

Through The Eyes Of Another Pony

Chapter Five: The Bride of Chapter



Author's Notes: DON'T I JUST LOOK AWESOME? Another day, another chapter. Just to warn everyone, I'm going on a vacation so I won't be spending much time working on the fic as I'll be mostly with my friends and family. I'll try to get some work done, but yeah... For the next ten or so days, I'll be pretty occupied. You understand don't you? DON'T YOU!?

[Random Fanart! \(SFW\)](#) If anyone knows the source, please let me know at Lafteroth@hotmail.com

Another Note! I've heard that people are sending me emails and I'm not getting them! Apparently my email is on the fritz and is sending almost everything to junk for auto-delete! If you've sent me anything and I didn't respond, I apologize! D: Promise! I'll try to get this worked out after I'm back from vacation!

"You should have restrained him, Storm Wing," I heard Celestia say, completely ruining my *MLP: Fighting is Magic* dream by waking me up, "Why on Equestria did you attack him?"

"M'lady, forgive my rash decision," I heard some pony respond as I rolled over. He sounded young but as serious as a Grimdark tag, "Snowfall came to me saying that the princess was in danger and that a suspicious fire breathing unicorn was forcibly entering her room. I wrongfully assumed that he was trying to hurt her when I sensed him chasing her out of the courtyard."

"I see. I understand your decision, Storm Wing, and I approve of your willingness to act. But also, it's that same willingness that allows you take it too far," she replied gently, "I expect you to show more restraint in the future."

I opened my eyes and instantly regretted it. Light! BAD! Getting bucked in the face can obviously cause some serious migraines and today was no exception. I groaned as I slowly got to my feet, rubbing the spot where Captain Jackpony busted my chops. I went to pull out a smoke before finding out with absolute horror that they weren't on me. This day had just officially become a bad one, and I could already tell that somepony was going to catch hell for it.

"Of course, my princess," I heard him say as I began to look at my surroundings. I was in... well... It looked like a stable. Made out of iron. I'm pretty sure it was supposed to be a humiliating form of prison. To me, it was just funny. Well, at the time it just pissed me the hell off, but yeah, looking back, it was kinda funny. I searched through my magic mental map to find that this jail wasn't very far from the palace actually. Keep your friends close and your enemies closer, I suppose.

"Do as I ordered and come see me when he awakens. We've got to prepare for the worst," she said before I heard the soft sound of departing hoofclops. I wasn't sure if just one or both of them left (even one pony walking sounds like a multitude of hoofsteps). As I pushed on my unmoving stable door, I decided I did not feel like being contained. With that, I looked at my hoof and stared at it for a bit, channelling heat into it. It wasn't long before it turned red and I shook my head, not satisfied with that.

"Hotter," I told myself with an irritated snap. It didn't respond.

Expect it to happen.

Thanks, Luna, I'd almost forgot, I silently thanked her. With that in mind, I simply told myself as soon as my hoof got hot enough, we were getting out of here. Without a doubt, it began to flare up and turn white hot, crackling with magic. I'm not going to sugarcoat it, kids, I was in so pissy of a mood that I didn't even get that awesome feeling when I did something new and amazing. I just kept staring at it as it got hotter and when I felt it was good enough, I pressed it to the lock.

The lock slowly turned red. Then it turned white. Then it started to bend ever so slowly. This was taking too long, I told myself. I slammed my other hoof up there and began to do likewise with it and even then, it wasn't helping things move along very much at all. Finally, I began to breathe fire onto the damn thing with my two hooves pressing and within a few moments, the lock turned to butter and fell off the cage, hitting the stone floor with what sounded more like mud splattering than anything. I turned and gave that stable door a buck and sent it flying wide open. In retrospect, *Bad To The Bone* should have started playing right then, but it didn't. You disappoint me, yet again, Equestria.

"My prison not good enough for you, human?" I heard that same voice that had been talking to Celestia say as I stepped out, my very breath letting out wisps of flame.

Now, since this guy wasn't in the show, I'll go ahead and describe him for you, because this wasn't one of your run of the mill guards. First, take one of those stupid copy-pasta pegasus guards. Now, give their plated-armor a red trim with a violet star badge on the front (I guess a symbol of his rank). Instead of sky blue hair, his mane was bright electric blue with stark white streaks in it and his coat was bluish-white. I'm somewhat ashamed to say that he wasn't a huge ripped pony, either, but was pretty much the size of Rainbow Dash, frame and all. Hell, he didn't even look older than Fluttershy, which was odd if he was one of Celestia's 'oldest' guards. Another thing of note was that this guy had some seriously long hair. As in, the rivets in his neck barding had been left out and his mane was woven into the helmet going down the back of his neck and past his wings. It was that long. If I had not already had a serious problem with this pony, I would have been staring at him in awe (Because he looked pretty damn cool). As it were, though, I'd never wanted to hit a pony so hard in my life 'cause it was definitely that same jackpony that had blindsided me from before.

"Nope, it kinda sucks actually. Kinda like its current curator," I snapped angrily, "Now step aside, Sparky, before I lose my temper."

"That's Captain Storm Wing to you," he said, his expression bored and his tone flat, "And I'm afraid I can't do that. Especially with you so hot-headed right now."

I took a few steps forward before noticing that his visage wasn't just bored, it was unresponsive. I was entirely caught off guard by the development that Captain Storm Wing wasn't wearing a half-lidded bored expression, but rather, he was quite blind. The corn blue iris gave it away entirely. A scrawny, blind pony whipped my ass. This day just kept getting better!

"Why not? You going to try and stop me? Because I'm actually still agreeable enough to warn you right now, I've got no problems turning you into a simple clean-up job for whatever pony is out there with a broom-and-dustpan cutie mark," I threatened. I always did talk some serious smack talk when I was angry. Not necessarily cool smack talk, mind you.

"Please," the corner of his mouth raised a tad, betraying his amusement at my warning, "I've

chased hostile dragons out of Equestria and brought rampaging Behemoth Phoenixes to an early rebirth. I doubt you've got what it takes to match their brand of heat."

"Only one way to find out," I growled irritably. If I had just been a little more clear headed, I would have just cooled my hooves and defused the situation. As it were, however, I'll simply fast forward past this next part. Imagine here a fight that goes badly for me, where I find out that a pegasus half my size can whip my plot like a boss. And screw Captain Storm Wing. Magical tasing is cheating!

"Had enough?" he asked, gently nudging my prone plot with a hoof.

"I've never... hated a... pony before you," I said between pained breaths, "How do you mani-fest lightning... without unicorn... magic?"

