Twilight yawned and slowly got out of her bed, wincing in pain as she did so. Though her muscles were still a bit stiff, both Fluttershy and the Medic had checked her out and said she was ready to go back out into the battlefield again. Twilight had thought for a long time over what had happened to her and had come to the conclusion that though if she did die, Luna would most likely be there to save her again. But that was no reason to throw caution to the wind and risk everything just to get caught by her safety net at death. Blushing at the memories of her death, she whispered to herself.

“Still, I wouldn’t mind getting rescued by her every now and again…”

Stretching, Twilight forced herself to get moving again, as she started to get ready for another day of sniping.

Twilight Sparkle had just lined up her next shot to take out a bothersome RED Pyro when a large crash from the center of 2fort knocked her down and sent her sprawling against the large crate she was using for cover. Fearing something bad had happened, she tapped into her now increased power and teleported back to the BLU briefing room. Her friends were all gathered around a large, spherical object just outside of the room. Running over to her curious friends, she asked panting,

“W-what’s going on girls?”

Rainbow Dash answered her, though she did not take her eyes of the strange object.

“Nopony knows, but I have a bad feeling about this, what if the RED team sent this thing, and it’s a bomb or something?”

Twilight turned back to the sphere and was about to express her doubt when a flash of light emitted from it and temporarily blinded the gathered ponies. Blinking back tears, Twilight could just make out something separating from the object. Was it a… stage? After a moment, her vision cleared and saw that it was indeed a stage, with two figures standing at the center. The first was what appeared to be a large Dragon of some kind, with maroon scales and a ruby red glow that seemed to shine with an impossibly bright haze over the scales and black tipped spikes on his head and wings. The other figure beside the dragon was an odd looking pale coated earth pony with a microphone cutie mark. His mane and beard was a shaggy mess of brown hair, but contrary to his unkempt hair, he was dressed sharply in a dark tuxedo. The pony’s yellow eyes seemed to dart around as he eyed the group, as if expecting them to disappear in an instant. The dragon stepped forward as a large podium rose from the floor. Reaching it, he proclaimed to the gathered ponies,

“Behold, it is I the Sagely, Industrious, Illustrious, and Incomparable BEN!”

He paused and waited, as if he expected shocked gasps or thundering applause. When nothing was seen or heard, he glanced at them with an annoyed expression. After a moment, Dash leaned over to Twilight and whispered aloud,

“Wow, even Trixie’s title wasn’t that long…”

Twilight could not help but giggle at this, but soon regretted it as an overwhelming force yanked her into the air and pulled her up to be eye level with the now enraged dragon. “You… you dare mock the Illustrious Ben?” Twilight was about to reply when he cut her off.

“No…no wait I know you, your Twilight Sparkle, the pony that the wretched rebel Luna requested we safe guard while you are in this world.”

Twilight’s eyes widened as she recalled that Luna had promised to send them to help her. Though they sure aren’t being very helpful at the moment, she thought to herself.

“Oh, so you’re the one Princess Luna sent to help us! Ok so first you should-”

The dragon’s eyes were alight with fury as he growled darkly, “You do NOT command me, I shall do as I wish, for I am the Sagely, Industrious, Illustrious, and Incomparable BEN!”

Twilight, not wanting to anger the dragon to the point of his ensuing rampage, nodded in appeasement as he released his magical hold on her and dropped her to the ground, causing her to yelp in surprise. Ben smirked in amusement at her misfortune as she tripped while starting to get up before turning back to the crowd.

“I have chosen to take control of this world to ease the boredom that I face while under Luna’s debt, and I will now take control of this world, should you have any questions about your new ruler, direct your attention to my head servant Silver Speech.”

With that he disappeared in a large flash of light, dazing the ponies once more.

Silver Speech waited for a moment until he was sure the ponies could see again before he hesitantly began.

“Ok, I know this looks bad, but Ben won’t eat your anything like that… probably.”

Dash flew up next to him and glared at him in fury.

“What do you mean probably? And why are you helping him, huh? Does he give you control over some of the land?” He was about to answer when she leaned closer.

“Or does he give us to you as slaves?”

Silver Speech swallowed and hurriedly assured her.

“NO, nothing like that at all, he just employs me as his butler, to take care of cleaning and other things that he deems unnecessary that a being as powerful as him should have to do…”

Dash stared into his eyes questioningly, but after a moment decided that it was true, or at least his explanation would do for the moment.

Silver Speech sighed in relief and turned to Twilight with a pleading look.

“So can everypony just calm down so I can explain the changes that Ben will make?”

Twilight nodded egger to hear what the strange stallion was going to say.

“Ok, so from what I have gathered, Ben is currently taking over Mann co. and most likely scoping out the RED team for anypony that he deems worthy of being a servant to him. Meanwhile, I am supposed to similarly examine you all for the qualities he is looking for.” He paused and looked over them for a moment.

“I don’t see what he wants in any of you, so you are safe there, now all I have to do is replace the announcer for the battles that you fight in and everything should basically turn back to normal for you, more or less.”

Twilight glanced back over to the others and the nodded in agreement to listen to him. Twilight was pretty sure Ben’s title was exaggerated; still she could tell he was powerful, and even if she was fully recovered from her near death experience, she doubted she could take him on and win. She suddenly jumped back as a swirling dark portal appeared next to her and a unicorn with onyx colored coat stepped out, wearing simple dark purple beret. His long black hair that had a blue strip running down the middle covered half his face, and his striped tail was styled into points in such a way that it resembled a razor. His cutie mark was an open book, perhaps he owned a library? She thought to herself, hoping to find a wider selection of books, as the BLU's library mainly consisted of classical Russian folk tales. He was levitating a pile of books with him as he approached Silver Speech. Silver Speech smiled and introduced him to the others.

“Ah yes, this is Midnight Shadow, a fellow servant to Ben, and a good friend of mine.”

The unicorn bowed respectively at the ponies gathered around him. As he turned his gaze to Twilight Sparkle and flipped back his hair to get a better look at her, she gasped. His left eye was a dark, blood red and his right was a pristine green that seemed to glow eerily in contrast. He smiled at her, showing a flash of fang-like teeth, before beginning.

“I am tasked with recording your names and positions as well as gathering a general summery of your backgrounds.”

Applejack raised her hoof in confusion.

“And why does that dragon need ta know about us?”

Midnight turned to AJ and said matter-of-factly,

“He simply wants to know more about his new subjects.”

Applejack frowned but accepted this. Silver Speech cleared his throat.

“All right everypony, let’s get started!”

As the ponies started to form a line for the registration, Midnight page whispered quietly, “I wonder what Ben is doing…”