

The Fanon Trilogy

Legion of Gloom

The League of Fanons

Between a Rock and a Hard Place

By John Perry

THE LEGION OF GLOOM



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Legion of Gloom

Chapter One

The Legion Rises

Few ponies ever went anywhere near the Froggy Bottom Bog. There were enough terrifying monsters living in its muck to scare off even the boldest of travelers, and its location in the midst of the Everfree Forest did a remarkable job of isolating it from most of ponykind. As such, it was not the ideal place to construct any kind of building.

And yet, a building there was. Rising out of the mud was a domed, ominous structure overlooking the swamp it was sitting in the midst of. And within this building constructed by pony hooves was probably the strangest gathering Equestria ever saw...

"The Great and Powerful Trixie will now call this meeting to order!" a boastful voice rang through the large, dimly-lit hall. The sound came from a blue unicorn wearing a flashy cape and pointed hat who was sitting at the center of a long table with several other figures.

"Psht. Whatever," an unimpressed-looking griffon rolled her eyes. She had her front legs crossed and was sitting at the end of the table to the right of the unicorn.

"*Silence*, half-breed!" Trixie screamed. "You should consider yourself thankful to be addressed by The Great and Powerful Trixie!"

"HALF-BREED?!" the griffon shouted back, standing up on her hind legs. "When I'm through with you, you'll be lucky if there's half of you left!"

Three bulky figures who had been sitting between the unicorn and the griffon now stood up. "This not time for fight," the biggest one grunted.

“Yes!” the smallest one squeaked. “Bigger problem to worry about!”

The griffon glared at the unicorn for a moment, but then sighed and sat down. “These dweebs might have a point. I’ve got a bigger fish to fry.”

“Then The Great and Powerful Trixie will begin this first meeting of the *Legion of Gloom!*” the unicorn announced, standing up. “Using my amazing feats of magic, I have located all of those who have been wronged by the inferior Twilight Sparkle and her companions! You have been brought here so that we may enact our glorious revenge!”

Trixie sat down. “In order to better understand our fellow comrades, The Great and Powerful Trixie will ask all of you to introduce yourself and explain why you have joined this most amazing of organizations! We’ll start with you, creature,” she added, gesturing at the griffon.

“You’d better watch it...” the griffon growled, then ran a claw over her head to make her feathers more impressive. “Name’s Gilda. I was an old friend of Rainbow Dash’s, until she started hanging out with that group of dweebs. Especially that lame-o Pinkie. Ooh, when I get my claws on that little pink rat...” she emphasized the point by digging her claws into the table, making a horrible screeching noise.

“STOP THE NOISES!!!” the bulky creatures had their claws over their ears, flinching at the sound Gilda was making. “It’s as bad as the pony!”

“What is your story then, foul-smelling beasts?” Trixie said to the three creatures.

“We are Diamond Dogs!” one of them spoke up. “We wanted the pony to find us precious diamonds, but then the noises she made! It was horrible! And after all we did for the pony, in the end we got no precious diamonds!”

Trixie turned to the figure on her left. “And what about you, four eyes?”

The very finely dressed pony Trixie was addressing gave a short huff. “I will be addressed by my proper name: PHOTO FINISH!” She emphasized her name by speaking it extra quickly while making a dramatic pose. “I,

Photo Finish, am ze finest fashion photographer in all of Equestria! I just point and capture...ze magics!" she added, emphasizing the last two words while holding her hoof in the air. "I vas the one who discovered ze Flootershy! Ah, her grace! Her innocence! I would have made millions with her working for me! But Flootershy abandoned me to live out a life of...mediocrity!" she emphasized darkly.

"Well we are after that deespeecable Pinkie Pie!" a sack of flour sitting on the other side of Photo Finish slammed an appendage on the table.

"Yes! We sought to comfort her after her friends abandoned her, but she had the gall to turn her back on us!" a ball of lint sitting nearby said.

"And to think! Her hanging out with that bunch of lo-sers!" a stack of rocks shouted.

"Completely uncalled for..." a bucket of turnips muttered.

However, no one sitting at the table seemed to have heard the four objects. One of the Diamond Dogs gave a confused look at the group of inanimate objects at the end of the table.

"Um, why is there a bucket of turnips, a sack of flour, a bunch of rocks, and a ball of lint sitting over there?" he asked, pointing at the objects.

"The Great and Powerful Trixie...does not know," Trixie admitted. "They were not here earlier..."

Trixie then stood up again. "Well, The Great and Powerful Trixie's problems far outweigh your pathetic concerns! For you see, the inferior Twilight Sparkle had the *gall* to upstage a gifted magician such as myself! After dazzling the simple-minded village folk with the tale of how The Great and Powerful Trixie defeated an Ursa Major, that inferior Sparkle – obviously fueled by jealousy – sought to convince a couple of the simpletons in the village to release a monster and catch me off-guard, to make of a foal of me! I mean...to make a foal of The Great and Powerful Trixie!" Trixie said, catching her mistake.

“And let us not forget the one who made this meeting possible...” a voice from behind Trixie called out. The voice belonged to somepony sitting behind a chair, facing away from the group. “The one who put the money forward to build this secure location and safely transport you all here,” the chair spun around to reveal a white, handsome stallion with a flowing mane of hair.

Trixie looked at the stallion with a sinister smile. “No pony could forget you, Prince Blueblood.”

The prince got up and trotted over to the table. “As for myself, I was attacked by that ferocious Rarity at the Grand Galloping Gala! That barbarian and her commoner friends sought to destroy the Gala and humiliate me in front of my adoring public!”

“Then let’s kick their flank already!” Gilda shouted, slamming a fist on to the table.

“It is not so simple...” Prince Blueblood muttered. “You see, Twilight Sparkle is none other than Princess Celestia’s prized student. Ms. Sparkle and her friends have close contact with both of the princesses, so we must exercise caution.”

“Then zis is hopeless!” Photo Finish cried. “How are ve to get to them ven zey are so well-connected?”

Suddenly, there was a loud booming noise echoing around the room. Everypony in the room tensed, trying to find the source of the sound. After a moment it came again, and they realized it was coming from one wall at the end of the hall. Trixie approached the wall slowly, reaching up to press a hoof-sized button on the wall. A section of the wall recessed and slid away, revealing the swamp outside.

“Special delivery!” a cheerful-looking gray pegasus with crossed eyes was hovering in front of Trixie, holding out a box for her to take.

“What the...What are you doing here?” Trixie demanded.

“I’m making a cameo!” the pegasus replied cheerfully.

“You’re...what? Wait, are you spying on us? *Did you hear anything we said?*” Trixie growled.

“Nope!” the pegasus said happily. “I definitely didn’t hear anypony making evil plans about enacting revenge! Heh, that’d be silly!”

“Oh...well...good then!” Trixie muttered. “But how did you find this place?”

“It was on the box, of course!” the pegasus said, pointing at the address label on the package. Sure enough, there it was:

*Legion of Gloom
1 Ominous-looking Building
Froggy Bottom Bog, Everfree Forest*

“Oh...” Trixie said, unsure what to make of this. She was surprised this cross-eyed commoner could even read at all.

“Sign here, please!” the pegasus said, holding out a clipboard with her mouth. Trixie levitated the quill out of its holder and scribbled ‘The Great and Powerful Trixie’ in curly letters on the sheet.

“Have a good day!” the pegasus called out, sailing off. Trixie huffed in response before closing the door behind her.

“Um, who ordered a package?” Trixie asked the rest of the group.

“That’s me!” Prince Blueblood cried. “This is the important component of the plan I told you of,” he informed Trixie, who now had a look of understanding on her face. The prince levitated the box with his magic and brought it back to the table. “You see, I had contact with the guards who visited Ponyville, who informed me that Ms. Sparkle has two companions who assist her in daily chores. One is a dragon who is far too narrow-minded to be of any help to us.”

The prince opened the box. “But the other...is with us here today.”

At his cue, a brown owl popped out of the box and hopped lightly onto the table, giving a small “Hoo” when he did so. Prince Blueblood backed away a few steps, muttering something about filthy commoner birds.

“Fillies and gentlecolts...and common beasts...” Trixie muttered. “This is Owlowiscious, Sparkle’s number-two assistant.”

“Hoo,” Owlowiscious said.

“Uh, you,” Trixie replied.

“Hoo.”

“Owlowiscious!” Trixie yelled. “Are you not Owlowiscious?”

“Hoo.”

“I’M TALKING ABOUT YOU, YOU STUPID BIRD!!!” Trixie screamed, her hat becoming lopsided as Trixie gritted her teeth, breathing hard at the expression-less owl.

“Anyway,” Prince Blueblood continued. “This bird has turned his back on Ms. Sparkle, and is now working for us as an undercover agent! He has infiltrated her library and her circle of friends – they trust him completely! With this bird on our side, we can discover a weakness and exploit it!”

“A brilliant plan, The Great and Powerful Trixie must admit,” Trixie said, looking at the prince wistfully.

“Ah, but not as brilliant as you madam, who alerted me to the source of our ills...” the prince responded, giving Trixie a charming smile.

“You flatter The Great and Powerful Trixie! But please, continue...”

Prince Blueblood then leaned towards Trixie and gave her what looked like a rather clumsy kiss on the lips. He had his front hooves on Trixie’s shoulders, putting what must have been a painful amount of weight on them. But Trixie was returning his kisses with gusto and the slurping and smacking noises they made echoed through the sparsely decorated hall.

“Oh brother...” the Diamond Dogs muttered, flinching.

“I do not approve of zis...unholiness.” Photo Finish grimaced, shielding her eyes from the sight.

“Get a room, already...” Gilda scoffed, rolling her eyes.

Even Owlowiscious, who otherwise looked completely passive, chose to turn his gaze away from the hideous sight.

Chapter Two

All the Really Bad Stuff Happens

Sweet Apple Acres was in the full swing of summer. The trees were lush and each was dotted with shiny red apples ripe for picking. Applejack was trotting among the trees, pulling a cart loaded with baskets full of apples. Having just finished her day's worth of apple bucking, she was now heading back to the barn to store the apples until they were ready to be sold.

It had been a perfectly normal day for Applejack, but that was about to change.

A low rumbling noise caught the orange pony's attention. It seemed to be coming from a clearing in the orchard nearby. Applejack unhitched herself from the cart and trotted slowly towards the clearing, trying to identify the source of the noise. She couldn't see anything, and what's more she couldn't figure out where that noise was coming from. It was almost something she could feel rather than hear, like it was coming from beneath her hooves...

Suddenly, with a thunderous boom that shook Applejack off-balance, the ground in front of her split open, sending up an enormous cloud of dirt and rock. The Diamond Dogs emerged out of the fresh hole in the ground, poking their heads into the air.

"Are you sure this is the right place?" one of them asked.

"I don't know, there's too many roots down here!" another shrieked.

"YOU!" Applejack cried, shocked at the sight before her.

"It's the pony!" the third Diamond Dog said, pointing at Applejack.
"Get her!"

But in their haste to capture Applejack, the three wound up tripping over each other as they scrambled out of the hole. This gave Applejack enough time to dash back to the cart and retrieve a length of rope.

“You fellers chose the wrong pony to mess with!” Applejack announced, fashioning the rope into a lasso. She twirled it over her head for a moment before flinging it at the Diamond Dogs, aiming for the head of the biggest one.

But the lasso began to glow and froze in mid-air before it got anywhere near the Diamond Dogs. Before Applejack could comprehend what was going on, the lasso snapped back like a rubber band and wrapped itself around Applejack’s hooves, leaving her lying hogtied on the ground.

“WHAT THE HAY?!?” Applejack shrieked.

“Quiet, foalish peasant!” Trixie trotted up to Applejack, shoving an apple into the earth pony’s mouth to complete the hogtied look. “As to be expected, you are no match for The Great and Powerful Trixie!” Applejack began making sputtering noises through the apple when she recognized her captor.

“We have successfully captured our quarry!” Trixie announced. “Quickly beasts, bring her into the tunnel!”

The Diamond Dogs grabbed Applejack and scurried back into the hole, dragging the earth pony with them. Trixie followed them back underground.

At the Carousel Boutique, it had been a quiet day for Rarity. There hadn’t been many customers and she was currently occupying herself by working on some new designs in the back room. At the moment, she was running some fabric through her sewing machine when she heard the doorbell over the shop door ring.

Rarity trotted in to the front room of her shop to greet her customer. "Welcome to the Carousel Boutique! I am Rari-" she stopped and gasped when she caught sight of her visitor. "You!"

"Yes, it is I, *Photo Finish!*" Photo Finish said, posing dramatically at the announcement of her name. "And I have come to see you, Rarity!"

"M...Me?" Rarity squeaked, the word getting stuck in her throat on the way up.

"Yes! I realized I made a terrible mistake! Your fashion designs and grace and beyond compare! I must capture...your magics!"

"Oh my!" Rarity cried. "Are you saying...?"

"Yes! I am to make you shine across Equestria!" Photo Finish declared, waving a hoof in the air over her head. Rarity squealed and started jumping up and down excitedly, unable to contain herself with the announcement of this news.

"I merely need you to step outside with me, Rarity," Photo Finish said, gesturing to the front door.

"Of course!" Rarity cried, regaining her composure. "Anything for Photo Finish!"

Photo Finish held the door open for Rarity, offering her to go first. If Rarity hadn't been nearly bursting at the seams with the knowledge that she was about to become one of Equestria's most famous fashion models, she would have thought this gesture of kindness was very strange coming from Photo Finish. But it was too late.

A yellow claw shot out of the air and grasped Rarity around the neck, pinning her to the ground. Rarity tried to scream, but another claw had placed itself over the unicorn's muzzle.

"Listen pony..." Gilda said threateningly. "One sound out of you and you're history. Got it?"

“We have succeeded!” Photo Finish declared, speaking over Rarity’s whimpers.

“Frankly, I don’t see why I couldn’t have just gone in and grabbed her myself,” Gilda huffed.

“Too uncouth,” Photo Finish said sharply. “Now...we go!”

Gilda took to the air, clutching Rarity in her claws. Photo Finish ran along the ground, following the griffon.

Pinkie Pie was cheerfully hopping around her room on the second floor of Sugarcube Corner. It had been another super happy fantastic pony-rific day in Ponyville, and all it was missing was a party! Now Pinkie just had to figure out what to throw a party for...

“Got any ideas, Gummy?” Pinkie asked, referring to her pet alligator. Gummy stared back blankly.

“I think I have an idea for a party...” a low voice said slowly.

“Yes! Let us ceeleebtrate the return of your real friends, Pinkie!” a vaguely French-sounding voice cried out.

Pinkie stood straight up, her body going rigid. She turned around slowly to see a bucket of turnips, a sack of flour, a stack of rocks, and a ball of lint sitting at the other end of the room.

“You’re no friends of mine,” Pinkie said darkly, a sudden and frightening change from her normally cheerful voice.

“Now is that any way to address those who comforted you when you were alone?” Sir Lints-a-lot offered.

“You didn’t comfort me!” Pinkie shrieked, pointing a hoof at the ball of lint accusingly. “You all wanted to make me a jealousy-jealous pants and leave my friends!”

“But we’re your friends, not dat bunch of lo-sers!” Rocky said.

“Come back to us, Pinkie...” Mr. Turnip said slowly.

“Yes! Join us!” Madame LeFlour commanded.

“NO! Stop! What are you doing?!” Pinkie squealed.
“NOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!”

Downstairs, Mrs. Cake was looking up at the ceiling with some concern. “Do you think we should check on her?” she said to her husband.

“Nah,” Mr. Cake said, pulling a fresh batch of cookies out of the oven. “I’m sure Pinkie’s just playing with Gummy. See, she’s already quieting down!”

Mrs. Cake seemed satisfied by this. “You’re right, dear,” she said, returning to a tray of muffins.

Prince Blueblood approached the Ponyville library. Fortunately for him, the area was deserted – it would not do to have any of these filthy commoners coming up to him while he was carried out his mission.

Owlowiscious had informed the prince when Twilight would be departing the library to visit one of her friends, leaving her dragon assistant alone at the library. This part of the plan was crucial: they had to cut off Twilight and her companions from their connection to Princess Celestia.

The prince tapped a hoof on the door. After a moment, Spike opened the front door.

“Hi there! Can I help – what...Prince Blueblood?!” Spike sputtered, taken aback. He had never met the prince, but he had seen him from a distance once or twice when he lived in Canterlot.

“It’s customary to bow to royalty, underling,” Prince Blueblood huffed.

"I don't bow to anyone who upsets Rarity!" Spike growled, shoving a finger into the prince's chest. "What are you doing in Ponyville, anyway? Here to torment Rarity again?" he said accusingly.

"Actually, I am here to apologize for my actions," the prince replied. "I realize I treated Lady Rarity poorly and wanted to come to make it up to her. May I enter your place of residence?"

Spike still looked suspicious, but stepped back. "I suppose..." he muttered. "But you better not be thinking of trying anything with Rarity. She's...already called for."

The prince strutted in through the door. "Here," he said, levitating a black jewel out of a bag slung around his mane. "I was informed that you like jewels. Enjoy." he stated, levitating it to Spike.

"Hey, thanks!" Spike said. "Maybe you're not such a bad pony after all..." he popped the jewel into his mouth. "Interesting flavor...what kind of jewel is this?"

Prince Blueblood chuckled. "Interesting that you should ask about that. This is a very unique kind of gem...it has been cast with a spell that causes any dragon to eat it to instantly fall asleep. But I see you've already discovered that for yourself..." he added with a laugh, looking at the snoozing dragon.

Horn glowing, the prince levitated his bag off his mane and scooped up Spike in one swift move before closing the bag. He turned to leave, the bag floating alongside him, when he almost collided with the gray pegasus with crossed eyes hovering at the front door.

"GAH! What are you doing here?!" the prince cried.

"I think I'm now a running joke! Oh and special delivery, your majesty!" the pegasus said, holding out an envelope. On the address label was written:

*Prince Blueblood
Ponyville Library, 42 Pony Way
Ponyville, Equestria*

“Uh, yes...thank you,” the prince stuttered, taking the envelope. The pegasus saluted before taking to the sky. The prince opened the envelope to find it was a colorful advertisement that said in large, bolded letters *‘FIND LOCAL DRAGON CATCHERS IN YOUR AREA!’* On the other side of the flyer was a similar advertisement, this one proclaiming *‘HOT, ELIGIBLE MARES IN PONYVILLE ARE LOOKING FOR YOU!’*

“How do they *do* that?” the prince muttered, marveling at the speed of advertisers these days.

Twilight Sparkle was in a panic. She had left to see Rarity, but found no one at the Carousel Boutique even though it appeared to be open. That was unusual in and of itself, but then she had returned to the library to find the door left open and Spike missing. It was at this point that she ran into Rainbow Dash, who told her she had been looking for Pinkie and having no luck. Dash had since located Fluttershy, but Applejack was nowhere to be found.

Twilight was running through the town square for what felt like the hundredth time when she heard a shout from overhead. “Hey, Twi!” Rainbow Dash and Fluttershy were hovering in the air.

“Did you find them?” Twilight asked hopefully.

“Um...Well, we think so...” Fluttershy muttered.

“But that’s not all we found.” Dash said grimly, motioning Twilight to follow. They raced down the street to a spot on the edge of town, where a group of familiar figures were standing...

“We did it!” one of the Diamond Dogs cheered. The Legion of Gloom was standing over the bound and gagged figures of three ponies and Spike. Rarity and Pinkie had terrified looks on their faces, while Applejack was struggling with her bonds. Spike had been outfitted with a wired faceguard which prevented him from opening his mouth and breathing any magical fire.

“Wait...who collected the pink commoner?” Prince Blueblood asked. “I don’t remember her being part of the initial phase of the plan...and why is she sitting next to a bucket of turnips, a bunch of rocks, a sack of flour, and a ball of lint?”

“Who cares?” Gilda scoffed. “We’ve got her and that’s all I care about!”

“HEY!” a blue pegasus was approaching the group, followed by a yellow pegasus and a purple unicorn. “What’s going on here?”

“We have been discovered!” Photo Finish exclaimed.

“Well, well...” Gilda strode forward. “If it isn’t Rainbow Dash...”

“GILDA?!?” Dash shouted, so shocked that she stopped moving forward. Fluttershy caught up with Dash first.

“The Diamond Dogs?” Fluttershy said in a confused tone. “...Photo Finish?”

“Prince Blueblood?” Twilight said, looking completely bewildered. “And...Trixie?”

“That’s The Great and Powerful Trixie to *you*, foal!” Trixie shouted. “And soon you will have the privilege of adding Your Majesty to that title!”

“Your...Majesty?” Dash muttered, raising an eyebrow.

“Yes!” Trixie shouted triumphantly. “I have found an ideal companion in His Majesty, Prince Blueblood!”

“Indeed!” the prince affirmed, locking eyes with the blue unicorn. “I shall marry her into royalty. She shall be Her Majesty, The Great and Powerful Princess Trixie!”

At this Trixie threw her arms around the prince’s mane, kissing him savagely on the lips again. Spike, Applejack, Rarity, Twilight and Fluttershy looked beyond shocked.

“Ummm...” Fluttershy said slowly.

“...what?” Twilight couldn’t comprehend what she was witnessing.

Rainbow Dash, on the other hand, looked unimpressed. “Eh, I’m not that surprised. Those two were *made* for each other.” For her part, Pinkie looked like she was trying not to giggle uncontrollably.

Trixie finally broke from her embrace of the prince. “Now behold inferiors, as we, The Legion of Gloom, enact our revenge on you who have dared to wrong us!” at this she threw down a hoofful of powder which burst into a cloud of dust that shrouded the entire area. Twilight and Fluttershy coughed and sputtered, while Dash had the presence of mind to lift into the air and make several swoops at the dust cloud, cutting it apart and clearing it away.

But when the cloud finally dispersed, it was to show that the Legion of Gloom had vanished, along with their captives. Unseen to Dash, Fluttershy or Twilight was a well-hidden hole situated at the foot of a tree, which connected to a tunnel leading back to the Froggy Bottom Bog.

Chapter Three

FIGHT! FIGHT! FIGHT!

Any self-respecting brony will be familiar with the Elements of Harmony, the magical power which Twilight and her friends used to stop Nightmare Moon when Twilight first came to Ponyville. These elements – Kindness, Laughter, Generosity, Honesty, Loyalty and Magic – when brought together by the spark of Friendship, can face down the darkest of foes. These elements reflect the values held most dear by the good ponies of Equestria.

However, there is another set of elements in Equestria, which reflect a pony's darker nature. These elements are the direct opposite of the Elements of Harmony, and combined they can wreak terrible damage upon the just and innocent.

Take the Diamond Dogs. They sought to ponynap an innocent mare from her friends, put her to work at a task she was ill-suited to handle, give no thanks for her hard work, and collect anything she had received without any payment. The opposite of kindness in every way, the Diamond Dogs represent the Element of Nastiness.

Or Prince Blueblood. Where the Element of Laughter brings joy to everpony around her and can make the darkest of situations easier to bear, Prince Blueblood has only ever managed to bring pain and misery to everypony he meets, be it the servants he treats so awfully or the young mares whose hearts he has broken. He reflects the Element of Sorrow.

And then there's Photo Finish. Vain and sure of her success, she sought to ignore the wishes of the models who worked for her, seeing them not as ponies of feeling but as mere subjects to photograph and money to be gained. Far from generous, she reflects the Element of Greed.

When it comes to honesty, there is no equal to Applejack. And so it is with her opposite, the self-centered Trixie. Always looking for another crowd to exploit and bolstering her name by telling of deeds she never accomplished, she is the very manifestation of the Element of Falsehood.

Or take Gilda. Unwilling to accept her old friend's companions, Gilda chose to abandon Rainbow Dash rather than come to terms with the fact that she was no longer the center of the pegasus' universe, and may never have been. Her willingness to turn her back marks her as the Element of Betrayal.

But the most dangerous element is the last, for it is also the spark that has brought these other elements together. It is the opposite of the order and focus that entails the use of magic. It is reflected by Pinkie's imaginary friends, for this element is what gave birth to them and what drove the other elements to form the Legion of Gloom, to pursue the dreams of revenge. This last element...is the Element of Insanity.

Mind you, I'm only telling you all this because I thought it sounded cool. There's no magic or powers involved with these elements, like with the Elements of Harmony. And none of the characters in this story know that these elements even exist. I'm only telling you this because it makes the Legion of Gloom sound way more intimidating and unified than they actually are – the elements have absolutely no effect on the events of this story whatsoever. I'm sorry if you were expecting something awesome to come out of all that text, I just thought it would sound neat. My apologies to anyone who got their hopes up, and I hope this doesn't effect your enjoyment of the rest of the story.

We now return to your scheduled fan fiction, already in progress...

"Our plan is working perfectly!" Prince Blueblood cried triumphantly. The Legion of Gloom had returned to their headquarters in the Froggy Bottom Bog and were now standing around the still bound and gagged figures of Applejack, Pinkie, Rarity, and Spike.

"Of course!" Trixie said. "What less would you expect with The Great and Powerful Trixie working on your side?"

"Frankly, I didn't think it was going to be so easy..." one of the Diamond Dogs muttered, only for the other two to nudge him sharply and give him a look that quite plainly said 'Shut up now.'

“Now ve have to figure out what to with ze prisoners!” Photo Finish pointed out.

“Well, I know what I’m doing with *you*...” Gilda growled, approaching Pinkie. “I’m going to give you a little ‘flying lesson.’ I’ll just drop you from above the clouds. Don’t worry, I’ll catch you before you hit the ground...maybe.”

