that horrible white unicorn back under any circumstances."

"You don't have to." Countered Gilda. "We don't care about Rarity, or Twilight Sparkle for that matter. Leave them on the moon if you want, just bring back the others."

"Are you really so naïve?" Trixie couldn't believe this. Only hours ago they had all seemed so keen! What had happened to change their minds so quickly? "It's all or nothing. Do you really think that if we bring four of them back they'll be happy to just leave their friends up there? Twilight Sparkle is NOT coming back, and that means that none of the others are either. That is FINAL."

"All or nothing you say?" Spike laughed, as all the eyes in the room turned on him. "Interesting turn of phrase, I was just wondering how best to put it myself. Has Trixie told you all about her plans for Celestia yet?"

Blueblood eyed Trixie suspiciously. "No. What plans would those be exactly?"

Something was bothering him, although Trixie couldn't quite work out what. "If you're worried about her, you shouldn't be. With your help, the Great and Powerful Trixie could easily vanquish he-"

"NOW WAIT JUST ONE MINUTE!" Blueblood was suddenly inches from Trixie's face, angrier than she had ever seen him before. "No pony said anything about some sort of... regicide!" He spat. "The royal family is not about to be overthrown by some COMMONER like you, Trixie. Certainly not with any assistance from me!"

"It was just an idea!" Trixie backtracked swiftly. "Nothing solid! If you all aren't interested then that is not a problem!"

“Oh but it is!” Spike was clearly enjoying himself. “All or nothing, remember? You can probably get rid of me easily enough, and I'm sure that you can all keep your mouths shut, but do you really think that Celestia isn't going to notice her personal student going missing? In a couple of days Ponyville is going to be swarming with Royal Guards, and I bet it won't take long for them to find you. You haven't exactly been keeping a low profile, barging into Twi's library and probably all over the rest of town as well.”

Blueblood sighed, dejectedly. So THAT was what had been worrying him earlier. Now that he thought of it, it did seem rather foolish to think that this would have all gone unnoticed by Celestia. She did have an annoying knack of always knowing exactly what was going on. “The dragon is right. We have no choice but to bring them all back. Even-” He paused, it was a struggle to admit it. “Even Rarity.”

“No. The Great and Powerful Trixie is the Element of Power! You need me to bring them back, and that is NOT going to happen. And if Celestia does track us down, you WILL all help me to defeat her. If you don't, then you can bet that she will not go easy on you. Either you stand with Trixie and live free, neigh, perhaps even become rulers of Equestria, or you stand against me and get imprisoned, or banished, or who knows what. Make your choice. Either way, we will NOT be bringing Twilight Sparkle or ANY of her pathetic friends back from the moon!”

“No, you will not.” Everyone span around, surprised to hear a new voice in the room. Standing in the doorway were six ponies which Trixie had not been expecting to see again.

“Twilight!” Spike yelled happily. Twilight's horn glowed, and the bonds around him broke. He rushed over to her, embracing her warmly. “I was so worried...” He released her. “Rarity! I'm so glad you're OK!” He grabbed her too, and for once she let him. “Oh.. um.. I guess it's nice to see the rest of you as well.”

“Impossible!” Trixie yelled, refusing to believe the evidence of her own eyes. “How did you get back here?”

“Ooh! Ooh!” Pinky Pie was jumping up and down gleefully. “I know! I know! We rode back on a beautiful rainbow!”

The Elements of Anarchy stared at Rainbow Dash incredulously. She might be a strong flier, but it was hard to believe that she'd carried five other ponies all the way back from the moon in a matter of a few minutes. Gilda was the first to speak. "Wow Dashie, you must have been working out."

This caused Applejack to laugh. "Not THAT Rainbow! It was a sorta magical rainbowy thing."

"But... how?" Blueblood was surprised. Magic that powerful was beyond anyone, even the Princesses. It had certainly been beyond Nightmare Moon at least.

"Banishing us was a smart move." Explained Rarity. "But you made one mistake- you banished us all together!"

