

The Empty Room
Chapter 15
By Wanderer D

"She will betray you. You know that."

Nightmare Flare glared at the mirror, where her reflection seemed to be sneering at her. *"Twilight? Don't make me laugh."* she thought back at it.

"Not her. Your sister. Nightmare Moon."

The alicorn shook her head, almost amused. *"Nightmare Moon won't. She is loyal to me. More loyal than even Luna was when I was Celestia."*

"And yet, Luna betrayed you a thousand years ago," her image said. *"What is stopping her from doing it again?"*

"We're balanced now. Equals in the sky."

"But she doesn't have her eternal night. All she has done right now is block your sunlight." the mirror whispered. *"Do you really think she is satisfied with just being equals?"*

Nightmare Flare's eyes narrowed. *"She has been diligent about the search for my missing filly. I have seen the anger in her eyes at these rebels threatening me. She has..."*

"Begun to amass her own forces? Restarted the Shadowbolts? What is next? Her own private army?"

"The Shadowbolts are only a few fliers in her service. Hardly a risk against the royal force which is not loyal to her, but to me."

"You shouldn't trust her. And you know it in your heart of hearts. You have seen how she has been acting. She has control of four elements of harmony now that Rainbow Dash has joined her as Captain of the Shadowbolts. Twilight has control of one, but how long will it take for Nightmare Moon to have Applejack join her side?"

"You underestimate me." Nightmare Flare glared at the mirror. *"I know the elements. I created them!"*

"When you had more power... when the rest of the gods knew how necessary they were. You might have created them, but the power was not yours alone."

Nightmare Flare didn't say anything, staring intently at the mirror for a few seconds. *"What do*

you suggest, then?"

There was no voice this time. Just a feeling and images as her mind suddenly realized... she smiled. **"Yes. That will do. Even if my sister betrays me..."**

"Mother?" Twilight Spark asked, looking up from her notes. Spike had fallen asleep next to her and continued to snore as she stood up, studies forgotten and walked up to Nightmare Flare. "Did you say something?"

The alicorn smiled kindly at Twilight. **"My dear student... my daughter... I will bring to Equestria something that has not been seen for thousands of years."**

Twilight nuzzled the Queen, who lowered her head to allow the pony to do so. After a moment she stood normally again. **"Twilight, ask one of the guards to fetch Spitfire. We will need her."**

o.O.o

"Wow."

"It's... amazing!"

"So big!"

The three little fillies stared at the city of Canterlot in wonder. After several hours walking they had finally arrived, and despite how tired they were, the sight of the city was enough to give them more than enough energy to be awed.

"W-where do we go from here, Scootaloo?"

"Uh..."

"Why don't we ask?" Apple Bloom said, looking at several ponies around.

"Hey, check this out!" Scootaloo said, looking up at a poster. "It says here that everypony has to gather in about an hour at the plaza and that Nightmare Moon and Rainbow Dash are going to be there!"

"Now that's good luck! We can just go there and meet with them." Sweetie Belle said.

"But what do we do for an hour?" Scootaloo asked.

"We explore!" Apple Bloom shouted.

“Wait, this says there’s going to be a stage!” Sweetie Belle said. “Why don’t we just head there now and get good places?”

o.O.o

“Rainbow Dash! Wait!”

The pegasus stopped and looked back. “Spitfire…”

“Don’t let Applejack get to you… she doesn’t understand…”

“No.” Rainbow Dash snapped. “She doesn’t.”

Spitfire stepped back, ears flattening.

The cyan pegasus didn’t care. “I’ve just about had it with everypony thinking I’m a traitor. I’m not!”

“I know, it’s just that they…” she glanced around, making sure that nopony was around. “they don’t understand our greater mission, they can’t, unless they are part of the council.”

Rainbow Dash stopped in her tracks. “Are you saying I should induct Applejack?”

“She won’t mind! Once its done she’ll be okay with it… and you can have your friend back!”

