

# Perquisition

## Chapter 8

“So, should I just buck it or something?” the pegasus asked, lightly poking the odd egg-shaped object, looking for a reaction.

Sketch put up a hoof to her chin while thinking, then nodded. “Might as well. There’s only three P.O.I.’s that we can get to from here. The entrance we came from, the runes ‘instructing’ us to break this egg and... the egg. Seeing how we’re trapped, all we really can do is do as we’re told.” She gave the egg a long, hard, skeptical stare.

Crimson nuzzled his saddlebag, taking inventory of his things. “S-Sorry... but whatever do y-you mean by ‘P.O.I.’?” he asked, pulling his head out of his bag to look at Sketch.

“Oh! P.O.I stands for ‘point of interest.’ Or just ‘poi’ if you’re lazy. Basically, anything of importance. We use the blue ribbons to symbolize them.” The small earth pony pulled up a deep blue ribbon, almost the same color as Kickbolt. “Although, there’s no reason for us to bother using them here. No matter which direction we go there’s a P.O.I.” She showed a simplified version of the map she’d made so far of the area. They were currently located in the left tip of an Y shaped cavern. Crimson gave a slight nod before continuing rummaging in his own saddlebag.

Kickbolt slowly walked up to the unicorn and looked over his shoulder without Crimson noticing. “What are you doing, anyway?” he asked in a louder than usual tone.

Crimson froze with his head still stuck in a bag. “N-N-Nothing, why?” his muffled stutter could be heard.

“You’ve been digging around in your bags for a while now. I was just curious why.”

“Oh, I’m...” He finally pulled his head back out, only leaving the bag open for but a moment for anypony else to peek inside of it. “I’m just making sure I g-got everything. I h-have this odd feeling I k-keep forgetting something.”

Kickbolt gently shrugged his wings. The wing harness had felt a bit off ever since he’d block a direct boulder from the giant muddler. “Well, okay.” He moved back to the egg instead. “So, should I buck it?”

Sketch reluctantly nodded. “I guess, although what Crimson said earlier still makes sense... or something. Once broken, nopony will be able to use it again, so the next pony to get stuck in here would actually be *stuck*. Assuming this thing actually gets us out of here.”

The red unicorn pulled his head back out again to join the conversation. “W-Well... I was thinking about that, actually. If this egg really is the source of whatever will lead us out of here, it w-would have to be magical. If so, t-then it could very well mend itself once again.”

The pegasus rolled his eyes. “Do I buck it or not?” He was frozen in position where he could finish the job in the blink of an eye, waiting for a signal of approval.

“Lacking any other choice...” Sketch said, “I’d have to say... yes.”

A split second later his hind hooves connected with the giant yellow egg-shaped object hanging from the wall. A loud *crack* was heard echoing throughout the corridor as the bottom part of it fell. The pegasus who’d kicked it quickly flapped away from it as the shell touched the ground. A dark blue, sparkling *yolk* started oozing onto the ground. The gooey essence in the middle trembled like jelly as it slipped down from the cracked shell. As it touched the ground, the center of the yolk was flattening as the rest of the liquid was stretching out to cover more and more of the floor. The three ponies watched with awe at the display and they backed away a few steps to avoid coming into contact with it.

The very same moment that all of the contents had escaped the egg, the shell snapped back together, fusing with the top part again into one whole egg. The contents still spilled out on the floor in front of it. Little by little, faster and faster, the yolk started crystallizing. After only a few seconds all of it had become one dark blue mirror.

“Okay?” Sketch edged over to look into it, but was surprised when what she saw wasn’t a reflection. Attempting to tap it with a hoof, it instead sunk right into it - and through - to what seemed to be another room under the *yolk*. Quickly pulling it back up and staring into it for a moment, she turned around to the others. “I guess... this is our only option.”

Kickbolt started dipping his wings into the portal. “Wow, that’s creepy!”

“And it looks like Crimson was right about it fixing itself,” Sketch mentioned. “All we really can do now is to go through this, I guess.” She looked at the other two ponies. “Anypony care to try it out?”