"Took a few centuries to learn. It's basic pegasus weather magic on a much smaller, yet more focused scale," he replied before helping me off the ground and forcing me to stand back up, "Get it all out of your system?"

"Yeah," I admitted, not wanting any more of this fight at all, "How can you... see me?"

"Everypony and everything gives off an electromagic field. With a little creative use of my pegasus magic, I can sense it just fine," he explained. I could tell he was somewhat surprised that I caught onto it.

"Like an electric eel," I remarked, finally starting to breathe normally again, "That's... pretty interesting actually."

"Most ponies don't even pick up on the fact that I am blind," he commented with an appreciative nod, "Humans must be pretty quick. That trick with the tail was a new one on me."

"For all the good it did," I stumbled a tad as I tried to recover. I thought the migraine sucked. Let me tell you, when enough electricity runs through your body enough times, you will feel like you ran a marathon. A long one. Maybe even a marathon that consisted of multiple marathons combined, "I need my cigarettes. Tell me you have them?"

Storm wing pulled the box from his nothing, "I can only presume you mean these? What are they?"

"They're poisonous leaves wrapped in paper designed to burn slowly," I explained as I took them from him and lit one. I don't know why, but I felt compelled to show him how stupid I was for smoking them by explaining the entire process, "The smoke is intended to be breathed in through this filter on the back and cause feelings of ease or awareness and sometimes both. The chemicals in the leaves also create an addiction, so even if you want to stop using them, it

becomes almost impossible without serious motivation. Even with that, it causes serious mood swings when you do. Without these, I would eventually make those monsters you mentioned look like candles. Or try to, anyway.”

“Wow,” he gave a snort of laughter, “Whatever helps your pony float. Anyway, now that you’re good and calmed down, it’s time to come see the princess.”

“What?” I rubbed my latest bruise, glaring at him disapprovingly, “You mean you beat the hell out of me just because?”

“Wanted to take your measure. You’re smart. Your temper is a problem, but that’s understandable considering the situation. I’m fairly certain you’d have given me a harder time if you had been thinking more clearly,” he gave a wing shrug. His wings were pretty large for a pegasus of his stature, I noted. Not too much smaller than Celestia’s even, despite his size. I found myself wondering if wings just kept getting bigger with age. I was also wondering if it would hurt more should I decide to kick them really hard. ‘Why?’ you ask? No reason. Purely random thought. I get those sometimes.

“So... .. you just beat the hell out of me... .. Just because,” I repeated, taking a loooooong drag off that cigarette. That had to have been one of the best smokes I’d ever had. Even through all the pain, I could feel that slight rush of mentholated nicotine wash over me.

“Sure,” he said with a chuckle.

SCREW CAPTAIN STORM WING!

“You’re an ass,” I remarked before giving a sigh, the cigarette already helping me chill out, “Well, whatever, let’s go see Celestia.”

“*Princess Celestia.*” He gave a nod before turning to walk out. “Come with me.”

Easier said than done, I thought to myself as I tried to keep up with him. Actually, the keeping up part was easy. It was doing so while not whining like a baby as I did that was the hard part. Everything ached so badly thanks to Captain Taser Hooves, here. I was quite aware that focusing on pain just made it that much more unbearable, though, so I sucked it up and kept pace. At least I’m not lost thanks to Luna’s map, I told myself in a desperate attempt at consolation. Then, I remembered what had taken place and was suddenly wrought with worry over the indigo alicorn.

“What do we know?” I finally spoke as we made our way into the palace, crossing the entrance hall on our way to the throne room, “Is Luna alright?”

“I’ve no clue,” he flicked his tail a bit, causing it to pop with electricity. I’d call him a showoff

but... .. Yeah... Even *I'm* not that hypocritical, "We can't find her. We were hoping you would know where to look."

Of course they did. I'd just pop out the GPS on my phone and *OHWAIT*, "Why would you think I would know?"

"Because she said you would," he answered with another wing shrug. I swear, I think pegasi do that just to screw with less-winged ponies.

"You mean you caught up to her?" My surprise was rather evident.

"Of course I did," he gave an arrogant laugh, "There's not a pony I couldn't catch."

"Bet there is," my mind instantly jumped to Rainbow Dash, "Heard of a Sonic Rainboom?"

"Doesn't exist," he said quite plainly, not even blinking. I guess he didn't get out much. You would figure a pegasus in charge of some branch of military would be on the lookout for other good fliers.

"Oh, HELL YEAH!" I suddenly bust out, pointing in his face as we approached the door to the throne room. Not that he could see me pointing, "Seen it happen TWICE! Rainbow Dash would leave you eating dust!"

"Whatever," he really didn't take me seriously at all. I disapproved of his dismissal, "Compose yourself, you're about to appear before Princess Celestia."

"I know who I'm about to appear before," I said with a roll of my eyes before pushing the door open, "Princess, your Captain of the Guard could use a few sensitivity-awareness seminars!"

Celestia didn't look at all amused as I cantered in. Can't say I blame her. Her baby sister was probably off in God-knows-where having the mental breakdown of the century. Whether or not I did anything, it was still indirectly my fault. If anything for my carelessness. I took a drag off my smoke and shifted it over to the other side of my mouth before approaching the throne. Normally, I would have gotten rid of my cigarette long ago, but quite frankly, I was stressed. So very, very stressed. And I didn't see any No-Smoking signs anywhere, so to hell with it!

"I'll see about arranging that for him, No-Name," she said quite curtly, "And he's not a guard. He's Captain of the Sky Archons."

"What's a Sky Archon?" I tilted my head before giving it a shake and holding up my hoof, "Skip it, we've got more important matters on our hands. Hooves, whatever."

"Indeed, we do. My sister is gone, and we have your now-charred device to thank for that."

More elephants in the room being pointed out. Just what we needed, I thought as she continued, "By the time she reached the city, she took flight. Storm Wing caught up to her, but she resisted and he was unwilling to harm her in an effort to bring her back."

"I see." I glanced at Storm Wing and considered brohoofing him for playing it smart. But then I decided not to. Not exactly fond of the bastard. "What did she say about me and finding her? And how long was this after Sparkles, here, decided to blindside me?"

"About half an hour after I dragged your heavy carcass into your cell," he said in a matter-of-fact tone, though his words were hardly professional, "After trying to ground her, she lashed out at me. I was able to evade her, but Luna's no foal. She knew I wouldn't harm her, thus she made it impossible for me to get too close without doing so. After realizing how futile my actions were, I asked what it would take for her to come back. She stopped to think before telling me to get the nameless unicorn. When I asked where she would be, she called back saying that you would know where to find her."

"Indeed," Celestia nodded, "Now, before we continue. What exactly has happened here, my little human?"