"We're the Elements of Harmony!" Said Rainbow, proudly, poking at the necklace around her neck. Trixie now noticed that they all appeared to be wearing them, aside from Twilight who had a rather over the top tiara instead. "Once we were all together again Twi could use that power to bring us all the way back here no problem at all!"

"So, um... what happens now?" Asked Ace, hesitantly.

"Now?" Twilight grinned. "Now we're going to tolerate and love the hay out of you!"

# Chapter 5

## In Which the Great and Powerful Trixie is Tolerated and Loved

“What? What does that even mean?” Asked Trixie. “Tolerate and love this!” Without the support of the others, she couldn't achieve anything like the spells she had used earlier, but she was still the Great and Powerful Trixie! She sent a volley of books flying towards them.

They had little effect. No sooner had the books had started rising than a rainbow coloured shield formed around the six ponies, and the books just bounced right back at Trixie. All that it had really achieved was mildly annoying Twilight due to the abuse her books were getting. “Rainbow, why don't you show her what we mean?”

The pegasus groaned. “Why do I have to go first?” Twilight gave her her best impression of a Fluttershy stare. “OK, OK, fine. Gilda, I'm really sorry for embarrassing you at that party. I still want to be friends, but you've gotta be more kind to my new friends as well. Do you think you can do that?”

The griffon was stunned. It wasn't like Dash to be the first to blink. “Wait... you're apologising to me? I just sent you to the moon!”

“Weeeeell, perhaps you should apologise too then?” Suggested Dash.

“Oh right. I'm sorry I helped send you all to the moon Dash. I... get carried away sometimes.”

“Aaaaand?” Prompted Rainbow, gesturing sideways at the others.

“Oh right, sorry for sending you guys to the moon as well.” Now that she was getting all these apologies off her chest, suddenly it didn't seem so bad. Might as well go the whole hog... “Especially Pinky Pie and Fluttershy, I was cruel to you guys back the first time we met, and I'm sorry for that too. I guess... I guess I misjudged you all. I thought you were a bunch of lame dweebs when I first met you, but if you can magic yourselves back from the moon just like that I guess you're all pretty cool after all.” She held out her claw towards Dash, clenching it into a fist. “Truce?”

“Truce!” Replied Dash happily, touching her hoof to Gilda's claw.

“Pinky?” Inky stepped forward, nervously. “You're right, I don't really hate you. Do you... hate me now?”

Her sister laughed. “Of course not! You sent me to the moon! It was lots of fun, and then you sent all my friends up to meet me there too! Then we got to ride a RAINBOW! It was all rocky there, you'd have liked it.”

“Oh, um... well I'm sorry anyway. It was wrong of me. It's just that... when you threw that party for us, all those years ago, I was so happy, like my whole life had been in black and white and then had suddenly turned to colour. But then you went away and everything went back to how it was before. Only now I had one less sister... and once I'd seen how fun things could have been, the rock farm suddenly seemed so dreary without you...”

“You big silly! Pinkie Pie parties are the BEST parties, but that doesn't mean that you can't have a party without Pinkie Pie! You could just throw your own parties!”

“I... could?” Well of course she could, why hadn't she ever thought of that before? “But... I don't know how.”

“Oooh! Oooh! I know! I'll show you! I knew today was going to be a great day for a party! It'll be a super awesome Pinky Inky Pie party! We'll plan it together, and I'll show you how it's done, and then you can go home and throw as many parties as you want!”

“R-really?” Inky was beaming happily now. Suddenly, her perfectly straight hair seemed to explode into a frazzled mess of tangled disorder. “That's... ultra super mega triple awesome!” Laughing and giggling, the sisters began to bounce around each other and the other ponies.

“Oh great, now there's two of them...” Muttered Twilight, although she had to admit their levity was somewhat welcome.

“Applejack... I have a request.” Ace dived to the floor in front of the nonplussed farmer. “Pleeeeeease! Please please! Remove this curse! I'm begging you!”

She sighed, this pony was getting pretty darn annoying. “Ah already told yer! There ain't no curse! It's all in yer head! Twilight, help me out here, please?”

