

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.

Revision #1

Created 2024-04-18 23:22:06 UTC by oblivvys

Updated 2024-04-20 18:59:14 UTC by oblivvys