Ideas for a new toy line in Equestria, anyone?

"I don't know," I shook my head, taking a drag off my smoke, "I have a few guesses, some of them pretty horrific. As for what exactly, I've got nothing solid so... I've no idea. The fact that she's able to speak, fly, and hold a conversation is a good thing. However, that may also end up being a bad thing. I just don't know. I have to find her."

"Agreed," she responded immediately, "Silverheart?"

The throne room door opened up and in walked that same silly silver guard that was kind enough to break my fall earlier. Upon pulling off her (sorry, I wasn't exactly giving enough of a damn when I first saw her to try to distinguish her gender) helmet and kneeling, she spoke loud and clear.

"Yes, your highness?" she asked, keeping her eyes lowered.

"Fetch my Sky Carriage for our guest to use. Captain Storm Wing, you are to escort him," she ordered.

"Oh, hell no!" I blurted, the Mareboro falling out of my mouth as my jaw dropped in dismay, "Celestia, you cannot be serious."

"*Princess* Celestia," Storm Wing growled, not appreciating the familiar way I addressed his Princess. Well, that was all I needed to know. Cross 'Princess' off the list for Words In My Vocabulary. We might salvage this day, yet!

“Silence, Captain,” she ordered curtly, before turning on me. She started pretty softly, but by the time she was done, she definitely did not sound so regal and pleasant, “Yes, my nameless friend. An escort. You may very well be the last hope of saving my sister from whatever she’s done. This isn’t up for debate, you will be protected, and you will do everything in your power to bring her back to me. I know you are not purposefully causing all of this mayhem in my darling Equestria, but the fact remains that you *ARE* causing it, nonetheless! So, if you give me any reason to doubt you, or cause me to think that you are incapable, I’ll have Storm Wing put you in a place that I can promise you know nothing of and where my beautiful sun will never grace your lovely grey face ever again! Are we clear?”

Daaaaamn~!

I gulped, “Crystal.”

“Excellent,” she said, narrowing her eye(s?) before aiming her horn at me and firing a beam from it, “This is to make it easier on you. Now go. I do not enjoy making threats, but rest assured, I’m a pony of her word.” (Anyone else have absolutely no problem believing that?)

I cringed away from the spell, but as soon as it hit me, I realized it was a restorative one. All the pain and bruises (THANK GOD) faded quickly and simply left feelings of empowerment. I took a deep breath before realizing that it had even removed the lung damage that the stupid cigarettes had afflicted me with. I don’t know if it was a side effect of the spell or just the relief from all the pain, but whatever the case, I was ready to take on an army. I felt amazing.

“Yeah!” I reared up and slammed down, snorting a bit of fire as I smiled widely, “Well, I’ll see what I can’t do with the boyscout! C’mon, Storm Wing!”

I kid you not, I was on top of the world. I turned and galloped out of the throne room with Silver Heart and Storm Wing slowly cantering behind me. I stepped back out into fresh air before finishing my smoke and flicking it (Didn’t even bother trying to figure out how, this time) into a nearby courtyard bush.

“I’ll return shortly,” Silverheart promised us before departing.

I cantered in place for a bit before rearing up on my back two legs a second time, this time to stretch with a loud groan.

“Feeling better, I see,” Storm Wing remarked before sighing as if he was about to do something he didn’t want to do, “Listen, I know you don’t like me. You don’t have much reason to. I just want you to know, I’m going to do everything I can to help. Just keep me in the loop and I’ll try to stay out of the way. I’m not stupid, I know you’re pretty much the only shot I have of bringing Luna back safely and I’m not going to let my pride screw that up.”

So now Storm Wing was suddenly being an okay guy. That didn't sit well with me. I hated not being friends with cool people. And he was a badass pony so not being friends with him already sucked. I didn't want to like him, though. I eventually sighed and turned to face the Sky Archon (whatever the hell that is).

"Look, Storm," I began to say before suddenly spotting *HIM* walking up the entrance hall. I paused for several seconds, staring at the pony headed towards the throne room before looking back at Storm Wing, "Uhhh... Actually, you want to help?"

"Of course," he was so serious. Quite the trooper.

I smiled deviously. As a brony, what I was about to do was my civic duty. Maybe not civic, but it was pretty much an opportunity that I would regret for the rest of my life, should I let it pass. Also, nopony would ever forgive me.

"Look the other way for ten seconds. I'm not going to run away and it's not like you couldn't catch me. Just look over there," I pointed off into the distance at the courtyard, where absolutely nothing resided beyond the palace decor.

Storm Wing decided to give me a rather skeptical look (>implying he was looking at all?!). When he opened his mouth to speak, I cut him off.

"Ah-ah-ah. Help, right? Trust me on this. This will make the entire day go by much more easily. Be right back," I promised him. Eventually, he took my word and stared out into the courtyard. Then I bolted. Not running away. No. No, I was running towards some pony. Had to reach him before he made it to the throne room. I could tell I wasn't going to be in time. Then I remembered that he wouldn't recognize me. Just had to delay him a little.

"Prince Blueblood!" I called out, causing the royal pony to stop just before the door. He didn't have any servants with him to open it for him, so I don't know why he was headed that way. I mean, it wasn't like *he* was going to open the damn thing, right? That was all I needed, "Let me get that for you, your highness!"

He paused and looked delighted to see somepony rushing to his pampering, but quickly recovered to looking oh-so-princely. I approached with a big smile and as soon as I closed the distance, it was on. BAM, I BUCKED THAT ROYAL PAIN-IN-THE-BUTT RIGHT IN THE FACE!

"THAT'S FOR MISS RARITY, YOU HORSE'S ASS!" I shouted at him as he fell back onto his haunches, more horrified than hurt. I'm pretty sure Celestia could hear the entire thing since I was just a few feet from the door, but as long as she didn't see it, I could play coy with her later, "I can't believe the Princess let you grow up to be such a complete waste of air! You're a disgrace to royalty of ALL races! I hope this wake-up call gets you somewhere in life, Prince

Black-Eye!”

I turned to canter back to Storm Wing, whom was shaking just a bit and I couldn't figure out why. Just as I figured out that he was actually trying not to laugh, I heard that albino jerk call out after us.

“C-Captain Storm Wing! Arrest th-that brute!” he commanded, his voice cracking a little from what I desperately hoped was efforts made to avoid crying.

Storm Wing froze up suddenly before turning about and grimacing. I figured this might happen, but I had already decided that it was worth it. That prancy self-absorbed prick needed it so badly and I was all too happy to be of service, even if it got me in trouble.

