

I'll Never Let Go

A "My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic" fan fiction

*Written by **Autumn Wind***

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It was that day again. The prison vessel had plunged into shadows and risen again onto Equestria seven times since her last visit. Celestia observed the surface of the moon as she hurried through the void, carried by powerful magic. A single mare sat in the gray dust, waiting for her, looking up at the sky.

High above Equestria, the moon had always been a beautiful sight. However, its surface could only be described as unwelcoming, nothing but grey dust and dark sky, coldness and shadows. Though the magic barrier restraining her to the surface protected Luna from the constant rigors of open space, it was no place to spend a day, let alone several hundred years.

In a flash of bright light, Celestia's physical form manifested in the moon's sky. With a

muted thump, the white alicorn landed, raising a cloud of dirt around her landing. Her expression showed deep worry, but a gleam of hope twinkled in her eyes. This time, things would work out differently. She was sure of it. Taking a deep breath, she set down the wicker basket that her magic had held afloat next to her.

Today was Monday, and just like every Monday for the past few hundred years, Celestia had flown out into the cosmos to bring the Mare in the Moon some food, sisterly affection and a chance at repentance. Though their nature as goddesses absolved them from the need to eat, it helped them keep a better disposition and kept their powers at peak capacity. Therefore, she mostly brought it as a gesture of good will. Every week, she hoped to share it with Luna. With the events of last week, she just knew that this time, she would get to. They would eat together, and then they would head back to Equestria and announce the great news to the ponies; Nightmare Moon was no more.

“Celestia! You came!”, a young voice sounded.

“Luna?” Celestia couldn’t help but exclaim. Had her hopes finally come true? It seemed too good to be true. Maybe, just maybe, it was real this time. Celestia knew it was more than likely a trick by Nightmare Moon, but she wanted it to be true. If it really was Luna, every millisecond of affection more was worth risking falling into a trap.

“Sister!” the filly-looking goddess squealed as she galloped towards her adored sibling.

“You came for me!”

“Oh... Luna... I knew that someday, just someday, I’d find you here instead of Nightmare Moon. Was it the telescope I got you? Did that let you see how much ponies like your night? What was it?”

Luna smiled and mirrored Celestia’s gallop, eagerly moving to meet her sister.

“Yes! I looked down on Equestria at night and I saw the ponies partying and having fun, and the stargazers making their maps. It made me see how much Equestria loves me! I’m sorry, sister. I’m so sorry I ever doubted you.”

Overjoyed, Celestia stepped forward and wrapped her forelegs around her sister, pulling her into a deep hug. Luna returned the gesture of affection, with a sweet, relieved smile on her face.

With her head draped over her younger sister’s shoulder, Celestia couldn’t see the smile slowly melt into a vicious, sadistic grin. In a flash and a scream of anguished rage, the filly nearly doubled in size, becoming every bit as tall as her solar counterpart.

Celestia’s eyes shot wide open as her “sister” pulled her head back and gave her the most horrible of stares.

“Well, well. It seems you’ve fallen for this one again, haven’t you, Celestia? This time, I’m not letting you go. I’ll strangle you with my bare hooves, and take the power that rightly belongs to me. I’ll take back those hundreds of years you’ve stolen from me! I’ll rip them one by one, right out of your soul! I’ll never let go, not until you stop breathing!”

Nightmare Moon’s legs wrapped solidly around Celestia’s neck. The dark mare was using all her strength trying to finish things in the simplest, most brutal way. However, something just wasn’t right. Her assailant was barely exerting any pressure on her throat. It only took a token effort for Celestia to escape the Mare in the Moon’s grip.

Week after week of screaming her rage out into space and desperately trying manner after manner of escape had taken a severe toll on Luna’s body. Her horn had gone dull

and no longer provided any magic talent. Her wings had atrophied and could no longer carry her through the air. Her mane hung limply, no longer floating or shining.

Celestia spoke coldly and stoically. Only her strong willpower kept her from showing troubling disappointment. She didn't want to show weakness. She needed to stay strong.

"Nightmare Moon. After the first hundred times you used this trick, I should certainly have seen through it. Shame on me for being so trusting."