However, Pinkie wasn’t paying attention to Gilda, instead focusing on something else in the room. Rarity seemed to have noticed this. “Mmit. My mif mer ahm muck wuv fower, ahm saf wuv rofs, ahm wall wuv mint man ahm vuckef wuv furnis nef to Vinkie?” Rarity garbled through the bandana covering her muzzle, which roughly translated meant “Wait. Why is there a sack of flour, a stack of rocks, a ball of lint and a bucket of turnips next to Pinkie?”

“Don’t be getting too rough with the prisoners yet, half-breed!” Trixie yelled. “We need them as the ransom to get the other three! And The Great and Powerful Trixie will not rest until she has that inferior Sparkle!”

“Nor I, *Photo Finish*, with ze Flootershy!” Photo Finish jumped in.

Gilda glowered at the two of them for a second before shrugging. “I guess I could afford to wait. There’s still Rainbow Dash, after all.”

“Someone call my name?” a confident voice called out from behind them.

The group turned around abruptly to see none other than Twilight, Fluttershy, and Rainbow Dash standing at the end of the hall, looking confident and impressive.

“What...HOW DID YOU GET IN HERE?!?” Trixie screamed. “HOW DOES EVERYPONY KEEP FINDING THIS PLACE?!?”

“Because there was a spy in your midst!” Twilight said dramatically as a brown owl swept up from behind her and landed softly on Twilight’s back. “You thought that Owlowiscious was working for you, but in fact he was a

double-agent! The moment you ponynapped our friends, Owlowsious told us how to find your headquarters!"

Owlowsious gave a small "Hoo!" at this. Even through his mouth guard, Spike was able to mutter something through gritted teeth that sounded an awful lot like "Show off..."

"And now," Twilight continued. "Your days are numbered! Before we left Ponyville I sent off a letter to Princess Celestia, who is sure to send dozens of royal guards here to rescue us within moments!"

There was a loud tap on the wall behind Twilight. The unicorn turned around and pressed the hoof-sized button on the wall to open the door. The gray pegasus with crossed eyes was hovering outside.

"Sorry ma'am, insufficient postage," the pegasus grunted at Twilight, giving her a dirty look she obviously reserved only for those who dared to cheat the system (at least, it seemed like a dirty look...it was somewhat undercut by the crossed eyes). Twilight looked at the envelope:

*Princess Celestia
1620 Highly Dangerous Situation
Nightmare Crater, The Moon*

Under the single solitary stamp was stamped in harsh red letters **'INSUFFICIENT POSTAGE.'**

"Nuts," Twilight sighed. "And I left my satchel with all my bits at home. Well ponies, I guess we're going to have to handle this on our own."

"And how do you propose to do that?" Prince Blueblood announced. "There's eleven of us and only four of you! You're hopelessly outnumbered!" He paused for a second. "Wait...eleven? No, there are only seven of us...why did I say eleven?" He muttered, scratching his head.

"Well no matter, you're still outnumbered!" Trixie shouted.

"Uh...hello?" Rainbow Dash scoffed. "Equestria's best young flyer, Ponyville's greatest magician, and the world's best animal expert here!"

“Vaht does being an animal expert have anything to do with rescuing your friends?” Photo Finish asked.

At that moment, there was a massive movement coming from behind Fluttershy. Wave after wave of adorable creatures – small mammals, amphibians, and birds – appeared behind the yellow pegasus, looking steely and ready for battle. Angel the Bunny was wearing a pasta strainer upside down on his head and holding a carrot like an assault rifle.

“Now everybody,” Fluttershy directed the animals. “Please don’t be too hard with them, okay? Mr. Hawk, don’t claw anyone’s eyes out again, okay? And Mrs. Beaver, I don’t want to see you chewing off any limbs this time, all right?” the hawk and beaver Fluttershy were addressing looked ashamed for a moment, but nodded.

“Everypony ready?” Twilight called. “And...*CHARGE!!!*” she lowered her head and ran at the Legion of Gloom, followed by Rainbow Dash, Owllovisious and the dozens of forest animals.

It was chaos. The individual members of the Legion of Gloom had dispersed in different directions, each fighting a different battle. Owllovisious and a few of the chipmunks had already clawed or chewed through the ropes binding Pinkie, Rarity, and Applejack, releasing them within moments. A woodpecker was trying to remove Spike’s face guard but not having much luck, much to Spike’s discomfort.

Rainbow Dash and a contingent of hummingbirds were battling Gilda in the air, swooping and diving at each other. Twilight was taking on the Diamond Dogs, using her magic against their brute strength, while Rarity was facing down Prince Blueblood (literally – Rarity was screaming in the face of the prince, who had decided to cower against a wall). Angel Bunny was dueling Photo Finish, the rabbit using a carrot while the fashion photographer wielded a tripod she got from who knows where. Trixie was now defending herself against a very angry Applejack and a bunch of frogs.

No pony in the room seemed to have noticed Pinkie shouting at four apparently inanimate objects. “I should have turned you into cupcakes!” she screamed at Madame LeFlour before giving it a mighty buck, ripping the canvas cover and causing white flour to spill on the floor. “And I should have made *you* into cookies!” she leveled a kick at Mr. Turnip, causing it to

crash on the ground and a number of turnips to spill out. Pinkie suddenly stopped and put a hoof on her chin. "Wait, no...that wouldn't make any sense. Turnip cookies would taste awful! Then again, I've never actually tried turnip cookies so maybe I shouldn't judge before I've had some. But how would you make turnips into cookies?" as she was mulling this over she managed to back into Rocky, causing Pinkie to jump several feet into the air.

"Oh, thought you could sneak up on *me*, huh?" Pinkie shouted at Rocky. The stack of rocks was standing next to Sir Lints-a-lot. "*And* team up to take me down?" Pinkie hollered. "Well, you'd better be ready for my *PINK-FU!*" she stood on her hind legs and gave a number of sharp kicks and jabs before swiping at Rocky, causing the top two rocks to fall off and pin Sir Lints-a-lot to the ground.

Pinkie smiled slyly. "You are a formidable opponent, but you are no match for me!" she said in a vaguely Asian accent, somehow managing to speak it aloud and out of sync with the movements of her mouth at the same time.

"*What...is...your...DEAL?!*" Rainbow Dash gritted through her teeth, diving at Gilda with each word.

"You left to hang out with that lame-o Pinkie!" Gilda shouted, swiping at a passing hummingbird with her claw.

"I thought we went over this!" Dash cried. "What, am I not allowed to have new friends?"

Gilda decided to answer this with by diving at Rainbow Dash, her claws extended and ready to cut, when she was knocked out of the air by one of the Diamond Dogs, who had been sent flying by a spell from Twilight.

"-MOST UNCOUTH, DISGUSTING, PRETENTIOUS, VILE PONY THAT I HAVE EVER HAD THE MISFORTUNE TO MEET!" Rarity's scream rang throughout the room, interrupted only by a scream from Trixie as a frog landed on her horn, knocking her hat off. In another corner of the room, a surprisingly loud 'thunk!' was heard when Photo Finish's tripod struck Angel's carrot.

“Zis is the end of the line...*for you!*” Photo Finish said sharply. Angel gave her a glare that quite plainly said “Bring it, toots.” Nearby, Gummy and Owlowiscious were surrounded by a crowd of animals, but there was no fight here – the alligator and the owl seemed to be taking bets on each of the fights and the animals were placing fruits, acorns, and other items of value to the forest creatures down and going back and forth over the odds of each fighter.

And so it would have continued, had Prince Blueblood not backed into the panel of buttons on the wall behind him.

“STORY TERMINATION SEQUENCE INITIATED” a loud, robotic voice overwhelmed every other noise in the room. It was accompanied by flashing red lights and repetitive sirens and caused every individual in the room to freeze in place, trying to figure out what was happening.

Prince Blueblood backed sharply away from the wall before dashing over to Trixie. “Hold me, my love!” he hollered, attempting to jump into Trixie’s front legs only to pin the unfortunate blue unicorn to the ground.

Twilight looked around her. The red lights were blinking faster, the sirens growing more frequent as the entire world seemed to be shimmering slightly at the edges, falling away from Twilight.

“This doesn’t make any sense...” Twilight muttered. “It’s almost as if I’ve been...”

Twilight awoke with a start. “...dreaming?” she muttered slowly. Her eyes began to focus and adjust to the light...first she could see the book her head had apparently fallen asleep on, drool forming a small puddle on the pages...then she could see the desk with other books and a set of quills sitting next to a couple of empty cups and a glass bottle half-full of a brownish-red liquid...then the rest of the library...and then finally the windows and the morning sky beyond them.

The unicorn groaned and lifted herself off her desk. “That’s it...” she muttered to herself. “I’ve got to start going easier on the apple cider...” her

eyes found a plate on the floor littered with crumbs. “And no more Pinkie Pie treats before I go to sleep.”

She yawned and stretched for a second before there was a knock at her door. Twilight grunted and got up to answer it.

“Welcome to the Ponyville Library, how can I-“ she was cut off when her visitor, a gray pegasus with crossed eyes, thrust her face into Twilight’s, giving her an angry and thoroughly disappointed expression.

“Really? *Really?! You sunk to the lowest common denominator? The ‘Oh, it was all just a dream!’ set up?”* Derpy Hooves demanded.

“...What? What are you talk-“ Twilight was interrupted when Derpy shoved a hoof into Twilight’s mouth.

“Tsk, ts. Couldn’t come up with a decent ending, so you reverted to the worst of clichés. Oh sure, the idea of a team of supervillains, well that’s just comedic gold, but when the time comes to actually make them do something you drop the ball! And here I was really enjoying myself!”

Derpy removed her hoof from Twilight’s muzzle and turned around in a huff. “STORY! I WANT TO SEE YOUR SUPERVISOR! THIS WILL NOT DO!” she screamed at the sky before taking to the air.

Twilight stared at the receding figure of Derpy, mouth agape and unable to process what had just happened. “The ponies in this town are *crazy...*” she finally muttered to herself before stepping back inside and closing the door.

Fin

Enter the League of Fanons

Chapter One

The Doctor Makes a House Call

A sharp crash. Prince Blueblood diving towards Trixie. Sirens. An explosion. Exposed sky. The world melting away. A flash of white. The bedroom ceiling.

Twilight Sparkle's eyes were open now, staring up at the sunlit room she slept in. She was trying to discern whether this was part of the dream or if she was awake now, before coming to the realization that if she was considering the possibility she was dreaming, then most likely she was no longer dreaming.

She rolled over on her bed, trying to put the images of her dream together to form some kind of coherent train of events. But the more she tried to piece it together the more it was slipping from her and after a moment all Twilight could remember from her dream was a vague feeling of confusion and the fact that she had experienced this dream before.

There was a loud knock at the door downstairs. "Why do ponies always seem to come to the library right after I wake up?" Twilight muttered to herself, lifting herself from her bed. "Well, at least Spike will get it..."

The knock came a second time. Twilight ignored it, brushing her mane instead. The knock came a third time, louder and more repetitive this time.

That's when Twilight realized Spike was away on royal business. She gasped, causing the brush she had been magically levitating to drop on to her head. Cursing under her breath, she raced downstairs and wrenched the door open.

"I'm so sorry! I didn't mean to take so long!" Twilight gasped.
"Welcome to the Ponyville Library, how can I help you?"

"Ah, Twilight Sparkle, I presume?" a cheerful voice rang out. On her doorstep was a brown Earth pony with an hourglass cutie mark wearing a light brown overcoat, standing next to a gray pegasus with crossed eyes who seemed to be staring at nothing in particular at the moment and with her tongue sticking out. The Earth pony was addressing her. "Anyway, don't worry about taking too long, I have all the time in the world! In fact, I have all the time of *several* worlds. Possibly even the whole universe, I haven't actually added it all up yet."

Before Twilight could think of anything to say to this, the Earth pony had pushed past her inside, followed by the gray pegasus. "Ah, libraries!" he exclaimed, taking in the whole room. "So full of knowledge and wonderment and great stories!" At this he pulled a random book off the shelf and glanced at the cover, which had the word Spiderses printed on it. "Well, mostly great stories," he muttered, tossing the book on the floor. Twilight was about to object to such blatantly poor treatment of library property (even if it was such horribly written material), but the Earth pony had strolled up to her and was looking intently into her face.

"But we're here for another great story, one not printed in a book. And you'll be the one to tell us it, Twilight Sparkle," he said.

"You...I...what?" Twilight sputtered, not able to make heads or tails of any of this.

"But you can't, can you?" the Earth pony said, looking deeply into Twilight's eyes before reaching into a coat pocket and retrieving a small metallic object with his mouth. It flashed briefly and made a sharp reverberating noise as the Earth pony waved it in the direction of Twilight. "Blocked, just as I thought." He put the object back into his pocket. "Well Ms. Sparkle, you have a story locked away and I am your key. Disregard that metaphor by the way, because it was horrible."

"That...this...I...you..." Twilight stammered. "...I'm very confused," she finished weakly.

“Yeah, he has that effect on ponies,” the gray pegasus said, smiling. “This is the Doctor, and you can call me Derpy.”

“Oy, don’t be introducing me!” the Doctor cried. “I prefer to introduce myself, you know that!”

“But you didn’t. So I thought I would,” Derpy smiled.

“I did too...” the Doctor said uncomfortably, before turning back to Twilight. “I’m the Doctor, by the way,” he muttered in a quiet voice. “Oh, shut up,” he said, catching sight of Derpy rolling her eyes in opposite directions.

“So...what’s this about?” Twilight asked, looking from the Doctor to Derpy and back again.

“Well strictly speaking, only you fully know the answer to that question. So we just need you to come with us!” he exclaimed, pulling Twilight out the door.

“Don’t worry, you get used to it,” Derpy said, winking at Twilight, which only served to make her crossed eye appearance even stranger.

“The Great and Powerful Trixie will call this meeting of the Legion of Gloom to order!” Trixie exclaimed, her voice ringing through the spacious yet dimly lit hall. “First, the Great and Powerful Trixie will go over the minutes of the previous meeting!”

“Oh, for the love of...” Gilda muttered, putting a claw to her forehead. “When we have ever kept minutes of our meetings?”

“Since the last meeting, half-breed,” Trixie growled. “When I assigned *you* the job of keeping minutes and you agreed!”

“What...I did not!” Gilda cried.

“Actually, you kinda did...” one of the Diamond Dogs said warily.

“As someone who attended the previous meeting, I too can assert to your agreement in this matter,” Prince Blueblood chimed in. “I believe the exact words you spoke to Trixie-“

“*The Great and Powerful Trixie*,” Trixie interrupted.

“-went as follows: ‘What? Oh yeah. Sure. Whatev.’ Then you placed your earbuds back on and resumed banging your head in time to that atrocious music you listen to,” the Prince finished. “Then again, I can’t be completely sure those were your exact words, since we don’t have the minutes from the previous meeting.”

“Ve are vaisting our time vit zis!” Photo Finish said sharply. “Ze minutes do not matter, ze Flootershy and her companions do!”

“Oui, zat is correct Madame!” Madame LeFlour said, waving her appendages in the air and sitting next to Rocky, Mr. Turnip and Sir Lints-a-Lot. But once again, no one else in the room seemed to hear her. Photo Finish looked sideways at the inanimate objects sitting next to her. “Vaht is a sack of floer, a bucket of-“

“I DON’T KNOW WHY THERE’S A BUNCH OF JUNK SITTING THERE!” Trixie yelled. “I didn’t put it there, I don’t know who keeps putting it there, and *I don’t care!* I mean...The Great and Powerful Trixie does not care! Can we just forget the stupid objects already?!?”

Everyone in the room was silent for a moment after this outburst, and for a while the only sound in the room was Trixie’s heavy breathing. Finally, the blue unicorn straightened up in her seat.

“Very well, since we don’t have any minutes from the previous meeting to go over...” at this she glared at Gilda. “Then the Great and Powerful Trixie will explain our next plan to defeat the meddling Twilight Sparkle and her friends!”

“Which is what we should have been doing the whole time...” Gilda muttered under her breath, crossing her front legs.

“Now then,” Prince Blueblood stood up. “My sources in the Royal Government have informed me that Twilight Sparkle is not only Princess

Celestia's prized student, but that she and her five friends are the bearers of the source of an incredibly powerful magic. In fact, it was this very magic that drove the influence of Nightmare Moon from Princess Luna and as far as we know, there is no creature in this world that can stand before its might. Now while the six are the bearers, the objects of the magic themselves are located here in Canterlot."

"Fillies and gentlecolts...and...other...creatures," the Prince said awkwardly. "We have found their greatest strength...and their greatest weakness. If we were able to get our hooves on those objects, we could defeat them easily!"

"Brilliant, my Prince!" Trixie exclaimed.

"Ah, but not as brilliant as you, my sweet..." the Prince replied, leaning in for a kiss.

"Here we go..." the Diamond Dogs sighed in unison.

"Before zis...*atroc*ity can begin..." Photo Finish shuddered darkly. "I must ask: vere are zese objects located?"

"It's an ill-kept secret among the Royal Guard that the Elements of Harmony are locked away in a vault in one of the main towers," Prince Blueblood explained. "But this vault can only be opened by one of the Princesses."

There was silence for a moment following this announcement. Then Gilda spoke up. "So you mean to tell me that our best weapon against those lame ponies is *completely out of our reach?!?*"

"Now now, Gilda..." a new voice said softly. "I wouldn't say that..."

The voice came from a figure standing behind the table at the end of the room, facing away from the table and obscured by shadow. But even at a distance he was a tall, imposing figure.

The figure bowed his head slowly, as if in thought. "There are locked away, yes...but those are but the physical manifestations of their power. The true power of this magic lies within the spirit of the six ponies who

possess them, and those ponies will call upon that power at their time of greatest need.”

He turned to face the Legion of Gloom. “That will be the opportune moment. Push them to call upon that power, and when they are about to use it...” he raised a hoof and smashed it on to the ground, sending cracks spreading from the spot he hit. “...then we strike.”

“Sounds risky,” Prince Blueblood said warily. “You’re saying we have to strike after they call upon the power, but before they actually use it. Our window of opportunity is very small...”

“Oh ye of little faith,” the figure chortled. “Remember who you are speaking to. Was it not I who saved you from the dome in the swamp when your enemies had you cornered? And was it not I who erased their memories so that you can strike from the shadows once more?”

The figure smiled maliciously. “You are speaking to one of unimaginable power. Trust me – this time you all shall succeed.”

“So how do we find them?” Gilda asked, narrowing her eyes.

“We do not need to,” the figure responded. “We merely have to wait...and they will come to us.”

Photo Finish spoke up. “I must ask...Vaht is ze name of zis magics?”

“This magic...” the figure said. “Is called...”

“The Elements of Harmony!” the Doctor cheered. “A pleasure to meet you, each and every one of you!”

The Doctor was standing next to Derpy Hooves addressing Twilight, Applejack, Rainbow Dash, Pinkie Pie, Fluttershy and Rarity. After grabbing Twilight, the Doctor and Derpy had rather forcefully retrieved each of the others one by one, assuring them that their presence was essential before taking them to a small clearing near Ponyville where there was a blue box with POLICE STABLE printed on the side, similar to the ones that had been

common in large Equestrian cities decades ago. The Doctor had led them inside, where to the shock of the six mares they found a large, futuristic room made of metal arranged around a single control station in the middle of the room.

"I know, I know, bigger on the inside, right?" the Doctor had said gleefully, galloping around the room and hitting a few buttons seemingly at random (which, for all intents and purposes, he may have been). After the usual reactions of disbelief and explanations that yes, this was in fact a time machine finally subsided, the Doctor set about explaining their situation.

"You see, an event of crucial importance has occurred in your timeline but for some reason you have a block on your memory centers so you are unable to recall the details of said event except in the form of subconscious images during the stages of sleep," he said very quickly.

There was silence for a moment. "...Ah...may not have been able to follow all that," Applejack said in a confused tone.

"Oh, silly!" Pinkie exclaimed. "He said something happened to us but we don't remember it, except in our dreams!" She seemed to be taking the discovery of a time machine and an apparently mad pony in charge of it all in stride.

"Oh," Applejack said. "That makes a little more sense...I guess."

"Actually no, it doesn't," the Doctor said. "Why would anypony want to block your memories? What could have possibly happened that somepony...or *something*...wouldn't want you to remember?" Once again he pulled out the metallic object in his pocket and waved it over each of the six mares in turn.

"Um...if I may..." Twilight asked slowly. "What exactly is that thing?"

"Sonic Screwdriver!" the Doctor said proudly through the object clenched in his teeth. "Never leave your temporal dimension without one, trust me. Unlocks doors, tracks life forms, controls devices, and performs medical scans, which is what I'm doing with it now." He ran the screwdriver over Pinkie and spat the device into his front hoof to examine it. "Now

that's interesting...but not important at the moment. Anyway, each of you has the same reading: blocked memory cells that come from the same source."

"Well, wait!" Pinkie cried. "We're in a time machine, aren't we? So let's just go back and see what happened ourselves!"

"Actually, we already thought of that," Derpy said, her eyes sliding in opposite directions. "But something kept blocking us. I got to break through a couple of times by delivering some mail, but each time something forced me out before I could learn very much."

"Basically," the Doctor continued. "The structure of events you experienced followed a specific, largely predetermined framework, and we could only access it if our appearance fit within that framework."

"And there's a lot of these frameworks! We call them 'stories,'" Derpy concluded.

"And here I thought you were just a simple clockmaker and a friendly mailmare," Rarity said, admiration creeping into her voice.

"Nope!" the Doctor said cheerfully. "But that would make for an interesting story...somepony should really write that. Maybe with 'clock' or 'tock' in my name somewhere, that'd be cool. Or I can just be called...Bob. I always wanted to be called Bob."

"So...wait," Twilight was looking at Derpy. "What you were saying about stories...Is this why you came to my house yelling to me about dreams and clichés and what not?"

Derpy tilted her head, her eyes sliding apart as she did so. "What now?"

"You...came to my house? Yelled 'story, I want to see your supervisor' before you flew off? ...Remember?"

Derpy's eyes slid further apart. "...No."

"Oh. Well...never mind then," Twilight muttered.

Derpy turned to the Doctor. "I think it's time we introduced them to the League."

"Absolutely!" the Doctor cried, dashing over to the control panel in the middle of the room. "Hold on, everypony! Things are about to get interesting." At that he dramatically threw down a switch and a deep humming noise filled the room, apparently coming from a pulsating object in the middle of the column at the center of the room. The floor beneath them shook and everypony barely managed to grab something to keep them steady. After a moment, the noise and the shaking abruptly stopped.

"Fillies and gentlecolts..." the Doctor said, approaching the door. "Well, I suppose I'm the only gentlecolt here..." he muttered as he opened the door. "Welcome to Trotswood!"

The six mares gasped as they trotted out through the door. The shock was the result of two reactions – one was surprise at the fact that they were now in a completely different location, and the second was their admiration of the breathtaking room they were now standing in. It was spacious with high ceilings, painted gleaming white with splendid décor, fit for royalty. And there was only one city in all of Equestria with architecture this fine: Canterlot.

On the floor was shelf after shelf of fantastic looking equipment. Some of it looked incredibly futuristic, while other items looked like they belonged in a museum. But perhaps the most obvious aspect of these shelves was the clutter: there seemed to be no rhyme or reason to the placement of any of these objects. An abacus was sitting atop a tank of green bubbling liquid, which was positioned next to an anvil with several records perched on top. An old compass was pointing at a small silvery thin box with what looked like the icon of an apple with a bite taken out of it embedded on top. A cupcake with an actual bite taken out of it sat on the shelf below. A large computer mainframe with dials, flashing lights and various indicators beeped occasionally nearby. It was too much for the six mares to take in all at once.

"Hello there!" a friendly voice called out. The attention of the six mares was brought to an occupant of the room who had gone unnoticed amidst the architecture and contents of the space. Their greeter was a

familiar Earth pony with a pale cream coat, a pink stripe in her navy blue mane and a cutie mark consisting of three wrapped candies. Twilight knew she had seen her around Ponyville before, but she couldn't remember her name.

"Bon Bon!" Pinkie shouted, bouncing forward to greet her. Twilight smiled. Of course Pinkie would know everypony in Ponyville. Bon Bon greeted Pinkie warmly before turning around.

"Lyra!" Bon Bon called out. "Everypony, all of you, get out here! We've got visitors!"

The aforementioned mint green pony stepped out from behind a shelf full of equipment, her face shining as brightly as her cutie mark of a gold lyre on her flank. She offered them a cheery wave before two other ponies followed her out from behind the shelves. One was a gray mare with a flowing dark gray mane and the cutie mark of a treble clef – Twilight recalled seeing her at the Grand Galloping Gala and figured she must have been one of the musicians there. The second pony was a white colored pony with a wild, spiky mane of blue and cyan stripes, a cutie mark of a double quaver and wearing thick black goggles with purple lenses – the same pony who had been the DJ at Rarity's fashion show for Hoity Toity.

"Everypony," the Doctor said, stepping forward. "This is Octavia and this is DJ Pon3, two of Equestria's most talented and yet perhaps most different musicians. You've already met Lyra, Bon Bon and Derpy, and I of course am the Doctor."

Octavia stood up on her hind legs, drawing herself up impressively. "And together," she announced in a crisp, clear voice which carried through the room. "We are the League of Fanons."

Chapter Two

Meet the Fanons

Within Canterlot's royal castle, Prince Blueblood occupied the top floor of an entire wing of a building set towards the rear of the complex, furthest away from the public spaces of the castle – the throne room, the reception areas, the dining halls, all that. The prince's chambers consisted of a private dining room, a living space, multiple dressing rooms, and a single grand bedroom positioned within a short tower extending out of the building. It was from this tower that soft, cooing noises could presently be heard.

"Oh *Blueblood*, you impress the Great and Powerful Trixie..." Trixie said in an excited, breathless voice.

"You have seen nothing yet, Ms. Great and Powerful Future Princess..."

"Oh Prince, sweep this Great and Powerful mare off her hooves!"