This was a tough one, Twilight mused. Sportsponies could get very superstitious, and it seemed that Ace just simply wasn't interested in listening to reason. She'd read all about this; lots of them had all sorts of silly little rituals, like getting dressed in a certain order or something. If they did them wrong, they'd attribute any mistakes they made to the 'bad luck' of breaking their routine. And because they were so upset about it, sometimes it really would make them play worse, making it a self-fulfilling prophecy. Of course, they were always careful to do their rituals right, so that way they'd think positively and... wait! "That's it! Applejack, instead of cursing his racket, why don't you try blessing it instead!"

That was a shock to Applejack. "Well Twilight! Of all the ponies here, ah thought you'd be the last one to..." Suddenly she caught on to her drift. "Ooooooooooh. Ah get it. Erm... by mah mighty voodoo powers, or somethin', ah hereby give Ace here's racket the blessing of the mighty apple..." She waved her hood over him and grinned, rather unconvincingly.

But it was enough for Ace. "Oh thank you Applejack! I swear I will never cross you again. If you would excuse me, I have a title to reclaim!" He reared up, and shot out of the library.

"What a complete and utter mule!" Exclaimed Applejack. "If ah never see that pony again, it'll still be a mite too soon for mah liking!" She froze, suddenly remembering something important. "Oh, horseapples, ah never did ask him what happened to mah hat..."

"Zat horrible thing is just vere you left it, lying on the ground in your farm." Photo Finish turned up her nose. Hats were not in this season, especially not battered old Stetsons. "Now. Ve get to ze important moments, yes? Fluttershy, I have decided to give you vun more chance, as an apology for ze whole moon thing."

"Oh... that's, um, very kind of you..." Be assertive. Be assertive. Be assertive. "But even if I did want to, I'm afraid that I wouldn't be able to help you. You see... there's something I never told you about my last show. All those things I did..." She blushed. Just the thought of it was enough to get her embarrassed. Of course, the thought of most things was enough to make her embarrassed, but that show had been particularly embarrassing. "I couldn't do them on my own, I needed Twilight's magic to-"

She was cut off as Photo Finish gasped loudly, realisation dawning. "Vhy of course! To make ze magic... I need- ZE MAGIC! I do not need you, vhy are you still here? Vhy am I still here? I go!" And she did.

This only left the two unicorns. Blueblood could definitely see the way the wind was blowing here. He threw himself at Rarity's hooves. "Please, Rar- LADY Rarity. I hope this little... misunderstanding will not come between us. You want a princely suitor? Why, I am your colt! Anything you want, anything at all! Just please, please don't tell Princess Celestia about this!"

She had to admit, she was ever so slightly tempted. He had said he'd do everything she wanted. Why, she could force him to be the perfect gentlecolt! Open every door, pay for every meal. Catch every cake.

But she knew that it wouldn't be the same. If deep down he was still the same stuck up inconsiderate blow-hard, and only behaving like a proper prince to save his own flank, then all the romance was gone. Still, he did seem to be pretty desperate, and there were certainly plenty of other ways she could make use of that offer. "I have NO interest in a princely suitor. You are a horrible, insufferable dolt who I would not be seen DEAD with. However, if you really will do anything... From now on I want you to always place whatever mare you are with first. That means that you open doors for her, pay for her meals, help her to her seat... I think you get my drift."

"Gah! Fine." It didn't sound too appealing to Blueblood, but he supposed that it was preferable to whatever Celestia would do to him if she found out the truth.

"Oh, believe it or not, you may well thank me for these instructions one day." It would certainly give him more chance of attracting some poor misguided mare to his side. Rarity couldn't help but feel that she was doing him a favour. That wouldn't do at all. "My second request... I do not think you will ever thank me for." She grinned evilly. "You see, I am in need of a new clothes horse!"

"...A clothes horse?"

"Yes, a clothes horse. For my dresses."

"...For your dresses?"



“Why indeed. I will make you look oh so PRETTY! We could even have a FASHION SHOW! I'm sure that everypony in Canterlot would want to be there...”

