

## A New Equestria

*By Mist*

### Chapter Four (Rainbow Dash Saga)

I awoke from a nightmare of being attacked by more cannibals with a gasp. My dreams had seen so vivid and real for some time now. The real wasteland of Equestria was far more horrifying than any dream could simulate though. Despite being plagued with nightmares, I found I was able to relax more in sleep than in a waking consciousness.

My eyes adjusted to an artificial light around me, florescent of some kind. After a moment of dilating, they permitted me to take a glance at my location. I was quickly able to determine that I wasn't where I had fallen asleep that was certain. I was in a bed as well, which was odd as my attackers certainly didn't seem like they had much reason to keep me alive; perhaps they had other purposes for me.

Gazing around I could see that there was several bookshelves all around me, most of which with books scattered about in an untidy manner. A lot of volumes appeared to be missing as well. I noticed that the floor, although still dirty, was a lot cleaner than expected of any building out here in the ruins. It was void of dust, so clearly there was somepony living here besides myself.

Cautiously I pulled myself out of the bed and stepped onto the floor. My left hind leg nearly gave way from putting the pressure on it. It was dreadfully sore. Glancing back at my left flank I noticed it was bandaged and that a spot of red had seeped through the wrap.

I forced myself to make it to the doorway and down the stairs. I was only four steps from the bottom before my leg finally decided it couldn't take the strain anymore and gave in. I slid down the stairs with my chin hitting every step on the way down. With a crash I landed on my stomach in pain. In agony I attempted to force myself to stand again, however I was only able to drag myself off of the stairs pathetically.

"So you're finally awake then? Perhaps you should be taking it easy though?" A tomboyish voice echoed from across the room towards me.

A cloaked pony sat at a simple wooden table sipping from a glass. The cloak she wore was aged and tattered, and appeared grey in color. She was wearing the hood up, which concealed her face; only her snout was visible from under that hood. The aura she gave off was one of unfriendliness; the aura of a mare that clearly wanted to be left alone.

Examining her further I could tell she was a bit older than me, probably Pinkie Pie's age or so. She had a sky blue coat, and her tail was hanging out of her cloak, which was adorned with a vibrant rainbow it appeared. If I peeked at the right angle I could see some strands of the same colors hanging down towards her face.

I noticed that she had a similar device on her front right hoof as Pinkie Pie did. This pony's however had a blade that appeared red in color with a multi-color trimming along the edges of the blade. The word "Colors", was carved onto the blade, though unlike Pinkie Pie's this one looked like it was etched in with precision, more than likely by some kind of expert that crafted these weapons.

“You should give your body a chance to heal before you go back out there. You’ve been out cold for nearly two days, I thought you were dead when I found you.” She continued not waiting for my answer.

Finally I spoke up. “Um, where am I?”

She took another sip from the glass in front of her, not even turning to face me. “You’re in Ponyville.” She answered plainly.

“How did I get here? What about the ponies who attacked me?” I started bombarding her with questions; she didn’t seem to mind though.

“Well, you were attacked by a group of savages after you got out of the forest. I happened to be heading out to get some supplies, and I happened to notice the incident. I took care of the bastards quickly and then Pinkie Pie helped me bring you back here.” She explained calmly.

I glanced back at my backside. “Who put these bandages on me then?” I asked.

“That would be me as well. I removed the bullet out of your backside and patched you up. I’m not much of a doctor, but I learned a thing or two from hanging around some. Most ponies learn how to patch themselves up out here as I’m sure you know.” She seemed a little friendlier than she let on at first.

“What are you doing out here kid? You don’t look like one of those savages, so you must know that it’s dangerous out here.” She changed the subject.

I sat up. “I’m looking for the Knights of Celestia.”

She laughed a little before replying. “You won’t find them out here. They’re held up at the Canterlot castle.” She informed.

“How can I get to the castle?” I inquired.

“Where are you from kid?” She changed the subject yet again.

“Skyvale...” I answered very softly.

She sighed and took another sip. Her kind aura quickly turned to one of seriousness and intensity.

“I left the city to look for the Knights of Celestia, and Rainbow Dash...” I noticed her ears twitched when I mentioned the last part.