Nightmare Moon was hunched over, wobbling with every step. She dragged herself across the ground, exhausted, retreating from Celestia in defeat. Stopping a few meters away from her uninvited guest, the somber goddess offered a mocking, emaciated smile.

"Yes, Celestia. You were always so blind. Unable to recognize your sister's sorrows. Unable to notice her envy. She turned murderous, and you still didn't notice. I could throw your sun at you, and you wouldn't even see it coming."

Celestia's only answer to the mockeries was a blank stare. She refused to give Nightmare Moon the satisfaction of getting to her. After so long, Nightmare Moon had exhausted her notably large vocabulary of invectives and insults. This time, the fallen moon princess had resigned herself to insults the like of which were often heard in elementary schools around Equestria.

Raising a single eyebrow, she questioned, "Why must we go through these tricks and games every time I come see you? Can we not simply talk?"

Nightmare Moon's smug grin collapsed into a grimace. Her teeth ground against one another. She approached her sister hesitantly, slithering ever closer. She hissed words of fury, slowly turning into fully voiced anger.

"I don't want to talk to you! You've come to mock me once more! Is this sequestration not a sufficient punishment, Celestia? Was banishing me not enough for you? How dare you show your face here again? What more do you want from me, sister? You've taken everything! My powers, my strength, my freedom; I have nothing left!"

Celestia turned her back on Nightmare Moon. "The only thing I took from you was your ability to hurt our subjects. You took away your strength by yourself. Your rage and anger are what exhaust you so much. If you would only stop to breathe and think quietly, perhaps you would not be so fatigued."

Nightmare Moon's eyes wandered across the surface until they met the basket. "Food. Again? Really? Ridiculous." With a single swipe of a dull horn, the basket sparked with magic for a moment before detonating into a burst of smoke, scattering the produce that had been brought within, and shattering the crystalline water bottle.

Celestia sighed, still refusing to look at the pony that had once been her sister. She had expected such defiance. She gazed at the scattered victuals. Last week's vegetables and fruit were gone and it was easy to tell that the prisoner wasn't going hungry so badly. She knew full well that once she had left, Nightmare Moon would nourish herself.

Other scenes attracted Celestia's attention across the desolate plains. To the east, the remains of a shattered telescope lay near a large rock. To the west, a track of displaced dust seemed to grow with every one of her visits, leading to a crater a few meters ahead. Celestia had often witnessed the obsessive attempts at flying back that invariably ended in a crash. Between the magical barrier and Nightmare Moon's own exhaustion, there was no way she would be able to fly back by her own means.

"You know full well why I have come, Luna, just like last week, and the thousands before. I've come to see how you are, hoping that perhaps you would have reflected

enough. It was with great sorrow that I sent you here, and with greater sorrow even that I am forced to keep you here.”

Nightmare Moon’s disdainful face contorted into a frown of anger. She grabbed Celestia by the shoulders and forcibly turned her around. Mustering what little strength she had left, she pulled herself just inches away from her sister’s face. She flew into a frenzy of shouting, pounding at the mare with her front hooves.

"Why won't you let me be, sister? Why do you insist on coming up here and disturbing my solitude? Go away! Leave me alone! Can't you see there is no hope? Why do you insist on loving me after everything I've done! I've wounded you! I've tried to kill you! I've been making attempt after attempt on your life every week since you stuck me here! Why do you refuse to hate me? Celestia! Answer that! Why won't you hate me!"

Her blows barely shook Celestia. The white mare made no effort to stop her sister. She was part of the reason Nightmare Moon was so hysterical, and she knew the only hope to talk to her was to wait out the pure frothing rage, the incoherent outburst of emotion that accomplished nothing except weaken the mare even further.

“One day, I will find my way back onto Equestria, and it will be my turn at last! I’ll show you! I’ll crush you! I’ll destroy you! Equestria will see that Nightmare Moon is their true leader!"

After what seemed an eternity, the assault finally ebbed. Celestia was shaking in place, horrified by what her sister had become. Her lips quivered as she did all she could to restrain herself from collapsing into tears. It tore her apart to know that Luna was suffering. She couldn’t do anything about it except come week after week and let Nightmare Moon take everything out on her. This was her burden.