"Your wish is my command."

"Oh, Prince! Oh, oh yes! Yes! Oh...oooooh...your horn is so *biiiiig*..."

"Um, Great and Powerful Trixie?"

The last line was spoken by one of the Diamond Dogs, who had entered the room and briefly managed to catch a glimpse of Trixie on the Prince's bed, holding doll versions of herself and Prince Blueblood (*available for \$9.99 at your local toy store, comes with hairbrushes and fashionable accessories*) in her hooves with the doll's horns touching together before the Diamond Dog had to dodge a pillow violently hurled by force of magic.

"*The Great and Powerful Trixie demands that you **KNOCK ON THE DOOR BEFORE ENTERING!!!***" Trixie screamed at the now cowering

Diamond Dog. The unicorn's face was crimson and her eyes were ablaze, an alarming contrast to the pale white of the Diamond Dog's face.

"Sorry, sorry!" the Diamond Dog pleaded, hunched before Trixie with his paws over his head. "I just came to find Prince Blueblood, the newcomer wants him!"

"He's not here," Trixie growled. "He's conducting some royal business, so the Great and Powerful Trixie decided to wait for him. *Is that all?*"

"Well...no," the Diamond Dog cringed. "The newcomer wants to see you too. He wants to see all of us!"

"Fine," Trixie huffed. "The Great and Powerful Trixie will grace this meeting with her presence. Just so long as you remember something very important: *you didn't see anything here.*"

"Yes. I mean-no. I mean...I saw nothing," the Diamond Dog whimpered.

"Okay, hold on...I'm very lost," Twilight Sparkle announced to everypony in the room. "And I know I speak for my friends in this regard." Applejack, Rarity, Rainbow Dash and Fluttershy gave nods of agreement, while Pinkie just kept turning her head this way and that staring at various objects in the room.

"Firstly, what in the wide world of Equestria is a 'fanon'?" Twilight continued.

"Well, that's actually kinda a tricky question to answer..." Lyra replied.

"Alright, remember what I was saying earlier about frameworks and trying to fit into them?" the Doctor asked.

Derpy cut the Doctor off. "Just call them 'stories' Doctor. It makes it easier to follow."

“It’s like this,” DJ Pon3 started. “You all got your story, and we’re in that story too. But you have like an *impact* in the story and we don’t, but then a bunch of fans of your story were like ‘hey, let’s hear from those ponies too!’ which are us ponies. You dig?”

There was a silence for a moment as the six mares gave DJ Pon3 blank stares. Octavia facehoofed. “That...has to be the worst explanation I have ever heard.”

“Let me try,” Bon Bon said. “You see girls, all of Equestria is like a big story and you six are the main characters in that story. The six of us are also within that story but only vaguely defined, fitting in as background characters to your daily lives. But your story has a lot of fans who were interested in finding out more about our world, so they wrote little stories about us background characters. Eventually, enough of them wrote stories about us six that we began to have our own personalities.”

“Hang on...” Fluttershy said, panic creeping into her voice. “Do you mean to say that we’re all *fictional*? That none of this is really real?”

“I prefer to think of it more as being *guided* than being fictional,” the Doctor said. “Remember philosophy class Fluttershy – as Descartes once said, ‘I think, therefore I am.’ You think, I think, all of us here are thinking, so we must exist in *some* form or another.”

“I never took a philosophy class...” Fluttershy mumbled quietly.

“I still don’t really understand.” Twilight said.

“You don’t really have to,” Derpy said in a comforting tone. “That’s the beauty of it – you can just go along your daily life and not worry about it, not even have to think about it.” She gave Twilight a warm smile, and this time the crossed eyes actually served to complement her intended message rather than detract from it.

“So how did y’all meet each other?” Applejack asked, clearly wanting to get off these highly philosophical and brain-numbing topics.

“The Doctor found us,” Lyra said. “As you can probably tell, he seems to know a bit more about this kind of stuff.”

“It’s a gift,” the Doctor winked.

“And what exactly do you do?” Rainbow Dash inquired.

“Oh, you know...save the universe, make sure the timestream for this world remains consistent, keeping an eye on *you* lot,” at this the Doctor gestured towards the six mares. “You know, typical timey-whimey, Doctory...stuff.”

“And don’t forget about me, the Doctor’s companion,” Derpy chimed in. “Who managed to save your hide more than once, if I’m not mistaken,” she added, nudging the Doctor.

“Lyra and I do a lot of the administrative and general support work here at Trotswood,” Bon Bon explained. “And Lyra is just so delightful at that wonderful instrument of hers!”

“Oh, go on...” Lyra said, waving a hoof nonchalantly but blushing nonetheless.

“Music and technical know-how, that’s what I bring,” DJ Pon3 smiled, adjusting her goggles.

“My specialty is also in music, though of a different variety of course...” Octavia explained. “However, I also do a fair amount of detective work for the League. It is incredible what some of these royal ponies say in front of the musicians when they think we’re just focusing on our music.”

“And how did you find out about us?” Pinkie asked cheerfully.

“Ah, *well...*” the Doctor said, keen interest creeping into his voice. “The TARDIS – that’s the blue box thing you came here in – picked up on some dimensional disturbances around Ponyville, particularly around Froggy Bottom Bog. But as we already explained, we couldn’t get in ourselves to find out what was happening, and any trace of what happened was wiped clean. *Except...*in here,” he said, indicating Twilight’s head. “Your memory just needs to be unblocked and we can learn what happened.”

“How in Equestria do you suppose we do that?” Rarity asked.

DJ Pon3 held up a hoof. “Just follow me, girls.” She turned around and started trotting to the back of the room, with everypony following her.

“So...” Rainbow Dash was walking astride Octavia and was leaning in to ask her a question. “Octopus, was it?”

“*Octavia*,” she replied curtly.

“Right, right...” Dash said. “So...I’m still not quite getting who you all are. I mean, this Doctor fellow, what’s so special about him?”

“Well, I’ve puzzled over that myself actually,” Octavia said, looking thoughtfully at the Doctor. “I believe he resonates so strongly with his fans because he embodies the ideal characteristics of a masculine figure: commanding and truly in charge of any situation, brave to the point that he literally laughs in the face of danger, relying not on strength of arms but on intellect and sharp wit, wise and clever beyond any measure...he is what every stallion wishes he could be and what any mare would look for in a companion.”

Rainbow Dash gave Octavia a blank look. “I meant more like...what exactly has he *done*?”

“Oh,” Octavia said. “I thought we went over this. He’s a time traveler who has saved the universe on multiple occasions.”

“Okay, that...that makes more sense,” Dash replied.

They proceeded to the back of the room, where there was a large bank of computers positioned around a circle labeled on the floor. The computers had blinking lights, multiple toggle switches and buttons and readout screens, but what their exact purpose was couldn’t be deciphered from the appearance of the machine itself.

“Right then!” the Doctor cried. “You lot, stand right here in the middle, in the circle,” he said to the six mares. “On you go, then!”

“Sorry, but what exactly does this machine do?” Twilight asked.

“It scans brainwaves,” DJ Pon3 said, giving a sly smile. “Anything in your mind, it picks up.”

“Basically,” the Doctor began. “The mind scanner will locate your blocked memories, and I’ll use my screwdriver to unblock them so you can remember them. But then they’ll also appear on the monitor here so that we can see them too.”

“Now then...” the Doctor continued, turning to the other members of the League. “This is going to have to be a group effort. Octavia and Lyra, I need you to get your instruments ready.” The two musicians nodded and galloped off. “DJ, I need you to keep an eye on the monitors.”

“On it, Doc!” DJ Pon3 said, giving the Doctor a mock salute.

“Oh, don’t salute!” the Doctor shuddered. “And no ‘Doc’ either, you know I hate that...”

“Sorry sir, you know I forget,” DJ replied, snickering slightly. The Doctor grumbled in response.

A moment later Octavia and Lyra returned with their instruments in tow and proceeded to tune them. “Right then...” the Doctor said. “The experience of having your memories unblocked is a very traumatic one, especially if they’re important in any way. But soft music has a way of making the whole experience much easier to bear, so I need you two to play something soothing while we do this.” Octavia and Lyra nodded as they finishing tuning their instruments, then after a moment began to play a quiet melody.

The Doctor turned back to the six mares. “Now I’m not going to lie, this is going to hurt a little. But close your eyes and try to concentrate on the music, okay?”

The six mares nodded and closed their eyes, listening intently to the wafting notes of Octavia and Lyra’s song. Pinkie seemed to recognize the tune, as she was bobbing her head back and forth in time to the music, humming along softly.

“Doc, I found them!” DJ shouted, pointing at a collection of red icons on the brain scan on the screen.

“Alright...” the Doctor looked at the screen to memorize the location of the blocked memory cells, and then pointed his sonic screwdriver at the six mares. “On three then, ready? One...two...three.”

Twilight had tensed herself for the moment, finding it difficult to focus on the music in her state of anticipation. For a second she heard the noise of the sonic screwdriver before she felt a searing pain in her head, so strong it felt like her head would burst. Something was forcing its way inside her brain, pushing in deeper and deeper. Twilight clutched her head in agony, forcing herself to pick out the distant notes of music she could just barely hear. She tried to focus on them, not thinking it would do much good. But to her surprise, the more she focused on the music the more the pain receded. It didn't vanish, but it was numbed, and that was good enough.

And then, she could remember everything.

Twilight was battling one of the Diamond Dogs, blasting one of them back with her magic and shielding herself from a blow from another. It was tough, but she definitely had the upper hand, and it would only be a matter of time before she had them beat.

“STORY TERMINATION SEQUENCE INITIATED.” The chaos of the battle suddenly ceased with the overwhelming sound of a loud, robotic voice. Everyone in the room froze, looking for the source of that sound as alarms and sirens suddenly began to ring out.

“Well, not this isn't fun...” a bored sounding voice echoed through the room. “But I think I've had just about enough of this nonsense.” Prince Blueblood yelped and dove on top of Trixie, cowering in fear of this new voice.

Suddenly there was an ear-splintering crash as the ceiling exploded. Twilight braced herself to dodge or magically block any falling pieces of the

ceiling, but somehow they never came. The sky was now exposed as the ceiling seemed to just vanish, and it took Twilight's eyes a moment to adjust to the brightness of the sunlight.

When her eyes finally adjusted, she saw a powerful-looking figure hovering in the air. It was a dark green alicorn the size of Princess Celestia with a long, silvery horn and a majestic wingspan, a mess of blond hair for a mane and a tail, and glinting eyes.

The figure's horn glowed and suddenly what was left of the Legion of Gloom's lair began to fade away, leaving only the swamp behind. There was a flash of brightest white, and Twilight suddenly found herself back in the library, her head lying on a desk with a bottle of apple cider and a plate of eaten treats nearby.

One last detail returned to Twilight. The alicorn had said something in a lofty, casual tone as he cast his magic.

"Greetings to you all, My Little Ponies! Allow me to introduce myself...my name is John. But you can just call me...The Author."

Chapter Three

The Self-Insert Rears His Absolutely Fabulous Head

“Okay, so I know I’ve been saying this a lot today, but...” Twilight’s right eye began twitching and she was talking through clenched teeth. “I’m confused. I’m very, very, *very* confused. And I really *hate* being confused. So something had *better* start making sense or Celestia help me, I will not be responsible for my actions.”

Twilight’s friends, having previously seen her in a state of rage and fearing the consequences of being on the wrong end of it, backed away from the purple unicorn as quickly as possible. Bon Bon and Lyra followed suit, not really knowing why they were doing so but deciding that if everypony else was doing it they should do the same. Even Octavia and DJ Pon3, who were already standing a fair distance from Twilight, involuntarily shied away. Only Derpy and the Doctor seemed oblivious to the danger, Derpy staring at nothing in particular with her tongue sticking out and the Doctor pacing back and forth while quickly talking, half to the room and half to himself.

“Oh no, oh no no no...this is tricky, this is very tricky...no, I know exactly what we’re dealing with and it is not good at all...” He finally looked up at Twilight. “Oh, don’t give me that look, the last thing we need now is you catching on fire.”

“...Because it’ll harm you or her?” Fluttershy inquired in a squeaky voice.

“No, because it’ll set the sprinklers off and stain my coat. And short-circuit the computers. And make a general mess of things.” He paused for a moment. “And the harm thing, yeah, there’s that too...”

“Doctor, what are we up against?” Lyra asked urgently.

“One of the scariest things in the universe,” the Doctor responded. “They are ill-conceived monstrosities that lack solid emotions and are far too skilled at any number of traits, whether it flies in the face of the laws of space and time or not. They are too perfect or too imperfect, with a complete disregard for reality as we understand it, serving only to fulfill the ridiculous fantasies of their creator.”

“Fillies and gentlecolts...well, I suppose I’m the only gentlecolt here...and you all are far too old to be called fillies, so I guess ‘mares’ would be better...”

The Doctor took a deep breath and a stern expression crossed his face. “...We are dealing...with a self-insert.”

The other members of the League of Fanons gasped in fear. Lyra gave an exaggerated scream of terror, standing on her hind legs and clutching her head with her front hooves. The Elements of Harmony, however, merely stared blankly at the members of the League.

“...Come again?” Applejack asked, raising an eyebrow.

“Oh that’s right...” Derpy said slowly. “You don’t know what that is, do you?”

Bon Bon stepped forward. “Okay, you remember what I was saying about stories? Well, a self-insert is when an author inserts themselves into a story!”

“Oh, you mean like an author character?” Twilight inquired.

“Well, yes...” the Doctor said. “Except self-inserts are generally idealized versions of the author. So not only are they in control of the situation they insert themselves into, but they will alter the situation to fit their own ridiculous whims.”

“*Very good, Doctor...*” a loud, ominous voice rang throughout the room. “*And now it is my whim that you all come to visit me!*”

Everypony in the room froze at the sound of The Author’s voice. Bon Bon squealed with terror and leaped into the arms of Lyra, who barely

managed to catch her in her front hooves and remain standing at the same time. Suddenly the floating image of The Author's smiling face appeared in the middle of the room, leering down at all of them.

Octavia snorted. "Oh, a floating disembodied head trying to mock us. How *very* subtle there..."

The face of The Author frowned. "Yes, I suppose you would know a thing or two about subtlety. Gray skin and gray hair...what, were black and white just too *vibrant* for you?"

Octavia's normally dignified expression suddenly hardened and she gave The Author a vicious stare. "Oh, it. Is. *On*."

"Yeah!" Rainbow Dash yelled. "Who do you think you are, blocking our memories and joining up with the Legion of Gloom?" At this she flew at The Author's head, but as the head was but an illusion the pegasus sailed right through and crashed into the wall on the opposite side of the room.

"Consarnit, Dash," Applejack shook her head. "Why is it whenever we meet a big nasty bad guy, you go charging in without thinking?"

"I can't help it..." Dash muttered quietly, glaring at Applejack.

"What do you want with us?" Derpy demanded, stepping forward.

"Oh, that is just *precious*!" The Author exclaimed, looking like he was on the verge of giggling. "A cross-eyed mare acting all tough? You are just so adorable looking when you're angry!"

"Don't cross me..." Derpy growled, but she was blushing slightly with embarrassment at the blatant mention of her condition.

"Enough of this!" Twilight shouted forcefully. "Answer her question, what is it you want with us?"

"It's not so much what I want with *you*..." The Author said casually, his face taking on a mockingly innocent expression. "It's what I want for *them*..." at this his horn began to glow, and the images of the members of the Legion of Gloom appeared around him. They all floated there, standing

impressively and leering at the Elements of Harmony and the League of Fanons, with the exception of Trixie and Prince Blueblood, who had their hooves wrapped around each other and were kissing furiously, apparently oblivious to their surroundings.

“A-*hem*,” The Author cleared his throat in disgust. Trixie and Blueblood froze and looked up to see where they were before immediately leaping off each other. Trixie’s hat was tilted to the point that one of her ears was exposed and her cape was disheveled, Blueblood’s bowtie was a tangled mess and his mane was ruffled, and both had several prominent hickies on their necks.

“Hang on,” DJ Pon3 said, pointing at the image of a group of Legion of Gloom members. “What’s with the dust bunny, the turnip bucket, the-“

“Okay, that’s enough,” The Author interrupted. “I think that particular joke has run its course by this point.”

The Author sighed. “Right,” he continued. “As I was saying, it’s not what I want with you; it’s what I want for them. I set something into motion when I put these characters together, and I do not intend to let it die so soon. I could not bear to have my beloved Legion be defeated so soon, not when I have a higher authority to answer to...”

“A higher authority?” the Doctor asked with his eyebrows raised. “And who might that be?”

“My fans,” The Author gushed. “My glorious, glorious, absolutely wonderful fans (*this isn’t coming across as pandering, is it?*). Oh, their reaction to my story was so positive! So joyful! When I tasted that praise I knew at that point there was no going back. I just *had* to keep the story going...the show must go on!”

“So you inserted yourself in to a tale of your own making,” the Doctor grimaced. “Well sorry to break it to you, but the fine readers of Equestria Daily (*again, not pandering, right?*) will not readily accept such blatant self-indulgence.”

“They will if it’s well-written!” The Author spat back. “Their standards may be high (*totally NOT pandering*) but I will rise up to meet them!”

"Enough of zis!" the image of Photo Finish cried. "You said you vere all-powerful, so destroy zem already!"

"Now what kind of ending would that make for?" The Author chuckled. "We haven't even finished the second act! No no no, first they must come to *us*." His horn glowed brightly for a moment. "Doctor, I have transmitted our coordinates to your sonic screwdriver. We await your arrival!" The Doctor pulled his screwdriver out of his pocket which, sure enough, was beeping softly.

"What are you *doing*?" Trixie hissed. "You're giving them the opportunity to attack us?!"

"Hush, loud and boastful," The Author said. "Everypony, we're *waiting*..." At this, the images of The Author and the Legion of Gloom vanished.

The Elements of Harmony and the League of Fanons were quiet for a long moment, staring at the spot where the images of the Legion of Gloom had been. Then finally the Doctor spoke up.

"Right then! Off we go! Allons-y, everypon-y!" he said cheerfully.

"...What, just like that?" Derpy exclaimed skeptically.

"It's rude to turn down an invitation, Derpy," the Doctor said, winking.

"Sorry, but did you forget the part about the all-powerful author who can snuff your life out at his whim?" Octavia said.

"I don't think he'll resort to such crudeness, at least not right away," the Doctor explained. "While he may act cocky, I detect a certain lack of self-confidence about him. He's absolutely terrified at the thought of disappointing his readers (*What? Ridiculous! I have tons of self-confidence! I don't feel any desperate need for approval! ...Not that I don't want your approval, of course...heh...*)."

The Doctor continued. "He may have the home field advantage, but the game is still on our terms, at least for now. And do disregard that metaphor, I absolutely despise sports analogies. Anyway, I say we go."

"As do I!" Twilight exclaimed with a confident look on her face. "Come on girls, we possess the Elements of Harmony! Together, there's nothing we can't overcome!" Her friends gave each other warm, confident smiles, their spirits boosted by Twilight's pep talk. Even some of the members of the League of Fanons looked warmed by Twilight's statement.

"Then let's go!" Lyra exclaimed, standing on her hind legs and pointing across the room with one of her front hooves. "To the TARDIS!"

"Some day you're going to have to show me how you do that," Bon Bon said in a half-annoyed, half-admiring tone.

"It's really quite simple when you've practiced," Octavia said in a haughty voice, standing atop her own hind legs and proceeding to walk towards the time machine.

"Show off..." DJ Pon3 muttered under her breath.

Deep beneath Canterlot Castle was a catacomb of tunnels linking a series of subterranean rooms below the city, each one of utilitarian design illuminated by the occasional lamp and decorated by the occasional bit of graffiti, with messages that ranged from the stupid (*LUNA + BIG MAC*) to the political (*Coltbert for President!*) to the bizarre (*the cupcake is a lie*). It was within one of these tunnels that one could hear a deep humming noise, a sort of wheezing sound that got louder as it repeated and a blue box materialized within the tunnel. The TARDIS finished materializing with a loud thud that sounded like a boom in the quiet space as it echoed down the dimly lit hallway. A moment later the door creaked loudly as it was opened and twelve ponies stepped out into the tunnel.

"Where are we?" Applejack asked nervously.

"Below Canterlot, in one of the old emergency tunnels I imagine," the Doctor responded. "Why do villains always set up shop in cold, dark

places? Is it too much to ask for a little sunshine? At least throw a plant in, spruce the room up a bit.”

“If it’s a plant you want,” a loud, arrogant voice came from down the hall. “Then a plant The Great and Powerful Trixie will grant!”

There was an explosion of smoke, and when it cleared Trixie was standing before them, her cape fluttering behind her even though there was no wind.

“Very nice,” DJ Pon3 said appreciatively. “Think you could show me that smoke trick? Would make quite an entrance at the DJ booth...”

“The Great and Powerful Trixie never reveals her secrets!” Trixie boasted, placing a hoof on her chest. “Now, about that plant...” she grinned slyly as her horn began to glow. Small green shoots began to emerge from the cracks in the walls, growing in size until entire sections of wall began to fall apart as vines tore through them. Another explosion of smoke, and Trixie was gone.

“What do we do?” Bon Bon cried out in fear, gripping on to Lyra again. Lyra strained, struggling to push her off.

“She’s cast a growth spell!” Twilight shouted, looking around at the vines as they wrenched themselves free of the rock and earth surrounding them. “I can reverse it, but it’ll take me a moment!”

“Then let’s hold it off while Twilight works on her magic!” Rarity said to her friends.

“Ah come on everypony, it’s just a plant,” Applejack said. “What’s it gonna do to us?”

A nearby vine chose that moment to lash out at the orange Earth pony, wrapping itself around one of Applejack’s rear legs and pulling her off her hooves before dragging her away from the group.

“Oh, cruel irony...” Derpy said, rolling her eyes in opposite directions.

“Yeah, I forgot to mention...” Twilight muttered somewhat embarrassingly. “She *may* have also made it sentient.”

“Oh, *ya think?!* ” Applejack yelled, struggling with the vine.

“Don’t worry Applejack, I got you!” Rainbow Dash cried, diving at the vine. She stamped at it with her hooves, but its grip on Applejack refused to slacken. She repeatedly tried to stun the vine and even bit it once, but nothing worked and soon another vine was swatting at Dash, forcing her to fly out of the way.

“Gah, how do you *fight* these things?!” Dash yelled, frustrated that blunt force was having no effect.

“I don’t suppose we could reason with it?” Fluttershy muttered in a squeaky voice.

“A nice sentiment,” the Doctor replied. “But I have a feeling it won’t be willing to listen. Partly on account of the fact that it has no ears.”

“Out of the way, amateurs,” a haughty voice came from behind them. Before they could turn around, the gray figure of Octavia had rushed past them, running at the vines on her hind legs, clutching her bow in one of her front hooves. She ran towards Applejack and swung the bow at the vine gripping the Earth pony’s leg, which sliced through the vine in one swipe, causing the vine to snap back in pain.

“Wha?! How...?” Applejack exclaimed before she got a good look at Octavia’s bow. The hair of the bow had been replaced by a thin, silvery blade, held in place by the stick frame. Octavia wielded her instrument gracefully, turning around to face the vine currently attacking Rainbow Dash and diving at it. She gave another single swipe, and a large chunk of vine crashed to the ground.

Applejack and Rainbow Dash’s mouths were agape as Octavia nonchalantly removed her bowtie and used the ribbon to wipe her blade clean of plant material. When she was done, she tied the ribbon around the handle of her weapon before standing up to look at the ponies she had just saved.

Applejack was the first to attempt speech. "I...ah...never expected a city pony like you to be...well..."

"A TOTAL *BAD-FLANK!*" Rainbow Dash hollered, leaping into the air. "Hay yeah, Octavia! *Woo!*"

"A mare of refined tastes such as I would never resort to such crude language," Octavia replied, but nevertheless the musician allowed herself a smug smile.

Meanwhile, Lyra, Rarity and DJ Pon3 had surrounded Twilight and were using their magic to hold back the vines while Twilight quietly muttered incantations to herself, her horn glowing softly. The Doctor was pointing his screwdriver at approaching vines, which seemed to retreat each time the Doctor used it. But they were having limited success and would be overwhelmed soon.

Suddenly a bright flash of light emerged from Twilight's horn and shock waves thrust their way along the floor from her figure as the force of her magic enveloped the vines, causing them to shrink back to normal size and fall to the ground. A moment later the light cleared and the tunnel was dim and quiet again.

Lyra was the first to speak up again. "That. Was. Brilliant."

"Brace yourselves, everypony..." the Doctor warned. "That was just our first obstacle."

"I believe that means it's time to put these babies into action," DJ Pon3 said, indicating her goggles. She tapped the side of them with one of her hooves and the lenses suddenly turned from purple to green, with readings projected along the sides.

"Cool, huh?" DJ Pon3 said, looking at each of the Elements of Harmony in turn. "And they come with all sorts of functions. This button turns on the infrared vision," she said, tapping a small button on the side of her goggles, and her lenses took on the mixed hues of reds, greens, and blues. "Uh, Pinkie? You seem to have a...alligator buried in your tail."

“Oh, I was wondering where he got to!” Pinkie exclaimed, reaching in to her poofy tail with her head and pulling it out with Gummy latched onto Pinkie’s head with his mouth.

“Now Gummy, you should know better that to stow away like that!” Pinkie gently scolded the alligator. “Now get back into the timey-whimey machine, that’s a good alligator!” Gummy slowly walked back into the TARDIS, closing the door behind him.

“...Right,” DJ Pon3 muttered. “Anyway...*this* button turns on my favorite music,” she said while tapping another button, and soon the sounds of Daft Ponik were filling the hall, with DJ Pon3 banging her head in time to the beat.