“You’re her aren’t you? You’re Rainbow Dash?” I tried not to sound too excited, I didn’t want to come off as an overly enthusiastic fan, but it was difficult to contain myself.

“Go back to Skyvale.” She replied sternly.

I blinked in confusion. “Why?” I asked.

“There’s nothing for you out here. Perhaps if you go back and tell them you made a mistake and beg they’ll let you back in. It’s a better place for you than out here I assure you.” Her voice seemed void of emotion now.

“I can’t go back. That’s the rule of the city; once you leave you are not permitted back in. I left knowing this, and I have no intentions to return; I came out here to find the Knights of Celestia, and Rainbow Dash, now tell me: are you her?” I raised my voice and tried to match her in terms of seriousness.

She sighed and took yet another sip of her drink. A pill bottle levitated directly to her from a nearby shelf. Pouring out the contents, she took two pills and washed them down with a sip of the vile looking liquid in front of her that she had been downing this entire time. I suspected it was some kind of alcohol.

“I was…” She finally answered.

My heart started beating faster than I’ve ever felt before. I was excited to finally meet her, but she certainly was nothing like I expected. I had always pictured a mare in respectable armor with a strong spirit, before me however sat what appeared to be a broken old drunk.

“What do you mean?” I questioned.

“I mean I’m not the Rainbow Dash you may have heard about. That was almost another lifetime ago. I’ve left that life behind me; now I’m just an old mare waiting for the end to finally come.” She sighed taking another gulp.

I was in disbelief. The Rainbow Dash that Dipper described would never give up, she’d have kept trying even when it was impossible. She was “The Miracle”, after all.

“What about the Knights!?” I was almost yelling.

“Twilight still handles their affairs. I don’t have anything to do with the Knights anymore. I left many years ago.” She seemed uninterested in this conversation.

I dragged myself over to the table with her. She could see my struggle and poured me a drink then offered it to me. Not wanting to be rude I took it, despite not having a taste for alcohol. It smelled like fairly strong liquor as well.

“What about Trixie?” I asked innocently.

Dash seemed to be very angered by the question. She tensed up quickly and smacked at her glass, sending it across the room only to shatter against an empty bookcase. She picked up a second glass from the floor in her teeth and hurled it in the same direction, achieving the same result. She looked around for another to throw, but when she found none she simply uttered “worthless bitch.” Clearly her hate towards Trixie was left unchanged.

I decided to change the subject. “What exactly caused this war? A friend had told me much about

it, but he never exactly explained why all the fighting began in the first place.”

“Pass me another glass, kid.” She instructed.

I did as told and slid a glass from my side of the table over to her. She smiled half-heartedly and poured another drink.

“The truth is that no one really knows how it all started.” She spoke.

I tilted my head in confusion. “How is that possible? Just one day you were fighting?” I questioned.

“Well, you’ve probably heard of the darkness right?” She answered my question with another question.

“Of course.” I said.

“Well, the story goes like this...” She took a sip before continuing. “For some reason, and nopony is sure why, but for some reason the darkness appeared in Equestria. Nopony knows where it came from, or what created it, but one day it just somehow fell into existence.”

“It just... Appeared? Just like that?” I asked in shock.

She nodded. “At first we didn’t even know it was there. It sat there doing nothing for a long time, so most of the normal citizens weren’t informed that it was even present. They didn’t want to invoke panic among the commoners.” She was rather tense. “By the time the darkness did something it was too late. Several ponies left to go serve the darkness, and just like that it had an army built up, and a sizable one at that.”

“Why didn’t somepony go and destroy the darkness?” I asked curiously.

“We couldn’t. The darkness has no physical form, fighting it is impossible. Not even our strongest magic was able to affect it. Because it has no physical form, it relies on servants to do most of its dirty work for it. It creates agents to command those mindless servants after that.” She explained.

“Agents?” I asked.

She paused for a moment and looked up at me. For the first time I could see her magenta eyes. She had a beautiful face that was ruined by a scar that extended across her right cheek. The mane on the actual pony was a lot longer than the one in the flyer I had. She clearly hadn’t done much to tame it. She still looked very appealing though despite these flaws.

