

# Prologue: The Tale of the Emperor's Staff

150 years ago, San Franciscolt was a young city, a waystation for every kind of pony, and travelers from faraway lands. Earth ponies, pegasi, and unicorns mingled with gryphons, zebras, merponies, sea serpents, and too many others to count. The city hummed with activity, but it was full of conflict. Its creatures didn't always get along.

In this fractured city, there was a seafaring unicorn who was nopony of note—a merchant who had lost his fortune. In his despair, this unicorn just...snapped. In his special brand of madness, he dressed himself in the finest clothes he could find, and a most regal hat. He declared that he was the Emperor of San Franciscolt & Protector of Equestria. Now, San Franciscolt already had a mayor, and Equestria had an immortal Princess, so neither needed an Emperor. Still, he claimed that lofty title, all the same.

But the strangest thing happened! All the ponies & other creatures just agreed that he could be Emperor if he wanted.

The Emperor was kind, and funny besides. He treated everypony—everyone—who called San Franciscolt home with equality and dignity. Because of this, he was beloved by all who knew him. He minted his own bits out of tin, which were accepted as real money at local shops. He penned proclamations, which the newspapers all printed. For years, San Franciscolt loved its sweet, crazy Emperor. And he loved his beautiful city back.

One grey and cloudy day—an angry day—the Emperor performed a wondrous magic.

Mobs of earth ponies, pegasi, and unicorns were fighting, though nopony now remembers exactly why. They galloped from all sides toward the center of the city with hatred in their hearts. All the other citizens hid behind locked doors and windows.

The Emperor stood in the city center, blocking the rioting ponies. His foreleg was hurt, so he walked with the aid of a plain wooden staff. His eyes were closed, his head was bowed.

They stopped and eyed each other warily...their quarrel was not settled but nopony would hurt the kind Emperor.

The Emperor raised his head and opened his eyes. He looked at the earth ponies, pegasi, and unicorns. His eyes beseeched. They plead. They glistened with barely-contained tears, and he spoke...whispered, really. But the square was so quiet that all could hear his words.

“You are all my friends. I beg of you, be at peace.”

A shiver passed through the assembled ponies, and they became ashamed. They had nearly run riot and nearly destroyed the city they called home.

As this feeling swept through the heart of each and every pony, the staff upon which the Emperor leaned glowed with a light like the sun. It was bright enough to be blinding, yet nopony had to close their eyes. The staff had been transformed and all could see its new form. Its golden surface was covered in filigrees and there was shining red gem in a clasp upon its head. At dusk, the gem would shine with cyan blue, bright orange, and magenta, like the sunsets that can only be seen over the Bay.

The Emperor's Staff was filled with the spirit of the city—its heart and its love for all who lived within it. His strength renewed, the Emperor remained a shining example to all the denizens of San Franciscolt for many years more, until the day of the Great Quake...



SAN FRANCISCO -  
110 YEARS AGO

**"QUEEN QUAKE: ORIGINS"**

STORY BY SONYALYNN & SOPHIANNA  
PENCILS & INKS BY SLIFERTHESKYDRAGON  
COLORS BY CHECKERBOARDAZN



QUEEN  
QUAKE!!!

ISN'T IT  
BEAUTIFUL,  
EMPEROR?

ALL OF THIS  
DESTRUCTION,  
BY MY HOOF? A  
ONCE PROUD  
CITY, NOW IN  
CHAOS?

YOU WON'T GET  
AWAY WITH THIS!!!

JUST TRY AND  
STOP ME!!

Ngh!

HA  
HA  
HA



I'LL SEAL  
YOU AWAY  
WITH MY  
STAFF!!



