MLP - Raze AU

Half of the continent is ash, remaining ponies stuck in Equestria are struggling to survive, and Twilight is thrust into an unfamiliar world... as a Changeling.

150 years following the Changeling Invasion of Canterlot, Twilight Sparkle awakens and breaks from a protective chrysalis alone and in an alien body. Only the deteriorated and mummified corpses of everyone she loved remain in the castle ruins... These are her (non-linear) adventures as she goes from a scared whelp to the most powerful being in the Ashen Wastes.

- awake
- progeny

awake

Year 150 of the Ruin Era

Canterlot Castle

...

Twilight could not breathe.

The mare kicked and thrashed, only aware of her desperate need to *breathe*.

BREATHE!

I CAN'T BREATHE!

Finally, her hooves found purchase on a wet and waxy surface, and she thrust a kick with all of her might.

Twilight flopped unceremoniously to the ground beneath her with a wet slap. She didn't notice her surroundings until she had gulped in several deep breaths and vomited up the slurry she had been breathing instead of air.

"Ohhhh..." Twilight groaned, the strange haze of hypoxia evaporating as she blinked the strange green goop from her eyes. Looking back, Twilight thought it rather odd she had been inside of a chrysalis... Ponies didn't belong in those, right? She fished her memories for why she had been in the chrysalis at all--

"Chrysalis!" she barked loudly, wildly looking around for any sign of the hostile Queen. Her senses returned, and instantly a sinking feeling of shock formed in the pit of her stomach.

The throne room was... wrong. All wrong! The walls had decayed unnaturally, ash and soot covering nearly everything. Rubble was scattered across the once-pristine marble floors, nearly every intact stone adorned with cracks and at least a century of miscellaneous unrepaired damage! Twilight's mouth went dry as she examined her surroundings over and over, hoping she was just hallucinating from that bug-gunk. However, no matter how many times she tried to snap herself into 'reality', she was still staring at... ruins.

"I n-need to find the girls... My brother..." she choked, voice monotone from shock. Twilight scrambled to her chitinous hooves--

What.

Twilight stared down at her unfamiliar hooves. They were once a beautiful lavender shade, her fetlocks and cannons coated with soft fur. Now they looked almost identical to the changelings that had invaded Canterlot! Twilight thoroughly examined herself further, perhaps reaching her threshold on how shocked she could possibly be within such a short timeframe. She was coated in black chitin, with an indigo carapace crested along her back. A soft and slightly translucent pink band wrapped around her midsection, stopping at the edges of her carapace. Her mane was the same as it always was, except for being coated in the strange slurry that had suspended her within the chrysalis. Two thin, gracefully curved gossamer wings extended from her carapace, giving her slight pause from how strange it felt to have wings. Perhaps the strangest thing of all was the fact she retained her cutie mark through this odd transformation.

"N-No..." She felt her walls breaking. This was wrong! So, so wrong! Twilight felt distant from her present situation, blood going cold as the former unicorn keeled over onto a knee. She couldn't stop herself from dry heaving as a panic attack quickly set in. It was too much, too soon. Twilight hyperventilated for a good few seconds before her mind caught up, and began to breathe in and out until she could control herself again. Shaking, Twilight eased herself onto the floor and focused on calming down as best she could.

It was perhaps ten minutes before Twilight shifted from her limp position on the dusty floor, and dried her eyes with a chitinous hoof. Confusion replaced panic, but not her imminent desire to find her friends and family... Or anypony, really. One thing at a time, she reassured herself. Twilight needed to survive. Queen Chrysalis was clearly not present, but who knew when she'd come back... With a few unsteady hoofsteps, Twilight made her way through the corridor near the entrance of the throne room doors... Or, what was left of them. As she walked around the corner, she gasped.

The entirety of the once-great castle was almost entirely gone, save for some walls or faded tapestries. It seemed as though the entire structure had failed in some catastrophic event, or simply from age... Twilight couldn't let herself believe it, not yet. The mere thought of her family and friends being gone was far too painful, especially considering her newfound... condition.

Twilight stumbled through the castle ruins in search of any sign of life. However, she only found ash, rubble and rusted armor. After a while, she would make her way to where the ballroom of Canterlot castle once stood. The sight that awaited her made her blood run cold. Chrysalises, dozens of them. They littered the floor, and Twilight could imagine they once lined the ceiling and walls. What was especially shocking was that many were all occupied, prompting Twilight to rush to the closest one. She tore away at the waxy exterior with her hooves and a familiar slurry poured out... as well as what remained of the occupant. A foul smell permeated around the chrysalis, and Twilight staggered back in disgust and shock.

The occupant of the chrysalis was halfway decomposed, the chrysalis fluid darkened by rot. Through her profound horror, Twilight had noticed that this occupant was more changeling than pony... She grimaced, holding back her gag reflex and scanning the rest of the chrysalises. Had everypony met the same fate as the unrecognizable soul in front of her...?

No...

No!

Twilight tore a few more open with her magic, only seeing more hybridized ponies in various states of decay. It was only when she tore open a particularly dry-looking chrysalis that she stopped in her tracks. A skeleton, with very little else remaining to identify who it may have been.

Except for the slightly mangled horn, still unicorn enough for her eyes to follow its spiral and swirls.

Oh stars, she knew that horn pattern...

Shining Armor.

What happened next could be seen from dozens of miles surrounding the ruins of Canterlot.

A mighty lavender beam arced into the sky, splitting the clouds above Mount Canterhorn to reveal the blue sky. A guttural scream echoed throughout the desolate streets of Canterlot as the beam's light reached its climax. Twilight's surge was short lived, however. As soon as the light pulsed into the air, it dissipated.