“Turn that drivvel off!” Octavia hissed. “You’ll give away our position!”

“I don’t think our position is much of a secret now, but point taken...” DJ Pon3 flipped the music off and turned to face down the corridor. Another tap of the goggles and she activated her night vision scope. “Nothing down there, Doc. Just an empty hallway for the moment.” The other ponies nodded and began proceeding down the tunnel.

Several minutes later the twelve ponies emerged from the tunnel into a large, cavernous room that was completely empty, save for four objects: a bucket of turnips, a stack of rocks, a sack of flour and a ball of lint.

“It’s them!” Pinkie squealed in horror, diving behind Fluttershy. The yellow pegasus spent a moment considering whether she should mention the irony of this situation before deciding against it.

“Ah, fer crying out loud, Pinkie...” Applejack muttered. “It’s just a bunch of junk.”

“I’m not so sure...” the Doctor muttered, pulling out his sonic screwdriver before waving it at the inanimate objects, then spat it out into his front hoof to examine it. “Well, this is...unexpected...”

“What? What is it?” Derpy exclaimed excitedly.

“Well, it would seem those supposedly ‘inanimate’ objects are in fact a species of creature which bear some similarities to that of an alien species called ‘the Weeping Angels.’ Usually, they only move when nopony is looking at them.”

“...What...are you crazy?!” Rainbow Dash said. “It’s just Pinkie Pie’s imaginary friends! I’m betting the Legion of Gloom just put them here to freak her out.”

“Ah, so you say...” the Doctor replied. “But everypony was looking at me while I was explaining what those objects were, correct?”

“What’s that got to do with anything?” Twilight asked.

“Everypony was looking at me, right?” the Doctor asked again. The other ponies nodded. “...Then where are the objects?”

Everypony turned back to the room. The objects had vanished.

Chapter Four

And Then Things Got Ridiculous

“Doctor, what are we dealing with here?” Octavia asked urgently.

“Eh, nothing that scary,” the Doctor shrugged. “They’re strange creatures, but they can’t do any real harm.”

There was silence for a moment after this statement. Finally, Derpy exploded. “You *colt* tease! You stupid, foalish *tease*! What, were you going to leave us on a cliffhanger there?”

“...Maybe,” the Doctor said, smiling slyly.

Derpy stormed off into a corner of the room, muttering furiously under her breath while DJ Pon3 raised a hoof. “Uh, question Doc,” she asked. “You said they move when nopony is looking. So why does Pinkie Pie seem to know about them?”

“Well, Pinkie Pie is no ordinary pony,” the Doctor said. Pinkie’s friends rolled their eyes, their faces quite plainly saying the same thing: ‘Doctor, you have no idea.’

“Perhaps it’s her Pinkie Sense, perhaps it’s her fantastic knowledge of the loopholes of physics, or perhaps it’s just the fact that she grew up on a rock farm and developed a kin with what otherwise seem to be inanimate objects there, but Pinkie has an ability to see and communicate with these creatures that the rest of us lack. It’s what I noticed when I scanned her with my screwdriver earlier,” the Doctor explained, indicating his instrument.

Derpy rejoined the group. “But you once told me the Weeping Angels were among the most terrifying creatures in the universe. How are they similar to these things?”

The Doctor put a hoof on his chin. "Well, they both move only when nopony is looking, and..." he trailed off. "That's really it. The similarities end there."

"Why I oughta smack you silly..." Derpy muttered darkly with her eyes crossed. Neither of her eyes was focused on the Doctor but staring at the opposite sides of his face, which actually made her glare that much more intimidating. The Doctor laughed nervously in response.

"I say, what ever shall we do?" Sir Lints-a-lot cried. "They seem to know what we are now!"

"They called our bluff!" Rocky grumbled, hopping slightly with anger.

Mr. Turnip was a bucket of few words, and he managed to eloquently sum up their situation in one simple yet concise and comprehensive word: "Crap."

"Perhaps we should rejoin our compatriots in the main hall?" Sir Lints-a-lot offered.

"Oui, that would be wise, I zink..." Madame LeFlour agreed.

The Elements of Harmony and the League of Fanons continued down the tunnel, noticing it and the rooms they were passing through were getting larger and larger the further they traveled. Finally they came to a massive, cathedral-like cavern where, to nopony's surprise, the Legion of Gloom was waiting for them.

What was to everypony's surprise was that The Author, who apparently had gotten bored of waiting, had been working on his own lyrics to a familiar song and was now hopping around the room singing it:

*All you have to do is go on Youtube for an hour,
See a PMV remix.
Now just watch an episode and start to scour,*

*For more ponies, it's an itch!
Sonic Rainbooms and tail twitch,
Add a strange rhyming zebra.
Watch a little more, until you are sore,
And you never get your filla...
Ponies! So cute and cuddly,
Ponies! Marks on their tushies,
Ponies!
Ponies, ponies, PONIES!*

"HEY! That's *my* song!" Pinkie cried. The Author, who had stood up on his hind legs for the final line, nearly fell over in surprise and looked embarrassed for a second, but recovered quickly.

"Oh, *finally!*" he said. "I was starting to think we were never going to get the third act going..." He drew himself up impressively, staring down at them.

Octavia stifled a laugh as she looked at him. "Nice horn there," she noted, looking at the lengthy silvery horn on The Author's head that seemed even longer than Celestia's. "Again, very subtle. Compensating for something, are we?"

"Yea-*NO!*" The Author cried, his wings flaring. "...Maybe. ...I mean, *absolutely not!* ...Not at all! ...Really..." he stammered meekly. "You...have a very dirty mind for a pony, you know that?" he added in a defiant tone.

Octavia drew her bow/sword and pointed it at The Author threateningly. "Anypony who uses the word 'dirty' when referring to me is either an idiot or has a death wish. For you, I'd say you possess both traits."

"The Great and Powerful Trixie demands attention!" Trixie suddenly hollered, stamping her hoof. "Author, the Great and Powerful Trixie demands to be referred to as a Princess! Join this Great and Powerful mare in union with Prince Blueblood and change her title!"

"Very well," The Author sighed. "The Great and Powerful Trixie, do you take Prince Blueblood to be your contrively wedded husband?"

“The Great and Powerful Trixie does!” Trixie yelled triumphantly.

“Prince Blueblood,” The Author continued. “Do you take The Great and Powerful Trixie to be your contrively wedded wife?”

“Absolutely!” Prince Blueblood cried.

“Then by the power invested in me by myself, I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss the bride, though I would prefer if you didn’t. The Great and Powerful Trixie, as you have married into royalty your title will now be changed to The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie. All will now be forced to refer to you as such from this point forward.”

The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie laughed manically. “At last! Bow before your Princess, underlings!”

“What?!” Rainbow Dash cried. “That’s ridiculous! I’m not bowing before The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie!” She paused for a moment. “Wait...did I really just say all that?”

Bon Bon stepped forward. “After the lies you told in Ponyville, there’s no way I’m calling you anything other than just Trrrrr...” her tongue faltered. “Trrrrr...” she tried again, struggling to form the word. “Trrr*TheGreatandPowerfulHerRoyalHighnessPrincessTrixie!*” She gasped in horror and stuffed her hooves into her mouth. Lyra couldn’t help but snicker as she watched this spectacle.

“Wait...” Twilight said, sounding confused. “You mean to say every time we refer to The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie, we have to say The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie?” She gasped as she realized what she had just said. “*STOP DOING THAT!*” she yelled at The Author.

“Why should I?” The Author giggled, bouncing from hoof to hoof with delight. “It’s just so much fun!”

“No it’s not!” Derpy shouted. “It’s stupid and it’s getting old fast!”

“It is *not!*” The Author cried, obviously hurt.

“Enough of zis!” Photo Finish shouted before leaping down in front of Octavia and drawing her photo tripod out, holding it like a sword and pointing it at Octavia. “It is time to face...*your doom!*”

Octavia frowned before giving a single clean swipe at the tripod with her bow/sword, neatly slicing it into two pieces.

“...Ah,” Photo Finish replied, looking at the short fragment of the tripod in her hoof. “...zis...may be a problem.” After a moment she dropped what was left of the tripod on to the ground and dashed back to the other members of the Legion of Gloom. “You zere!” she yelled, pointing at the Diamond Dogs. “You have done nothing for nearly two chapters now! *Get zem!*”

The Diamond Dogs looked at each other and shrugged before quickly tunneling underground, vanishing below a cloud of dust down a deep hole. The Elements of Harmony and the League of Fanons tensed, waiting for them to emerge from beneath them.

“Hold on, I’m on this!” DJ Pon3 shouted, tapping the side of her goggles. They shifted to infrared vision as she started scanning the ground beneath them. “There!” she shouted, pointing at a spot on the ground. “Coming up in about five seconds!”

“Got it!” Applejack shouted while getting herself into position, ready to buck anything that came up.

“*Heads up!*” Rainbow Dash screamed, shoving Applejack and DJ Pon3 out of the way as Gilda and The Author swooped at them, narrowly missing. Dash took the air, speeding after Gilda while Fluttershy and Derpy rose to confront The Author.

“Alright, *now* you’ve done it,” Fluttershy said sternly. “*No pony* threatens *my* friends. *You got that?*”

“Oh my Celestia, Fluttershy’s getting *angry* at me!” The Author squealed with delight. “That is just so *adorable!* I think I might be having a fangasm!”

"I've had enough of this!" Derpy shouted. "You're going down!"

“And the other adorable pegasus is mad too!” The Author giggled. “You’re just so *cute* when you’re-“ he was interrupted as one of Derpy’s hooves made contact with his jaw, nearly knocking him out of the air.

“Okay, good feeling gone,” The Author muttered darkly, wiping the spittle from his face. He reared back, horn glowing, before sending a lightning bolt from his horn at the two hovering ponies before him, sending them diving for cover.

Meanwhile, the Diamond Dogs were wreaking chaos on the group of ponies on the ground. DJ Pon3 continued to scan the ground and was surrounded by Applejack, Twilight, Rarity, Lyra and Bon Bon, who all together were beginning to make headway against the Diamond Dogs.

There was an explosion of dust in front of Lyra, but DJ Pon3 had warned her. The mint green unicorn spun around on one of her hind legs and aimed a karate kick squarely at the Diamond Dog's head.

She did it perfectly. Unfortunately, the Diamond Dog's hide was of such strength that the kick caused more pain to the unicorn than the Diamond Dog.

"OW-ow-ow-ow-ow-ow-ow-ow!!!" Lyra yelled in pain, bouncing around on one of her back hooves while clutching the other with her front hooves. Now it was Bon Bon's turn to snicker.

Rainbow Dash and Gilda circled around each other furiously in mid-air, with Gilda occasionally swiping at Dash with her claws, but Dash swiftly dove out of the way each time.

“You’ve got some serious issues, you know that?” Dash scolded the griffon. “When did you become such a bully? What changed?”

"I DIDN'T CHANGE!" Gilda screamed. "YOU'RE THE FLIP-FLOPPER!" she dove at Dash once again, but this time Dash aimed a kick at her head. However Gilda was too quick and nimbly dodged the attack.

“Too slow, Rainbow Crash,” Gilda chortled. “I know you too well. There’s nothing that can surprise me!”

“SURPRISE!” The griffon turned around just in time to be smacked squarely in the face by a perfectly thrown cream pie. Pinkie broke down into hysterics, rolling on the ground and giggling madly.

“GAAAAAAGGGGHHH!!!” Gilda screamed as the bits of pie were blown off by the force of her anger. “THAT DOES IT! *You!*” she glared daggers at Pinkie. “You’re gonna be bird chow!”

“Why?” Pinkie asked innocently. “Can’t I be griffon chow?”

“YOU’RE GONNA BE *BIRD CHOW*, AND THAT’S *FINAL!*” Gilda screamed. “And *you*,” she glared at Rainbow Dash. “Are gonna *watch!*” With that she dove rapidly at Pinkie. Dash followed, flying as fast as she could, but Gilda had a head start. There was no way she would be able to catch up with the griffon before she reached Pinkie.

And that’s when Pinkie experienced an ear-flop, followed by an eye-flutter, followed by a knee-twitch.

The TARDIS materialized on the ground in front of Pinkie, its door opening on its own accord as Gilda sailed right in, smashing into the room within with a loud clatter. The sound of heavy objects falling and glass breaking rang out for a moment before there was a flash of light coming from within the blue box and Gilda was unceremoniously thrown out the time machine by an unseen force. A second later Gummy walked out the door, followed by Angel Bunny. The two gave each other a high-five.

“Well, that’s awfully convenient,” the Doctor said as he galloped towards the time machine, intending to use its power to tip the battle in their favor.

“Not so fast, time pony!” A Diamond Dog burst from the ground in front of the Doctor, blocking his path. The Author noticed what was going on and sent a burst of magical energy at the TARDIS, enclosing it and the two animals within a transparent bubble before it vanished, the time machine and the animals going with it.

“No!” the Doctor cried. “What have you done?!”

“Moved it to a secure location,” The Author replied. “I will not have you calling upon such power...this battle will not be won *that* easily.”

“Then let’s call upon *this* power!” Twilight shouted. “Girls, time for the Elements of Harmony!” Applejack, Rarity, Rainbow Dash, Pinkie Pie and Fluttershy quickly joined Twilight, whose horn began glowing as shimmers of light appeared around her friends. The physical objects of the Elements of Harmony began to materialize on their necks.

“Legion, assemble!” The Author yelled, pointing at a spot where the “inanimate” objects were already standing. Gilda, Photo Finish and the Diamond Dogs struggled to join them, but managed. Prince Blueblood and The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie galloped over as well, their manes and clothes ruffled and a fresh set of hickies on their necks.

“Yeah, yeah, *where were you two this whole time?*” Gilda growled at the two royal ponies. “Some magic would have been helpful in this battle!”

“Not the moment!” The Author yelled. “Get ready, on my signal!”

The objects of the Elements of Harmony finished materializing around the six ponies. Twilight’s eyes opened, glowing brightly as she and her friends began to hover in the air. The Doctor looked from the six ponies to the Legion of Gloom assembled before them, and realized too late what was going to happen.

“Girls!” he yelled. “Wait! Don’t unleash that power!”

“NOW!” The Author yelled. Each of the members of the Legion of Gloom placed a hoof or a claw upon one of the “inanimate” objects as Prince Blueblood and The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie’s horns began glowing, establishing a link between the members of the Legion.

The Author’s horn began glowing as the energy from the Elements of Harmony was almost at its height. He unleashed a blast of energy at the

Elements of Harmony while at the same time establishing a magical connection with the members of the Legion below.

Suddenly, the Elements of Harmony froze. The expressions on the faces of the six mares, so confident a moment ago, now gasped in horror. They fell to the ground forcefully while the bejeweled objects of the Elements remained hovering in mid-air before floating upward, towards The Author.

“NO!” the Doctor shouted, staring at this scene in horror.

“What’s happening?!” Derpy exclaimed fearfully.

“The Elements of Harmony are now connected to The Author!” the Doctor yelled back. “Their power is now his!”

“But he’s the all-powerful author figure!” Octavia retorted. “What does *he* need the power for?”

“It’s not for me!” The Author cried triumphantly. “It’s for *them*!” A pulse of energy flowed from the Elements of Harmony to The Author, which was then channeled down into the Legion of Gloom. They began to glow from the power, watching as their strength was restored and they were slowly transformed into more powerful versions of themselves. Gilda’s wings extended and her claws grew sharper, the horns of the royal ponies bristled with magical energy, and the Diamond Dogs grew even more muscular.

“YES!” The Author shouted. “Now *this* is a story! Watch, *My Little Ponies*, as I ensure that my beloved Legion of Gloom lasts FOREVER!”

Twilight and her friends groaned as they tried to lift themselves from the ground, staring weakly at the Elements of Harmony floating above them, now cut off from them.

“No...” Twilight moaned softly. “What have we done... our hope is lost...”

At these words, there was the faintest flicker of energy from the Elements of Harmony, like that of a light bulb as it began to run low on

energy. It lasted for but a fraction of a second, but the Doctor saw it, and it gave him the inspiration he needed in the moment.

“I wouldn’t be so sure!” the Doctor cried, galloping forward before locking the green alicorn above him in his gaze. “Author! You’ve made a terrible mistake with this story! In fact, you’ve made *two* terrible mistakes...”

“Mistakes?” The Author shouted back. “*What* mistakes could you possibly be referring to?!”

“Oh, *big* mistakes, really really huge...” the Doctor muttered darkly. “Didn’t anypony ever tell you? There are two things that you never bring into a fanfic.”

The Doctor gave The Author a sinister smile. “If you’re smart, if you value your continued popularity as a writer, if you have any plans of seeing the respect of your fellow bronies again, there are two things that you never, *ever*, bring into a fanfic.”

“And what would those be?” The Author replied, raising an eyebrow.

“Well the first is a self-insert, obviously. I mean come on, in a world of such wonderful characters you really have to throw *yourself* in? Either somepony’s really lazy or really self-indulgent. Or both. Nothing good can ever come from that.”

“And the second?” The Author asked.

“Ah, and the second...” the Doctor said slowly. “...Because some writers just can’t be satisfied with this world on its own terms; some writers just *have* to pull in a character from a different series they like, regardless of whether their readers would have seen it. The second thing...”

The Doctor pulled his sonic screwdriver out of his pocket and pointed it at the Elements of Harmony floating above him.

“...is me,” he finished.

He activated the screwdriver, and the Elements of Harmony shattered, exploding into a million glittering fragments.

Chapter Five

Nearing the End

Time seemed to freeze as everyone in the room watched as the shattered remains of the Elements of Harmony slowly began to fall to the floor. The fragments of the Elements glittered brightly as they fell, taking on the appearance of a golden snowfall.

But the awesome sight did not last long, as the room began to be filled with a loud, crackling sound and a blinding white light, seemingly coming from the spot where the Elements of Harmony had just exploded. The light filled the room and everyone shielded their eyes from it before finding themselves blown back by the force of a terrific explosion.

After a moment the light began to fade and the ringing in everyone's ears began to subside. As everyone lifted themselves from the ground, they could see they had been blown back to the edge of the room, the heroes on one side and the villains to the other.

There was no trace of the Elements of Harmony and the members of the Legion of Gloom had been returned to their normal forms.

"Doctor, what have you done?!" Twilight exclaimed in horror. "How could you destroy the Elements of Harmony?!"

"Ah, but I didn't destroy them, Twilight..." the Doctor said with a glint in his eye. "In fact, they're right back where you picked them up."

At this, everyone in the room responded with a loud "*Huh?!?*"

"Yes," the Doctor began to explain. "You see, the Elements of Harmony are actually energy in purest form. And what's one of the most basic laws of physics regarding energy?"

Everypony was silent for a moment before Pinkie started bouncing up and down excitedly. "Ooh! Ooh! Is it that you can't destroy energy, but only transform or transfer it?"

“Exactly,” the Doctor smiled.

“Well, glad you got the science lesson in there for the kiddies,” Derpy said sarcastically, her eyes rolling in opposite directions. The Doctor chose to ignore this statement.

“But don’t you see what you have here? The purest form of magic, and the only way you can use it is to call upon the magic of friendship! You brilliant ponies, your ancestors created a source of power that’s both indestructible *and* incorruptible!”

“But if they’re indestructible, then where are they?” Twilight asked.

“Right back where they always were: within you lot!” the Doctor answered. “The big crown thing and the necklaces are just one form of the Elements, and when I cracked those I just released the energy – hence the big boom – and transferred it back to you! Oh, I am *good*!” he finished with ill-disguised pride in his voice.

The six mares looked at each other before their faces broke out into smiles. Their bodies began to glow again, and a few seconds later they were wearing the physical objects of the Elements of Harmony once again.

“Yes yes, all well and good then...” The Author muttered. “But you seem to be forgetting something. A) We’re still here. B) You still can’t use the Elements against us. And most importantly, C) I am still the all-powerful Author character who can wave his hooves and make you all vanish at his whim.”

“If that was really true,” the Doctor shot back. “Then you wouldn’t let us do what we’re about to do. League of Fanons, assemble!”

The other members of the League galloped forward to form a neat line alongside the Doctor, with Octavia and DJ Pon3 on his right and Derpy, Luna and Bon and Bon on his left.

Bon Bon reared on her hind legs. “League, let us call upon the *other* Elements!” she cheered.

“*Other* elements?” Photo Finish replied. “Vaht other elements?”

“Elements that can trump any power you throw at us!” the Doctor cried as the figures of the League of Fanons began to glow brightly. “We call upon... *The Elements of Fiction!*”

“DJ Pon3,” the Doctor announced. “Because no story about a team of heroes is complete without someone with technical know-how, because it makes the readers feel better about sitting in front of the tele or the computer all the time, represents the Element of... *Geekiness!*”

“Sweet,” DJ Pon3 nodded appreciatively as a bejeweled necklace with the icon of a pair of horn-rimmed glasses appeared on her.

“Octavia,” the Doctor continued. “Who displayed cool calmness, makes witty retorts and has a totally wicked sword, represents the Element of... *Bad Flankery!*”

“Hmph,” Octavia *hmphed*, holding herself up in a dignified pose as a necklace with the icon of a pony skull with two crossed machine guns beneath it materialized around her neck.

“Lyra and Bon Bon,” the Doctor said. “Whose antics relieve the tension of the situation, represent the Element of... *Comic Relief!*”

Lyra and Bon Bon squealed with delight and hugged each other as two necklaces, each with a comedy mask embedded on them, appeared around their necks.

“Derpy,” the Doctor continued. “Who stands as the character the audience will identify with, always pointing out the flaws in the story and expressing the opinions of the readers, represents the Element of... *the Audience Surrogate!*”

“Wow, *really* catchy name there...” Derpy sighed, shaking her head as a necklace with the icon of several question marks shone on her neck.

“And I,” the Doctor said, drawing himself up proudly. “Who constantly dumps background information on to the other characters and occasionally informs the readers of the themes and important aspects of the story,

represent the Element of...*Exposition!*" He reared up on his hind legs as the final necklace appeared upon him, this one with a speech bubble for its icon.

The Author stepped back in horror as the Elements of Fiction glowed even more brightly than ever. "Legion of Gloom! Assemble – we need to take down this threat together!"

"How? The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie sees nothing we can do!" The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie replied.

"*GAGH!* My own creation dares to question my will?! And that joke *is* getting old!" The Author cried.

"You see Author," the Doctor smiled. "When Elements of Fiction such as us call upon this power, they can bring an end to any bothersome aspects of a story."

"You can't defeat me!" The Author yelled, his horn now glowing brightly. "I am The Author! I WILL YOUR POWER AWAY! **I WILL IT AWAY!**"

The Author's horn sent out a burst of magical energy. Nothing happened.

"It's time to meet your maker!" Lyra cried, pointing a hoof at The Author.

"I *am* my maker!" The Author shot back, but looked increasingly fearful as the Elements of Fiction began to float into the air, radiating with energy. The Doctor opened his eyes – they were glowing brightly.

The Author's gaze grew stern. "You may take me, but you won't destroy my creation!" With that his horn glowed brightly one last time as the Legion of Gloom vanished from the spot, teleported to Celestia-knows-where.

The Elements of Fiction unleashed a beam of energy which looked as if it was composed of words, hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of

words that circled around each other viciously. They encircled The Author, who screamed as the tip of his horn began to flake off into small letters. Slowly he dissolved into words that joined the others racing around him as first his wings vanished, then his head and tail, then his body and finally his hooves until nothing was left.

The words swirled together into a tornado, spinning faster and faster until it began encircling itself, shrinking into a growing ball of energy that finally winked out of existence. The Elements of Fiction stopped glowing as they returned to the ground, looking upon the scene with immense satisfaction.

The Elements of Harmony were looking at the League of Fanons with their mouths agape, slowly realizing what they had just witnessed. Suddenly there was an intense scream as Fluttershy started bouncing up and down. **“THAT WAS AMAZING! WOooooooooooooo!!!”** she squealed with delight.

When they finally came to, the other Elements of Harmony nodded appreciatively. They and the League of Fanons started congratulating each other, recounting their favorite moments from the battle and admiring each other’s necklaces. A loud humming sound filled the room as the TARDIS, now free of The Author’s influence, rematerialized in the room and Gummy and Angel hopped out.

“Good job, everypony,” Rainbow Dash said happily. “Still, it’s a shame we couldn’t capture the Legion of Gloom...” she frowned as she looked at the spot where they had been standing before The Author transported them away.

“We should inform Princess Celestia about them immediately!” Twilight said. “Then she can put out a search for them!”

“A good idea,” the Doctor replied. “But I have a feeling The Author has made sure they won’t be easily captured. Still, the kingdom should be warned of their treachery, lest The Author ever attempt to write a sequel to this story.”

“Celestia help us if *that* ever happens...” Derpy muttered darkly.

And so harmony was restored to the kingdom of Equestria once again. The Elements of Harmony returned to Canterlot and explained to Princess Celestia all that happened. Because the League of Fanons (particularly the Doctor) preferred to work from the shadows, Princess Celestia promised to keep what had happened a secret.

The Legion of Gloom went into hiding and none of its members have yet to be found. As of the time of this writing, Prince Blueblood, The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie (they're still working on reversing The Author's spell), Gilda, Photo Finish, and the three members of the Diamond Dogs are wanted by Equestrian authorities for "questioning," but no leads have surfaced.

Life returned to normal for the Elements of Harmony after they returned to Ponyville, and life returned to whatever passed for normal for the Doctor and his companion Derpy, who continue to go on adventures through space and time, occasionally aided by the other members of the League of Fanons who continue to work out of Trotswood. DJ Pon3 and Octavia are still popular musicians residing in Canterlot while Lyra and Bon Bon are still widely assumed to be normal ponies living in Ponyville.