The rainbow-maned pegasus gritted her teeth. “I will think about it.” she answered, facing away from Spitfire. “For now I have to meet with a couple of ponies about the Shadowbolt positions.”

“Do you want me to join?”

Dash closed her eyes and lowered her head. “Spitfire… under any other circumstances it would be my pleasure… my honor… hay, I’m not good with words, the truth is I would love to fly with you… but we can’t right now. The sisters need a balance. I’m taking care of the Shadowbolts and you…”

“I’m being made Captain of the guard.” Spitfire sighed. “I… I know I can’t say no… Guardian knows Nightmare Flare would fry me in place. I just wanted to ask if… if you would have considered me.”

Rainbow Dash turned around and nuzzled the Wonderbolt. “I’ll make sure everything turns out okay.”

Spitfire leaned her head on Dash’s shoulder and nodded. “You promise?”

Dash closed her eyes and sighed. How much could she take of this? And what exactly did Spitfire feel for her? Was it even real? Her mane fell forward hiding a grimace. Well, she cared enough for the Wonderbolt to set her free... regardless of the consequences.

"I promise. And to make it good I need to go now. But... we'll catch up in a little bit."

Spitfire nodded and watched the other pegasus take flight.

"Captain Spitfire?" an earth pony guard approached her. "I have orders from Queen Nightmare Flare, you are requested in her presence."

Spitfire blinked. "Sure. I will be there at once."

o.O.o

"Halt! The ponies in here are under house arrest by order of the Queen!" A pegasus guard glared at Rainbow Dash.

"Well, I am under orders myself," she snapped. "I'm Captain Rainbow Dash, of her Majesty Nightmare Moon's Shadowbolts. And I am here on official business."

The guards did not look pleased but stepped aside. As she was walking past, one of the guards 'accidentally' shoved her. She glared at him, but said nothing as she went into the building.

She soon reached a closed door behind which she could hear voices. Just as she was about to knock however...

"Rainbow Dash."

"Huh?" she looked around. "Nightmare Moon? Are you in my head?!"

"I need you to give somepony a message."

Rainbow Dash sighed. "Sure. What is it?"

o.O.o

Conversation ceased the moment there was a knock on the door. After a moment, a cyan-coated pegasus walked into the room. The reactions were immediate.

"What the hay are you doing here?!"

“You have got a nerve to step into this room!”

“Are you here to make fun of us, or take us to be interrogated?”

The sudden onslaught from the Wonderbolts in the room jarred Rainbow Dash. Spending time with Spitfire and hearing her tell stories of the other Wonderbolts had made Dash's idols seem less perfect. Nonetheless, it really stung to hear them despise her. Dash steeled herself. If she allowed her feelings to affect her she would break down again.

She looked down then slowly dragged her eyes up to look at Soarin' who was looking at her warily.

“You. Soarin’,” she said. “I have a message for you: you're needed in the cave. Midnight is actually evil.”

“What does that even mean?” Asked a mare with a light tan coat and a blue and mint-green mane, Rainbow recognized her as Misty. She was glaring angrily at the cyan Shadowbolt. “What are you trying to pull?”

“What is she talking about, Soarin’?” another Wonderbolt mare asked. This one was known as Blast, if Rainbow recalled correctly.

“Uh...” Soarin' looked around. “Um...” he dove down on an apple pie that was on a table nearby, sending pieces flying.

“Okay, now I know you have something to hide,” Misty said. “Spit it out, buster. Or so help me Celestia...”

“He's a rebel,” Rainbow Dash said. “I just found out myself.”

The two mares immediately jumped between Dash and Soarin', who was now choking on a piece of pie and staring incredulously at her at the same time.

“You're not taking him!” Blast said. Her mane, so very similar to Spitfire's, fell down around her face and gave her a wild and intense look.

Rainbow Dash rolled her eyes. “I don't care about him being a rebel. I was asked to give him a message and I've done so. It was supposed to be urgent.”

