

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."

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