Crimson took a step back and looked away. “Ah, uh... I-I’m only an apprentice... soo...”

Kickbolt bowed deeply, using his wings to motion for Sketch to move forward. “Ladies first!”

She stuck out her tongue and blew a raspberry. “Cowards.” After which she jumped straight into the portal head first without hesitation. The other two ponies just stared as her body was swallowed into the blue goo. Her yellow tail being the final part to get sucked into it.

Crimson walked up to the edge of the pool and looked into it, seeing Sketch - donning a huge grin - waving them in from the other side. "Is she a-always that reckless?"

"Usually," the pegasus responded flatly. "But no point in keeping her waiting now," he said before stepping into it himself, his hooves starting to sink. "Not as fast, but probably less bumpy." He continued sinking until about halfway through, then he came to an abrupt stop. After some light awkward wriggling he started laughing. "Ahahahaha! Oh stop! *That tickles!* Ahahaha!" His head was the final part to go through as his laughing finally subsided.

The unicorn that stood there by himself didn't wait long before diving into it head first, as Sketch had done first. As he tried to jump, he missed a step and ended up somersaulting, flying flank first through the portal.

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Crimson's butt flew out first through the portal, but it seemed he managed to grab hold of the edge on the other side, leaving half of his body hanging out from the blue hole in the wall.

"First you and now him?" Sketch muttered while walking up to the red flank, biting down on his orange tail and giving it a steady tug. Half a yelp could be heard as his head finally got through the portal. He landed flat on the ground.

"S-Sorry... I tripped. I thought i-if I tried to jump like you did, Sketch, I would get through easier," the unicorn said, rubbing his legs in shame as he looked away.

"At least you didn't fall out sideways, I had to pull out Kickbolt by his legs." She rubbed her face, giving the pegasus a sore look. "I still can't believe you *kicked* me in the face!"

The blue pony looked away, blushing slightly. "You tickled me, I couldn't help it."

"Your legs were hanging out from a *wall*, I had to do *something!* Do you have any idea how creepy it was to see that from my perspective?" Sketch complained, flailing her hooves in the air.

Crimson picked himself up from the ground and looked around. "So where a-are we?"

"I'm not sure, it's not like I had time to check it out already." Sketch replied. "All I can say for sure is that the interior is the same, for now at least..." She pointed down the lone passage before them. "There's only one way for us to go."

Kickbolt picked up the lantern and began trotting ahead. "You guysh coming?"

The earth pony pulled out her notebook and flipped a few pages. "Just a second, I need to decide on where I'll put this on the map..." She made a few scribbles, frowned, erased it and wrote something again before giving a slight nod. "Okay, ready!"

As they walked down the new passage, the sound of water could be heard flowing in the distance. The sound of their steps echoed back and forth in the eerie hall against the stone pavement covering the surfaces, mingling with the rushing noise.

Sketch was drawing the final details of where they had just been when she slightly turned her head to peek at the pony behind her. "So, how are you feeling anyway? With your head, I mean."

Crimson was in the middle of taking an inventory of his saddlebag again. Caught by surprise, he started stumbling for a moment before regaining his footing. "Oh, uhm... better, a-actually. Thank you for asking." His eyes crossed as he looked up at his own horn. It flared for a moment as he attempted some magic again. "I could probably resume lighting the way again, with some m-more time to rest. But t-that's it."

"Feel free to tek over lantern duty any time, dude!" Kickbolt mouthed through the lantern. "Dish 'ing tastes horrible!"

Crimson smiled. "I'll let you know w-when I think I can handle it again. But there's something I wanted to talk a-about..."

"Wait, what's that?" Sketch pointed to somewhere in front of them in the dark. A small altar, not unlike the one from the entrance, stood in the middle of the hallway.

Kickbolt set down the lantern next to it, gagging slightly to get the old rust out from his mouth. "Is that an egg on it?" he asked.

"More eggs? What's up with this dungeon?" Sketch didn't look at it, but instead inspected what she'd seen behind the altar. "Anyway, there's a... hole... here," she said, standing at the edge of the cavity about the size of her head. "Judging by the echo I'm hearing... it's pretty deep."