The chrysalises around her had not moved, except for a few that sustained damage from her outburst. Silence reigned before loud wails replaced the short-lived silence. All was lost.

Welcome to a new era.

progeny

Year 150 of the Ruin Era

Canterlot

It was Queen Syvida's yearly trek to her mother's final resting place when she saw the beacon. She and her entourage of drones rushed to see a newly hatched whelp laying in front of some pony's corpse. It was a sad sight, to be sure. But far more than that, Syvida's glee was unmatched.

150 years prior, just a few months before her own hatching, Queen Chrysalis had made a bold move on the Equestrian capitol, Canterlot. Her plan was a total takeover, among other things. She had been quite the boastful one, having recorded all of her plans so that Syvida could later read Chrysalis's machinations for herself. Among her many plans, Chrysalis had been experimenting with a way to convert ponies into changelings. A complex process thought impossible, as ponies and Changelings had vastly different brain structures. Chrysalis had made several alchemical and magical discoveries, no doubt thanks to her ambition, that she theorized would allow a pony to convert into a sort of... halfling. A self-sustaining drone able to interface with a Queen's egregore and disguise fully.

It was thought all was lost after the Raze, but clearly the experiment had worked! However what Syvida looked upon in that moment was not a drone. This mare had become a halfling Queen, so she could not subserviate this one. While it did sour the victory of her predecessor's efforts, she knew she could find some boon in this discovery.

'*Oh Mother, what was your angle?*'

The mare was clearly in great distress, but Syvida cleared her throat regardless after waving her drones into the shadows. The halfling mare's head perked up, eyes wide with shock. Then, she snarled and stepped into a protective stance over the... skeleton.

"Now now, doll. Let's calm down..."

"Who are you!" the mare bared her fangs threateningly, appearing more feral than pony-like as she staunchly defended the skeleton. Her horn spat with power, and Syvida chuckled inwardly. This mare was already more 'ling than pony...

"My name is Syvida. Who might you be?" Syvida spoke politely, raising her hooves submissively, "you don't appear to be a pony..."

"I'm... I used to be," the halfling stuttered, then glared at Syvida, "my name is Twilight Sparkle."

Syvida's jaw nearly dropped, but she showed no emotion to Twilight. Twilight Sparkle, the protege of the Sun Princess herself! Queen Chrysalis had machinations, sure, but to convert the very student of the Sun? Syvida had almost some semblance of respect for her Mother at that fact.

"Well, Twilight Sparkle..." Syvida started slowly, "you seem to be in quite the pickle... What do you see?"

"See?" Twilight's horn sputtered out in her confusion, "I see a Changeling Queen asking me weird questions!"

"No, doll. I meant... what are your findings thus far, since hatching? You must be rather confused," the taller Queen probed.

Twilight froze, then slowly stood back up to her regular posture, "I... I hatched from the chrysalis, and everything was... destroyed," she explained, "the castle, it never used to look like this! And Shining... how long was I in there...?"

Syvida felt a pang of pity for the younger Queen, and slowly lowered her hooves to the ground, "Twilight, it's been 150 years since the... incidents leading to Canterlot's destruction. You were in stasis for a long while. I'm sorry."

"*Hundred and fifty*-" Twilight stumbled, unsteady on her hooves. She caught herself before she tumbled to the ground, but her eyes gazed off in the distance. Syvida sighed softly, and walked slowly towards the halfling Queen.

"Yes. I can tell you more, but only if you are prepared for the truth."

"I need to know! Please..." tears pricked Twilight's eyes as she looked desperately up at Syvida. She nodded, and sat next to Twilight, prompting the younger to sit alongside her.

"150 years ago a mighty Queen lived, but was banished from the Summit, a grand gathering of Queens with hives of their own. They would gather every so often to commune with the Foremothers, and each other on matters concerning the entire Changeling species," Syvida's voice carried gently through the ruins of the castle as she spoke, "Queen Chrysalis had done something awful to her own mother, and was banished for it. In an ambitious attempt to reclaim her glory, she planned a decisive attack on the greatest source of love known to Changeling kind... Equestria. Your home,"

"But love conquest was only one of many things on her mind. She had planned many experiments on the ponies of Equestria, one such experiment... being total conversion," Syvida paused at Twilight's horrified gasp, then continued, "I had read most of her records in the old hive. She had a tendency to document all of her successes and failures. Chrysalis had until that point failed entirely in total conversion from pony to changeling; she didn't have the resources to keep her *experiments* alive. That was when her records ended, the night before setting out for Equestria with her armies,"

"For all this time, I thought the invasion had failed," Syvida, "and in large part it did. But I see now that not all of Chrysalis's mad efforts were in vain," Syvida smiled warmly at Twilight, "you are the

sole surviving product of the last era..."

Twilight's mind caught up with Syvida's story, and she stared blankly at her hooves.

"...So what caused... this? All of this destruction? The deaths of my friends, my family?"

"I was told when I was very young that the Sun Princess had brought the full wrath of the sun down upon Chrysalis and her armies. The ripple was felt throughout the world. Very little of Equestria was unscathed, and only 2,000 drones who had not been present at the invasion survived... along with my egg."

"So that's it, then," Twilight sniffled, "everything's gone..."

"There is still much to go on for, despite the losses you've endured," Syvida comforted, "and until you are prepared for your new life, my people will ensure your safety."

Twilight seemed to hesitate, but she looked up at Syvida with vulnerable eyes, and nodded.

"Very well. We leave when my rites are completed."