Aboard the TARDIS, the Doctor threw a lever to send the time machine traveling through space and time once more. Derpy was standing nearby, her eyes crossed in a look of concentration.

"It just doesn't seem to add up though..." she muttered quietly. "Here was the very author of the story, and he gets taken out by his own tale?"

"Well, we *did* use the Elements of Fiction against him..." the Doctor replied.

"But it seems too easy somehow...what if he wanted to get destroyed? Was he bluffing about joining the Legion of Gloom this whole time?" Derpy asked.

"I don't think he was bluffing, he really wasn't that good a liar," the Doctor said. "Unless..."

"Unless what?" Derpy said excitedly.

The two ponies stared at each other for a moment, revelation dawning on them.

"You don't think...?" Derpy began.

"No..." the Doctor gasped.

"But it all makes sense!" Derpy was practically bouncing with excitement at this point.

"Oh, how could we have been so *blind!*" the Doctor cried dramatically.

"That *wasn't* a self-insert, was it?" Derpy asked.

"Oh no no, it was still a self-insert," the Doctor corrected. "But it was a mock self-insert. A self-insert whose purpose is to make fun of self-inserts."

The Doctor grinned wildly. "Derpy, we were in a *comedy* the whole time and we were acting too seriously to see it!"

Derpy facehoofed. "Oh Celestia, it seems so *obvious* now!" She paused before looking at the Doctor again. "But what he said about saving the Legion of Gloom after the reaction to his first story...do you think that might be true?"

The Doctor nodded. "Undoubtedly. Which means the first story would have left off at the battle in the Froggy Bottom Bog..."

"When Twilight and her friends got their memories wiped," Derpy said. "Wait...you don't think...that's how he ended it?"

"Waking up in your house to find out the whole thing was a dream," the Doctor said. "A rather terribly clichéd ending, wouldn't you say?"

Derpy smiled. "Doctor, can you do something for me?"

"...Oh sure, the idea of a team of supervillains, well that's just comedic gold, but when the time comes to actually make them do something you drop the ball! And here I was really enjoying myself!" Derpy yelled at Twilight, who was staring back with an expression of confusion and disbelief. Finally Derpy turned around to scream at the sky. "STORY! I WANT TO SEE YOUR SUPERVISOR! THIS WILL NOT DO!"

She took to the air, leaving Twilight struggling to comprehend what had just happened. Derpy sailed over to the edge of Ponyville, where the Doctor was waiting for her, standing next to the TARDIS with a grin on his face.

"Was that really necessary?" he said.

"Twilight might not understand, but hopefully somepony's watching at the moment," Derpy replied. "Somepony's got to make sure he gets the message, and it might as well be now."

"You're getting awfully good at this time traveling stuff, you know that?" the Doctor said, holding the door open to let Derpy inside.

"Let's just hope The Author's learned his lesson," Derpy muttered.

Indeed he had. The door of the TARDIS closed and the time machine vanished with another loud humming noise as normality returned to Ponyville once again.

...

...Or did it?

For as the TARDIS dematerialized, a large boulder that was sitting behind the time machine now became visible. It was a rather plain looking rock, unremarkable in seemingly every way save for its size.

And yet, despite having no visible mouth, it spoke.

“Yes, very good...let your guard down, foalish ponies...become complacent once again while I work from the shadows. I’ve got nothing but time and the patience to bear it...after all, I am a boulder.”

The boulder shifted in place before rolling onto its side. Then it rolled over again, inching its way slowly down the road.

“Don’t think you cast me aside so easily, ponies...” it muttered.
“Elements of Harmony, League of Fanons... you all shall hear from me soon enough...”

The boulder paused for a second to deliver his ultimatum:

“Be afraid, my little ponies...*For Here Comes Tom!*”

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## The End of Enter the League of Fanons

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Between a Rock and a Hard Place

Chapter 1

All the Ponies in This Town Are Crazy

Rainbow Dash's head was swimming. She moaned softly as she groggily opened her eyes, her pupils expanding to compensate for the dim light in the room. She made to grasp her pounding forehead in her hooves, and it was about then that she realized her hooves – all four of them – were chained to the wall.

"Well good morning, sleepyhead!" a cheerful voice giggled from the shadows. "I was starting to worry I was going to have to start the fun without you!"

Dash was gripped with fear and started struggling with the chains, the memories of what had occurred flooding back to her in an instant. After accepting Pinkie's invitation to join her for lunch at Sugarcube Corner, Pinkie presented Dash with a cup of punch. After drinking it, Dash suddenly started to feel dizzy as Pinkie began giggling uncontrollably. Dash could remember Pinkie saying something about "finally having Dash for dinner" before she lost consciousness. Now she could recognize the basement of Sugarcube Corner where she was currently being held against her will.

"Pinkie, what's going on?! Let me out of here!" Dash cried.

"Oh, silly filly..." Pinkie giggled. "You can't leave yet! We haven't even started the fun part yet..." The party pony stepped out of the shadows, her hair straight and her coat a faded shade of pink, just as it had been when she became convinced her friends no longer liked her. But at the moment,

Dash's attention was focused on the gleaming steak knife Pinkie had gripped in her teeth.

"Pinkie Pie...w-what are you doing? H-help me outta here!" Dash whimpered, tears welling up in her eyes.

"Don't worry, Dashie! All I want to do is *cut* to the chase!" Pinkie giggled before standing up on her hind hooves, clutching the knife in one hoof and laughing manically. She raised the knife above her head, preparing to make the first stab into the cyan pegasus' hide.

WHAM!

Pinkie's body suddenly went rigid. She stopped laughing but a creepy smile was still plastered on her face as her eyes slowly moved in opposite directions. Suddenly she began to slowly teeter forward, landing face first on the cold ground with a loud 'THUMP.' Behind where Pinkie had been standing, a gray pegasus with crossed eyes hovered, clutching a shovel with a head-shaped dent in the blade.

"Was that *really* necessary?" A voice came from the back of the room. Stepping out of the shadows was a brown earth pony with an hourglass cutie mark and a frown on his face.

Derpy Hooves grunted, dropping the shovel onto the ground. "We're dealing with the single most disturbing thing to ever come out of this fandom," she replied. "I'm going to go with...yes." She pulled a length of rope out of a nearby box and started binding Pinkie's hooves together. "Now go free Dash while I stop Leatherface here from carrying out the Ponyville Chainsaw Massacre."

Doctor Hooves trotted over to Rainbow Dash, pulling out his sonic screwdriver and waving it over the chains binding Dash, which immediately released the pegasus with a rusty '*click!*' Dash fell to the ground, shuddering uncontrollably as she tried to come to terms with what had just happened.

"Pinkie Pie..." Dash muttered. "...Why...?"

"That is most definitely *not* Pinkie Pie," the Doctor said. "At least not the Pinkie Pie you know. By the way, lovely to see you again, you're looking quite well. ...Save for the, you know, terrified for your life part..."

Derpy finished tying together Pinkie's hooves, leaving her unconscious and hogtied on the ground. "I think we might want to throw some chains on her as well...we don't know what this girl is capable of."

"Right," the Doctor said, helping Dash to her feet. "Now come on Dash, we need you to be strong right now. We're going to get this all sorted out, you understand?"

Dash nodded slowly, her eyes closed as bitter tears streamed down her face. She took a great, shuddering breath before slowly exhaling. Finally she opened her eyes, a brave look of determination crossing her features.

"I'm fine," Dash said shortly. "I was just thinking about what I saw when I thought I was about to die...about what I would lose..."

"Quite normal, really," the Doctor replied, looking relieved that Dash was apparently speaking once again. "In a moment of trauma your brain is deprived of oxygen, causing your visual sensors to stop analyzing the current situation and desperately search your memories in search of a solution to your predicament. Or as you ponies refer to it, 'your life flashing before your eyes.'"

"It's not just that..." Dash said quietly. "I thought about...*her*."

"Who?" the Doctor asked.

"Her..." Dash repeated, gazing off into space. "I could have died without telling her...how I feel."

"Who are you talking about?" Derpy asked, frowning but with a worried look on her face.

Dash looked up at the cross-eyed pegasus. "...I need to go," she blurted out suddenly, getting up and galloping to the door.

"Well wait, where are you going?" the Doctor cried. "We need your help and I haven't even explained what's going on yet!"

"It'll have to wait," Dash said. "There's something I've been putting off for too long, and it's time I fixed that. If you really need me, I'll be at Sweet Apple Acres," she finished before racing upstairs.

The Doctor and Derpy were slack-jawed and silent for several seconds, staring at the spot where Rainbow Dash had just been standing. Finally they turned to each other.

Derpy broke the silence. "Did she just say...Sweet Apple Acres?"

The Doctor gave a world weary sigh. "Oh, *dear*..."

Knock. Knock. Knock.

Spike raced to open the door to the Ponyville Library, nearly stumbling over himself in his haste. He wrenched the door open to see Bon Bon and DJ Pon3 standing on the doorstep.

"Oh good, you're here!" Spike exclaimed, gesturing for the two ponies to come inside. "Come on in, quickly!"

"Is she all right?" Bon Bon asked worriedly as Spike led them upstairs.

"She's been like this all day, and I don't know what to do!" Spike cried, obviously distraught. Looking carefully, Bon Bon could see the dragon had dark circles under his bloodshot eyes from lack of sleep and he looked like he was on the verge of tears.

"Don't worry little man, we're gonna get this all fixed up," DJ Pon3 offered, patting Spike on the shoulder. "She's in here?" she asked, gesturing to the door to Twilight's bedroom. Spike nodded.

Bon Bon pushed the door open. "Twilight? ...Are you okay?"

Despite being nearly mid-day, the room was quite dim. The curtains were drawn and Twilight Sparkle was lying on her bed, gazing absentmindedly at the ceiling. At the sound of Bon Bon's voice, she turned her head slowly to face her.

"Oh, Bon Bon..." Twilight said with a hint of surprise in her voice. Her tone was gloomy and she looked deeply troubled, almost depressed.

"Are...are you alright, dear?" Bon Bon asked. "You've got Spike quite worried. He sent a letter to Princess Celestia when you wouldn't get out of bed, and the Princess sent us along." Strictly speaking, this wasn't the

entire story – the Doctor had convinced the Princess to assign this specific task to the League of Fanons, but that detail could wait.

“Oh...I’m sorry...” Twilight muttered slowly. “I just...” After a moment she resumed staring up at the ceiling.

“Is there something bothering you, dear?” Bon Bon asked kindly.

“Something you want to share with us, maybe?” DJ Pon3 inserted.

Twilight continued to stare off into space. “I just...I’ve been so blind. I never realized how I really felt about her.”

Bon Bon and DJ Pon3 exchanged a significant look. “Twilight...” Bon Bon said slowly. “Did you fall for somepony?”

“Wha...how did you *know?!?*” Twilight yelped, sitting straight up in her bed. After a moment she slumped back onto her covers. “...Was it really that obvious? Oh...I bet everypony knew it all along, but I was just so *blind...*”

“Dare I ask who?” DJ Pon3 said, raising an eyebrow.

Twilight sighed softly, and a small smile crept upon her face. “The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie...” she said, apparently savoring every syllable she spoke.

“You guys *really* have to get that spell fixed,” Spike muttered. “I’m really sick of having to say The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie, you know.”

“Hey, this spell stuff ain’t easy, little man,” DJ Pon3 replied. “Take it from a unicorn on this.”

“I’m sorry,” Bon Bon interjected. “But Twilight, are you forgetting the fact that The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie tried to *kill* you?”

“That wasn’t her fault!” Twilight cried. “The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie is just scared is all!”

Bon Bon turned back to DJ Pon3 and Spike and gestured dismissively at Twilight, who had resumed staring at the ceiling sadly. “Well, she’s

hopeless. I say we just leave her like this for now. So long as she doesn't do anything stupid, she should be fine just laying here moping."

"Right," DJ Pon3 agreed. "Let's find the Doc and see if he has a plan yet."

Octavia and Lyra knocked on the door of Fluttershy's cottage for the fifth time in as many minutes. They would have stopped after the second time, but a soft moaning sound coming from within suggested that their quarry was inside. Just as the two started to debate whether or not they should break inside, the door finally opened with a soft click and an exhausted looking Fluttershy came into view.

"Oh...hello ladies..." Fluttershy mumbled. "It's an...an...aaaawwn," she stifled a large yawn. "...Honor to see you again."

"Hello Fluttershy," Lyra replied, giving the pegasus a cheery wave. "Are you feeling alright? You look really tired."

"Oh, I'm fine..." Fluttershy mumbled. "Come on in...if that's alright with you..." She turned around and trotted back inside. Octavia and Lyra exchanged a look before following her inside.

The inside of Fluttershy's cottage looked perfectly normal – tidy, picturesque – save for a couple of major details: all the curtains were drawn so the light was dim and there was a certain heaviness in the air that was similar to that of a mildew-infested place, but without the dampness or the smell.

"So..." Lyra started, searching for the right words. "...Have you been, you know, sleeping okay?"

"Well, to be honest, not really..." Fluttershy said softly. "I've been having these horrible dreams lately," her eyes suddenly became unfocused as she stared off into space. "There was smoke and fire...always devastation, destruction and death...*the horror...the horror...*" Suddenly she seemed to snap back to reality as she closed her eyes and smiled sweetly at Lyra and Octavia. "But I'm sure it'll pass soon enough."

Lyra stared back with apprehension. "Uh-huh...and uh, how long have you been having these uh, dreams?"

“A few days now,” Fluttershy replied.

Suddenly there was a deafening scream as Octavia threw herself backwards into the middle of the room. “**MOTHER OF...**” she stopped to catch her breath, pointing shakily at a basket in the corner. “**WHAT THE...What...WHAT...Is that thing?!?**”

Lyra looked to where Octavia was pointing and gasped in horror. Sitting in the basket was a black mass of ooze, glistening softly with small bubbles covering it. It would have looked exactly like tar, were it not for the fact that it also seemed to be breathing. In the silence of the cottage following Octavia’s scream, Lyra could now hear the thing’s deep, ragged breaths that caused it to expand and contract slowly within the basket.

Fluttershy looked over to the basket with a cheerful expression on her face. “Oh, that’s my new animal friend! He looked hurt, so I brought him back here to nurse him to health! I’m still trying to figure out how to help, though...but I did figure out he doesn’t like sunlight, which is why all the curtains are closed.”

Lyra tried to respond to this but the words got stuck in her throat and came out as a quiet squeak. She cleared her throat. “And...um...how long have you been...um, taking care of it-I mean, *him?*”

“Oh, a few days now,” Fluttershy answered.

“Oh, a few days you say?” Octavia cried out. “Same amount of time as these nightmares you’ve been having, am I right?”

“Are you implying something?” Fluttershy’s voice was quiet, but it had lost some of its usual shyness. Lyra was standing behind Fluttershy facing Octavia, waving her front hooves frantically in the air as if to say ‘*Stop talking now!*’ Octavia ignored her.

“I’m *implying...*” Octavia growled. “That this...*thing* is corrupting your mind. And I’m going to see to it that it stops!” She turned back to the basket but before she could take a step towards the creature Fluttershy had raced in front of it and looked Octavia in the eyes, flashing her infamous stare.

“**YOU WILL NOT HARM US.**” Fluttershy was speaking, but the voice that came out of her mouth was deep and gravelly, and sounded like a demonic

voice layered atop Fluttershy's stern tone. The words rumbled throughout the cottage and the atmosphere felt even heavier, almost constricting. Octavia was frozen in terror, helpless to do anything but stare back into Fluttershy's eyes, while Lyra noticed that the creature in the basket glowed slightly red as each of the words were spoken.

Lyra rushed to Octavia's aid, taking her arm while avoiding Fluttershy's gaze. "Heh, that's not Octavia meant at all! Hey look, we should really get going so we're just going now so we're just going to leave you with your *obviously totally harmless and absolutely delightful* animal friend! Okay, bye bye now!" She tugged at Octavia, pulling her towards the door. With a final great tug, she managed to break Octavia's line of vision away from Fluttershy and they both bolted for the door, slamming it behind them before racing down the road back to town.

"Wow, you two look like you've seen a ghost," DJ Pon3 remarked.

"*Never...again...*" Octavia wheezed through clenched teeth, breathing heavily.

The members of the League of Fanons were standing in a Ponyville park on the edge of town. After escaping from Fluttershy's cottage, Lyra and Octavia had galloped full speed back to Ponyville where they spotted Doctor Whooves, Derpy, Bon Bon and DJ Pon3 in the park. Lyra and Octavia were hunched over, panting breathlessly after their flight for life.

"So how's everypony doing?" Bon Bon asked. "What's happening to the other Elements of Harmony?"

"It's just as I feared," the Doctor replied. "Each of the Elements of Harmony has been taken over by a popular fanon version of themselves. At the moment, Pinkie Pie is the psychopathic killer of *Cupcakes*." With the exception of Derpy the other ponies gasped in horror at the news and the Doctor hurriedly waved his hooves. "It's okay, it's okay! We got her locked away on board the TARDIS, she can't hurt anyone!" There was a collective sigh of relief at this announcement.

"Well," Bon Bon started. "Twilight is now infatuated with TrrrrrrrrThe Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie. Oh, *Celestia damn it!*" she cursed at having to once again say the full title. "How does a mock

self-insert who's dead still get to *do* that?!" Lyra offered Bon Bon a comforting pat on the shoulder.

Octavia straightened up. "Fluttershy seems to be entrapped in some sort of grimdark tale. She is caring for a demonic creature and she was quite liberal with The Stare." Octavia shuddered at the memory of it.

"I didn't even realize that was a fanon trope," DJ Pon3 said.

"Well, it's no Twixie..." Bon Bon explained. "But Flutterrage and demonic creatures are something of a theme among Fluttershy stories."

"I still can't believe you actually *read* that garbage," Octavia scoffed.

"Hey, it's not *that* bad!" Lyra cried. "In fact, some of it is really good! I don't see why out of a group of ponies made from fanfics Bon Bon and I are the only ones who actively read it. I mean really, what excuse do the rest of you have? Huh?"

Derpy shrugged. "Well, with my eyes the way they are I don't really do a whole lot of reading. Gives me a headache." She said this very matter-of-factly, but Lyra blushed deeply in response.

"Oh, Derpy..." Lyra breathed. "I-I'm so sorry, I didn't mean..." she stammered.

Derpy waved a hoof dismissively. "Don't make this a bigger deal than it already is. Let's just focus on the task at hand."

"So knowing *Cupcakes*, I assume you rescued Rainbow Dash from Pinkie's evil clutches?" DJ Pon3 asked. "How's she doing?"

The Doctor and Derpy exchanged a glance before the Doctor cleared his throat. "Well, um...she's with...that is to say, she's *at*...Applejack's farm."

"Doing what?" Octavia asked.

"Probably Applejack by this point," Derpy snickered. The Doctor threw her a sharp glare and Derpy gave him an embarrassed smile, placing her front hooves behind her back. "What? I couldn't let that opportunity pass me by!"

The Doctor cleared his throat. "Rainbow Dash has gone to meet Applejack to...discuss their *feelings* for each other."

"Oh, how sweet!" Bon Bon and Lyra cooed.

"No, it's *not* sweet," DJ Pon3 growled. "It's freaking *gross*. And it's stupid, too! I mean really, they're the two most stubborn ponies out of the whole group and they keep getting on each other's nerves! Who really thinks *those* two winding up together makes any sense?!"

Bon Bon smiled slyly at DJ Pon3. "You're just sore about it because every story the fans write about you has you falling in love with Octavia!"

"THAT IS *NOT* TRUE! I am in *tons* of stories that don't have Octavia in them!" DJ Pon3 yelled hotly.

"Oh, DJ..." Octavia simpered, mockingly fluttering her eyelashes at DJ Pon3. "Am I not good enough for you?"

"Screw you," DJ Pon3 muttered darkly.

"If you ask politely enough, maybe she'll let you," Lyra giggled. Doctor Whooves facehoofed while Bon Bon and Derpy burst out laughing. Octavia looked affronted while DJ Pon3 glared daggers at Lyra.

"Oh..." DJ Pon3 growled at Lyra. "You filly of a bi-"

"*IF* we're quite finished," the Doctor proclaimed loudly. "We seem to be forgetting somepony. Did any of you check up on Rarity?"

"Um, Doctor?" Derpy pointed with one of her hooves. "She's right over there."

The others turned to a nearby picnic table in the park where they saw Rarity sitting astride a massive boulder she was positively clinging to. Occasionally she would pause her constant massaging of the boulder to softly coo something into the general area where there would be an ear if boulders had ears.

The League of Fanons took in this sight for a while before DJ Pon3 threw her hooves into the air. "That's it. This fandom is sick. *Sick*, I tell you. They'll ship us with everything but the kitchen sink. And then they'll probably ship us with *that* too."

“Hey, at least Rarity and the boulder actually happened in our version of reality,” Derpy pointed out.

“Say Bon Bon,” Lyra said, winking slyly at her friend. “Are you pondering what I’m pondering?”

Bon Bon smiled mischievously and put a hoof on her chin as if deep in thought. “I think so Lyra, but if you’re making out with a rock, does that mean it already has a *hard-on* for you?”

“WOULD YOU STOP THAT?!?” DJ Pon3 screamed at Bon Bon, who was rolling on the ground with laughter along with Lyra and Derpy while Doctor Whooves and Octavia groaned at this childish display of innuendo. For her part, DJ Pon3’s normally frizzy mane somehow was looking even more chaotic and her face was flushed. “Seriously, this is all *really* starting to creep me out.”

The Doctor sighed. “If we could all just focus for a minute, I think you’ll find this situation is no laughing matter. Right now all these versions of our friends from separate realities are crashing in on this reality, and if we don’t figure out how to stop it soon it will spread to all of Equestria. Before we know it, we might be dealing with-“

Suddenly the world was plunged into darkness. Everypony looked up at the sky, expecting to see a night sky full of stars and the moon, perhaps Nightmare Moon flying by laughing about an eternal night, but the sun was still visible in the sky. Everypony tried to figure out this contradiction for a moment before they looked around and realized that the sun’s light had been shrunk to a series of narrow rays that moved slowly across the landscape, their light resembling dots in the darkness.

The sun now resembled a giant disco ball as the tune of a popular Equestrian disco song could be heard wafting through the air.

“...Princess Trollestia,” the Doctor finished, groaning.

Chapter 2

Gloom's Return

“At last! We got it to work!” one of the Diamond Dogs announced with obvious delight.

The three Diamond Dogs were standing with the rest of the Legion of Gloom in a large cavern, surrounding a large green fire burning in the center of the room. It resembled the dragon fire Spike used to send and receive messages from Princess Celestia, and in fact it was a variant of it – while Diamond Dogs possessed little knowledge of magic (and zero ability to perform it) they did have some ancient knowledge of the properties of magical fire. Eons ago they were able to use it to craft the crude armor and weapons some Diamond Dogs possess to this day, and while the collective knowledge of how to do it has been lost to time with the decline of Diamond Dog civilization, the three Diamond Dogs of the Legion of Gloom had, through much research and hard work, finally managed to create a simple teleportation fire. And now they were ready to use it.

“Alright, then!” another Diamond Dog hollered. “What do we all want on our pizza?”

“The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie demands mushrooms and roasted peppers on her pizza!” The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie yelled back, lounging on a couch nearby.

“I’ll take one with anchovies,” Gilda said, not bothering to glance up from the magazine she was currently thumbing through.

“Hmph,” Prince Blueblood *hmphed*. “I’ll only accept the finest ingredients on my pie: fresh alfalfa sprouts, sun dried tomatoes, capers, basil leaf, a sprinkling of rosemary, and the finest quality ricotta known to ponykind.”

“I, *Photo Finish*, would never stoop to eat such *garbage!*” Photo Finish cried dramatically, waving her hoof with a flourish. “However, I will accept a Greek salad.”

The third Diamond Dog finished scribbling the order down along with the number for the credit card tied to Prince Blueblood's secret Equiss bank account before crumpling the piece of paper into a ball and tossing it into the fire. A moment later a sheet of paper with 'THANKS FOR YOUR ORDER' printed in large words next to a smiley face floated out of the fire. The largest Diamond Dog snatched the paper out of the air and read over the order details.

"30 minutes or it's FREE!" he cried, bouncing up and down with delight. The other two Diamond Dogs joined in while everyone else in the room ignored them.

It had been over a month since The Author had teleported them to this small network of caves beyond the Everfree Forest, which had been already furnished when they arrived and had magical protections which prevented it from being detected, and the cavern was already showing obvious signs of their presence. Dirty plates and glasses were sitting on nearly every flat surface, a garbage can nearby was overflowing, stacks of half-read books and magazines were perched precariously on the edge of the dining table, the floor was in need of sweeping, and a bad smell had been emanating from the kitchen for the past few days. Prince Blueblood, who normally would have been horrified by these living conditions, was too lazy to do anything about it himself and his previous attempts to goad the others into cleaning up the place had been a dismal failure, so he had given up and resigned himself to living in squalor.

And the living conditions weren't the only things that had downgraded for the Legion of Gloom in recent days – relations between the members, which were already iffy to begin with, had soured considerably given the lengthening period of time they had lived in close proximity to each other. Gilda was spending all her days as far removed from the other members as possible; Photo Finish was constantly at everyone's throats; the Diamond Dogs stuck to themselves; Sir Lints-a-Lot, Madame LeFlour, Mr. Turnip and Rocky spent all their time sitting in a corner; and the relationship between Prince Blueblood and The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie, so steamy a month ago, had cooled somewhat lately.

Still, there was something for them to look forward to, and if weren't for that fact they probably would have killed each other by now. Last week a new ally had made contact with them and was now acting as an operative in

Ponyville. The plan they hatched together was brilliant – taking what they had learned of fan fiction from The Author, they would wait for twisted versions of Twilight Sparkle and her friends to come into this world (their ally had assured them that they would come), and their operative would see to it that these fanon versions stayed in place while the Legion of Gloom made their move. Now it was just a matter of waiting for the right moment.