“I'm sorry, Prince Blueblood, but Princess Celestia has ordered me to keep him safe and assist him until he retrieves Princess Luna. Placing him under arrest would greatly hinder him from carrying out his mission, which would directly conflict with her majesty's orders. I'm afraid I cannot carry out your command,” he said apologetically, bowing low to show his regret, “Please, forgive my inability, sire.”

Okay. Now, Storm Wing was on my Awesome-Ponies list. The look that Prince Blueblood gave us was worth getting thrashed by that blind, beautiful blue boy a hundred times!

I blew that sorry bastard a kiss as our chariot arrived and brohoofed Silverheart (she was a little caught off guard, I think) in the shoulder before hopping on and zooming off into the sky. I didn't even realize I was controlling the damn thing until I was long gone into the air. Luckily, it was just like casting a magic spell and all that it required was for me to expect what I wanted to actually get it moving. I checked to see if Storm Wing was keeping up. He wasn't kidding when he was bragging about his speed. I don't think he was even trying very hard and this carriage was hauling like an airliner.

It felt good, flying did. I've always been one for speed and the wind in my hair, so this was absolutely divine, to say the least. I didn't have my shades on me, which was kind of a bummer, but meh. If that was the worst thing about the trip, I'd make it out just fine.

“Well, for not having been a unicorn for very long, you've picked up magic pretty handily,” Storm Wing commented as he landed beside me, “You're no foal, human.”

I started to point out that I had a name, but really, I didn't. Yeah, I know I still had a human name, but to be honest, it was nothing special. I mean, what sucks more about having a lame name is having a lame name that six other people have that you know personally. Ye be crushin' me need ta be a unique snowflake, fate!

“So, uh... Thanks for not throwing me under the bus back there?”

Weird thing about blind ponies and people, they're pretty damn good at poker faces. All he did was arch an eyebrow and I wasn't sure if it was surprise, irritation, contemplation, or if he just had the urge to wiggle a brow muscle. Pretty sure it wasn't that last one. Maybe.

"I assume you're thanking me for not arresting you for assaulting a member of the royal family," he confirmed before continuing, "Prince Blueblood is young and very foalish. He doesn't understand the weight of his responsibilities nor the consequences of his very selfish actions. I can't say I wouldn't have taken action against you, had I not been under conflicting orders, human. But, I will... admit... that I found it very hard to not laugh. And yes, he's had that coming for years."

"You're damn straight," I gave a nod, "So, to find Luna. Okay. That I can do. Just gotta think."

"*Princess* Luna. And what do you mean? You don't know?" he was a tad surprised, "She said you would know where to find her!"

"I think she was referencing that I would know *how* to find her and less specifically where to find her," I pointed out as I began contemplating, running a hoof over my chin.

"I hope that doesn't complicate things," Storm Wing did not like the possibility of uncertainty, I could tell.

"Meh, all it means is that she would go someplace that the rest of you ponies wouldn't go. A place that a human wouldn't be daunted by something that would prevent most ponies from visiting," I began to think as we soared along at LUDICROUS SPEED. It didn't take me long, however. There was only one place that I knew of that ponies actively avoided altogether.

"Oh," I gave a chuckle, "Of course."

"That simple, hmm? Let's hear it, pal," he asked with a wing nudge at my ribs. I'll take the time to mention, I'm tired of other ponies having wings. You're probably tired of hearing about it. That's okay, too.

"Oh, well it's quite simple, actually. It's a place where the ponies won't go for certain. Well, not without a damn good reason, anyway," I said with a nod, "Where the trees grow, the animals care for themselves and the clouds move... *All on their own~!*"

"What?" he wasn't catching onto the reference. Poor guy never saw (HAH!) the show. Go figure.

"The Everfree Forest, my sparky friend," I smirked as I pulled out a Mareboro, "Let's do this!"

With that, I cranked up the speed on Celestia's Awesome Sky-Carriage of Awesomeness™. Let

me tell you, that thing could pull some G's. I'm pretty sure I approached Sonic Flameboom speeds back there as I hauled off towards Ponyville, from which I could easily navigate myself to the Everfree Forest. One bad thing about such speeds is that you cut the lifetime of your cigarette down dramatically due to wind. Still, that was probably for the best. Didn't want to spoil my newfound health so quickly. You might think, 'Hey! This is a perfect time for him to quit!' but then I would remind you, 'Hey! I avoid all things mentally exhausting!'

As we passed over Ponyville, I decided to fly low. I was hoping to spot one of the Mane Six in hopes of getting a bit of guidance, as they've all be in the forest at least twice. Sure enough, as I passed over Town Square, I spotted Twilight pawing at the dirt near the crater. She looked like she had brought out her entire library and laboratory with her.

"DETOUR!" I yelled as I suddenly swung it around, throwing poor Storm Wing right off due to my rapid, unexpected turn.

I broke speed just above Twilight and laughed at Sparky as he oriented himself. Twilight spotted us and waved a hoof with an excited smile. I smiled at my sparky friend and lowered the Carriage.

"Cute," his visage was not a happy one. Which, of course, made me happy, in return, "Why are we stopping?"

"Phoning a friend," I answered as I hopped off beside the purple pony, "Twilight!"

I gave her a big pony hug, to which she laughed a bit, "Hey, No-Name. Did you learn anything from Princess Luna? And who's your friend?"

"This stick-in-the-mud is to be ignored," I assured her with a nod, "He's also blind, so you can make faces at him and he won't know! See watch!"

I turned and stuck my tongue out at him. Twilight had her usual reaction: Stare at me like I was nuts.

"How mature. Get your tongue back in your muzzle," he groaned before sighing, "Look, human, I'm not wasting time. Catch up to me at the Everfree Forest. I'll try and find Luna while you're busy playing hooky with your fillyfriend. Hopefully, by the time you're done blowing off your responsibilities, all you'll have to do is meet up with me and we can go straight to her."

"Whatever you say, Stick-in-the-mud!" I called out to him, smirking as he turned around and bolted...

Actually, let me explain. When I say 'bolted,' I don't mean he took off really fast. I mean it was like he made like a bolt of lightning and was gone. He also left us with a deafening thunder

crack and a charred spot where he once was. Now, I can safely say he was a bigger showoff than me.

“Wow,” Twilight blinked to clear up her eyes, “Flashy.”

“Yeah,” I muttered, a little worried that he might actually be a little faster than my favorite RoyGBiv’d pony. I then remembered what I had stopped for and turned to look at Twilight, “So, what did you find out? Also, are you free to come with me to the Everfree forest?”

“What? No, I’m still busy here! I’ve learned a lot, though!” she pointed at her book (It was as thick as War & Peace!) full of notes and began to recite her findings, “As you can see...”

