Applejack followed the Engineer to the firing range. She asked why they did not go to the shop first and he replied,

“You don’t deserve to build until you can protect yourself and those around you first.”

Accepting this, they traveled down to the range. Applejack found the guns to be a bit tricky to use at first, even after they had been modified for her. Rainbow Dash had come up to the Engineer soon after they she had started firing and requested that she could get modified weapons as well. Applejack wanted to chat with her friend for a bit and see how she was doing, but as usual Dash was in too much of a hurry, trying to wipe the smug smirk off Scout’s face as she tried to learn how to fire her guns. Without realizing it, Applejack had finished off her targets and was now staring out in space. The Engineer walked over and said “Well, that was mighty impressive AJ, now how about we go on to the work shop?”

Applejack turned to him, “Hang on, ah need a moment with my friend if you don’t mind…”

He nodded and watched as she walked over to her frustrated friend.

“Hey there sugarcube, how are you?”

Dash jumped into the air before turning to her friend.

“Hey Applejack… I am ok I guess, I just wish I could figure out how to fire these things!”

Applejack leaned over and adjusted the cyan pegasus’s grip on her gun. “Here try holding it like this, so you can aim easier and the recoil doesn’t hit you so hard.”

She nodded and after a few breaths pulled the trigger. She had finally hit the target! She smiled and said,

“Hey thanks AJ, now I can show him that anything he can do, I can do but way more awesome!”

Applejack nuzzled her friend and replied

“Sure thing Dashie, glad ta help you.”

Rainbow Dash surprised by the display of affection turned away embarrassed.

“A-applejack stop, I don’t want to give Scout any ideas he could use against me…” Applejack nodded and started to head over to her waiting teacher when Dash called out,

“Oh and AJ… thanks for that…”

Applejack smiled, she had a feeling she was not just still talking about her help with aim. With a wink she started towards her mentor. He had no comment about her somewhat open display of affection to her friend and simply led her to his shop. Turning to her he said,

“So…what are your skills in engineering so far?”

Applejack looked away slightly embarrassed.

“Well ah have worked with the various machines at meh farm as well as the odd contraption that sometimes people bring to me to fix…”

The Engineer looked up from his work bench.

“You have a farm? Mind if you tell me about it?”

Applejack readily agreed.

“Yes, but why do you want to know about meh farm?”

Engineer looked away with a pained expression.

“Well you see, I used to have a farm, though after all this time it has probably been overgrown, I am just curious to see how farming in this…uh Ponyville of yours is similar to farming back on Earth.”

Applejack nodded and began.

“Well sure, ah live on my farm, Sweet Apple Acers, with my brother Big Mac and meh little sister Applebloom…”

The Engineer listening attentively as he worked, modifying his team’s weapons and gear so their new pony replacements could use them without having to hold them in their mouths. He then told Applejack about his farm back in Texas, or at least the memories of his old home.

“Alright, it looks like all your friends basic equipment is done, let’s just send them on their way and get to your training.”

With that he dropped the box of gear into a teleporter that teleported the gear back to the resupply center for the others. Applejacks eyes widened as she viewed the teleporter.

“That is the thing that sent us here, it was in pretty bad repair, but ah am sure it was one of those.”

Then a horrifying thought crossed her mind.

“Engi, did ya happen to see three fillies come through the portal before we came?”

He shook his head.

“No, and I recon if what you described is right there is only one place they could be… the RED team base.”

Applejack froze in shock.

“Y-you mean that those fillies are ALONE with them?”

He looked away with a pained expression.

“Yea and I reckon they have probably been…“recruited” by the RED team as well…”

“We have to save them, we can’t leave Sweetie Bell, Scootaloo, and mah little sis, Applebloom to them!”

The Engineer looked over at her, his eyes fixed with determination.

“And we will, don’t you doubt.”

He gathered some tools together and after placing them in an orange tool box, placed it before her.

“But, if we are going to save them, you and the others need to have the skills to do it, so… are you ready to learn?”

Applejack nodded. He smiled slightly.

“Ok, so first let’s start with the dispenser, it is one of the most valuable tools available to you. Not only does it supply you with metal and ammo and resupplies the ammo of yer team, it heals you and your teammates as well.”

He paused to make sure she was keeping up before continuing.

“A key thing about dispensers is that you need to build them in a place where you and the others can reach it easily, but not somewhere that is heavily under fire as that can risk it being destroyed.”

Moving over to the example of a dispenser in each of its varying levels, he gestured to her to examine them. Applejack took in the device, amazed at all the things it could do. Moving over to the set of sentries, the Engineer began once again.

“This is a sentry, the main source of firepower that you have at your disposal, and with every upgrade, its range and lethality increases.”

As Applejack studied the weapon, the Engineer set up the finial tool.

“And this is the teleporter, which I am sure you are familiar with.”

He gave it a few whacks with his wrench, and it started to glow more brightly.

“The more you upgrade it, the faster the power will return, and the best thing of all, is that when you repair or upgrade one teleporter, it affects them both, but be careful, as damage affects both teleporters as well.”

Impressed by this, Applejack moved close to it, but not too close to be affected by it and teleported. The Engineer smirked at his student’s amazement. Over the next few hours, they went over how to build the devices and the best place an area to build each item. Once Applejack was able to effectively build everything, the Engineer broke out into a huge smile and said

“And now we get to the fun part.”

Applejack looked confused.

“What do ya mean fun part?”

He laughed and pointed at a few buckets of paint and other crafting supplies in the corner.

“Now you get to personalize your buildings however you like, it’s the mark of a professional ta take something, and improve it in their own way.”

Applejack pondered what she should do to put her own spin on the buildings when it came to her.

“Ah will just make it inspired by Sweet Apple Acers!”

She soon drew out her plans and got to work. In no time she had all but her sentry finished. The dispenser had become the Applespencer, and she had customized the teleporter to resemble a half of an apple. She even figured out a way to make the teleporter close and resemble a full apple, which not only increased its armor rating, but made it immune to a spy’s sappers as well. She had adorned the sentry gun with apple designs and painted it (as well as the other buildings) an orange that resembled her own coat color. But it needed… something. She thought back on the last few hours searching for a clue. It was only until she recalled her time at the firing range that she had her answer. Diving through her bags she finally found the thing that completed her sentry. It was a picture of Rainbow Dash and herself. Applejack thought back on the day that the picture had been taken. At the time, fame had gone to Dash’s head and she took that picture with Applejack as a way for Applejack to “immortalize” a moment with her “famous” friend. Though she had been mad at Dash that day and was frowning in annoyance in the picture, Applejack had a feeling that something… more had been driving her friend to feel the need to take that picture than just arrogance. After all, if she had simply been so arrogant, why not have a picture with all of her best friends, instead of only her. She quickly made copies of the memory and placed the original back with her other things. She put one of the copies inside a bullet proof casing and merged it to the outer top casing of the sentry. She placed it there so even if Rainbow Dash had been flying over her, she could view and remember that moment they had shared together. It was of course rigged to explode if somepony tried to remove it so that the RED team could not steal such a precious memory of them together, even if it was just a copy of the original picture. She also similarly copied another picture and placed it on the back of the sentry. It was of her farm, her family all gathered together, laughing happily. It was a reminder that even in this strange new world, there was still a home to go back to, and a reason to keep on fighting. Blinking away tears that formed in her eyes, she yawned,

“Well, ah am done.”

Her teacher smiled.

“Great job little missy, now go on back to yer cot now ya hear, you have a big day tomorrow…”