"What, like a well or something?" the pegasus asked, looking into it himself.

"No idea," the earth pony replied, she walked up to the altar and examined the egg, "but I'm willing to bet it has something to do with this. Crimson, any chance you're able to figure anything out like with the last altar?"

The unicorn nervously walked up to it, and after some thought he shook his head. "S-Sorry... last time I just... *knew*. This time I know just about as much as y-you two."

Kickbolt cautiously poked the egg with a wing. It wobbled slightly. "Do you think we're supposed to break it like the other one?"

Sketch picked it up. "I'd like to think it was that easy, but we don't know for sure yet. Let's just bring it with us- wha?" The egg in her hoof glowed brightly as she lifted it away from the altar. Within a second, it had just faded away from existence.

"Where did it go?! It was just here a moment ago!"

"Uh, Sketch?" Kickbolt replied, "It's back on the altar." He pointed towards the same spot she had picked it up from moments ago. The egg was sitting there again just as when they had arrived.

"Huh..." She picked it up again, but didn't move her hoof away. "Maybe it gets pulled back here if it gets taken too far..." She slowly started pulling away her hoof, when she got about as far as she had the first time, it started glowing again. Then it was back at the altar.

Sketch pulled out her notebook. "Interesting... an egg that can't be moved," she murmured while writing something. "Kickbolt, try tossing it down that hole."

"Uh, are you sure?" He nervously looked back and forth between her and the egg. "I hope you're right..."

He picked up the egg carefully, and then with a precise throw lobbed it towards the hole behind the altar. It barely reached the cavity before the process repeated.

"Okay..." She scribbled something, then walked up to the egg again herself. "How about something more direct?" She raised a hoof and crushed the egg on the very altar it laid on. Similar blue liquid as in the earlier giant egg started seeping out of the crushed shell.

"Sketch! What did you do that for?!" Kickbolt called out. "We might need it!"

The shell and the liquid started glowing, and then the egg reappeared again.

She firmly slammed her book closed and started speaking to nopony in particular. "These eggs are obviously magical in nature, but this one in particular seems to have a rule to it. *It cannot be moved from the altar, nor can it be damaged.* What we're actually meant to with it remains to be seen. And as for this hole..." She leaned over the edge again, peeking into it. "Well, I honestly have no idea. But I have a feeling it's connected to the egg, somehow."

“But did you have to just *crush* it like that? You couldn’t know for sure that would work!” the pegasus snarled.

“Relax. That’s why I had you try tossing it away first. I had a feeling it would work, anyway,” she nonchalantly waved a hoof in front of his face.

“You and your feelings...” he muttered. “I swear,” sitting down, he brought up his hooves and barely held them apart, “you’re *this* close of getting us both killed one of these days.”

“You mean the three of us,” Sketch flatly replied.

“What?”

“It’s not just two of us any more, remember?” She pointed towards the unicorn standing behind him.

Kickbolt’s eyes shot up as he realized Crimson was standing directly behind him, waving awkwardly. “Uh... h-h-hi?”

“Oh, dude... sorry,” Kickbolt apologized. He covered his face with his hoof. “I... forgot. I got pulled in by the moment. This sort of thing happens way too often between Sketch and me...” He revealed his face again, and looked at Crimson with sudden enthusiasm. “Hey, who do you think is right? I mean, testing the egg like that.”

“I... umm...” Crimson began, “... I think Sketch was right when it came to testing the simpler properties of the egg, regarding p-picking it up and seeing what h-happened.”

Sketch grinned. “See? He agrees with me!”

“B-But...” he continued, “... destroying it was taking it t-t-too far. We still d-didn’t know if it was the *same* egg that r-reappeared or not. Crushing it just l-like that could have just as well done nothing, or it c-could have simple re materialized as c-crushed again, or it c-could have b-broken something, or it could have-”

“Okay, *alright already!* I’m sorry.” Sketch rolled her eyes. “Sorry for assuming things and acting rashly.” She glared at Kickbolt. “Happy?” She received a content nod in response.