“Woah, woah, woah. Hold up,” I cut her off, giving her a bashful smile, “Twilight, could you cast a spell to create an exact copy of this book? Like right now? I’m on a time budget.”

“Oh, to read on the way? Hmm, I guess so,” she said after a moment of contemplation, “Here, come this way. This crater’s radiating some form of magic suppressant.”

We walked about twenty feet away from the crater before stopping. If I wasn’t in such a rush, the entire idea of anti-magic would have made my blood run cold, but at the time, there wasn’t much of a chance of distracting me.

“I can’t promise anything but... Here goes,” her modesty was so cute!

With a pop, an exact replica fell beside the first. Let me channel Trixie here and ask you all, ‘*Was there ever any doubt?*’ I levitated it up and flipped through the pages for a few seconds before nodding, “Twilight, you are frigg’n OP, girl. I hope I get a sweetheart back home that’s half as awesome as you.”

“Uhh. Thanks?” she blushed, not knowing what to think of that before gasping, “You learned how to use magic!”

“Hells yeah! And now it’s time to burn some valuable literature!” I exclaimed before setting down it back down and stomping down about it, absorbing it like a pro.

“What are you doing?!” she gasped before seeing me tremble all over, sorting through all the information she had compiled, “What... did you do?”

We know Twilight’s smart. I don’t think anyone knows just *how* smart she really is. Just to give you a quick rundown (I am summarizing and skipping so much here, you just haven’t got a clue). She had notes, measurements, hypotheses (Yeah, that’s the correct way to spell the plural form. I would know. It was in Twilight’s notes!), results of many many many experiments (yeah, it was that many. Like... Dozens.), anti-magic equations, a few solid theories on the effects of prolonged exposure to what she called the

'antimagic radiating submatter henceforth known as Inmanipulon,' the process of how the radiating dirt prevented magic (I can't even pronounce some of these words), the interactive process between the anti-magic and magic radiation which she called 'Manipulable Antisubdimensional-Resonance Relativity,' possible applications concerning antimagic uses if made controllable, I'm boring you, aren't I? Well, I understood most of it simply because she was *that* thorough explaining every last detail, with little over two hundred footnotes and references to books, laws, and theories.

TL;DR - Twilight knows more about magic than anything you know about anything. By a long shot. (Seriously, where did all those botched-spell fics even come from?)

As I tried to contend with the rush of information, I felt Twilight's hoof rest onto my shoulder. It was like choking down a dry peanut butter sandwich with my mind. After a good two minutes of trying, I simply forced my mind to think about ponies to occupy it with something else. Luckily that seemed to work just fine and I was overjoyed to discover that just the thought of ponies made my life so much easier yet again. It took another moment to gather my thoughts before accessing the information once more, this time choking the flow of information more fluidly.

The high points were:

- 1). It was new. Never before had such a thing as anti-magic ever existed in Equestria.
- 2). It could be overpowered with enough magic to counter balance, but the ratio was staggeringly sided towards the anti-magic.
- 3). It was composed of undocumented elements.

"Ow," I said as my eyes rolled back into my head for a moment, "Twilight, how long have you been out here?"

"About eleven hours," she answered with bashful smile, looking somewhat ashamed for having done so.

"It shows," I responded, giving my head a shake to clear it up a bit, "Wow, that's pretty amazing, to be honest. Okay, this anti-magic..."

"Inmanipulon," Twilight corrected with a hopeful smile.

"I'm... I'm not going to call it that, Twilight," I shook my head with a chuckle, "Anyway, see if you can determine the source of this stuff and I'll be back to help with speculation and theories. I can already tell you a couple of these are wrong. Also, since y'all are gonna be busy, who can I hit up to help me navigate the Everfree Forest?"

"Um, Twilight. Excuse me, but I got everything you asked for," I heard a quiet, familiar voice peep up behind me, "I... I'm sorry, am I interrupting?"

It wasn't even a thought process, really. Stoic just stepped aside as Lafter barrelled right into my immediate decision making. I instantly shrieked like a woman and turned to wrap my hooves about Fluttershy's neck, causing her to seize up like I had thrown cold water on her. I was shaking all over, and to say that I was out of control was a practice in understating.

"FLUTTERSHY!" I can't say I even recognized my voice.

Fluttershy dropped the basket of whatever she was carrying and thankfully did not start flailing in panic (The basket, nor it's contents were Fluttershy, so I did not care about them).

"N... No-Name, you're going to give her a heart attack!" Twilight protested, looking rather distraught at my lack of personal space respect.

"I'm so sorry!" my voice became deadly serious. I didn't let go, I just kinda stopped all the bouncing and shaking, "Fluttershy. I apologize. Do you accept my apology? I will cry if you say no."

"W-What?!" the poor confused pony gasped. *Even 'er gashps are grasheful~!*

"You don't want me to cry do you?" I pleaded with a whine, sounding extra ridiculous in my opinion. I know, it was way too much. I was lost in the moment. My apologies to everyone.

"N... N-N... N-No?" she stammered eventually.

"I'm sorry for scaring you," I was still hugging her like a champ.

"It's... It's... ... It's alright," she finally muttered, giving a hesitant laugh.

"I'mma let you go. Don't run away, please. I need your help to save the princess. You want to help save the princess, right?" I begged, struck with the idea that she could be my guide! Time spent with Fluttershy! It was like Christmas! Only 20% co-... You get the idea.

"No-Name! Stop that this instant!" I heard Twilight cry out at me. I'm sorry, Twilight, No-Name is not available at the moment. Please leave your name and number and he'll get back to you as soon as possible.

"What?! That's your name?!" Fluttershy didn't seem to trust me very much. And here I was being so nice.

"Help me, Fluttershy! You're my only hope!" I urged her.

"I give up!" Twilight finally left me alone. See, she is a smart girl.

“O-Okay! I’ll help!” Fluttershy promised, “J-Just let me go! Please!”

I disengaged from Fluttershy with a squeak-smile (DAMN IT, THERE IT WAS AGAIN!). She looked quite frazzled, standing at the ready to dodge in case I lost control again. I sat on my haunches and smiled happily at her before nodding, “Right. Then we best get going. Princess Luna needs our help.”

“R-Right now!?” she looked absolutely horrified.

“Yes, of course, ‘R-Right now!’ Princess Luna won’t save herself,” I nodded enthusiastically, “C’mon!”

“But, uh...” she *still* didn’t trust me! After all we had been through! Yeah, I know. Shut up.

“Twilight, please tell her I’m not dangerous,” I said with a pout. Man, looking back, even I can say I was acting pretty damn weird.