There was a sudden ‘*woosh!*’ as the teleportation fire doubled in size, its green flames rising into the air almost high enough to lick the ceiling. Several pizza boxes materialized out of the flames which were neatly caught by one of the Diamond Dogs. He was about to dig into the first pizza when he noticed an envelope on top of the stack of boxes. He ripped it open and looked at the letter within.

“Hey! It’s a message!” he said. “From our friend in Ponyville!”

“Give me *zat!*” Photo Finish yelled, snatching the message out of his hands. But just as she was about to look at it the message began to glow softly and was levitated into the air.

“As royalty, The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie is entitled to be the first to read this message!” The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie announced, using her magic to draw the note toward her.

“In which case, *I* should be the first to receive it!” Prince Blueblood cried, using his magic to freeze the note in mid-air. The two unicorns struggled over it, engaged in a tug-of-war with their magic.

“Grrrrf...mares...*first!*” The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie grunted.

“I...have...*seniority!*” Prince Blueblood panted.

“Oh for crying out loud,” Gilda scoffed, swooping in to snatch the note out of mid-air before quickly glancing it over. “Legion of Gloom, I have put our plan into effect, the Elements of Harmony are divided, blah blah blah, time to act,” she read aloud before tossing the paper onto the ground. “Alright, time to move out!”

“But what about the pizza?” The three Diamond Dogs cried simultaneously.

“Forget the pizza!” Gilda shouted. “We’ve got work to do!”

“But I purchased that food and I intend to consume it!” Prince Blueblood hollered.

“Yes, The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie was looking forward to that pizza...” The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie murmured.

“Akph...but...we...you...” Gilda stammered. “*ARGH!* Fine! We’ll eat the stupid pizza!” she finally relented.

Ponyville was in chaos. But not the kind of chaos that normally hits Ponyville, where there was panic and shouting and generally a lot of mad galloping around by the local denziens. No, this was a rather controlled chaos, but chaos none the less, as everypony in the village seemed to be entrapped in their own little world, oblivious to what was going on around them.

Everypony that is, except for six ponies walking down the main street taking it all in. The League of Fanons looked on at the scenes before them: Scootaloo was jumping around clucking loudly. A purple earth pony with a bunch of grapes for a cutie mark was stumbling down the street, clutching a wine bottle in one of her hooves. A blue unicorn with a blue and white striped mane was sailing through the air on a giant toothbrush (what the means of propulsion for the toothbrush were remains a mystery to this day). Sweetie Belle was standing nearby with her mouth open in an unrealistically large oval while her eyes pointed in opposite directions. An adorable black filly with glasses was trotting happily down the street. There seemed to be an unusually high number of ponies wearing socks. All this while Equestria was still experiencing what could only be described as strange solar behavior.

But amidst all this, there was one sight that drove one pony over the edge. DJ Pon3 could see Big Mac sitting under a tree clutching an old ragged doll with button eyes and short curled bunches of horse hair for a mane. But it was the way Big Mac held on to that doll with obvious love that pushed the DJ pony to do what she did next.

“Alright, that’s it!” DJ Pon3 cried, galloping towards Big Mac. “I’m going to put an end to at least *one* of these stupid shipping tropes.” She reared up and smacked Big Mac across the face, who, caught unawares, dropped to the ground.

“Geez, I didn’t mean to hit him that hard...” DJ Pon3 said somewhat guiltily. “But at least I can get this away from him...” she leaned over to pull the doll out of Big Mac’s grasp.

“Hi! My name is Smarty Pants and I love you!” the doll suddenly said.

“What – *It talks?!?*” DJ Pon3 hollered, now holding the doll at arms’ length. The other members of the League of Fanons approached.

“Oh, it must be one of those magical talking dolls!” Lyra cried. “You know, enchanted with unicorn magic to say cute things. I hear they’re all the rage with fillies in Canterlot.”

“My name is Smarty Pants and I want you to love me too!” the doll said.

“Psht. Fat chance, dolly,” DJ Pon3 muttered.

“My name is Smarty Pants, and I think you’re tardy!” the doll continued.

“Yeah well my name is DJ Pon3 and I think you’re annoying,” DJ Pon3 spat at the doll in her hoof.

“My name is Smarty Pants, and I think I’m going to fail you,” the doll uttered.

There was a long silence following this statement. “This...is a toy for *children* of your world, right?” the Doctor asked awkwardly.

“My name is Smarty Pants, and I’m going to kill you.” At this the doll’s button eyes started to glow red and the curls of its mane began to levitate in the air. DJ Pon3 squealed in horror, flinging the doll to the ground. Before the doll could clumsily pull itself off the ground Octavia drew her bow/sword and in one clean motion removed the doll’s head from the rest of its body. It lay on the ground, looking pathetic as stuffing leaked out the hole on to the grass.

DJ Pon3 shuddered violently. “Okay...so we have disgusting shipping and psychopathic inanimate objects. Sometimes we have those two things together at once. This is just my regular life now, isn’t it?”

“Okay Doctor,” Derpy said. “Lay it on us, how bad is this?”

“Very bad,” the Doctor replied.

“On a scale of one to seven?” Bon Bon asked.

“...Seven?” the Doctor responded, looking confused. “Why seven?”

“Well, you know...seven,” Bon Bon said. “You know? Four hooves, two wings and a horn? Seven?”

“You ponies use a base-7 number system?” the Doctor cried in delight. “How wonderful!”

“*DOCTOR!*” Derpy shouted. “Forget the numbers and just tell us what’s going on!”

“Oh, right,” the Doctor muttered. “Well, as I said, our friends – and indeed all of the ponies in Equestria by this point it seems – have been replaced by some fanon version of themselves, pulled into this reality from their own. But all these versions of themselves in one place are inherently conflicting, and the resulting paradox should be destroying this dimension. So why isn’t reality collapsing around us yet?”

There was a long silence at these words as the League of Fanons considered the implications of what the Doctor was saying. Finally Octavia spoke up. “What about us, Doctor? Why haven’t we changed yet?”

“Well, strictly speaking, we’re already fanon characters, so we shouldn’t have much problem. Although we may experience one or two small...err...*side effects*,” the Doctor said, emphasizing the last two words with a false cheeriness.

“Side effects?” Derpy said, raising an eyebrow. “Such as...?”

“Well, such as maybe, *maybe*... Octavia and DJ Pon3 developing romantic feelings for each other,” the Doctor said.

“*I KNEW IT!*” Lyra squealed enthusiastically.

“Ooh, maybe it’ll be just like *Allegrezza*!” Bon Bon said, stars shining in her eyes.

“Forgive me if I withhold my enthusiasm,” DJ Pon3 muttered.

“Tell me Bon Bon...” Octavia said, throwing the pony a stern glare. “Who is the person who wrote this *Allegrezza* story?”

“Oh, that would a brony named CoffeeGrunt!” Bon Bon said cheerfully.

“Then mark my words,” Octavia growled. “If DJ Pon3 and I wind up kissing before this is over, I am going to kill that brony in his sleep.”

“Anything else?” Lyra asked the Doctor.

“Well...” the Doctor mumbled, rubbing his front hooves together anxiously. “Derpy might experience some...err...”

“Extra derpiness?” Derpy chuckled, sticking her tongue out. “No sweat, Doctor. I think I can handle it.”

“Well, yes, there’s that...” the Doctor muttered. “But there’s also...”

“Mommy?”

The League of Fanons jumped at the sound of a small, squeaky voice coming from right behind them. They turned around to see a small gray unicorn filly standing there, staring at Derpy.

“Hi Mommy!” the filly said happily. “How was work today? Did you deliver lots of mail?”

“M...Mommy?” Derpy stammered, looking at the filly.

“Oh, silly!” the filly said cheerfully. “I’m not Mommy, you’re Mommy!” She bounded up to Derpy and nestled herself against the pegasus, rubbing her head against Derpy’s leg. Before Derpy could pull back, say anything or even begin to truly comprehend what was going on, the filly had climbed up onto the pegasus’ back. “I’m tired, Mommy...” she mumbled before curling up to sleep between Derpy’s wings.

Lyra and Bon Bon had their mouths covered in horror. DJ Pon3 and Octavia were staring at Derpy, their mouths open in shock. The Doctor

only looked at the gray pegasus with a sad expression on his face. Derpy stared at the filly for a long time before turning back to the other members of the League of Fanons. Her crossed eyes were brimming with tears.

“Derpy...” the Doctor mumbled softly. “...I’m so sorry...”

“Wh...wha...” was all Derpy managed to say. She tried to form the words, but she just couldn’t. She felt she should have been able to say something, anything – that this filly must be mistaken, that Derpy didn’t have a daughter or that this was all one big misunderstanding...but the expressions from the other fanons – the Doctor in particular – told her that this was no mistake. And so all she could do was cry. Whether it was for her or for her daughter that she had never met she wasn’t sure, but cry she did.

Chapter Three

The Fight Comes to the League

"I don't understand, Doctor," Derpy muttered. "Why don't I remember her?"

The League of Fanons were gathered aboard the TARDIS, along with each of the Elements of Harmony, which they had managed to drag along with them. Fluttershy had been particularly difficult, as they had to surprise her and tie her up in order to get her out of her cottage. Her condition seemed to have worsened: her mane was messy and she continued to mumble incoherent things as she stared off into space. At the moment she was lying with her hooves bound on the floor of the TARDIS near a caged, chained and gagged Pinkie (no one wanted to take any chances with her escaping), who was still looking strangely cheery.

Derpy had been tending to Dinky all day, but it wasn't like she had much choice in the matter as Dinky had stayed close to her mother the whole time. At the moment however, Lyra and Bon Bon were playing with Dinky, allowing Derpy to finally speak with the Doctor.

"I mean I've seen her around town..." Derpy continued. "But she's never spoken to me before. I don't have a daughter...do I?"

"In this reality you don't," the Doctor explained. "But in Dinky's fanon reality you do. Together here you are simultaneously her mother and not a mother."

"It's all so confusing..." Derpy mumbled. "I've only known her for a few hours but she knows me so well, I can tell she must be my daughter. She's exactly the little filly I would want to raise. What if I did something wrong? What if I was supposed to have Dinky all along? What if-"

The Doctor interrupted her. "You've done nothing wrong. You're just from a different reality than her. We'll get her back to hers, this one will go back to the way it was, everything will be fixed."

“Fixed...” Derpy’s gaze grew stern and she gave the Doctor a hard look. “How can you possibly speak of ‘*fixing*’ this? How can I go back, knowing what I know now? I may not have a daughter, but that little filly there looks up to me. Am I just supposed to cast her aside as if this never happened?”

The Doctor had nothing to say.

“If it makes you feel better, Derpy...” Twilight muttered. “I know how you feel. Perhaps I could cast some kind of happiness spell to make you feel better?”

“*NO!*” Lyra and Bon Bon screamed simultaneously before looking embarrassed at their outburst. “I mean...” Bon Bon stammered. “No dear, that’s quite alright. You should just try to relax...”

Octavia lifted an eyebrow at the two of them. “What was that about?” she whispered to Lyra.

“Do you *know* how many stories involve Twilight messing up a spell?” Lyra whispered urgently. “Twilight tries to do something and winds up switching bodies or time traveling or getting horn rot...the *last* thing we want is that girl doing any magic.”

“Anyway Derpy...” Twilight continued, oblivious to Lyra. “I know how you feel. How could life *ever* go back to normal for me now that I know of my love?”

“That’s not the same thing at all!” Rainbow Dash hollered. “I don’t know how you could possibly fall in love with that jerk The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie. Now what I have with Applejack, *that’s* real love,” at this she then started nuzzling Applejack’s mane.

“NO IT IS *NOT!*” DJ Pon3 yelled. “You’re not in love! You were *never* in love! It’s a stupid fanon trope and the sooner we put an end to it the longer I can hold my lunch.”

“Are y’all threatening to take mah Dashie away?” Applejack shouted angrily, leaping to her feet.

“Oh no, *not at all...*” Octavia said in a sarcastic tone, rolling her eyes. “Heaven forbid something would happen to ‘yer *Dashie*.”

“Don’t make fun of Applejack’s accent!” Rainbow Dash yelped.

“Everypony, *really!*” Rarity cried. “This is hardly polite conversation in front of such nobility as Tom here!” She turned to the boulder and began cooing at it softly again. “Don’t you mind them Tom, they can be such *fillystines* sometimes...” How they managed to get Tom inside the TARDIS was nothing short of a miracle, and the Doctor wondered if the scratches the boulder left on the doorway would ever come off.

“Mommy, why is that pony talking to that rock?” Dinky whispered to Derpy.

“Err...” Derpy paused. “...I don’t really know, dear.”

“Speaking of that rock,” the Doctor began. “Does anypony else here notice a strange pattern among our friends here?”

“You mean strange besides the obvious?” Octavia muttered.

“I mean among their conditions,” the Doctor replied. “Of all six ponies, Rarity being with Tom is the only condition that happened in our reality. All the others hold no relation to anything that happened in this world, but Rarity and Tom did in fact happen.”

“That doesn’t mean it’s not a fanon trope,” Bon Bon pointed out.

“But still, doesn’t that strike anypony else as odd?” the Doctor asked.

Before anypony could answer there was a thunderous crash that violently shook the TARDIS and caused everypony to be thrown to the floor. DJ Pon3, who was closest to the door, grunted as she got to her feet, her goggles now pushed up to her forehead as she trotted over to the door.

“What in Equestria...” she muttered as she opened the door before peeking outside. “Um, girls? We have company.”

“I’ll say you do!” the voice of Gilda came from outside as the griffon snatched DJ Pon3’s neck, gripping it tight in her claw before flinging her out the door, into the air, and flat on her back. The other members of the Legion of Gloom watched on nearby.

“OH YOU WANT TO TANGLE?!” DJ Pon3 roared as she leapt to her feet and pulled her goggles back over her eyes.

“THEN IT...IS...ON!” At the last syllable she unleashed a blast of magic from her horn and the sound of a stereo blast heavy with electronic feedback engulfed Gilda, causing her to drop to the ground as she covered her ears with her claws. She gritted her teeth, but they seemed to be rattling in time with the heavy bass beat emanating from DJ Pon3’s horn.

“MY CUTIE MARK AIN’T MUSIC FOR NOTHING, YOU KNOW!” DJ Pon3 screamed over the din. She looked enormously confident in her element, concentrating the loud, mixed beats of a nightclub into one single, overwhelming wave of magical energy.

But it was not to last for much longer, as one of the Diamond Dogs had just enough sense amidst all the noise to launch a flying tackle at DJ Pon3, sending her sprawling on the ground as she lost focus on her magic. The faint echoes of the din reverberated across the nearby landscape as the ringing in everyone’s ears finally subsided, with the exception of Gilda who looked like she was wound so tightly that if she bit on a rock it would probably be a diamond by the time she spit it out.

“The noise...I made it stop!” the Diamond Dog said cheerfully to his companions.

“WHAT?” Gilda hollered, raising a claw to her ear. “DID YOU SAY SOMETHING?”

The other members of the League of Fanons emerged out of the TARDIS along with Dinky, Twilight, Applejack and Rainbow Dash. Twilight took one look at The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie before

bounding towards her, grasping her in a tight hug.

“*Akph!* What in Equestria do you think you’re doing, foal?” The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie grunted, shoving Twilight off of her and using her magic to restrain the purple unicorn.

“Oh Great and Powerful Your Royal Highness Princess Trixie!” Twilight swooned. “Oh, how I missed you! You don’t know what I’ve been through, the feelings I’ve held back...tell me you feel the same way!”

“What...the...*wha-huh?*” The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie stammered, almost releasing Twilight in her shock.

“Great and Powerful Your Royal Highness Princess Trixie...” Twilight began. “...I...*I love you!*”

There was a long, deafening silence after this, as everything seemed to have stopped. There weren’t even birds chirping or the sound of wind. No one said a word. It was as if somepony had flung a switch and plunged the whole world into silence.

A silence which The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie eventually broke. “I...” she looked down at her hooves before raising her head to look Twilight in her shining eyes.

“I...I love you too, Twilight Sparkle.”

“*You do?*” Twilight squealed with delight.

“*Pbbbbbbtt!* Of course NOT, *you stupid foal!*” The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie cackled, falling on her back in her wild laughter. “*Ah-HA-HA-HAAAAH!!!* You just fell right into it! *The look on your face!*” She was clutching her sides, rolling on the ground as tears of laughter streamed out her eyes.

Twilight was crestfallen. “But...but...but Great and Powerful-“

The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie finally recovered as she interrupted Twilight with a hoof to the purple unicorn’s mouth. “Now now silly little filly, The Great and Powerful Her Royal

Highness Princess Trixie knows that her bewitching good looks are impossible to resist, but did you *really* think that *you* had a shot? The worst enemy of The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie?"

"Besides," she continued. "The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie already has a mate. He's handsome, he's rich, and best of all, he's royalty." She grinned slyly at Prince Blueblood. "You see Prince, you're not the only pony here who knows how to break hearts."

"You manage to continue to surprise me, my dear," Prince Blueblood simpered. Feeling a renewed spark in their relationship, the two unicorns locked horns and began savagely kissing once again.

Twilight looked grief-stricken. Her eyes were brimming with tears as she watched the scene play out before her. Finally she shut her eyes from the horrid sight, gritted her teeth and ran off into the distance, weeping loudly. The League of Fanons watched on in shock.

"You...you... *YOU BASTARD!*" Bon Bon screamed. "How could you be so *heartless?!?*"

"It's called tough love, foals," The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie said, breaking from Prince Blueblood's embrace just long enough to do so.

"That does it," Applejack announced. "Twilight may have been mighty foalish to fall for her, but that ain't no excuse for treating a pony like that! Come on, RD! *Yee-HAH!*" Applejack reared into the air.

"I love it when you say 'Yee-hah'..." Rainbow Dash muttered softly to Applejack, giving her a loving smile.

"Zis *shipping*..." Photo Finish muttered darkly. "I can not take zis much longer!"

"WHAT?" Gilda yelled again, both claws to her ears now. "WHY IS EVERYONE BEING SO QUIET? SPEAK UP!"

"Wait a second, we're missing somepony..." the Doctor said. "Photo Finish, Gilda, The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie,

Prince Blueblood, the Diamond Dogs..." He turned around to face the TARDIS only to spot Sir Lints-a-lot, Madame LeFlour, Rocky and Mr. Turnip standing in front of it, now frozen in place by the Doctor's gaze.

"They're after the TARDIS!" the Doctor yelled. "Stop them! And don't blink, or they'll be able to move again!"

But it was to no avail. Just as the League of Fanons were preparing to stop them, The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie launched an array of firecrackers she had saved from her old magic show at the League of Fanons, and while nopony was hurt they all instinctively flinched and blinked as a result of all the bangs and flashes around them. In short order the "inanimate" objects had entered the TARDIS and chucked Rarity along with the still-bound Fluttershy and Pinkie outside before returning. The door of the TARDIS shut behind them as the time machine began dematerializing on the spot, making its loud wheezing noise.

"Wait a moment!" the Doctor cried, examining the "inanimate" objects sitting in front of the TARDIS. "You're all outside so...who's piloting the TARDIS?"

Rarity stood up and began beating on the door, weeping loudly. "*TOM!*" she cried. "What are you doing? Don't leave me!"

The TARDIS dematerialized completely, causing Rarity to fall to the ground where the TARDIS had been standing. She laid there weeping as Applejack, Rainbow Dash, Dinky and the League of Fanons stared, trying to comprehend what had just happened. The last time they had battled the Legion of Gloom, they had held the upper hand nearly the entire time. Now they had lost so much in such a short span of time and they had barely started fighting yet.

"Ha-HAH!" The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie cried in exuberance. "Yes my foalish little subjects, you thought Tom was just another boulder, didn't you?"

"Wait, you know about Tom?" Applejack asked, managing to miss the larger implication of what The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness

Princess Trixie was implying.

“*TOM* is piloting the TARDIS?” Derpy cried in disbelief.

“Mommy, what’s going on?” Dinky asked fearfully, seeing her mother’s anger and remaining close.

“How is a boulder piloting the TARDIS?” the Doctor asked forcefully. “Is Tom even a boulder? And what does Tom want with the TARDIS anyway?”

“*TO-O-O-OM!!!*” Rarity cried in anguish to the sky.

“Remember this day well, League of Fanons!” The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie yelled triumphantly. “The day that Harmony failed and Equestria fell to the *Legion of Gloom!*” She flung her hooves into the air before throwing down one of her smoke bombs which shrouded the area in a dense fog. Rainbow Dash and Derpy worked together to clear the air, but by the time they did so the Legion of Gloom had vanished.

The library door burst open with an ear-splintering crash as the Legion of Gloom rushed inside.

“Quickly, it’s somewhere on one of these shelves!” Prince Blueblood yelled.

“Ooouuuggghhh...” a low moaning sound came from nearby. The Legion of Gloom froze momentarily to spot Spike, lying on the floor in what looked like considerable pain.

“Wha...wha...are you...*Hrgmph!*” He belched loudly, and the green cloud of flame coalesced into a grand piano, which crashed to the floor, shaking the entire treehouse. Now that the Legion of Gloom looked, they could also see a pile of bricks, a twin-sized mattress, several encyclopedias, a suit of armor, an anvil, and dozens upon dozens of opened cans of soda.

“Why does the Princess keep sending these?” Spike cried, burping up another can of Colta-Cola. “She should know they make my burping

worse!”

“It’s okay, Spike!” a small voice came from the next room. A second later an adorable black filly with glasses bounded out, levitating a bottle of dragon medicine with her. Before she got to Spike however, she froze and started looking around anxiously.

“That’s strange...” the filly said slowly. “I just got the weirdest feeling that I’m only present here because some insecure writer inserted me into this scene to satisfy the demands stated by his fans after he posted the previous chapter.”

She looked around anxiously for a moment more before waving a hoof. “*Naaaaaah*, that’s ridiculous! I guess I’m just being a scaredy filly again! Tra-la-la-la-la!” she sang happily as she trotted over to Spike.

“Ignore them,” Prince Blueblood announced, turning his attention back to the room. “Find that book!”

“BIND THAT COOK?” Gilda said rather loudly, a claw to one of her ears. “Why would we do that?”

“NO! *Find...that...book*,” Prince Blueblood repeated. “But which one? Where would Twilight Sparkle keep a book with the Elements of Harmony?”

“Oh, the book about the Elements of Harmony?” the black filly asked. “It’s under E,” she told them, pointing at a shelf on the opposite side of the room. The members of the Legion of Gloom glanced at each other for a moment before making a mad scramble to the E shelf, yanking out every book within reach.

“We’ve found it!” the Diamond Dogs cried, opening a book to reveal a shining golden crown and several bejeweled necklaces.

“Right then,” Prince Blueblood said. “While our enemies are too weak and divided to use the Elements of Harmony, it certainly doesn’t hurt to take them for ourselves. Consider it a trophy of our victory,” he smirked. “Now if you don’t mind, I’ll be taking-“

“I CALL CROWN!” The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie yelled. “I mean...The Great and Powerful Her Royal...oh heck, you know what I mean,” she muttered as she snatched the crown out of the book and replaced her star-studded magical cap with it while Prince Blueblood looked on with some envy. Finally he shrugged and took Rarity’s necklace. Gilda took Rainbow Dash’s, Photo Finish took Fluttershy’s and Pinkie’s necklace wound up in the hands of the “inanimate” objects when no one was looking, leaving the Diamond Dogs to squabble over Applejack’s necklace.

With these tokens of their victory, the Legion of Gloom strode outside into the chaos of Ponyville, ready to claim it as their own.

Chapter Four

In the Shadow of the Moon

“How did we wind up in this again?” Octavia asked the world at large.

“I don’t even care anymore,” DJ Pon3 muttered.

The League of Fanons were standing aboard a massive flying apparatus that was floating softly above the Everfree Forest. It appeared to be constructed of metal and was roughly the size of a dirigible though more triangular in shape, and was currently hovering through the night air by what must have been some sort of magical power.

Rainbow Dash and Applejack had vanished shortly after the fight with the Legion of Gloom presumably to spend some time alone, which left the League of Fanons (along with Dinky who was still keeping close to her mother’s side) to come across Princess Luna, who led them to this strange ship that was being crewed by an assortment of ponies from across Equestria.

One of the said ponies entered the control room, where they were all standing and gave a short salute to Princess Luna. “Hail Princess Luna, the true ruler of Equestria!” he cried. “Long live the Lunar Resistance!”

“The Lunar what-now?” Derpy asked.

“The Lunar Resistance!” another pony cried, looking up from a control panel. “The fight to bring down the greed and corruption of the tyrant Celestia!”

There was a good deal of cheering at this from the other ponies in the room, who started shouting various things like “*Yeah, down with the tyrant queen!*”, “*Power to the ponies!*” and “*We will not be silenced!*” The members of the League of Fanons stared on incredulously.

“Have you ponies completely lost your mind?!” Octavia cried. “Celestia hasn’t been a troll for a day yet and you’re already starting a revolution

movement?!" Fortunately none of the Lunar Resistance ponies heard her over their own cheering (at the moment they were all chanting "*The ponies, united, will never be defeated!*") and the Doctor quickly motioned for Octavia to stop talking.

"I'm guessing these ponies come from some reality where Celestia is a tyrant," the Doctor quietly explained. "Just go along with it for the time being."

"Right then, Doctor!" Princess Luna announced, causing the Doctor to spring to attention. "What is this secret device you said would help us?"