During the first few years, Nightmare Moon had still been strong, and she had inflicted several terrible wounds to the sun goddess when they clashed. However, as the years had gone by, the Mare in the Moon had become far too weak and exhausted to pose a threat. The only pains these visits now brought to Celestia were emotional wounds. As the years went by, Celestia was terrified that perhaps she would never see her sister's true self again. Still, she kept coming, week after week. Rarely, she would get a glimpse of the real Luna. She would comfort her for the few precious seconds where she could talk to her before Nightmare Moon began lashing at her anew.

"I do not come for who you are now, but for who you once were. I will never abandon you, no matter what abuse you inflict on me. I know you're still somewhere in there, lost in all that rage. I know one day, I'll be able to get you out of there. Luna, I still love you. No matter what you've done, I still care about you."

Nightmare Moon had collapsed onto the ground again. She was out of breath from doing more shouting than could ever be healthy. She was panting heavily, occasionally coughing from having inhaled too much of the dust her outburst had kicked up. Though she no longer had the strength to lash out physically, she kept the verbal assault up, in a broken voice that carried words of rage and sorrow.

"You idiot, Celestia. Luna is gone. Now there is only Nightmare Moon. She has vanished into rage and envy. If you care so much, then why do you keep me in this ironic prison? I should be down there. We should have been equals, but you kept it all for yourself, you selfish mule!"

"Luna, I know you are still there. You hide your sorrows and anger behind this Nightmare Moon mask. Do you think I enjoy keeping you here? That I come here and let you abuse me for my own pleasure? In this state, you would be a threat to our subjects, I have no choice. I must do what is best for Equestria. I come every week offering you a

chance of salvation. Yet, you insist on shouting and lashing out."

Celestia looked down at the exhausted figure, her eyes full of pity. *Why do you do this to yourself, sister...* Tears were beginning to well up in her eyes, and a knot formed in her throat.

"You stand so tall and proud in the face of a prisoner. Pitiful. You were always so full of yourself. A show-off! A power-hungry tyrannical show-off! Get out of here! Your light and color repulse me! You make me sick!"

Nightmare Moon was shouting again. She lunged at Celestia once more, but the exhaustion was too much for her body to handle. She collapsed onto her stomach. Forcing herself into a sitting position, Nightmare Moon tried to spit on Celestia. However, she was too dehydrated, and nothing came of it.

Celestia took a few steps towards her sister, wrapping a warm wing around her exhausted body, and pulling her into a close embrace. Her muzzle gently brushed against the black mare's starry mane, and she whispered words softly into her's ear. Her sister was in no shape to resist the affection, and simply snarled her discontentment.

"As you wish. I am leaving. You would do well to look down onto Equestria. Some ponies still remember the true Luna; I remember her most of all. I know that one day, you will be yourself again, and I wait for that day like no other. Sister, I love you. I'll come back next week. I'll never let go, not until you stop suffering."

Celestia turned on her heels for one final time, brushing away a stray tear from her pristine cheek. There was nothing more for her to do here. A single flap of her strong wings shot her out into space, like a beam of sun, leaving behind naught but a sprinkle of fallen tears twinkling to the darkness.

Nightmare Moon was left alone, screaming and flailing against the dusty surface. Her angered words eventually collapsed into incoherent screams. She pulled at her mane in fury, violently kicked at the ground, sought violence against everything all at once in a meltdown of insane proportions. Slowly, her rage collapsed into sorrow, until she finally broke down into uncontrollable bawling, the black coat of her cheeks glistening with tears.

"Come back here! You tyrant! You're nothing to me! I hope your stupid ball of plasma burns you to ashes! I hate you Celestia! I hate you! I hate you! I hate you! I hate you so much! I hate you... Celestia... Sister... Please don't leave me alone again..."

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All comments and criticism are welcome, either through comments wherever you've

read this fic, or through email at autumnwind.mlp@gmail.com. I ask in particular: What did you think of “Nutmare Moon”?

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Thanks for reading!