“But how am I supposed to get out?” he said. “They got pegasi guards this time. They do look up when standing guard.”

“Here.” Rainbow Dash tossed him something.

It landed at his hoofs. It was a pin of an equine skull with wings on the sides.

“Congratulations, you're now a Shadowbolt and your loyalty to the Queens is not to be questioned. If the guards have any complaints, they can take it up with Queen Nightmare Moon.”

Soarin' looked at her, then the pin. His eyes narrowed. “I can't trust you. You work for Nightmare Moon and you betrayed your friends.”

Rainbow Dash gritted her teeth. “I was not myself.”

“Ha!” Blast snorted. “Likely story!”

“Shut up!” the cyan pegasus growled. “You have no idea what I had to go through through thanks to Spitfire and her stupid medallion!”

“I don't know what you did to Spitfire but unlike you she would never turn traitor!” Misty said, glaring back at Dash.

“Wait...” Soarin' said. “She... Spitfire gave you the medallion?”

Rainbow Dash nodded, looking pained. “I broke free... and I want to help her, but I need help to do so...”

Soarin' sighed. He really wanted to go back to the cavern and see what this whole deal with Midnight was. “Let me check your wings and uniform,” he finally said.

“What?” Rainbow Dash stepped back. “Why?”

“I need to see if you have any medallions on you. I don't want to leave and find that you hit Misty and Blast with the Council's brainwashing voodoo.”

Dash snorted. “Fine.”

The two other mares looked at each other quizzically, but decided to remain quiet as Soarin' searched Rainbow Dash. She looked very annoyed as the Wonderbolt ruffled her wings and padded down every last inch of her flightsuit, but allowed him to do it.

“Satisfied?” Rainbow Dash asked blushing.

Soarin' nodded. “How did you free yourself?” he finally asked, looking at her in the eye. “I was told that the only way to break free was to die.”

Rainbow Dash knew why he was asking. "I... have a special skill, very old magic that allowed me to find help," she confessed. "Finally, Nightmare Moon destroyed the medallion. And I was free."

"We'll need to talk more," Soarin' said as he picked up the pin and walked towards the door.

"Soarin'?"

The pegasus stopped, but did not look back.

"I want to free Spitfire too."

The Wonderbolt nodded and stepped outside.

Rainbow Dash looked at the two mares, who were staring at her in confusion and suspicion.

"What?" Dash asked.

Misty narrowed her eyes. "You... didn't come here just to give that message to Soarin', did you?"

Dash shook her head. "I came to ask you to help me free Spitfire... and Luna and Celestia."

"How?" Blast asked.

"I want you to join the Shadowbolts."

o.O.o

Trixie cautiously walked towards 'it'.

In all her years in the road, listening to stories and legends that she could use for her shows, she had never heard of anything like this.

It was pony-sized, at least the very center of it was. It was egg-shaped, but clearly had no physical substance to it, it gave the feeling that it should be translucent, but the light emanating from it wouldn't allow anypony to look inside.

Bands of energy with strange glyphs constantly swirled around it. Some looked like cutie marks; a sun, a moon, stars, wings, others looked like they should be letters of some sort... runes, like the ones in the cavern.

As she approached, they became more focused, while the world around her shifted and seemed

to be distorted. She felt like the light was pulling her in. She could hear voices, or rather whispers.

She could not make out words, but they had a certain urgency to them, as if they were warning her of some danger and urging her to turn away, and at the same time pleading for her to continue and at the same time telling her secrets without telling her anything at all.

She found herself talking, or rather whispering back. Pure nonsensical words and babble that felt somehow significant, somehow answering the pleas, retorting to threats and making her fearful.

This was not for mortal eyes, even ghostly eyes. This had been created by forces greater than anypony had a right to witness.

Trixie tried to step back, but she couldn't. Her leg was forced forward. Once. Twice. It felt like her body was being stretched... like her soul was being stretched. Her thoughts became whispers, her vision became a blur of light and unidentifiable shapes, save for the bands of runes and glyphs.