The red unicorn whimpered. “S-S-Sorry... I didn’t mean t-to upset you... I just thought...”

Sketch and Kickbolt traded a look. “I’m not upset, you know that, right?” she reassured Crimson. After a moment of silence she spoke up again, “You’re not wrong, you know? I was sort of hasty when it came to the whole egg thing.”

Crimson gave a slight nod while avoiding eye contact. His lips were almost quivering.

Sketch groaned. "Okay, seriously, don't cry." She pointed back the way they'd come from. "If you start crying, we're going straight back to town. Closed entrances or not."

Crimson shook his head and closed his eyes. "S-Sorry... it's just... just..." he blubbered. He took a deep breath and held it for a few seconds, before letting it out. "I t-think I m-may have a problem reading e-emotions... for a moment there, it s-seemed to me as i-if you were furious for what I said..."

"Ahahaha! *Furious*? Trust me, man. You *don't* want to see her furious," Kickbolt laughed.

"*Without going off track*," Sketch spoke through her teeth while staring daggers at the pegasus. She looked back at Crimson. "I'm... guessing this might be another problem you have, coupled with your amnesia, or something..." She gave a small nod, and then smiled. "I can guarantee you that I am in no way angry or even irritated with you."

The unicorn finally stilled his voice. "Thank y-you... but... it's not just that."

Both the earth pony and the pegasus spoke up at the same time. "It's not?" This caused Crimson to flinch slightly.

He took another deep breath before speaking again. "At first, when I met you two... when I met Red Thread-"

"Master," both other ponies corrected him.

"You really don't want to call her Red Thread in person, best not get used to it," Sketch explained. "Sorry, go on."

"Uh... When I m-met *Master*, and she e-explained to me about exploring... I honestly thought it sounded interesting. It still does. She did c-cover the potential dangers, and the... *chances* of n-not returning alive," he said, rubbing his legs. "I argued t-that it would not be a-an issue, seeing how I have no memories. I would feel no d-desire to stay protected in my current l-lifestyle, seeing how I had none. That I could just t-throw myself into d-danger without any r-regret. Making memories from scratch." He almost started blubbering as he proceeded. "B-But when I see the t-two of you, how y-you act t-together... it makes me wish I already had m-m-memories." He closed his eyes again and gave a soft sob. "It's s-starting to feel as if I'm not actually a pony... sorry, it's hard to explain..."

He felt a touch on both sides of his flank. Opening his eyes, quelling a few tears, only to see both Sketch and Kickbolt pointing towards his new cutie mark he had only gotten a few hours ago.

“We may not be able to do anything about your lost memories,” Sketch spoke softly. “But you’ve already done more than enough to be considered one of us. And your cutie mark, right here,” she poked it a couple of times for emphasis. “It proves that you’re a pony, no matter what anypony says.”

Kickbolt used a wing to pull Crimson in closer to him, smiling while doing so. “I’m willing to bet that getting that cutie mark has to be one of the most memorable things ever, no pony I know has a cutie mark story that compares! I’m pretty sure some guys I know from Ever City would have killed to have gotten a cutie mark from *actual combat!*”

Crimson started pulling back, nervously shifting his eyes upon hearing the last part. “K-K-Killed?”

“It’s a figure of speech,” Kickbolt replied, tapping his shoulder.

The unicorn lifted off the wing from himself and took a step back. “S-Sorry... for getting all... *emotional*. I suppose there’s more than just walking that I n-need to learn about.”

“Don’t worry about it. Sorry about... uh, forgetting about you for a moment there. I just need to get used to it.”

Sketch stepped in between them and pushed them apart further. “I’m all for talking about our feelings, but could we maybe take this when we’re not in the middle of who knows where? We need to find a way out.”

“Right, sorry.” The blue pegasus looked up at the ceiling, answering to no pony in particular, flushing slightly. “So, are we done here?”

She nodded. “I’d say so. Lead on.”