"Ah, right..." the Doctor said. "Well, I know of a certain blue box that we can use to end this reign of the, uh...tyrant queen. But it was taken from us. I can use my sonic screwdriver to get a general sense of where it is, but I need a massive source of energy to pinpoint the location. Perhaps some sort of magical energy."

"I could cast a locating spell," Luna said promptly, taking the screwdriver from the Doctor and placing it on a table while her horn glowed.

"So this box..." one of the ponies spoke up. "Is it some kind of weapon?"

"NO!" the Doctor cried, looking highly offended. "I mean...no, it most certainly is *not*. It's...difficult to explain."

"I found it!" Luna said, her horn glowing softly while her eyes glowed white. "A massive source of energy due west of here, deeper within the Everfree Forest!" She turned to a large chair set in the center of the control room, facing away from all of them, instead turned towards the viewing window. "Captain Ahab! Set course!" Luna commanded.

"Captain Ahab?" Bon Bon asked. "Who's Captain Ahab?"

Luna trotted over to the large chair and spun it around to reveal...an abacus.

"Fillies and gentlecolts, meet Captain AHAB," Luna announced, gesturing towards the abacus. "AHAB, of course, short for **Abū al-Hasan ABacus***, mathematician extraordinaire, Captain of this vessel *The Eclipse* and my

dearest friend.”

“An abacus?” DJ Pon3 asked, one of her eyes twitching. “We’re being commanded by *an abacus?*”

“Hey, look on the bright side, at least it’s an inanimate object on our side for a change,” Lyra pointed out, before grinning slyly. “But don’t worry, I’m sure he’s still shipped with somepony.”

“I think Captain Ahab is looking at you, DJ,” Bon Bon snickered. “Perhaps you’re the ‘white whale’ he’s been searching for?” Lyra tried unsuccessfully to suppress a fit of giggles.

DJ Pon3 glared in response. “I hate you all.”

“Say hello to our friends, Captain Ahab,” Luna commanded the abacus, before picking it up and waving it back and forth. “Argh, ye lily-livered rainbow-bellied land lubbers!” she growled, unconvincingly puppeteering the abacus while sliding beads back and forth. “Now now, Captain Ahab, be nice!” Luna gently scolded the abacus. The League of Fanons watched on with apprehension while the members of the Lunar Resistance didn’t even seem to notice.

“Mommy, is Nightmare Moon okay?” Dinky whispered to Derpy.

“...No, dear,” Derpy whispered back. “She’s not herself right now.”

The Legion of Gloom had marched into the chaos of Ponyville, visible to any pony that bothered to look but ignored by all, with everypony caught in their own little world. The Legion of Gloom entered the town hall where they found the Mayor, who apparently was too boring of a character for any fan to come up with some alternate version of her, and forced her to formally surrender the title of Mayor to them before letting her flee. Now they were sitting in their new office, casually redecorating the place to their whims.

“Right then!” The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie announced as she put the finishing touches on the nameplate she was

redecorating with her name now on it. “The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Trixie declares herself the new Mayor of Ponyville!”

“GOOD IDEA!” Gilda shouted, still apparently oblivious to her volume level. “I call Mayor of Ponyville!”

“What-NO!” The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Mayor Trixie shot back. “*I’m* the new Mayor!”

“You’re the blue layer?” Gilda replied. “I don’t get it.”

“*Grrrgh*...no, you stupid half-breed...” The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Mayor Trixie growled for a moment before picking up the nameplate and gesturing vigorously at it and herself. “ME. I... AM... THE... NEW MAYOR. ME!”

Gilda looked at the nameplate for a second before catching on, but once she did she became angry immediately. “HEY! You’re already a princess, I think it’s about time *I* got something out of all this!”

“The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Mayor Trixie decrees that she is Mayor! This is a royal order!” The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Mayor Trixie decreed.

“Well fine, I didn’t want the stupid pony town anyway...” Gilda muttered. “But I still want to rule something! I’ve been busting my rump for you all long enough!”

“Perhaps we are thinking too small...” Prince Blueblood said, looking around at the humble office. “We need to think *bigger*.”

“I like the way this pony thinks,” one of the Diamond Dogs said.

“Yes!” another Diamond Dog cried. “We’ll rule...*two* pony towns!”

“No!” Prince Blueblood yelled. “Think bigger!”

“...*Three* pony towns?” the third Diamond Dog said, shrinking under the Prince’s glare. “...And a pizza place?”

“No...” Prince Blueblood sighed. “And why a pizza place?”

“Because I’m hungry again,” the Diamond Dog moaned.

“Listen, it’s time we looked to seizing power at the *royal* level,” Prince Blueblood explained. “With Equestria in chaos, nopony will notice us until it is too late, and we will rule Equestria!”

“How in Equestria do you suggest we seize power from the most powerful pony in all of existence?” Photo Finish said.

“We have the Elements of Harmony,” Prince Blueblood said, indicating the necklace he was wearing. “A power so great they defeated Nightmare Moon.”

“But we don’t know how to use these things!” The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Mayor Trixie pointed out. “Don’t they require friendship or some junk like that? And The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Mayor Trixie is certainly not going to be *friends* with the likes of half-breeds like *her*,” she said, indicating Gilda.

“I didn’t hear what you said, but I’m betting you’re going to regret it,” Gilda growled.

“We don’t have to *use* them,” Prince Blueblood said. “We merely have to *threaten* to use them. Princess Celestia knows of their power, surely she will not be foolish enough to risk defeat at our hands. She will meet our demands.”

“It is brilliant!” Photo Finish cried.

“Yes, it is,” Prince Blueblood replied smugly. “I shall be crowned king, and you shall be my queen,” he said to The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Mayor Trixie.

“Ah yes, the power of a queen would be most fitting...” the blue unicorn said. “But The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Mayor Trixie prefers to retain her title of princess, to suggest her stunning youthful beauty!” she added, throwing her hair back.

“Here! We found it!” Derpy cried, hovering above a thicket of trees with Dinky clinging to her back. Princess Luna and the other members of the League of Fanons rushed over to find the TARDIS positioned in the midst of several trees, sitting there as if it had fallen out of the sky (which for all intents and purposes it may have). It was slightly tilted to the side, leaning against one tree and covered in dirt and leaves with vines growing along the sides.

“I don’t understand,” the Doctor said. “It looks like it has been sitting here for weeks, months even. What did Tom do?”

“Well let’s get in there and find out!” DJ Pon3 said, heading for the door.

“Wait,” Princess Luna said, holding out a hoof to stop DJ Pon3. “I would like to see this contraption myself, if you don’t mind.” Her tone was polite but slightly forceful.

The League of Fanons exchanged looks. They hadn’t counted on Princess Luna demanding to see the TARDIS, and now they were stuck in an awkward situation. Should Luna see the inside, they would probably have to explain that it was a time machine...which could lead to having to explain their plan to fix this reality, which would require explaining that they were fanons, which would require explaining that Luna didn’t belong to this reality, which would ultimately require explaining that nothing they were planning to do had anything to do with overthrowing Celestia. Somehow they weren’t sure this news would go over very well.

“Um...well...” the Doctor stammered. “It’s...complicated,” he finished weakly.

“Do you dare question our leader?” A group of members of the Lunar Resistance were standing behind them next to Captain AHAB. Luna picked up the abacus and slid a few beads back and forth, which clacked loudly in the quiet forest.

“Captain Ahab, *really!*” Luna cried. “I know you’re a sailor, but such language!”

Luna clacked a couple more beads quietly as if the abacus was apologizing before she put the abacus back down and faced the League of Fanons, suddenly stern-faced once again. Once again, the members of the Lunar Resistance took this all in stride as if it was completely normal.

“Um...well, it's just that...it's dangerous!” Lyra offered. “Really, *really* dangerous!”

“Yeah, that's it, dangerous!” Bon Bon jumped in. “And, you know, we wouldn't want our glorious resistance leader getting hurt!”

“Your concern is welcome,” Luna replied. “But I believe as one of the most powerful creatures in all of existence I can handle whatever is inside.”

“But...” the Doctor paused, desperately searching for an excuse that would be adequate.

Fortunately for him he never had to come up with one, for at that moment there was a terrific flash of light from overhead which caused everypony to freeze in their tracks. They looked up to see Princess Celestia hovering above them, leering down at Princess Luna.

“Hi, little sis!” Celestia said teasingly. “I thought I saw your little ship floating by!”

“IT'S THE TYRANT QUEEN!” several members of the Lunar Resistance shouted. They all began to draw swords, knives and spears out, looking at Princess Celestia with steely gazes. “For the glory of the Lunar Resistance!” one member shouted. “We kill the tyrant queen tonight! *CHARGE!!!*”

However, the words were barely out of his mouth before Celestia cast a spell on all their weaponry, and the swords and knives they were holding turned to rubber while the spears were transformed into colorful marching band batons.

“Um...eh, heh heh...” the member who screamed ‘CHARGE’ was now nervously chuckling. “Uh...what I meant to say was, um, *all we are saaaaaaying, is give peace a-*” He was cut off as another blast of magic from Celestia turned him into a beach ball. The other members of the

Lunar Resistance ran around in panic but within seconds they were transformed into random objects as well. Celestia turned her gaze to Captain AHAB, only to be almost knocked out of the air by a blast of blue magical energy.

“YOU STAY AWAY FROM CAPTAIN AHAB!” Luna screamed, standing impressively before the sun princess.

Princess Celestia gave Luna a rather horrifyingly large mischievous and toothy grin with her eyes tightly squinted. “Aww...*r u mad*, Loony?” she said, adopting a tone normally reserved for when addressing newborn fillies and adorable animals.

Princess Luna charged at Celestia in response. In the midst of all this madness, neither of them noticed the League of Fanons slip inside the TARDIS and shut the door behind them.

Chapter Five

We Have Met the Enemy... and It is Us

The inside of the TARDIS was not its usual brightly illuminated self, it now looked dark and gloomy and was illuminated with an ominous red glow. Various pipes, wires and other appendages were sticking out of places where there hadn't been any before and the central console was now enclosed in a cage.

"It's bigger on the inside, Mommy..." Dinky said quietly to Derpy, looking around her. "But it's scary...I don't like it..."

"What has that boulder *done* to you?!" the Doctor cried, looking around the TARDIS in disdain.

"What have *I* done?" a gravelly voice spoke from the shadows. "I think the better question Doctor, is what *you* have done..."

With a sickening crunching sound, Tom rolled out from behind the console into their line of sight. Despite not having any eyes, the League of Fanons could practically feel the boulder staring at them. Dinky slipped behind Derpy's legs.

And when Tom spoke, it was how you would imagine a boulder to sound like – like two rocks scraping against each other, gravelly and harsh. "What you have done, are doing, and will do, Doctor..."

"Who are you?" the Doctor demanded. "*What* are you?"

"A race as old as time, Doctor..." Tom responded. "We have the appearance of boulders but are living creatures. Each generation lasts for millions of years, born from the dust, the sedimentation of the previous generation. Such as it is, such as it always will be. The time lords consider themselves the guardians of time, but we are the *embodiment* of time: ever-enduring, ever-lasting, patient, and hidden in plain sight."

"I don't understand," the Doctor continued. "Why are you here? What have you done to the TARDIS?"

"To prevent the conflicting versions of these ponies," Tom explained. "I have transformed the TARDIS into a paradox machine."

"How?" Octavia exclaimed. "You're a boulder!"

"I am a proud member of a species as old as time, as I said before," Tom said. "My kind knows much of the workings of time."

"That's...not what I meant," Octavia muttered. "I mean you have no arms, no appendages of any kind, how did you *build* it?"

"For a group of Elements of Fiction, surely you know the meaning of 'suspension of disbelief'? My kind knows much of the workings of time. That is all you need to know."

"Yeah, but that-" DJ Pon3 began.

"Suspension of disbelief," Tom repeated.

"But that doesn't make any-" Lyra started.

"Suspension of disbelief," Tom said once more.

"But *why*?" the Doctor yelled, increasingly furious. "Why steal the TARDIS? Why steal *MY*TARDIS? And why twist it into a paradox machine?"

"Why? *Why*?" Tom demanded. "*You* dare ask me why? *You*, who brought this madness upon us all?"

It had been a good day for Princess Trollestia. In just one day she had pulled a variety of great pranks on her subjects, including replacing the sun with a disco ball, replacing the water of Canterlot with red food coloring (the combination of which had led numerous ponies to announce the end times were upon them), "accidentally" releasing a swarm of parasprites over

Manehattan, sending a multitude of uncomfortable objects through Spike, readjusting the stars to spell out her name, and giving her tailor an allergy to fabric. Best of all, she had crushed the Lunar Resistance and banished her sister to the moon once again, removing that threat to her continued fun. It had been a very good day.

But now there was this annoying group calling themselves the “Legion of Gloom” standing before her. It was enough that they had barged in here and demanded her presence, but now they had the *gall* to demand she give up the throne!

“And why should I do that?” Princess Trollestia asked sweetly.

“Because we bear the Elements of Harmony!” Prince Blueblood announced, proudly showing off his necklace. “Should you refuse to relinquish the throne, we will use their power to banish you to the sun and take the throne by force!”

Princess Trollestia paused to consider this for a moment. Finally she bowed her head.

“Very well, then. I know when I’ve been bested. I am helpless before the Elements, and shall relinquish the throne to you. However, I do have one question...”

She raised her head and smiled mischievously at the Legion of Gloom. “Do you like bananas?”

“...Me?” the Doctor responded, confused. “What are you talking about?”

“For a timelord, you seem rather dense,” Tom muttered. “And that’s coming from a boulder. *Think*, Doctor. This reality is bearing the weight of fanon versions of the creatures of this world that do not belong here. Did it not once occur to you that *you* are one of those fanon characters that do not belong here?”

"I..." the Doctor started, but stopped as realization dawned on his face. "...But then...that would mean..."

"Doctor Whooves does not belong to this reality," Tom answered. "No fanon does. You are all of a different reality, and your presence here threatens to destroy this one. It was *you*, Doctor, who started the chain of events that led to where we are now."

There was a silence following this statement as the League of Fanons considered the ramifications of this statement. Tom considered them before speaking again, only this time his voice somehow seemed softer. "You seem genuinely surprised by this information. I may have made a mistake – I assumed you brought this chaos onto our world with evil intent."

"What *are* you?" Octavia asked pointedly. "I assumed you were just another poorly-written villain, but you don't sound like it."

"I am a creature older than ponykind," Tom answered. "My superiors placed me in the Canterlot sculpture gardens to keep watch over the dangerous beings held there – Discord is but the tip of the iceberg, I assure you. When Discord was released and the Elements of Harmony sent to defeat him in the maze, Discord, not knowing my true nature, cast a spell on me that seemed to give the Rarity pony the impression that I was a diamond."

Tom's voice grew quieter and more gravelly. "I must admit, my kind knows little of affection, and I found the adoration of the Rarity pony...much to my liking. I had never received such attention before, and when she cast me aside after Discord's spell was lifted I...became bitter."

Tom was silent for a moment before speaking again. "But soon my attention was focused on the more pressing matter of your arrival, Doctor. You landed in Equestria with your TARDIS, and I felt reality bending to accept your presence." Doctor Whooves remembered the day well, when his TARDIS jumped into this reality. "And to my horror," Tom continued. "You possessed the knowledge of fanon characters. Within moments you met Derpy, and soon you two discovered the other fanons and formed your little team. The tears in the fabric of space and time were spreading as you replaced these background characters with their fanon

versions, and I struggled to keep reality intact. But then you met the bearers of the Elements of Harmony and informed *them* of the existence of fanons. At this point the damage was too great, and I could no longer contain it.”

“But...we’re in a fanfic!” DJ Pon3 said. “Fanfics have fanon characters! It’s just the way it works, right?”

“This fanfic was never supposed to be,” Tom explained. “Though the events that have occurred will be recorded in writing, it was never supposed to have happened.”

“So you stole the TARDIS...” the Doctor began.

“To save this reality,” Tom finished. “When I discovered that the destroyers of this reality were aligned with Rarity, the same pony who had hurt me, I admit that I was eager to enact revenge upon her, petty though it may be. I enlisted the help of the Legion of Gloom, and while their intents are obviously not pure, they were the only ones I could count on to be willing to fight against you. And while they distracted you, I would steal the TARDIS and stop this destruction before it even started.”

“But something went wrong,” the Doctor inserted.

“Indeed,” Tom replied. “I had intended to take the TARDIS to the moment you entered this reality and prevent that event from occurring, but the TARDIS refused to let me.”

“Self-protection time-path cross system,” the Doctor said quietly. “The TARDIS is programmed to automatically stay clear of itself in a different time so that its time paths never cross.”

“I couldn’t carry out my original plan,” Tom continued. “So, with no way to intercept you before you entered this reality, all I could do was ensure that this reality could survive the incoming collision of all the different versions of these ponies. I transformed the TARDIS into a paradox machine. I admitted defeat. I could not prevent the chaos, but at least I could prevent this reality from crumbling on itself.”

“So...you’re not a bad rock at all, are you?” Dinky asked.

Derpy chuckled and ruffled Dinky’s mane. “You really are my daughter, you know,” she said softly. Dinky gave her mother a smile.

“Well, Doc?” DJ Pon3 asked. “What do we do now?”

“I don’t know...” the Doctor muttered, slumping down onto a railing. “We weren’t supposed to be here.../was never supposed to be here.”

“We have the Elements of Fiction!” Lyra said enthusiastically. “Couldn’t we use them?”

“The Elements of Fiction were not meant to be used as a *deus ex machina*,” Tom replied curtly. “Quite the opposite, in fact.”

The Doctor nodded. “We can only use the Elements of Fiction to remove bothersome aspects of a story, such as a self-insert. But to use them to solve this problem would defeat this story’s internal logic.”

The Doctor looked at Dinky for a moment before slapping his forehead with one of his front hooves. “Aah! Of course! I’m so *thick*! Look at me, I’m old and thick! Head’s too full of stuff! I need a bigger head!” Suddenly the Doctor grabbed Dinky in a tight hug and started playfully swinging her around in the air. “Oh, you adorable little filly, you! You’re the answer! You’ve been staring me in the face this whole time and I was just so *thick*!” the Doctor said with breathless excitement as Dinky laughed. After a moment the Doctor finally set Dinky down and turned to face the others.

“The internal logic of the story!” the Doctor cried. “Derpy, you said it yourself! How could I speak of ‘fixing’ all this? How are you supposed to go back to your old life now that you know about Dinky? *You’re not supposed to!*” he yelled triumphantly. “This story has been building to one logical conclusion: Dinky and Derpy will remain together while at the same time this whole timey-whimey wibbly-wobbly...*mess*...with the fanon characters gets sorted out!”

“But...aren’t those two things in direct contradiction to each other?” Bon Bon asked.

“Yes. In *this* reality...” All of a sudden the excitement that had been positively radiating from the Doctor faded in an instant and the Doctor’s face fell. “In order to fix this, it requires a sacrifice.”

“What kind of sacrifice?” Octavia asked quietly.

“I have to remove myself from this reality,” the Doctor answered. “All traces of me here must be eradicated forever.”

“How...” Derpy swallowed hard before continuing. “How do we do that?”

“We have to destroy the TARDIS,” the Doctor explained. “By destroying the paradox machine the paradox will correct itself, and if I’m inside the TARDIS as it implodes, it should pull all traces of me out of this reality. It’ll be as if I was never here...because technically speaking, I wouldn’t have been here. With any luck, the forces of time and reality will simply deposit me back within my own fanon reality, where I can exist without causing harm. And if Derpy and Dinky are present with me...” he looked at the two of them. “Then you can go back to your own reality.”

“And then I would remember...” Derpy glanced at Dinky.

“I think there’s a good chance of that happening,” the Doctor smiled. Derpy smiled back, wiping a tear from her eye as she hugged Dinky.

Lyra, Bon Bon, Octavia and DJ Pon3 looked at each other for a moment before Octavia stepped forward. “Then so be it,” she announced. “We give our lives together, so that Equestria can be restored.”

“No,” the Doctor said sternly. “I’m the one responsible for all of this. There’s no reason for you to give up your lives too. Everything you worked for here, everything you did will vanish when you leave this reality. There will be absolutely no trace of you – before I showed up, you were at least background characters to the Elements of Harmony, but if you sacrifice yourselves you wouldn’t have even been that. No one will remember you, you’ll have never *been*. Do you understand that?”

“After all I’ve seen with you Doctor, how could I willingly go back to what I was before?” Lyra asked. “I’ll take my chances in another reality, hopefully one where I *belong*, if you don’t mind.”

“We’re the League of Fanons, Doctor!” Bon Bon said. “Whatever we do, we’re supposed to do as a team.”

DJ Pon3 nodded, smiling. “Come on Doc, let’s put an end to this crazy story. A team of fanon characters who have little in common with each other? Tom’s right, this was never supposed to be. Let’s finish off this chaotic mess of a fanfic while we have a chance.”

Octavia held out a hoof to DJ Pon3. “For once, I agree with your artistic tastes. I am proud to have called you my friend and partner, DJ.”

DJ took Octavia’s hoof in one of her own. “Same here, Octavia.”

“D’awwww!” Lyra and Bon Bon *d’awwed*. Octavia and DJ Pon3 gave them a sharp glare.

“Well after that display Doctor,” Derpy chuckled. “I don’t think you have much choice. Wouldn’t the logic of the story now follow that all of us, so willing to go through with this, have to?”

“I...well...see...you...” the Doctor stammered. “...I’ve got nothing,” he weakly finished. “Alright, we do this together then.”

“I am touched by your sacrifice,” Tom said quietly. “Clearly, I was mistaken about you six, and I apologize. If you will allow me, I would like to help you carry out your plan.”

“We will gladly accept your help,” the Doctor replied, smiling. “Alright everypony...and, boulder, Tom...the objective is simple: search and destroy. I need you all to disconnect all the wiring in here by any means necessary. DJ Pon3, Lyra, I need you to use your magic to levitate Tom and smash him into the central console there.”

“Please Doctor...” Tom replied before rolling over to reveal a large pair of sunglasses wedged on the boulder. “Tom does all his own stunts.”

“Gah, talk about fan service...” Derpy muttered darkly under her breath.

The assembled ponies watched as Tom rolled surprisingly quickly down the steps toward the side of the room before catching a slanted object and vaulting himself at the wall, bouncing off it with a sharp crash before sailing back through the air at the central console. Everypony ducked as Tom smashed directly into the console, showering the TARDIS with sparks. Octavia starting slicing through tubes and pipes with her bow/sword while everypony else gripped various wires in their teeth and yanked them out of their various slots. Another massive crash into the central console by Tom completely wrecked what little there was left of the console, and the TARDIS began to shudder violently.

“This is it, everypony!” the Doctor yelled.

Sparks were flying everywhere and the TARDIS was filling with smoke as a blinding light began to emerge from the center of the time machine. The League of Fanons took a final look at each other. Derpy held Dinky, who clung to her mother. Octavia and DJ Pon3 gave each other a brohoof, looking confidently into each other’s eyes. Lyra and Bon Bon embraced each other and did not let go as they closed their eyes and awaited their fates together. The Doctor stood before his shattered time machine, watching the light as it engulfed him.

Everything was so bright...and then it was no more.

Chapter 6

Return to Froggy Bottom Bog

Meanwhile, on the moon...

“*We’re all gonna di-i-ie!*” Prince Blueblood cried in anguish, laying on the ground with his hooves lifted to the blue-green planet of Equestria above him. Surrounding him was the cold, stark landscape of the moon. “I don’t wanna die on the moon! There are no servants to build me a lavish tomb here!”

A blue hoof swung around and made contact with the Prince’s face, knocking him out of his sorrow before he found himself being vigorously shaken by the owner of that hoof. “We are *NOT* going to die here! With Celestia as my witness – and believe me, she *will* be – I vow that The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Mayor Supreme Ruler of the Moon Trixie will NOT die on this piece of rock!” said The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Mayor Supreme Ruler of the Moon Trixie, who as you can tell had wasted no time extending her title despite their grim situation. Nearby, Princess Luna was riding a mechanical dolphin ride similar to what you might see as a carnival. So enthralled she was that she was apparently completely oblivious to the presence of the Legion of Gloom or their predicament.

“But zis is *hopeless!*” Photo Finish cried. “How vill we ever get off ze moon?!”

“With *these*,” The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Mayor Supreme Ruler of the Moon Trixie said, indicating the Element of Harmony she was wearing. “Although none of you could possibly hope to measure up to me, desperate times call for desperate measures. There has to be a way we can use these...Blueblood, you know the most about these things. Now snap out of it and get to it!”

Prince Blueblood swallowed hard and stood up. “Well...each of the Elements of Harmony are supposed to embody each of the traits they describe, and they can only be used by a pony who represents said

element. So...let's see..." he looked around at the others before snatching Applejack's necklace from one of the Diamond Dogs and putting it on The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Mayor Supreme Ruler of the Moon Trixie.

"The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Mayor Supreme Ruler of the Moon Trixie (*dear Celestia I can't believe we're still doing this joke*)...who displayed brutal honesty and tough love when Twilight opened her heart to her, represents the element of...HONESTY!" At this the necklace began to glow slightly.

"It's working, it's working!" Prince Blueblood cried. "Granted, it's probably supposed to be a little more impressive than that, but it's a start. Okay, now then..." He turned to the "inanimate" objects holding Pinkie's element. "Laughter...laughter...has any of us laughed recently?"

"I think The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Mayor Supreme Ruler of the Moon Trixie did," one of the Diamond Dogs pointed out.

"Oh yeah..." Prince Blueblood murmured. "Well she can't be honesty *and* laughter. But no one else fits...ugh, this is so difficult! Okay, let's try this again." He yanked Applejack's necklace off of The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Mayor Supreme Ruler of the Moon Trixie's neck and placed Pinkie's on.