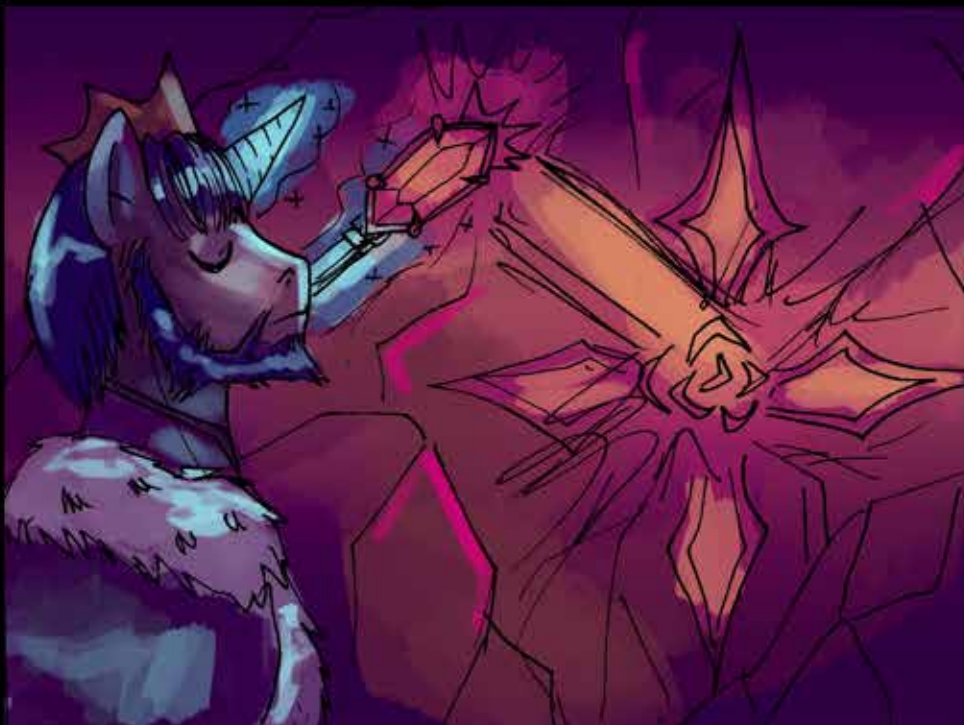
WHAT?



No!



NO!!!



PRESENT DAY - ALCOLTRAZ



THIS IS IT!  
WE'RE GONNA  
BE RICH!

I GOT A  
BAD FEELING  
ABOUT THIS...

YOU WORRY  
TOO MUCH!

CRACK

CRACK

BOOOOOM!!



MY SAVIORS...  
MY HEROES...

SEE? WHAT'D I  
TELL YOU? HEY  
LADY, HOW'S  
ABOUT OUR  
REWARD?

YOUR  
REWARD...

SHALL BE...  
TO SERVE  
ME!!!

THE WORLD  
WILL REGRET  
SEALING ME  
AWAY... IT'S  
TIME TO SHOW  
THEM THE  
POWER OF...

**ANDREAS**

**DIABLO**

# QUEEN QUAKE

TO BE CONTINUED... AT BABSCON!!!

ABOUT SIX MONTHS AGO, MILD-MANNERED EVENT ORGANIZER GOLDEN GATES WAS JOLTED AWAKE FROM A STRANGE DREAM BY AN EARTHQUAKE SHORTLY BEFORE DAWN.

SHE NEVER BELIEVED THAT LEGEND UNTIL THE STAFF MATERIALIZED BEFORE HER AFTER SHE DREAMED OF THE EMPEROR BARELY DEFEATING, A TALL, IMPOSING MARE WITH IT DURING THE GREAT QUAKE ALMOST 110 YEARS AGO.



LOCAL HISTORY RECOUNTS THAT THE KINDLY ECCENTRIC WHO DUBBED HIMSELF 'THE EMPEROR' ONCE QUELLED A RIOT THAT WAS TEARING APART A YOUNG SAN FRANCISCOLT. LOCAL LEGEND SAYS THE NEWFOUND UNITY OF THE LOCAL PONIES COALESCED INTO A MYSTERIOUS STAFF OF GREAT POWER.

UPON TOUCHING THE STAFF, GOLDEN GATES KNEW THAT IT WAS ALL TRUE, THAT THIS MARE WAS SOMEHOW RESPONSIBLE FOR THE GREAT QUAKE, AND THAT SHE WOULD NOW BE CHARGED WITH STOPPING IT FROM HAPPENING AGAIN.



**POWERS & ABILITIES:** THE EMPEROR'S STAFF TRANSFORMS ITSELF INTO THE GEM ATTACHED TO GOLDEN GATES' UNIFORM. POWER SET IS CREATING ENERGY CONSTRUCTS IN VARIOUS (HUMOROUS WHERE POSSIBLE, GIVEN THE MILIEU) SHAPES TO SERVE VARIOUS FUNCTIONS.