“Ugh. Fine. But only because you actually *do* need a guide,” Twilight rolled her eyes before looking to Fluttershy, “I know, Fluttershy, he’s quite bizarre, but he’s harmless. Just don’t stand close to him when he breathes that paper roll of his. It smells awful.”

Smoke? Around Fluttershy? What kind of barbarian did she take me for?

“There you have it, my lovely pink-haired friend!” I exclaimed before hopping back onto the Carriage, “Let’s go be heroes!”

Fluttershy’s jaw dropped a bit as she tried to think of something to say before looking back at Twilight, who was already back to work at the crater. I gave an encouraging smile, to which she sighed miserably and got onto the cart beside me.

“No-Name,” I heard Twilight call out after me.

“Yes, my pretty purple pony pal?” I smiled over at her, only to grimace at the glare I got in return.

“If anything happens to Fluttershy, you will be held responsible,” she swore to me. The fire in her eyes kinda made me feel like a small match in comparison.

After recovering from the initial shock, I smiled and nodded, “Of course, Twilight. Trust me, I wouldn’t be able to live with myself if I let something happen to the kindest pony in both our worlds.”

“I’m just warning y-,” she started to say, cutting her eyes at me.

“Good heavens, look at my wrist, is that the time? We’d best be going!” I laughed loudly before zipping off, entirely uncomfortable with being on the business end of Twilight’s horn.

Fluttershy was not used to riding, I noted, because she grabbed me in shock, to which she felt even less safe and instantly let go. I laughed and slowed it down a bit for her, cracking my neck as I let the wind catch my mane.

“So, anyway, here’s the rundown,” I began, nodding quite seriously, “Princess Luna’s pretty unstable right now and she’s in the Everfree Forest waiting to speak to me. I’ve never been in the Everfree Forest and since you live right on the edge of it, I figured you would know how to navigate it pretty well.”

Fluttershy stared at me for several seconds. Apparently, my change in attitude was a little sudden for her and after thinking upon my words, she nodded timidly.

“How do you know my name?” she queried me. Damn it, the track record was so good, nobody had asked that yet! Fluttershy is the c-c-c-combo breaker!

“It’s uh... It’s complicated,” I started, trying to think up an elaborate ruse. I could have just said Twilight told me or something, but as I turned to look in those big, questioning turquoise eyes, I’m not sure I could have handled it if she ever found out that I lied to her, “You see, I’m not from this world. And... I... Ah, hell.”

“What’s ‘hell?’” she asked, tilting her head cutely.

OMG BORDERLINE FLUTTERCUSSING!

“Don’t say that word, Fluttershy, it’s a bad word.” I instantly informed her, internally berating myself out for not having shown some restraint, “I have bad habits, you don’t want to mimic them.”

She looked so chastised, I don’t think I could have yelled at her and got a more intense reaction without her actually running away in tears, “S-S-Sorry.”

“Oh... No. Nononono. Please, do not Fluttercry. I might not survive that,” I felt weak at whatever you call a pony’s knees. (Are they just knees?) What had I done?!

“What?” the very word seemed to [confluttershy](#) her even more, which thankfully distracted her from her sadness.

“Nothing. Here’s the truth, Fluttershy, I come from a world where we watch... I guess they’re not just... Whatever, we watch other worlds for entertainment, pleasure, inspiration, education, and

a sense of desire to relate to ourselves,” I said with a helpful smirk, “You’re pretty famous where I come from.”

“W... What?!” she looked utterly put out at the thought of being famous again. Also, she said ‘What’ a lot, “W-Why am I famous?!”

“Because you’re the kindest, cutest, sweetest, soft-hearted pony ever,” I replied with a laugh, smiling at her, “If somepony can’t relate to you, they want to protect you, if they can’t protect you, they want to empower you. You’re an idol. When you faced down the dragon, you were inspiring. When you stared down the cockatrice, you were a hero! When you... Well, you get the idea. In short, Fluttershy, you’re pretty awesome. And I’m sorry about the scare back there with all the hugging. You’re just that much of a positive influence on a lot of lives. At least I didn’t pass out this time. Rainbow Dash just caught me off guard so much.”

Her eyes were about as big as baseballs as she stared at me in awe. She eventually smiled a bit and looked down, all bashful and adorable.

“I guess... that... that doesn’t sound so... bad, actually,” she murmured, mostly to herself.

“It sure doesn’t,” I confirmed as we neared the edge of the Everfree Forest, “Also, don’t worry about me getting scared or anything. Where I come from, all animals, plants, and clouds are like the Everfree Forest.”

That seemed to disturb her on a deep level.

I lowered the Sky Carriage just outside the forest and hopped off with a nod, “Alright, let’s rock.”

“We’re um... not going to fly?” she asked as she followed suit.

“Nah, she’ll think it’s Celestia or one of her guards,” I reasoned, “Which is also why I didn’t bother stopping my escort from going on ahead of me. See, she wants to speak specifically to me.”

“Why is that?” she arched her eyebrow.

“Because she did something silly, and I’m quite possibly the only person... Or... pony, whatever... that can relate to the knowledge she now holds. Well, at least the only one in Equestria,” I began to make tracks, already wanting a cigarette, “Lead on, Yellow-One. My first guess is the ruins that used to house the Elements of Harmony!”

We continued to make small talk as we entered the forest. She mostly pointed out the flora and fauna, letting me know what was safe and what wasn’t. She also gave her opinions on what was cute, which was just about everything that wasn’t absolutely horrendous (in which case it was still

'nice'). Luckily, The Nightmare didn't pull a load of hijinks trying to slow us down or something, since that would have just made me want a cigarette even more. As we got further in, the sky itself seemed to darken. I went to check my phone for the time before rolling my eyes, remembering I didn't have it anymore!

Also, news flash, either the Everfree Forest isn't that big, or Fluttershy is an amazing guide. Either way, it did not take us long to make it to that chasm right before the Ruins of the Ancient Castle of the Royal Pony Sisters (Yeah, I'm not making that name up.). The rope bridge was still intact, it seemed, so I just walked right across. Fluttershy (amazingly) elected to fly alongside me, causing me to wonder if she had toughened up just a little. The answer to that unspoken question is no. She had not. For when the skies began to thunder and a certain annoying purple cloud zipped right on past us, her wings shut right up.

"Fluttershy!" I gave a shout as I leaned over the rail to catch her tail with my mouth. Despite all evidence to the contrary, Fluttershy is not as light as a butterfly, or even a hundred butterflies. In fact, she weighs just as much as a pony should! Which I was barely able to hold onto without falling off the bridge myself, "Fra' 'or 'ings!"