Kickbolt picked up the lantern again and took the front, Sketch standing behind him and Crimson in the back. The three ponies continued marching into the unknown.

“Um... c-can I ask something?” Crimson meekly said.

Kickbolt flicked his tail in response. “You just did. But you don’t have to ask if you want to ask something, just... uh... ask.” Sketch groaned.

“R-Right... sorry... but... I was wondering regarding p-pony names.”

Sketch turned halfway around to look at him, but continued walking sideways. “What about them?”



“Do all pony names have... t-two words? I mean, you’re M-Map and Sketch, and he’s Kick and Bolt... Master is Red and Thread. The one who t-tutored me in magic too, Pledge and Word.”

Sketch came to a complete stop, turned around, and looked him straight in his eyes. “Wait, *Pledgeword* was your tutor?!”

“Y-Y-Yes? Although, I admit I did see quite a few... *flaws* r-regarding her personality... so I suspect I know where you’re g-going.”

The mare snorted. “I’ll say. We’ll talk more about that later, I need to make sure she didn’t brainwash you or anything.” She turned around again to continue walking after Kickbolt, who had momentarily stopped to give a visible eye roll as Sketch watched.

“I sincerely d-doubt that... all she r-r-really did was give me instructions f-for the basic principles of magic... but if you wish to. Anyway, since you f-found me, you’ve been c-calling me Crimson. I... actually *like* being called that, but I w-was wondering, do other p-ponies only have one word for their name?”

Sketch turned around halfway again to answer, but got interrupted by Kickbolt, who flared his wings for attention. “Stairs!” His muffled call could be heard, almost dropping the lantern from saying it.

Barely out of visible range from the poor lighting the lantern provided through its stained glass, a sudden maw darkness could be seen as they approached. Kickbolt’s keen eyes could easily identify the footing as steps, having seen many sets of stairs in his time exploring.

Slowly approaching it, examining for any possible suspicious indents or bulges, he gave a clear as they started trudging down the steps.

“It’s ‘ot bery deeb, I can already see the boddom,” he said after a few steps down.

Sketch raised her voice a little to compensate for not having to turn around to face Crimson while walking down the stairs, finally about to answer his question. “I’ve... heard about ponies with just one word for their name. But I don’t know any personally, besides you, of course.”

“I thought s-so... It’s a bit silly, to be honest, b-but I was wondering if it would be okay if I adopted a second word t-to my name,” he mentioned as the stairs ended.

“We didn’t exactly name you, we just needed something to call you at the time, and you seemed happy with Crimson. So you can call yourself whatever you want, I suppose.”

"It's not that I want to c-change it, just... *add* t-to it. F-For the record, I'd still like t-to be called C-Crimson, as my first name. I'd like to be named... Crimson Aegis."

Sketch turned around halfway again to speak with him, but not before Kickbolt's lame voice spoke up. "Aegis, like a shield? As in your special talent?"

The unicorn gave a useless nod, seeing how nopony was watching him right now. "I'm not q-quite certain it's actually my special talent, but I'd l-like to think so. I think I can imagine a few v-v-varieties of it I could p-put to use."

Sketch appointed her attention back to the red pony behind her again. "I'd say Aegis describes you well enough," she giggled. "Whatever your special talent is, it seems to be... barriers, force fields?"

He nodded again, this time to more avail. "I'd a-assume so, but I s-suppose I'll need to do some... testing, l-later."

Kickbolt flared his wings once again for attention, before he spoke. "Intersection." Followed by putting down the lantern for a spell. "And how much longer until you think you can start lighting with magic again, Crimson? After all that time spent in the tower, where we didn't need to use lanterns, I'm *really* not used to keeping this thing in my mouth," he sputtered, making a gagging motion as he tried to scrape his tongue.

The lantern next to him suddenly started floating, enveloped in a bright orange glow which seemed to actually strengthen its light. "I'd say just a-about so." He put down the lantern again, and focused for a second, igniting his horn once again.

"*Thank you,*" the pegasus grunted, happy for not having to carry the rusted handle in his mouth any longer.