WHEN USED IN DEFENSE OR IN RESCUING PONIES, ITS POWER SEEMS LIMITLESS AND UNBREAKABLE, BUT IT DOESN'T LEND ITSELF TO OFFENSIVE CAPABILITY. THE ANGER BEHIND A DIRECT STRIKE RUNS COUNTER TO THE EMOTIONAL CORE OF THE STAFF'S UNIFYING AND PROTECTIVE POWER.



**ORIGIN:** AFTER GOLDEN GATES BECAME UNCHARACTERISTICALLY RECLUSIVE AND WITHDRAWN ABOUT 6 MONTHS AGO, SILVER SPAN AND COPPER CHIP BECAME FRUSTRATED AND CONCERNED. THEY TAILED HER TO A LOCATION WHERE SHE PUT ON A STRANGE PURPLE COSTUME, AND STARTED USING MAGIC SIMILAR TO A UNICORN'S, BUT STRANGER AND MORE POWERFUL THAN ANY UNICORN THEY KNEW. BUT THAT WASN'T ALL.

THE COLT & FILLY BEGAN TO GLOW WITH GOLDEN LIGHT AND FEEL STRANGE. WHEN THEY GASPED AND SQUEAKED, RESPECTIVELY, THEY WERE CAUGHT.

**POWERS & ABILITIES:** SILVER SPAN'S POWER-SET IS THAT OF YOUR STANDARD COMIC BOOK SPEEDSTER (THO WHEN FLYING, NOT RUNNING). HE CAN CORNER LIKE A HUMMINGBIRD, AND REACT WITH SIMILAR SPEED. WHILE HE CAN'T ACTUALLY TELEPORT GIVING THE APPEARANCE OF IT BY ENGAGING IN FLASH STEPPING IS A FAVORITE TACTIC OF HIS.

**ORIGIN:** WHILE HER BROTHER SPED AWAY FASTER THAN SHOULD BE POSSIBLE, COPPER CHIP SAT (WELL, FLOPPED) ONTO HER RUMP WITH HER EYES WIDE. HER BRAIN WAS FULL OF IDEAS FOR INVENTIONS THAT WERE SO CRAZY THAT THEY JUST MIGHT WORK. NOW, SHE HAD TO GALLOP HOME AND BUILD THEM. ALL OF THEM, NO MATTER HOW BARKING MAD, BECAUSE YOU CAN NEVER KNOW WHICH WILL BE THE ONE THAT SAVES THEM.

**POWERS & ABILITIES:** COPPER CHIP'S NATURAL ABILITIES ARE PRODIGY-LEVEL FOR A FILLY HER AGE, THIS NEW LEVEL OF INVENTIVE INTUITION HAS ENABLED HER TO CREATE THINGS THAT, BY ALL RIGHTS, SHE SHOULDN'T.

STANDBYS, THOUGH, INCLUDE JETS BUILT INTO HER POWER ARMOR THAT ALLOW HER TO FLY CLUMSILY (JUST BECAUSE SHE CAN INVENT IT DOESN'T MEAN SHE CAN MASTER IT!), HER COHORT OF FLOATING LASER BLASTER PODS AND HER AUGMENTED REALITY HUD GOGGLES. HER TECH BACKPACK ASSISTS IN BATTLE AND HAS THE ABILITY TO MAKE PORTALS.



EMPERORS DAY - A DAY UNIQUE TO SAN FRANCISCOLT - CELEBRATING THE 'EMPEROR' WHO HELPED TAME THE EARTHQUAKES ALONG THE CALIPONYA COAST. THE DAY IS ONE WHERE ALL ARE WELCOME - AND EVEN HEROES GET TO RELAX



**"INTO OUR WORLD"**

PENCILS BY JENN BLAKE  
LINEART BY SUIFERTHESKYDRAGON  
COLORS BY CHECKERBOARDAZN & TEATIMEJESS

HAHAHA!  
GO GET ME  
THAT  
BLOODY  
STAFF!

I HAVE SOME  
UNFINISHED  
BUSINESS TO  
ATTEND TO  
WITH  
CALIPONYA!

BY THE  
POWER OF  
THE GOLDEN  
POPPY. I  
WILL...  
DEFEAT  
YOU!!