"The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Mayor Supreme Ruler of the Moon Trixie (*I'm getting real sick of this, you know*)...who laughed in Twilight's face when she admitted her love, represents the element of...LAUGHTER!" At this the necklace glowed, not nearly as brightly as it ever had on Pinkie but a fair amount more than the Element of Honesty had.

"HA! It's working!" Prince Blueblood shouted. "Now then...who should be honesty?" He looked up at the others, but they stared back with pale expressions on their faces.

"...Blueblood..." Gilda muttered with an eyebrow raised. "...Are you okay?"

“Why of course, I’m...” the Prince began, but the sentence got stuck in his throat as he looked down at himself and around at the others. Each of them was shimmering ever so slightly around the edges, which seem to shift back and forth slowly.

Suddenly everypony gasped as Prince Blueblood suddenly seemed to split into two identical ponies, with the ghostly transparent image of one where he was currently standing while a much more opaque version pulled Pinkie’s necklace from The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Mayor Supreme Ruler of the Moon Trixie, placed Applejack’s on, and then trotted backwards to the “inanimate” objects. By this point each of the members of the Legion of Gloom had found to their great shock an identical copy of themselves standing in the location they were standing.

“W...what’s going on?!?” The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Mayor Supreme Ruler of the Moon Trixie cried. “Who are they? Is that us?”

“I zink it is...” Photo Finish muttered. “But ze are moving *backwards!*”

“They’re doing everything we were doing!” Prince Blueblood exclaimed. “It’s almost as if they’re moving backwards in time...”

Then the movements of the backwards-moving Legion members grew faster. Suddenly there was a burst of light and they were back in Princess Celestia’s throne room, watching themselves now leading away from the moment she had banished them to the moon. And still it went on, faster and faster, until the world was a blur around them...

Time and space moved to correct itself now that the presence of Doctor Whooves and six other fanon characters had been sudden lifted from this reality. Working backwards from the moment of their departure, the cracks and damages healed over and the paradoxes cleansed from all existence, repairing the time stream to its normal sequence.

With no Doctor Whooves in this reality, the fanon presence never spread to begin with, and the events of this story tidily wrapped themselves away, having never occurred in the first place. In fact, the events of

the *previous* story also never occurred in the first place. But while the characters vanished from this world, the power of the Elements of Fiction would not be so easily undone – as it turns out, it takes quite a bit of logical story building, exposition and payoff to justifiably remove the power of something you spent so much time hyping up in the last story, and we just don't have time for that now. So while the fanons disappeared, The Author self-insert remained destroyed as well.

In all of this, there was a small group of beings who, for the sake of simplicity, we're just going to say remember everything that happened in this crazy story. Those beings were, of course, the Mane Six and the Legion of Gloom. While the rest of the universe forgot what now never actually happened, these two opposing factions we've followed since the start retained their memories because...heck, let's just say it's because they spent so much time near the League of Fanons and the incredible powers of the TARDIS (hey, the same thing happens in Doctor Who, and if they could get away with it I can at least try). And while you, the dear readers of the story, may chalk all this up as lazy writing I will defend as essential to establishing some great comedy and continuing character development out of the situations in the next scenes of this story.

...But I digress. And speaking of the next scene, let's get to that already. As time and space corrected itself, the Mane Six and the Legion of Gloom were flung back to the last moment before either the League of Fanons or The Author self-insert could affect their course of action in any lasting, meaningful way. That moment was when the Mane Six confronted the Legion of Gloom in their dome in the Froggy Bottom Bog. And now there they stood in the large, dim circular room, staring at each other as they tried to come to terms with what just happened.

"Hang on...I'm still trying to come to terms with what just happened," Twilight Sparkle said slowly.

"Oh, *Dashie!*" Pinkie cried, racing over to grip Rainbow Dash in a tight hug while weeping loudly. "I'm so sorry, I didn't mean to...you know I would never..." at this point she broke down completely, showering the pegasus with tears. "*Oh, could you ever forgive me?*"

Dash looked sideways at Applejack. "I think we all said and did things we didn't really mean back there..."

"Darn tootin'," Applejack agreed. "Let's just put this whole thing behind us, all right girls?" There were nods of agreement from the others at this.

"Hang on," Gilda butted in. "But how in the world did we get back here?" She paused for a moment before suddenly brightening up in surprise. "Hey! My ears! I can hear again! They're back to normal!"

"Everything started moving *backwards*..." Twilight muttered, deep in thought. "It's like we went back in time!"

"Oh silly, didn't any of you read that lengthy exposition earlier in this chapter?" Pinkie giggled.

"Yes yes, all well and good, but The Great and Powerful Her Royal Highness Princess Mayor Supreme Ruler of the Moon Trixie believes we have some unsettled business to attend to!"

The mane six stared at her. "Oh man..." Rainbow Dash muttered. "There is *no* way I'm saying that whole thing. You can just stay Trixie, all right?"

The others nodded before suddenly reacting in surprise. "*Dash!*" Pinkie squealed. "You said Trixie!" she pointed out, before gasping loudly. "And now I said Trixie!" she said, gasping again. "Now that The Author hasn't cast that spell yet, we don't have to say her whole name!"

"Oh, *thank you*..." Gilda sighed in exasperated relief.

"Thank heavens!" Rarity exclaimed.

"Thank Celestia!" Twilight exclaimed.

Thank god, thought the author of the story, relieved to have a legitimate excuse to write the joke out of the story seeing as he had gotten quite tired of typing out that entire name, even if it had helped increase the word count for the chapter. Plus, he had a sneaking suspicion that by this point he had milked the joke for all it was worth, which probably wasn't much to begin

with.

“NOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!” Trixie screamed at the sky before pounding the ground with her hooves.

“*Fine*,” Trixie growled through gritted teeth, standing up. “If I can’t have my title, I can at least have my revenge,” she said, indicating the crown of the Element of Magic on her head. “As you have already seen, we possess the Elements of Harmony!”

“Actually, I hadn’t already seen that,” Pinkie pointed out. “Namely because the author of the story failed to describe the scene in enough detail for any of us to notice it!” It was around this point that the author decided he’d had it with Pinkie breaking the fourth wall.

“*You...*” Twilight growled at Trixie, stepping forward while locking her gaze on the magician. “I thought you would learn your lesson one day, but it’s clear to me now that that’s never going to happen.”

Twilight’s tone now grew harsher, her frown deeper, her eyes more fiery and her demeanor more threatening with each sentence she spoke. “Your *fans* brought an Ursa Minor to town, your *companions* tried to kill my friends, your *husband* kidnapped my number one assistant and **YOU BROKE...MY...HEART. I’M NOT LEAVING HERE WITHOUT THAT CROWN.**”

Trixie gulped. “Uh, Blueblood? Elements? *Now?*”

“Oh, right!” Prince Blueblood replied. “Uh...The Great and Powerful Trixie is laughing, because she laughed at Twilight earlier.” At this Pinkie’s necklace, which Trixie was wearing in addition to the crown, glowed as Trixie lifted slowly into the air.

“And, uh...” Prince Blueblood looked around desperately. “The Diamond Dogs are...generosity!” he exclaimed, grabbing Rarity’s necklace off of his neck and slapping it on one of the Diamond Dogs. “Because they went to all that work to get us that pizza earlier!” At this Rarity’s necklace glowed and the Diamond Dogs began to hover in the air.

“And, uh...” Blueblood was sweating profusely by this point. “Photo Finish is honesty, because...she always speaks her mind?”

“Vell, if *zat* is the best you can come up with...” Photo Finish sighed, taking Applejack’s necklace and lifting off the ground herself.

“And kindness is...no, um...*loyalty* is...um...uh...” Blueblood was now drenched in sweat by this point and looked like he was on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

“Come on, you idiot!” Trixie exclaimed from above.

“Yeah, why don’t I do you a ‘kindness’ and just do the stupid thing for you?!” Gilda yelled, grabbing Fluttershy’s necklace. Prince Blueblood refused to let go.

“No, NO! I can figure this out!” Blueblood pleaded, clutching to the last two necklaces.

“I zink you can not!” Madame LeFlour said, who naturally was not heard by anyone except her fellow inanimate objects and Pinkie.

“Come on already, you lo-ser!” Rocky exclaimed.

But as it always happens with teams of villains who can’t figure out how to get along, their failure to support their companion was their downfall, as the spark of friendship needed to get the Elements of Harmony work failed to materialize and the Elements of Honesty, Laughter and Generosity lost what little glow they had and Trixie, Photo Finish and the Diamond Dogs dropped to the ground.

Rainbow Dash doubled over in laughter watching this. “We should just leave you guys on your own – you’ll probably wind up beating yourselves!”

“That’s it,” Gilda growled. “Your flank is sank, Rainbow Crash!” she yelled, taking to the air and diving at Dash.

“Bring the noise!” Dash challenged Gilda, jumping to her hooves and leaping off the ground. She and Gilda resumed their tradition of swooping and diving dangerously at each other in mid-air each time they got into one

of these fights.

“Well if you don’t mind, I’ll be taking *that*,” Rarity said firmly, using her magic to tug her Element out of the hands of the Diamond Dogs.

“NO!” the Diamond Dogs squealed, grabbing the necklace in mid-air and trying to pull it back. “It is OURS now!”

“But I *waaaaaant* it!” Rarity whined, sending the Diamond Dogs cringing in horror as they tried to resist throwing their hands over their ears and letting go of the element.

“Um, Rarity...” Fluttershy muttered softly. “I don’t want to sound rude, but...well, it’s just a little, *tiny* bit ironic that you’re both fighting over the Element of *Generosity* and...um...” she said before faltering under Rarity’s stern glare. “...well, but...what I mean is I guess this time it’s justified...*meep*...”

Meanwhile, Twilight and Pinkie had charged headlong at Trixie, seeing as she was currently in possession of both of their elements. Twilight let out a strangled yell as she fired off a blast of magic from her horn while Pinkie gave a loud “GRRRR!” as she threw a cupcake she retrieved out of her poofy tail. Trixie ducked the magic blast but got nailed in the face with the cupcake, causing her to scream in terror before realizing it was harmless. She stood up, wiping the remnants of the sweet from her face before sending her own blast of magic at Twilight and Pinkie. They both dodged it, but Pinkie was tripped by the sudden appearance of Rocky in front of her when nopony was looking and stumbled over. Twilight leaped into the air and tackled Trixie, sending both unicorns rolling over each other as they tussled.

“Let me go! Zis is undignified!” Photo Finish hollered to Applejack, who had successfully managed to lasso the fashion photographer and hogtied her before she could put up much of a fight.

“Ah’ll be taking that,” Applejack said, grabbing the Element of Honesty off of Photo Finish’s neck and placing it on her own. “Now then, where’s that uppity prince fellow...” she looked over before catching sight of Prince Blueblood just as he saw her.

“You!” the prince cried, pointing at Applejack. “You were the dirty peasant who fed me that horrid commoner fare!”

“Hey, ah put a lotta work into mah apples!” Applejack yelled. “Mah food is anythin’ but common! And I think it’s about time I taught you and yer hoity toity taste buds a lesson!” She flung her lasso at the prince, who squealed in horror and tried to dodge it.

“YOU LEAVE MY PRINCE ALONE!” screamed Trixie, who had Twilight pinned at the moment and was holding her down while she lifted her head to aim her horn, but before the magician could cast any spell Twilight thrust her head forward off the ground and headbutted Trixie square in the jaw, sending the magician flying backwards off of Twilight.

“Oooooowwwwww...” Twilight moaned, clutching her head around her horn. “That was stupid, why did I do that?”

“Maagggpphht!” Trixie groaned, her hooves over her mouth. Several drops of blood trickled out of her mouth as the chipped remains of a couple of teeth fell out. “*Yuf thucking thitch!*” she sputtered at Twilight, still clutching her mouth.

“Never fear, my Princess!” Prince Blueblood called out. “I know a spell that mends wounds!” He fired off a spell at Trixie, who was instantaneously relieved of pain as her teeth repaired themselves and the blood vanished.

“My word, Blueblood!” Trixie cried. “Why, that may be the first kind thing anypony has ever done for me!”

“Kind?” Blueblood replied, raising an eyebrow. “I just did it because I can’t *stand* the sight of blood.” He shuddered violently. “So uncivilized...”

“And *that’s* why,” Applejack interjected, finally succeeding in lassoing the prince. “You don’t get to have the Element of Kindness!” Twilight tackled Trixie again while Applejack secured the prince and retrieved the Elements of Kindness and Loyalty.

“Fluttershy! RD!” Applejack called out. “Catch!” At this she tossed the Elements into the air. Fluttershy easily caught hers, and Rainbow Dash

swiftly flew past and caught hers before Gilda could snatch it out of the air.

“Hi- *YAH!*” Pinkie cried, launching a kick at Mr. Turnip and sending the bucket of turnips spilling across the floor. Fluttershy spotted the now-empty bucket and quickly picked it up.

“GIVE...ME...THAT...CROWN!” Twilight yelled, still wrestling with Trixie and struggling to grab the crown off her head.

“Never!” Trixie growled, managing to hold Twilight off.

Suddenly Twilight looked up before a sly grin crossed her face. “Hey Trixie? What’s puffed-up, clueless and blue all over?”

“The Great and Powerful Trixie has no time for your silly rid-“ Trixie proclaimed before being cut off as Fluttershy forcefully brought the bucket of Mr. Turnip down on Trixie’s head, knocking the crown off in the process.

“*YOUR FACE!*” Twilight yelled triumphantly, pointing a hoof at Trixie.

“Sorry about that,” Fluttershy said softly to Trixie with a smile on her face as she pulled the Element of Laughter off of Trixie’s neck. “But you *were* hurting my friend.” Trixie replied with a series of muffled curses and screams from under the bucket as she tried to pull it off her head.

Twilight picked up the crown and placed it on her head while Fluttershy floated over to Pinkie to give her the Element of Laughter. “We’re almost there, girls!” Twilight announced. “The only Element left is...”

“AAAAAAAAAAHH!!! I CAN’T TAKE IT ANYMORE!” one of the Diamond Dogs cried, throwing his hands over his ears to block the sound of Rarity’s whining. Without all three holding on to the Element of Generosity it slipped out of their hands and on to the waiting neck of Rarity, who gave out a triumphant squeal.

A sudden flash of light from behind them caused them to pause and look to see that Rainbow Dash had tackled Gilda, flying at a high enough speed that it caused a small rainbow-colored explosion when she smashed the griffon into the floor. Dash lifted back into the air, unharmed, while Gilda

lay on the floor, unhurt but temporarily stunned.

“Dash! We got them all!” Twilight yelled, indicating the crown on her head. Dash nodded, not noticing that Gilda was now shaking off the blast and leapt into the air at her. Her friends were about to shout out a warning, but Dash was apparently expecting Gilda and a well-placed hoof caught Gilda’s wings in mid-air and sent her tumbling into the Diamond Dogs, where they lay in a big heap.

“Get us free!” Prince Blueblood cried to Gilda and the Diamond Dogs, still hogtied along with Photo Finish, while Trixie still struggled with the bucket and the “inanimate” objects could do nothing but stand around as they could currently be seen by the ponies in the room. The Diamond Dogs quickly got up and tried to release the prince and Photo Finish, but they lacked experience with knots and had difficulty releasing them.

“Ow! That’s making it tighter, you buffoon!” Prince Blueblood cried. “Hurry up!”

“Here, I’ll just claw you out!” Gilda said, showing her talons.

Prince Blueblood gulped at the sight of the griffon's talons. “Well, maybe I’m not in *that* much of a hurry...”

“All right girls, time to use our powers!” Twilight announced, gathering her friends as their Elements began to glow.

“On second thought, I’ll take my chances,” Prince Blueblood offered, seeing the oncoming threat. Gilda cut the prince and Photo Finish out of their bounds while Trixie finally managed to tug the bucket off her head.

But it was too late for them. The Elements of Harmony glowed brighter as Twilight’s friends lifted into the air and Twilight’s eyes opened to reveal two glowing orbs. And the fact that the Legion of Gloom were in such close proximity just made the job for Twilight and her friends that much easier, as they unleashed the power of the Elements of Harmony on to their foes.

Each of the members of the Legion of Gloom let out a scream as the rainbow launched by the Elements of Harmony came crashing down on them. Trixie and Prince Blueblood stood next to each other with their

heads turned away; Gilda and the Diamond Dogs each had an arm raised against the rainbow to shield their faces; Photo Finish gritted her teeth and braced herself against the onslaught of color; and the inanimate objects merely stood nearby.

A terrific flash of brightest light filled the dome-shaped building, and when it cleared the Legion of Gloom still stood...

...as statues of stone.

"But how did we get back here?" Fluttershy asked. She and her friends were sitting in the Ponyville Library, relaxing after the tiring events they had all gone through. "Why did time go backwards?"

"And where's the League of Fanons?" Rainbow Dash asked. "Anything to do with time, I bet the Doctor would know what's going on."

"I was asking around for Lyra and Bon Bon," Rarity said. "But everypony I asked just gave me a blank look and told me they didn't know who I was talking about! You'd think they had never lived here!"

"I went to the post office to ask for Derpy," Twilight said. "But the pony there told me they never had a mailmare by that name working there."

"It's as if they all vanished," Applejack said, shuddering slightly.

There was an awkward silence for a moment, and each of them noticed that a certain pink mare who was normally the chattiest of them all was being unusually quiet. She looked back and forth at her friends for a moment before clearing the silence with a small cough.

"Um, girls..." Pinkie began. "Well, Rainbow Dash mainly...I know we said we wouldn't talk about what happened, but...I still want to apologize for...well..." the words died in her throat.

"Darling, it wasn't your fault," Rarity assured Pinkie, giving her a pat on the shoulder. "We all said and did things none of us meant."

“Well...” Rainbow Dash cleared her throat. “That might not *entirely* be accurate...”

“Huh?” Twilight, Rarity, Pinkie and Fluttershy said in unison.

“Well, you see...” Applejack began, removing her hat. “This whole experience has made Dashie and I realize...well...” Applejack turned to Rainbow Dash while their four friends looked on with wide eyes and their mouths agape.

“You mean...?” Twilight trailed off.

“Applejack and I have realized our true feelings for each other,” Rainbow Dash finished.

“Oh *my*...” Rarity breathed, placing a hoof on her mouth. Pinkie and Twilight just stared back, their jaws comically low.

“Oh, that’s wonderful, girls!” Fluttershy said softly, smiling widely even though her eyes continued to betray her surprise. “I didn’t realize you felt that way about each other! Of course we support your relationship and we’re all really happy for you both! Eh, right girls?”

“Oh...yes!” Twilight said, snapping out of her shock. Pinkie and Rarity nodded. Applejack and Rainbow Dash smiled at each other.

Then Rainbow Dash’s left eye squinted. Applejack bit her lower lip. Dash’s body started shaking as she put a hoof to her mouth. Applejack closed her eyes tightly as small tears started to trickle down her face.

“***BWA-ha-ha-ha-HAH!!!***” Rainbow Dash finally burst out, falling onto her back and letting out a massive laugh as Applejack did the same, collapsing on the floor and pounding it with her hooves as she laughed uncontrollably.

“You...you all thought...that we...we...***Ah-HAH-HAH-HAH!!!***” Rainbow Dash laughed, clutching her ribs as she rolled on the floor.

“Me...and RD...oh ho, that’s rich!” Applejack gasped, tears of laughter streaming down her face. The other ponies in the room regained their shock for a moment as they looked at each other. Then they started to

giggle softly before breaking out in full laughter as the laughter of Applejack and Rainbow Dash was just too infectious. They spent several moments just lying there and laughing, feeling the joy wash away the stress of the events they all just went through.

“Heh heh...oh that was good...” Dash said, wiping a tear from her eye as she finally recovered. “Applejack and I have been planning that one since we got back. You should have seen the look on your faces! I mean *come on!*” she exclaimed, waving a hoof. “Applejack? Really?”

Applejack chuckled as she put her hat back on. “I love RD as a friend, but she ain’t like *that*,” she said.

“Nice one with the ‘Dashie’ there, by the way,” Dash said, offering a brohoof which Applejack accepted.

Everypony sat there, enjoying the now warm atmosphere of the room as they collected themselves after all the laughing. It was at this moment that they heard a quiet voice drifting through the library. And though it was barely audible, there was no denying who the voice belonged to.

“Hello? Can anypony hear me?” the voice called out.

“Doctor?!” Twilight yelped in surprise. She and her friends immediately bolted upright, looking around for their friend. “Doctor, is that you?”

“Ah, Twilight Sparkle!” the voice of the Doctor called back. “Good, then I got the location right. Hang on...”

Before their eyes, the Doctor slowly materialized in the middle of the room, causing everypony to jump back in surprise. He stood there looking at them all, but he was transparent.

“Doctor!” Pinkie gasped. “I can see through you! Are you a ghost?” She gasped loudly. “Does that mean I have to giggle at you now?”

“No Pinkie, that’s quite alright,” the Doctor quickly replied. “This is actually just a projection of myself, I’m standing in the TARDIS right now. Hang on...” He pulled out his sonic screwdriver and pointed it above their heads at something the rest of them couldn’t see. A moment later the image of

the Doctor became opaque. “Better?”

“Much better,” Twilight replied. “Where are you? And the rest of the League? No pony seems to know where you are!”

“Or *who* you are,” Rainbow Dash inserted.

“If that’s the case, it means our plan worked,” the Doctor explained. “You see, I was the cause of everything that happened to you. I brought the fanon dimension into yours and caused them to collide, threatening the very existence of your world. I had to remove myself from your reality, and the other Fanons joined me to save Equestria.”

“So...you’re in a different dimension?” Twilight asked, scratching her head.

“Yep,” the Doctor said. “It takes an awful lot of power to send a projection across dimensions. I’m in orbit around a supernova, letting the TARDIS collect the energy from a dying star. Heh,” he chuckled softly. “I’m burning up a sun just to say goodbye.”

“Goodbye?” Fluttershy said in a concerned voice. “What do you mean?”

“I can’t stay in Equestria,” the Doctor said. “At least, not *your* Equestria. In order to repair the damage to your world, me and the other fanons had to remove all traces of ourselves from your dimension. Even just sending this message could cause damage if I leave it on too long, so I don’t have much time to talk.”

“But what about Derpy?” Rarity cried. “And Lyra and Bon Bon and Octavia and DJ Pon3?”

“And that cute little filly Derpy had with her?” Applejack asked. “Where are they?”

“All safe and sound, never fear! We’re all in a dimension where we can exist without posing a threat,” the Doctor replied. “In this one, Derpy was apparently my partner and Dinky our child! How do you like that? It all fits together neatly! I’d like to shake the hoof of the brony who came up with that one!”

“But...will we ever see you again?” Twilight asked, fearing the answer.

“I’m afraid not, Twilight,” the Doctor said softly. “The risk to your world is just too great.”

Twilight and her friends bowed their heads sadly, and when Twilight lifted her head again her eyes were brimming with tears.

“But...it’s not fair,” Twilight said quietly. “We only just met, and we all had so much to learn from you. I had so much to learn from you...you said you could show me the stars, these things I could only imagine here in Equestria...And now it’ll be as if you never existed.”

The Doctor looked down sadly, as if in shame. “I’m sorry, girls. Once again, I have failed my companions. I show them the universe and they’re all too eager to come along...but our time is always cut short, and I wonder if I should have ever met them in the first place.”

“Well I for one wouldn’t have traded our time together for all the bits in the world!” Applejack announced. “It may have been short, but it was fun while it lasted!” Rainbow Dash, Fluttershy, Pinkie Pie and Rarity all nodded vigorously at this.

“That’s kind of you to say,” the Doctor said, looking up at them again. “I hope you find it in your hearts to forgive me, and I want you to try to forget me, as the rest of the ponies in your Equestria have.”

Twilight shook her head, the tears now leaking out of her eyes. “Our time together was short, but I think I speak for all of us when I say none of us could ever forget you, Doctor.”

“Oh, Twilight Sparkle...” the Doctor smiled softly. “Rarity, Rainbow Dash, Pinkie Pie, Fluttershy, and Applejack. The Elements of Harmony: always ready to offer their friendship and save Equestria. What am I compared to the power of the bond you all share? The bond you shared before you even realized it?”

Now the Doctor’s eyes were sparkling with tears as well. “I want you girls to remember...” he tried to continue, but the words were getting stuck in his

throat. "...you..."

But the image of the Doctor vanished before he could finish the sentence. Twilight bowed her head and let the tears drip to the floor as her friends comforted her and each other.

Inside the TARDIS, the Doctor stood there, staring at the wall in front of him.

"...you have each other." Tears trickled down his face as he finished the sentence.

"Power drained, Doctor," Derpy said, standing by the central console. "I'm sorry, there wasn't enough energy to keep the message going."

The Doctor took a deep breath and wiped the tears off his face. "That's alright. Although you really should said farewell too, they probably would have liked that."

"I was never good with goodbyes," Derpy replied. "And from the looks of it, neither are you."

"It never gets any easier..." the Doctor sighed.

Derpy walked over to him and nuzzled him on the neck. "It does now. You've got me and Dinky." The Doctor returned the gesture, gently laying his head in Derpy's mane and closing his eyes.

In short order, the statues of the Legion of Gloom were moved from the dome in the Froggy Bottom Bog to the Canterlot Royal Sculpture Garden, where they sat as a reminder of the danger of the jealousy, betrayal and greed they each had displayed in attempting to enact revenge on the Elements of Harmony.

For generations to come, they were shown to little fillies as a symbol of villainy, and every time they were, the fillies who looked at the statue had the same question for their parents, teachers, or whoever else was the one who brought them to the sculpture gardens, a question that always

managed to stump the unfortunate pony who was asked it:

“Why is there a carving of a bucket of turnips, a stack of rocks, a sack of flour, and a ball of lint next to them?”

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The End of  
Between a Rock and a Hard Place

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