"But I'm not q-q-quite sure I can manage much more than just light and telekinesis just yet."

Sketch jotted something before pointing towards the left path. "Considering how we're a floor below now, our current progress doesn't say much of the layout on *this* floor, so it doesn't matter which direction we take right now."

Kickbolt glared at her. "Then why not right?"

She glared back. "Because I like left." The pegasus groaned, but agreed, as he started to trek along the chosen path.

Crimson's magic was lighting up the way again, and was a lot more effective than the old dirty lantern had been at it. Not long far into the new course they came to a stop.

"Is that a... button?" Kickbolt asked, slowly walking up to the circular bulge in the middle of the wall.

"I'd... say so. What's that mark on it?" Sketch replied. "Look's like an arrow?"

The pegasus nodded. "An arrow pointing down, pretty much."

Sketch took up her notebook to jot something down. "Alright... try pressing it."

"Didn't we just talk about this?" Kickbolt muttered back.

"It's one button, there's only so much we can do with it, now press it," she said, ushering him.

Kickbolt turned for Crimson, hoping for backup. The unicorn just shrugged.

Giving a hearty sigh, the blue pony nodded. "Fine." He walked up to it and readied himself, standing on the tip of his hooves and wings outspread. "Ready?"

"Go."

*Click.*

Sketch frowned. "Nothing? I was-"

Kickbolt brought up a hoof to her lips. His ears twitched. "Shh. Listen. I don't hear the water anymore."

Sketch scratched her head for a moment. "Well... nothing else is happening here, so we might as well go check it out."

As they started making their way down the second passage in the crossroad, Crimson floated up a blue ribbon to the way, showing where the button had been, followed by a red one just next to where they were walking.

After another set of uneventful stairs leading down, they came upon another oddity.

"I'm not finding anything we can do with it, do you guys?" Sketch asked as she paced around the pillar placed in the middle of the path.

Kickbolt murmured, "No." Crimson just shook his head.

"Wait, maybe..." she quietly said, bringing up her book. After a moment her expression brightened. "Yes! If I got the distances right on the map, that altar with the egg, and more importantly that *hole* should be directly above here!"

The blue pegasus glanced her way before looking up the ceiling again, where the pillar connected. "And... what exactly does that mean?"

"I t-think it means that the hole is c-connected to something *below* us, through this pillar," Crimson said.

Sketch smiled. "Exactly. Of course, it's just the current theory, but we're getting somewhere!"

Kickbolt was staring into the darkness before them again. "I think I see even more stairs ahead of us. How far down are we by now?" He asked as they started walking towards said stairs.

"Uhh... If we started on floor zero, then this should be... minus two. Meaning we're soon on minus three," she replied, consulting her book.

Standing at the top step, the marine blue pegasus was glancing back and forth for anything. "Looks the same as the other two stairs," he mentioned, taking the first few steps down. "Looks like another crossroad just down below."

After slowly having made their way down the third set of steps, the new crossroad was clearly visible.

"Huh, it only goes a short way in... I think I see another button there?" Kickbolt said.

Sketch was mapping and writing something as she asked, "Does it have an arrow pointing up?"

"How did you know?"

"Call it a hunch. Please do *not* press that button for now... I want to check something, first." She closed her book and turned back around. "Come on, we need to continue... down, I hope it will be. Blue ribbon please, Crimson." The unicorn nodded and floated said object to the corner, showing a point of interest.

"Here's what I'm thinking... remember that very first egg we saw on the altar, next to the hole? I'm hoping that something down here will be connected to that hole, and hopefully will

give us a way to do something with the egg. But I want to see it to make sure.”

Kickbolt scratched his head. “And what about those buttons?”

“Well, you said that you stopped hearing water when we pushed the first one, the one pointing down. I think they control the flow of water, and we... *removed* it by pressing it. Pressing this other one pointing up will instead *add* water. But... I’m not sure about this, if I got the map right so far, then we should be heading down another set of stairs first, which will lead us to below the pillar - below the egg.”

Crimson blinked. “I... I h-had a couple of theories on how t-the layout of this place functioned... but nothing that e-elaborate.”