Her response was to flail in a panic. Apparently, Rainbow Dash was not kidding when she said that was Fluttershy's answer to everything back in that dress episode. I mean, my heart goes out to the poor thing and all, but this was seriously starting to wear on my jaw.

"Frap! 'or! 'ings!" I ordered as hard as I could through the pink fluffy tail.

That's when I heard Luna scream from inside the ruins. Oh. Dear. God. I did *NOT* want to have to make a choice here.

"FRUDDERSHY!" I gave her tail a jerk to try and get her attention, "'OU 'AFF TO FRY! PRINTESS ROONA ISH IN DROUBUL!"

I can only hope that she just couldn't understand what I was saying and not simply letting her fear control her so completely. Luckily, it didn't matter for that was when that blessed blue idiot showed up trailing a streak of lightning behind him. Captain Tas... Storm Wing. Yeah, he's not so bad, I'll admit. He flew beneath Fluttershy and reached out his hooves to take hold of her.

"C'mere, sweetheart," he said reassuringly. Fluttershy attached herself to him like she'd never let go in a million years, trembling like a self-playing maraca. He looked up at me as he strained a tad with his new passenger, "Human, The Nightmare is headed this way."

"It's already here," I called back as I turned to dash away, "Get her out of here, it may already be too late! And warn Princess Celestia!"

I heard him call out after a moment's hesitation, "Don't bother coming back without the

Princess!”

“Cross my heart and hope to fly!” I stuck my tongue back out at him before looking back ahead of me.

Yeah. Heroics. I’m stupid like that.

I barrelled towards the wooden entrance and turned it into ash with a bit of firebreath, before tearing up the grassy atrium behind it, still galloping as fast as I possibly could. As I looked outside, I noticed the sky began to brighten somewhat again, and that the thunder had entirely stopped. Running up the stairs to that final tower, I could hear The Nightmare scream out in frustration and rage. Luna was fighting back, it seemed. I was hoping that she was beating the evil out of that damn cloud.

Remember when I said I had no stamina? I wasn’t lying. By the time I made it up all those damn stairs to the farthest tower, I was sweating from pores I didn’t even know I had and doing a fine impression of Twilight Sparkle from the day before. So much for heroics. I finally stumbled out the last few steps into the Hall of Harmony (totally made that one up!) and looked to see Luna and The Nightmare standing off like the start of a round of Street Fighter or something.

“Whoo~!” I cried out, happy that I wasn’t too late. Not sure why, it wasn’t as though I was going to do anything besides pull out a cigarette and sit my tired plot down, “That... .. I am so... *huff* out of shape.”

“It’s the beast!” The Nightmare spat in its spooky formless voice.

Luna was staring at me as though she couldn’t decide if she was happy to see me or not.

I lit my cigarette and wiped my brow, “I was... *gasp* scared I wouldn’t be... *wheeze* in time. You okay, L.... Luna?”

“After what you’ve done to her?!” The Nightmare laughed, “What a question!”

“Sorry, I... I was speaking,” I gulped a bit after my first drag, starting to ease somewhat, “To Luna. Not... the cliché villain with... its cheesy lines. Hush and let the... *cough~!* big ponies talk!”

Luna glared a bit, her gaze switching between the both of us. She gave a shudder all over before suddenly snapping aloud at no one in particular, “I’m... I’m not okay! I c-can’t... even think s-s-straight!”

“I’m kinda... surprised you can think at all,” I admitted with a nod, “Rainbow Dash is obviously... not the Iron Pony after all.”

“Princess Luna, do not let his soothing words sway you from what you know you must do!” The Nightmare spoke urgently, “Together you and I can accomplish just that.”

“Oh, brother... If... I don't have a heart attack first,” I said, holding a hoof over my chest, still panting rather hard as I rolled my eyes, “I think the cliché... might kill me.”

“Shut up!” they both shouted at me in stereo.

“Mkay,” I nodded, taking another puff.

“I c-can't trust you, Ni-Ni... ... Nightmare,” she turned to the mist and glared, still quaking all over, “I know that much after a th-thou-thousand years.”

“But you also know I am no human!” it reasoned, starting to slowly float her way, “You know what they will do should they find their way here as we found them! Look at what its done to you!”

I snorted mirthfully, shaking my head. I know I played a part in it, but I know Luna wasn't stupid enough to discount her own accountability in the matter.

“That's far e... enough Nightmare! And y-you!” she turned to me, “W-Wuh-Why did you lie to me!?”

I hung my head a bit, sighing softly, “Just... trying to protect you... And all the other ponies. There's a lot of things that take place where I come from that I'm not entirely proud of.”

“You see!?” that annoying mist bellowed, “Even the beast can not deny its own race's corruption!”

So then I stood back up and took off the kiddy gloves.

“Honestly? I mean, really? You're trying to sell to Luna that you're the lesser of two evils? You? The fiend that poisoned her mind for a thousand years,” I'd heard enough of this bullshit.

“You have d-,” it started to say before I continued as though I weren't listening (I really wasn't, actually.).

“You, that tried to overthrow the throne *the very minute* you broke free!” I snapped, cantering a few steps forward and taking a drag off my Mareboro.

“It was for the greater good!” it responded, almost so quickly as though it had heard this argument before.

“And despite all that, you’re the pot calling the kettle black?!” I barked out, pulling the smoke from my mouth and using it to point at the Nightmare, “You’re literally the very *IDEA* of what ponies think of when they think of evil! And you’re trying to tell us that you’re not so bad? That *I’m* the fiend here?”

“You are!” it didn’t sound so certain all of a sudden. And it was quite aware that we could tell.

“That me, the guy who really has no stake in this world and is rushing to Luna’s aide in her time of need, is the ‘Beast,’ here?” I yelled as I dropped my cigarette onto the ground and crushed it with a fiery stomp, “Are you even listening to what you’re saying?”

“Silence! Silence, you monster!” it repeated over and over, trying to cut me off.

“Are you even sentient enough to know what sort of drivel it is that you’re spouting!?” I shouted above its protests, “Are you even aware?”

“I... SILENCE!” it began to pulse in frustration before starting to move at me, “NO MORE, YOU UNNATURAL ABOMINATION!”

“Or are you just a base incarnation of destruction and entropy that will grasp at any straw it can find?” I implored, snorting flame and cutting an accusatory glare at The Nightmare, “Perhaps I’m wrong but let’s flip this coin! Perhaps you’re just seeing what I *COULD* become! Perhaps you’re seeing me become *YOU!* Perhaps it is *YOU* that is the unnatural one here!”