“Agents like Trixie...” She answered.

“So Trixie commands the darkness?” I was putting the pieces together slowly as she talked.

“She partially controls it I suppose. She is still a servant to the darkness itself, but she commands its minions. They say that once you accept the darkness it takes your mind and makes you into its

thoughtless slave. Agents however get to keep their free will, this way it ensures its agents are only the most evil of ponies.” Dash clearly was upset just mentioning Trixie’s name.

“So when the darkness formed its army, what did you all do?” I asked.

“At first, nothing. Celestia had never expected anypony to actually try and go to war with her, so she took a strong stance of not making the first assault. Once the armies of darkness attacked, they did as much damage as they could before retaliation was made. They burnt most of this village to the ground, and several around it. After that Celestia formed the Knights of Celestia to fight this darkness, and before we knew it we were entering the first battle with them.” She seemed to be reliving painful memories.

“What happened at that battle?” I asked very nervously.

She seemed to be a bit angered by the question. “We got our asses kicked. We thought we could send them back using our strongest magic, but it proved to have almost no effect. We weren’t prepared for them; they brought something to the fight that we hadn’t expected...”

“Which was?” I was afraid to make her remember anymore almost.

“Guns.” She answered plainly.

I tilted my head in confusion. I wasn’t exactly familiar with military technology.

“They’re weapons that fire metallic objects called bullets at things. They can kill many ponies with only a few shots, and from far away as well. You’ve seen them out in the wasteland sort of.” She explained.

“Is that what Pinkie Pie had on her front hoof?” I asked.

“Sort of, see in order to keep up with our enemies we managed to take one of their weapons and reverse engineer it. The result is the guns that you see now carried by ponies. We went a step further though and attached blades to ours.” She said.

“So how do they work?” I asked.

She giggled a little, which was the first time I heard her laugh. “Well they are controlled by very simple unicorn magic.”

“Then how can you use one? Or Pinkie Pie for that matter? You’re not a unicorn, nor is she.” I quickly pointed out.

She hushed me, and gave a gesture for me to slow down. Clearly she intended on explaining that as well. “We have a little device called a U.M.S.A. You may have seen the one Pinkie Pie had?”

I thought back to the senile old mare, then recalled the black band on her left hoof which would glow a teal color every time she used her weapon. I had never given a thought to what that contraption was until Rainbow Dash mentioned it now. I nodded to acknowledge I understood what device she was speaking of.

“Right, well the proper name for it is the Unicorn Magic Simulation Apparatus, not exactly catchy, but that’s why we call them U.M.S.As. Anyway the device is designed to simulate unicorn magic for basic operations. It was specifically designed for use of weapons, but it’s effective in everyday operations as well.” Rainbow Dash spoke.

“I don’t suppose you have a spare one that I could use then?” I inquired.

She levitated a metal band identical to the one on her left hoof over to me. The moment it touched my left hoof, it appeared as though it just phased itself right through it and when it reappeared it was right on my left hoof, like magic almost. I could feel a great bit of magic coming from the band, so it made sense that it would have such properties that allowed it to do what I just witnessed.

“Thank you very much!” I bowed in gratitude.

She waved her hoof around in a manner that suggested she was not comfortable with my gesture. “No need for that.” She said. I merely nodded in response.

“Guess you’ll be on your way to the Knights then?” She suggested.

“Well, with my injury I don’t think I could make such a long journey on foot…” I sighed.

She was silent for a moment then let out a quiet, “You can stay here if you want, I guess…” She didn’t sound terribly inviting, but it was a genuine offer.

“Well, I don’t want to be a burden, perhaps you can just fly me there and I can get out of your mane?” I suggested.

She turned her head in shame and sighed. “I’m afraid that’s impossible.”

Suddenly she seemed very depressed. Perhaps my request was out of line?

“That’s okay, I understand if it’s too dangerous. I don’t want to be any more of a pest than I already have been up to this point.” I apologized.

She laughed gently, and looked back in my direction with a soft smile on her face. “No, it’s just… My flying days are long over.” With those words she flipped the right side of her cloak up revealing what appeared to be the remains of a right wing. It appeared as though it was hacked off right at the point where it met her body.