“No... no. That's too much.” The Prince shook his head. “I couldn't possibly-”

“Oh? Very well then. I know this is usually Twilight's line but... Spike, take a note please. Dear Princess Celestia...”

“I'll do it! I'll do it!” The Prince started sobbing. “Now, if you'll excuse me there's... there's something in my eye...” He dashed out, desperate to get as far away from Rarity as possible.

“No.” Now, only Trixie remained. Well, Inky and Gilda were still hanging around, but they were standing with Twilight and her friends now. “Whatever your plan is, the Great and Powerful Trixie is not interested in 'making friends', or 'saying sorry'. Nor is she one to be cowed into submission with threats. Your plan has failed, Twilight Sparkle.”

“You know, Trixie, I really don't understand what your problem with me is. The way I remember it, I never tried to embarrass you, even though I probably could have. All I did was save you from an Ursa Minor. If my saving your life is really upsetting you that much, then I am truly sorry. Next time I'll let the bear eat you.” While Twilight was truly trying to be earnest and conciliatory, she couldn't help but let a little sarcastic jibe slip in out of frustration.

“Trixie already told you no! If you had only let Trixie work, then that Ursa Minor would have been no obstacle! You saved nopony! You only disrupted Trixie's grand plan!”

Twilight was starting to get more than a little annoyed by Trixie's attitude. “Come on Trixie, we all know that isn't true. Who do you think you're fooling? You were terrified of that thing because you know that behind all that bluster you're just a little pony like everypony else. We don't have to be enemies! We both have a love of magic, think of what we could achieve if we worked together! We could be friends...”

“TRIXIE. SAID. NO.” Growled Trixie. “You think after this débâcle Trixie wants friends? The Great and Powerful Trixie works alone, all that this day has proven is that diluting with other ponies cramps Trixie's style!”

"That's it." Rainbow had had enough of this game. "Listen, Trixie, in case you haven't noticed, the tables have pretty much turned. Now it's you who is outnumbered six to one. Why don't you take a moment to think about how you want to handle this?"

"She's not going to back down." Gilda grinned. "She's stupid like that. And that's seven to one, by the way."

"Eight to one!" Added Inky.

Trixie didn't like it, but it was true enough, everything had pretty much fallen apart around her. Of course, surrender was not an option for the Great and Powerful Trixie. "This isn't over!" She warned. "One day you will rue the day you crossed the Great and Powerful Trixie!" There was a puff of smoke, and then she was gone.

As far as the door, at least. "You have to twist the handle and pull." Twilight explained, helpfully. Trixie just huffed, and in another puff of smoke she really was gone, the door slamming shut behind her.

"Are you sure you want to let her get away like that?" Asked Spike. "She did send you to the moon and all, is it really safe to just let her escape like that?"

Twilight looked over at Gilda and Inky. It would be hard to explain Trixie's increased powers without getting the others into trouble as well. It seemed a shame to upset what was after all an 83% happy ending. "Don't worry Spike, I think once she's had time to calm down she'll realise that she's best off just leaving us alone. Perhaps she'll even learn her lesson this time. Still, I do think it's about time for my next friendship report. If that's alright with Rarity, of course..."

"You go right ahead, dear. Now, if you will excuse me, I have a Prince to torture..."

"Very well then. Spike, take a note please-"

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Princess Celestia was reading through some dreary report from one of the guard captains, when a letter from Twilight appeared with a pop. Glad of the distraction, she caught it with her magic, and opened it immediately.

*Dearest Princess Celestia,*

*Today I learned that sometimes it can be hard to get along with every pony you meet. If you do find that you have made yourself an enemy, it is better to talk to each other to try to work out your problems together, because in the end fighting doesn't really make anypony happy. You never know, you might just be able to turn that enemy into a new friend.*

*Your faithful student*

*Twilight Sparkle*

On finishing reading the letter, Celestia glanced out of the window. Down below, Luna was frolicking in the gardens, enjoying the beautiful day. Celestia smiled. "Thank you, Twilight." She said to herself. "But I believe that I have already learnt this particular lesson for myself."

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The End  
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