“RAAAAAAAAAAAGGGGHHH! ENOUGH!” It suddenly dove at me, “I BROUGHT YOU TO THIS WORLD! AND I WILL REMOVE YOU FROM IT!”

Now, fillies and gentlecolts, I was very interested in where this was going. I dove right back at it, ready to throwdown like a champ. I swear, I think being a fire pony just brought the violent side out of me. I did not get my chance, however, for Luna blasted The Nightmare away with a big beam of light that looked potent enough to knock chunks out of a bulldozer. The Nightmare screamed out as it was thrown against the wall, where it was then pinned thanks to Luna’s next spell. It looked... like a blue strobe-light, really. Anti-Nightmare Flashy spell; Very handy.

“Y-Yuh... You lied t-to me... A-And I... W-Was almost sstupid enough t-to-to trust yuh... you again!” she brokenly yelled at The Nightmare as it began to take form and audibly strain against the light. Surprisingly enough, it slowly shaped into the armor that Nightmare Moon had worn, only there was nothing wearing it, “You d... d... did bring him huh-here! You s-seh-said they w... were conspir-ring against Equest... Equestria!”

The disembodied armor began to laugh, still occasionally groaning against Luna’s spell, “Yes, Princess Luna. I... I brought him here. All it takes is one. I chose even one of the str...

stronger, kinder ones.”

Thanks, I guess?

“Why?” I asked, stepping closer as my eyes strained against the light.

“It takes only one,” it replied, still laughing weakly, “Just one. And Equestria will crumble. Less... than two days since your arrival and... You’ve c... corrupted the Princess. How much more proof does... one even need?”

“I d-did it to muh-myself!” she argued, stamping a hoof and empowering the flickering light.

“The wa... way does not matter,” cracks began to appear in the armor, causing it to whimper somewhat, “Aaah! I f... finally have my r... revenge!”

“You h-have nothing!” Luna cried, strengthening the spell’s potency further yet, “This iss... is the end, Nightmare!”

“You... Only... Bring... Proof to my words!” the cracks began to cover the armor as the spell began to slowly break it apart.

Like a brick, it hit me that it was right. Luna was going to destroy The Nightmare. I don’t know to this day whether or not I made the right decision, but I rushed over and knocked Luna over with a shove of my hooves, disrupting the spell. The Nightmare took advantage of its life-saving liberty and sped out the closest window into the Everfree Forest.

“What ah-are you d-doing?!” Luna shrieked at me, jumping up and shoving me as I had done her.

“Stopping you from doing something you might regret later,” even though that was the exact reason I had done so, my words sounded pretty hollow.

“T-That w... was muh-my decision to make!” she turned and gave me a buck to the chin. I am so very abused. Not certain, but I’m pretty sure I deserved it all.

“Ow,” I answered, not sure what else to say.

Luna suddenly gasped, realizing what she had done and covered her mouth with a hoof as she looked back at me. It was a blow to the heart to see her start to tear up as she fell back on her haunches and shut her eyes.

“I’ll be okay,” I promised her, walking around to sit down in front of her, “Seriously, I’ve had worse. And I understand. It’s fine.”

"It's not fuh-fine!" she hollered, breaking down into a sob, "What h-have I duh... done to myself!?"

I reached out a hoof and set it on her shoulder, "You bit the proverbial fruit of knowledge. And it's messing with you. But it's not the end of the world. Yours or mine."

"I j-just h... hit you," she lowered her head as her tears began to drip onto the dank stone floor, "I... I n-never hit any... anypony before! And I... I almost k... k..."

"Yeah. You almost did," I nodded, smiling at her before lifting up her chin to look at me, "And I stopped you. Intentions or not, it didn't happen. You can't be punished for something you didn't do. And you don't even hit as hard as my big sister, so I don't think that lovetap counts either."

She gave another sob as I wiped her tears away with a hoof. Not sure how a hoof does that, but it did, "Y-Yuh... You are s... so s-stupid."

"God, if I only had a dollar every time I heard that," I reminisced, smirking at her.

Her sobs were interrupted with a laugh (I felt pretty damn good about that, actually. I kid you not, that was up there with brohoofing Dash.). She looked back down for a moment and sniffled a bit before wiping at her nose.

"What was it like?" I asked, knowing she would know exactly what I was referencing.

"Too much," she shook her head, "I'm th... t-tens of thousands of years old. Hundreds of t... thousands couldn't have prepared me. I... It was like reading a billion books at once... In a t... thousand d... d-different languages. I wa... wasn't even... Ugh... I h-hate s... stuttering!"

"It's kinda cute, actually," I stuck my tongue out at her.

Wrong joke! She hoofed me right in the shoulder hard enough to knock me onto my back as I laughed. Celestia, I'm sorry; your healing spell was for naught.

"Y... You're s... so happy!" she snarled, turning away from me as I sat back up with a chuckle, "How... How i-is that p... p... possible?"

"Luna, my silly filly," I said as I pulled out another cigarette with a smile, "I told your sister something along these lines. Where I come from, bad things happen. All the time. This may sound bad, but think along the lines of a stroke and what that does to people. That's rough stuff. This? Yeah, it's rough. And it's going to change your life. But you gotta take the good with the bad and only let the good get to you. Like a good/bad filter."

Luna coughed a bit, clearing up the last of her tears as she glared at me out of the corner of her eyes, "I s... still think y-you're stupid. Nameless jerk."

"Yeah, well," I nodded in consensus before lighting my cigarette, "I'm still the coolest human you've ever met."

She rolled her eyes, not able to keep herself from smirking, "That's really h-how you f-face it. Juh-just... block out the bad stuff."

"More or less," I gave a shrug, "I mean, don't ignore it like it isn't there. You still have to face it. Just don't let it affect you. You'll always be the one in control. Always keep in mind, the more crap you let roll around in your head, the more it will get to you."

"S... simple as that," she scoffed, shaking her head as if to say I was crazy. Like so very many ponies before her.

"Eh... It's slightly more nuanced than that, I admit," I took a drag with a so-so wave of my hoof, "But it only gets easier with time."

"Like antivirus for the b-brain," she suggested.

"More like a feel-good firewall," I joked a little, doing the famous pony-shrug.

"A firewall?" she seemed to think a bit, as if trying to remember what that meant, "Yeah. F-Firewall."

"Uh, yeah," I nodded, arching an eyebrow, "That's what I said."

"Well, we s-should get back to C-Canterlot," she said before pausing and tossing a wink my way, "Firewall."

I winced as I realized what she had just done. Pinkie Pie was going to be so completely devastated when she later discovered that she didn't get to name me after all.

[Chapter Four!](#)

[Chapter Six!](#)