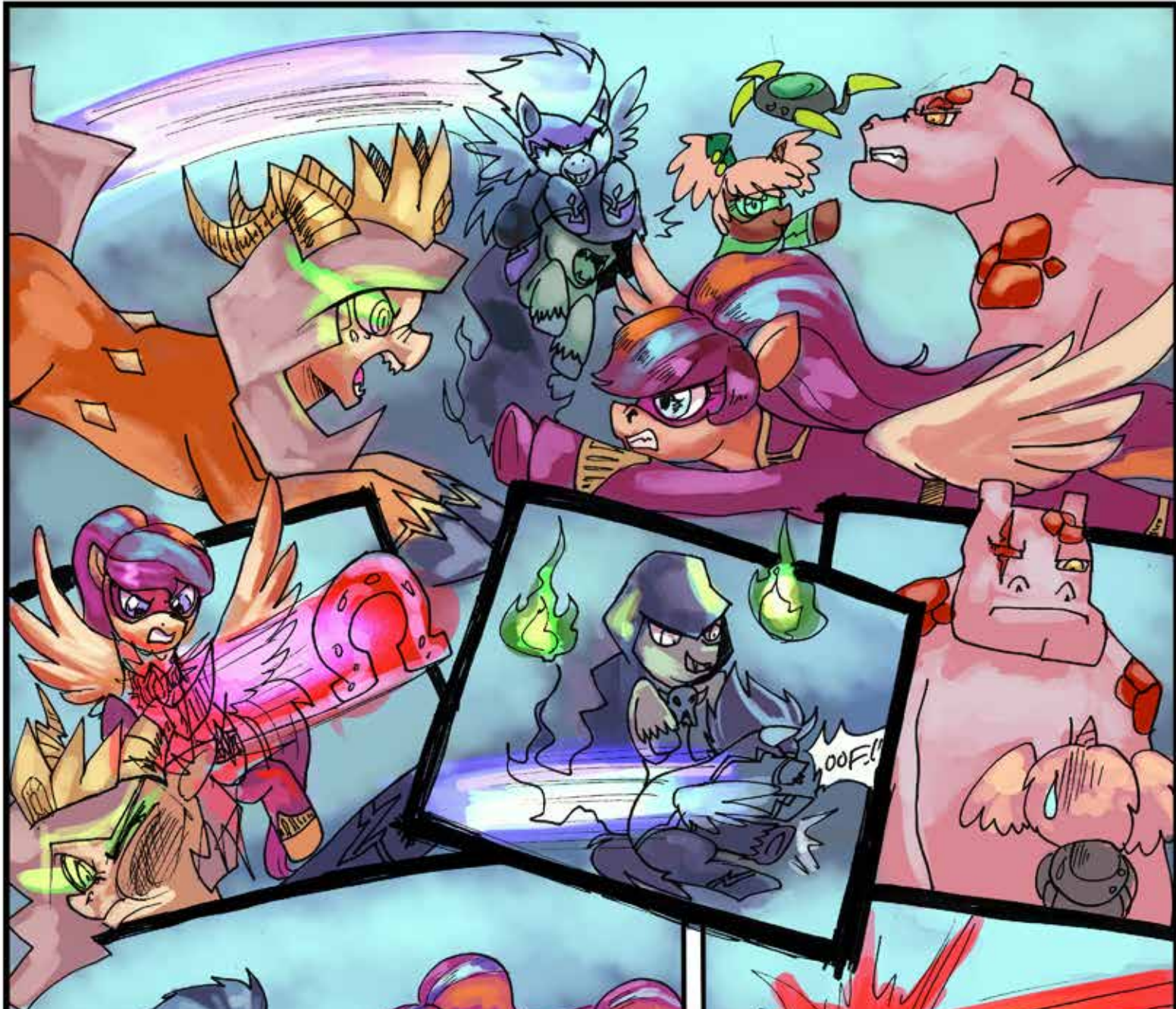
AREN'T WE  
SUPERHEROS  
THIS TIME  
AROUND?

OH  
YEA.

STOP RIGHT  
THERE  
QUEEN  
QUAKE! WE  
WILL STOP  
YOU!!











WHAT IS THIS PLACE?

TO BE CONTINUED AT...

**BABSCon**  
2016