

## Chapter 4

# What one discovers about oneself when they look inside

For several days and nights the journey was completely uneventful. The most exiting thing that happened was Jacob entertaining us with stories that herd heard thorough the wastes. I took particular intrest about the more recent ones about a pony named little pip, apparently she slayed a dragon! Then we found a safe just lying in the middle of the road, halfway buried in the ground.

Curiosity overtook me as I asked Jacob if he could get it out.

“No problem mate” said Jacob quickly, tying a rope to it and dragging it out like it weighed absolutely nothing.

“How do you do that” I said, amazed at his seemingly infinite strength.

“Easy” replied Jacob and would say nothing more on the subject.

Turning my attention back to the safe, though it looked fairly simple it actuality was too difficult for me, which was a first. Usually I could visualise a lock’s secrets and have it open in seconds, but this one was like nothing I had ever seen. After five minutes of utter bewilderment Jacob asked the question on everyone’s lips

“Having some trouble there?”

“What tipped you off?”

“Here one of these might help” said Jacob, tossing me a packet of what looked like candy cubes.

“What are they?” I asked

“Party time mint-als. Go on, try one.”

I put one in my mouth and chewed it.

“I don’t see how that was supposed to- WOAH” I said as a new mental clarity washed through my brain. The impossible lock now seemed so easy. I had it open in 10 seconds flat. Shortly after that I noticed something was wrong. I was losing control of my body. My eyesight was failing. I lost my balance. I barely felt myself hit the ground.

“WHAT’S HAPPENING!?” I tried to scream but what came out was more of a garbled yell of horror. I felt my legs spasm, my back arched, I tried to scream for one last time but found I couldn’t, to have to hold that scream for even a few minutes terrified me. Then I blacked out.

When I woke- I say woke but it was more like waking into a dream- I was falling through a black tunnel, yet I couldn’t determine any sense of direction.

I hit the ground hard, harder than anypony had a right to survive, yet I felt fine. I quickly checked myself over and noticed something weird. My cutie mark was different. Instead of the incredibly rare split mark that made me a social outcast in the vault only half of it was visible, the gun was gone. I put that aside in my mind and focused on the scene around me. There was mostly just darkness, but within the darkness I could see shadowy figures darting around in all directions around me. I tried to move forward, but the shadows seemed to be angered by this and started circling me faster and faster. The circle of shadows began to tighten, this strange situation scaring me out of my mind.

“I wish...” I thought, laughing at my own dark humour. At the current rate of radial decay the circle of

shadows would hit me in exactly five seconds.

Four...

Three...

I looked up to see a handsome jet black stallion with grey spirals running up his legs, a cutie mark of a gun on his flank that looked like what the other half of what mine used to be.

“Tobias!” I exclaimed, relieved to have my companion by my side. Immediately the shadows dissipated and the surroundings lightened to reveal a vault. The shadows formed smoke and marshalled themselves into ponies that I recognised. It seemed that the more I knew a pony the more solid the smoke forming them. There were a lot of faceless forms.

“*Do you have any idea where we are?*” asked Tobias

“Well if I had to guess I’d say that this is a weird psychotic episode caused by our dual reaction to the party time mint-als” I responded.

“*What? In English, if you don’t mind*” replied Tobias puzzled.

“That *was* English, but in a nutshell we’re inside our mind” I said with a sigh.

“*We should split up, we can search this place better if we’re apart.*”

“Ok, that sounds like a fairly good idea, let’s do that”

We parted ways but after what I perceived to be barely three minutes later (time did not seem to exist in this place) I heard Tobias’ yells and the shadows began to return. I sped down the hallway towards the yells to find Tobias struggling and wrapped in several layers of chains and cages. It was almost comical, except for the look of utter horror on his face as his bonds were tightening and crushing him. “Hold still” I said as I began to pick the locks, but they evaporated before I even got through the first one.

“*Th-Thank you*” Tobias stammered.

“Was that gratitude I heard coming from the lips of the great powerful Tobias?” I asked, enjoying making Tobias squirm.

“*Yes, yes it is, do you have anything against it?*”

“No, nothing at all” I snickered.

“*Let’s just keep moving, and this time I think we should stick together*” said Tobias, not wanting to continue the conversation any further.

“Yes, it seems the further we are apart the more our... worst fears keep happening”

“*I don’t know what you’re talking about*” replied Tobias, a lie that even the most gullible foal could see through.

“Oh come on, you can’t lie to me, we live in the same head remember? Your greatest fear is there

being a task that cannot be overcome with brute force and mine is one my intelligence cannot solve. That is why we work together so well, we cover each others' weaknesses."

*"I hate it when you do that"* Tobias conceded.

"Do what?"

*"Make sense"* he replied walking off.

After what seemed like hours of searching we began to feel as if we were walking in circles

"I'm sure I've seen this place before..." I said, immediately realising the futility of that statement. Most of the vault looked the same. Tobias knew this too and looked at me disapprovingly.

"Well then what do you suggest we do to get out of here?"

*"Well being together seemed to get rid of our fears, so maybe we need to work together to get out of here"*

"That seems like a good idea" I said as a large door appeared in front of us, as if us both agreeing on the idea caused it to come into existence.

*"Uh, are you thinking what I'm thinking?"*

"Really? That's the best pun you can come up with?" I said giggling

*"Seriously, we need to get out of this place and I think the only way to get through is to work together"*

"Fine, I thought we already had our epiphany, stupid subconscious"

I inspected the door. There was a simple keypad on it that I quickly opened up with tools that just happened to be on the floor outside of the door and looked inside. About 30 seconds of rewiring later the door let out a loud 'ping' as a second panel on the other side of the door opened to reveal a rusted lever.

"Tobias, would you do the honours?" I said jokingly

*"Gladly m'lady"* He replied, kicking the lever on. The door opened, behind it was a wall of brilliant white.

"Finally"

*"After you"* Prompted Tobias

"Why thank you" I said, walking through the door.

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Level up:

Perfect harmony: You and Tobias now understand each other's strengths and weaknesses, as a result can work together better. All battle skills temporarily increased every time you switch personalities.