Sketch giggled. “You get used to thinking like this, after a while you start assuming, based on what you’ve seen so far.”

“Which I really dislike about you,” Kickbolt growled. “That type of thinking has gotten us into trouble more than once.”

“Shush you. Clever ponies speaking back here,” Sketch said, cackling slightly as the stallion in front of her submitted.

“Well, you’re right so far - more stairs ahead,” Kickbolt said. “But I’m just saying, you need to think about the consequences more often.”

“Actually, I w-was wondering, what exactly is it you two d-do? Sketch... draws m-maps, and Kickbolt looks for t-traps?” Crimson asked.

The mare nodded. “Pretty much. Usually the groups are of three ponies, and you’re our third! One earth pony, one pegasus and one unicorn. It’s not exactly a *rule*, it’s just how it’s preferred. I’m a mapper, or cartographer if you prefer that. But I’m usually the one that has to do the thinking around here.” She tapped her head, smirking against the pegasus.

“This set of stairs is longer... looks like twice the length, I’d say.” He flared his wings, giving a clear view of his harness. “Well, my job is to *protect* Sketch, and you, now that you’re here. These blades I’ve got on my wings, the wing harness, gives me an edge in combat. As you’ve seen, we sometimes run into... *things*. Looking for traps is just something I just started doing so Sketch could focus on her maps,” he muttered. “Usually, I’m the one that has to put myself between danger, and other ponies.”

“I was curious, t-though... what am I expected to d-do then?” the red stallion asked.

“As our apprentice, not much, really. We’re already covering the most important bases.

But it's recommended to have at least one unicorn in your group for their magic. Even the most simple magic could be invaluable from time to time," Sketch said.

"Like light magic!" Kickbolt gleefully exclaimed.

She smirked. "But I think what you've done so far speaks for itself." She continued sketching something resembling stairs, like the ones they were currently walking in. "I think... it should be just up ahead. Either that, or another pillar or something..."

Kickbolt squinted. "Well, I don't see a pillar, but I do see... *something*. Looks like... another altar? And... I don't even know what that is."

As they got closer, Sketch took a closer look herself. "Okay, see that?" She pointed to something resembling the first altar, but was actually floating in a small pool of water. "I'm guessing that thing needs to float all the way up... *there*." She pointed up, the ceiling slowly coming together as a small hole in the middle was at the top. "That probably leads to the pillar. And this thing needs to get all the way up to the first floor we were on, so the egg can be placed on *this* thing," she said, pointing back to the miniature altar, bobbing softly in the water. "It will probably let the egg be moved to it, acting as an anchor. Then it needs to be floated back all the way down here, so the egg can be moved to *that*." She pointed to a flat slab of rock, with a small indent, with room for a small circular object. "What will happen then, I have no idea, but it seems fairly obvious this is what we're meant to do."

Kickbolt shrugged. "If you say so... so we just use those buttons to make more water, to float it all the way up?"

"Pretty much, except... come on, if I'm right about this, this won't be as easy as I hoped..."

They made their way up again, past the stairs, and stopped before the button. Sketch calmly walked up to it and pressed it. After the familiar *click* the sound of water gushing could be heard quite clearly, and loudly.

"Kickbolt, tell me how far up it reaches!" Sketch shouted through the sound of the rushing water.

"It stopped halfway up the stairs!" he yelled back.

Having heard what she wanted to, she pressed the button once more. After a moment the pegasus could be heard yelling again.

"It's right at the top of the stairs now, it's literally brimming over!" he yelled once again.

“Come back now,” Sketch replied. “I need to explain a few things.”

As the pegasus trotted back to the other two ponies, Sketch sighed heavily. “Right... this is where things will get tricky...”

[~Chapter 7~](#)

[~Chapter 9~](#)

(Author’s note: I’d like to thank ARBPW and LysanderasD for helping me with editing and making my story readable. If you liked it, please leave a comment, they’re probably the biggest source of encouragement I’ve yet to encounter. Don’t forget to rate!)