Spike followed the Soldier dutifully as they marched toward the Soldier’s private “Boot Camp” as he called it.

“All right maggot, are you ready to find out what separates the boys from the men, and prove yourself on the field of battle?”

“Yes sir!”

Spike replied.

“What is your name recruit?”

The Soldier leaned down to be eye level with him.

“It’s uh Spike sir.”

The Soldier scratched his chin and then continued.

“I don’t like that name, so for now on you are called… private Scaly-Toes, understand?”

Spike swallowed and nodded. I hope the girls to hear about this… he thought.

“So what do we learn first sir?”

The Soldier turned and picked up a rocket launcher.

“You learn how to fire this.”

Spikes’ muscles groaned in protest as he lifted the heavy weapon onto his right shoulder. He fired a rocket at a distant target, only to find that he had pointed the weapon the wrong way and caused a number of trees to burst into flame on contact with the rocket.

“Oh, man, Fluttershy is going to kill me if she finds out about this, worse she might even use the STARE on me…”

After putting out the fire and moving to another location without any wildlife or trees nearby, he tried again. After a while, he got the hang of it. The shotgun proved even easier to master and the shovel felt like second nature when he tied it to his tail. The Soldier then came up to him with an oriental box. Inside was a military star and… a heart shaped locket?

“What is this sir?”

The Soldier smiled.

“This is your graduation, son.”

“The medal is to prove that you were trained in the noble art of war and battle, and the locket is for you to keep those who are close to you near your heart, to remind you what is worth fighting for…”

He looked away into the distance and Spike could have sworn there were tears in his eyes. Spike didn’t even have to think about who he would put in the locket. On the left side was Twilight Sparkle, his best friend, and at times kind of like his annoying older sister or even mother. On the right side was Rarity, his most beloved pony who he would do ANYTHING for… The locket was set with the gem that Rarity had given to him as a gift so long ago. The Soldier came up to him and put a hand on his shoulder.

“Remember this, it does not matter who you fight or who side you are on, as long as you know who you fight FOR, and are fighting to make a better place for them in the future…”

Spike nodded, swearing to keep that advice to heart.

“Alright, private Scaly-Toes, go on and get some sleep, and when you go out there, do me proud!”

Spike nodded and ran out the door, hoping to find Rarity and show off his newfound medal and skills…