She was... she was...

She felt somepony calling out to her, and realized immediately who it was, the most important pony... but she couldn't stop. "Big Mac... I don't want to leave you..." she managed to gasp.

She was gone.

o.O.o

Midnight watched, enthralled as Trixie took a step towards his objective. The energy tendrils extended and wrapped around the showmare, sparking with energy as her horn started to shine. He held his breath. This was it. Even he hadn't made it *that* far before...

"Trixie!" Big Mac was suddenly charging towards the mare and 'it'.

Midnight jumped in front of the stallion. "Stop, you fool! You can't get close to it! You'll be destroyed!"

"What have you done?" the draft pony asked, his voice strained.

"The only way of accessing the power in that was through a soul and she needed an anchor... she went ahead and I stayed behind to..."

"Stop lying."

Midnight froze as he looked past Big Macintosh towards the entrance to the room. There were two more ponies there. A mare he did not recognize bearing some resemblance to the stallion, and a black alicorn.

Nightmare Moon stepped in, stopping right next to Big Mac.

“Y-you brought her here?! Are you crazy? What sort of rebel are you?”

“I said,” Nightmare Moon narrowed her eyes. **“Stop lying, Midnight. I know all about the guardian and the purpose of the Council of Nightmares.”**

Midnight closed his eyes and looked down. Then he started laughing. “What do you think you know?” he spat, looking up at the alicorn. “What I told these fools? 'Rebels' please. A rag-tag group of ponies with no chance at actually achieving anything significant other than getting killed by their own stupidity.”

“Hey! Don't you talk about my brother like that!” Applejack growled, stepping up on Nightmare Moon's left side. She spared a glance at her brother, but noticed that his eyes were set on Trixie, who was slowly walking towards... something made out of light.

She tried being jovial. “Big Mac, your taste in mares...”

“Not now.”

Applejack's mouth clamped shut involuntarily. Her brother had *never* spoken to her like that. The farm pony looked at him and sorted her thoughts. She felt confused, angry and even jealous at the same time. Confused because she could not understand, in all honesty, how those two could have ever developed feelings for each other.

When had that happened? It was clear that her brother held deep feelings for the showmare, but as far as she knew they had never met!

She felt jealous because this was the first time her brother seemed like he loved somepony more than his sisters. It was silly, she knew he would always love her, they were siblings as surely as they were Apple family and it was a completely different kind of affection.

Lastly, she felt angry. Angry at Midnight for tricking Trixie and Big Mac and who knew how many others.

But right now was not the time to ponder. “Trixie!” she shouted. “Stop! Midnight tricked you!”

The unicorn chuckled. “She can't hear you, she's trapped.”

Big Mac suddenly rushed forward, and to Applejack's surprise, went through the unicorn. But just as he was about to reach Trixie, he was enveloped in bluish light and stopped cold.

"Trixie!" he groaned.

"I'm sorry, Big Mac," Nightmare Moon said. **"But I can feel the power emanating from the *âmbro*. If you take one more step forward your body will be destroyed."**

Midnight laughed. "Indeed!"

Nightmare Moon glared at him. **"You shall pay for what you have done. To Twilight and to Trixie,"** she looked at the paralyzed pony. **"And to Big Mac."**

"Then why is Trixie able to walk towards it without dying?" Applejack asked.

"Because she's already dead." Midnight answered. "I would have gone myself, but given what happened to me before, I think I would rather let her try her luck."

Applejack stared. Trixie was dead? Did Big Mac know this? She glared at Midnight. "What happened to you?"

Midnight snorted. "My body was disintegrated immediately."

"Big Mac! You get back here right now, mister!" the cowpony shouted at her brother.

"So you decided to use somepony else to see if they would survive it?" Nightmare Moon shook her head slowly. **"That is pathetic."**

"But effective." Midnight returned.

"Wait..." a new voice interrupted.

Applejack, Nightmare Moon and Midnight turned to look at the cavern, where Soarin' stood panting, having clearly rushed there. "You lied to us?!" he glared at the unicorn ghost. "And..." he looked at Nightmare Moon. "What is *she* doing here?!"

"Getting rid of the trash." Nightmare Moon said. Her horn glowing as a sudden force slammed into Midnight, making him stagger.

"H-how..." he coughed. "I'm a ghost!"

"And I'm a goddess," Nightmare Moon smirked, then frowned as she turned towards Trixie,

who was almost touching the egg-shaped energy. **“Creating a cambro requires ancient and powerful magic... had we had arrived earlier...”**

“You... cannot, stop me!” Midnight stood up. “I will remain here as long as I am in the service of my master!”

The alicorn's horn shone again and something scraped against the floor. The group turned towards the cloaked body on the floor as a medallion slowly slid out from under it under Nightmare Moon's call. **“Then, by all means, be gone!”**

The medallion shot towards the black alicorn. Midnight tried to catch it, forgetting in his desperation that he was unable to touch it as it flew right through him. Nightmare Moon's hoof caught it in mid-air and she smashed it on the floor of the cavern, breaking it into tiny fragments.

Midnight stood still, his eyes going wide, then locking on to the Goddesses'. They slowly warmed, his body sagged as if a huge weight had been taken off of him.

The unicorn started to fade, wisps of his very being slowly melting into nothing. He looked up and his eyes focused on something beyond their sight. His last words faded into the silence just as the last sliver of him disappeared. “Star Dancer...”

“No! Trixie!” Big Mac called as the unicorn's horn finally touched the egg-shaped energy.

“Big Mac... I don't want to leave you...” Trixie's voice drifted to them, full of sorrow.

Applejack's eyes were wide as she turned to look at the showmare that by rights she should have hated, but now just couldn't. Before her brother's eyes the unicorn faded away into the light.

A bright flash made most of the ponies present cover their eyes. When it was gone, they stared at the thing, which now truly looked like an egg. It still glowed from within, but now seemed to have a solid feel to it.

Big Mac, released from Nightmare Moon's hold now that the alicorn felt it was safe, slowly stepped up to it and lowered his head to touch it. “Trixie.”

Everypony stood there, shocked.

“W-what happened to her?” Applejack asked Nightmare Moon.

The Dark Queen shook her head. **“I do not know. We will have to wait and see.”**

“Um, guys? Sorry to interrupt but... didn't Midnight say his body had been disintegrated?” Soarin'

ventured.

“Yes?” Applejack nodded.

“Then... if his body was destroyed... who's under that cloak?” he pointed with a hoof towards the body covered by a cloak.

Nightmare Moon's horn shimmered with light once more. The cloak slowly drifted up revealing the body beneath it. “**Oh...**”

“Dear Celestia...” Applejack fell to her knees, she felt short of breath. “I... oh, why...”

Carefully, with the tips of her wings, Nightmare Moon lowered the lifeless eyelids, regret clear in her expression. She had seen so much suffering hitting so close to home... she closed her eyes.

“What did they do to you?” Applejack asked nuzzling the body tenderly. “You didn't deserve this.”

“Who was she?” Soarin' asked in a small voice, caught up in the feeling of the moment.

Applejack looked up at him, eyes red and puffy. “One of my best friends.”

“**My savior.**” Nightmare Moon whispered.

“Twilight Sparkle.”

o.0.o End Chapter 15 o.0.o

Thank you all for reading! Don't forget to leave complaints/comments/remarks/praises/notes/theories (love those) and such after you leave!

As always, thanks to my dependable editor Stephen Cawking who makes this story better every time he grabs a metaphorical red pen and goes at it. You're awesome, dude.

He has also written an interesting short story which you should definitely read, and can find here: [Regicide](#) give it a read and tell him what you think!

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