

Never Truly Forgotten

Chapter 3: The Night

"The night after she flew around with you," Luna began, "I was in the courtyard, having just finished raising the moon. I was looking at the sky, trying to plan my newest addition to it, when Dawn came up to me.

'Hi, Luna!'

'Hello, Dawn,' I said. 'I heard you had fun yesterday.' You had told me what you saw in her that day, how you saw she's your friend. I felt the same way, and decided to try seeing Dawn in a new light.

'I did, Luna! Celestia flew me through the clouds, and I learned what the sky is like. Then after that, I took her crown and we chased each other until it was time to go home.'

She paused a bit, and realized that there was something she wanted to ask me.

'What are stars like, Luna? And how do you make them appear?'

'Well, Dawn,' I said, 'I was just preparing to add some stars to the sky. Would you like to see?'

She began nodding her head so fast, I was afraid it would fly off.

'Okay, okay. Calm down, Dawn. I'll show you...'

Her eyes widened, and a very large grin began to creep across her face.

'...tomorrow.'

And suddenly she looked like the very picture of disappointment.

'Awwww, but why *tomorrow*, Luna?'

'You really shouldn't be up this late, young as you are. I'd like you to get Moonbeam's permission first, because creating and adding stars can take some time,' I said. 'After all, my sky's like a half-finished mural. I've been adding to it, piece by piece, for a very long time, and it's still nowhere near complete.

In addition, a full Moon is scheduled tomorrow night. That way, there will be plenty of

light for you to see by.'

Dawn agreed to this idea, and we decided to meet on my balcony. Once she got permission, of course.

The next day, I was in my quarters, preparing the materials I needed. The Sun was nearly finished setting, but I hadn't brought up the Moon yet, leaving Equestria in the bright blue of the early evening. Dawn knocked at the door, and I let her in, after she gave me a note from Moonbeam, allowing her to spend the night under my watch.

As we walked out onto my balcony, Dawn saw the materials I had for my spell, but was mainly looking at one set in particular. Sitting on the balcony was a pile of gemstones, twice my height and easily twice again as wide.

'That's a lot of gems, Luna,' she said. 'Are you going to use all of them?'

'No,' I said. 'The gems are the focus of the spell, really. But only the finest will do, and I wanted to get enough that I was sure to have something from this batch.'

I began levitating each gemstone, and one by one, I cast a spell on them.

Dawn watched me, obviously wondering what I was doing, but she was kind enough to wait until I was finished. Considering the sheer number of gems I had to work with, she was waiting for much longer I expected her to. By the time I was finished, the Sun had set completely, leaving only a few more minutes of light.

'So, what was that spell, Luna?'

'Wait a moment, Dawn,' I said. I focused my magic on the darkening sky, and I brought up the full Moon. Once I did, the gems began glistening with magic, fascinating Dawn.

'The spell I cast a moment ago was to help me determine what gems are fit to become stars. The spell absorbs the moonlight, and the gems that can become stars will begin to glow.'

Dawn immediately began darting around the pile to see if she could see any glowing, which I couldn't help but giggle at a bit.

'But first, Dawn, they have to *absorb* the moonlight. This could take some time, which is why I had to make sure you were able to stay here this late.'

Dawn looked at me. 'Then, what do we do while we wait?'

I smiled at her and said, 'Whatever we want, I guess.'

So, we passed the time. We talked, we shared stories, we even played a few short games

of '20 Questions' and 'I Spy'. Finally, after about two hours had passed, we went back out to the balcony. Looking at the pile, you wouldn't be able to tell anything had changed.

'It doesn't look like any of them are glowing, Luna,' said Dawn.

'There should be at least a few,' I said. And so I began using my magic to sift through the pile. After some thorough searching by the both of us, we finally found something. At the bottom of the pile was one small ruby, giving off maybe a candle's worth of red light.

'See? There's a gem here that'll work,' I said.

'But there must have been hundreds of gems in that pile! How come we only have one star?'

'Like I said, Dawn, the gems must be of the finest quality. Such a gem is very, very rare, and it takes me years to find enough to add something new to the night.

Now, watch this.'

I decided to put on a little show of my next spell, to impress the little filly. I hunched over as if in intense concentration, and began casting. While the spell itself is fairly complex, I've done it enough that such concentration wasn't necessary, but I didn't care. I wanted to entertain my friend.

I weaved my magic into the ruby, and it began to glow brighter and brighter. Then, before it became too bright to look at, I stopped. The ruby was now giving off a very strong red light, strong enough to see from far away.

Without moving from where I was, I levitated a small box I kept in my room, and brought it out to me. I opened it, and inside were three other baby stars: a sapphire, an amethyst, and a diamond, each giving of a colored glow to rival that of the ruby.

I levitated the gems out of the box, and I said, 'Now, these stars are ready to be set into the sky. One more spell, and they'll go to their assigned place.'

I floated the ruby next to the other gems, and began charging them with a different spell. Instead of using the energy of the spell to become even brighter, this time they began to vibrate. After a few seconds, they were vibrating with so much magic, they began shooting sparks of magical lightning between them.

I paused the spell, and they stopped vibrating, though they crackled with energy. I pointed my horn into the sky, and with one more spark of magic, they shot away. Have you ever seen one of my shooting stars, Twilight, or maybe one of my meteor showers? It was almost like

that, except they flew up into the sky instead of down to earth.

They disappeared from our sight, and a moment later, four new stars were born, encircling the Moon.

'This is a very special night, Dawn,' I said, 'because it took me nearly fifty years to gather that many stars.'

She stared at me, not quite believing me. 'Does it normally take you that long?'

'No. It normally takes much longer. I'm lucky that we have such skilled rock farmers nowadays.'

She turned her gaze towards the leftover gems. 'What happens to all of these, then?'

I looked over the gemstones that completely covered the balcony. 'Well, some of them, we keep in our treasury. Some others, we use to feed the dragons of Equestria. Most of them, we give back to the ponies who so generously donated them to us.'

I looked at her and had an idea. I levitated a large purple gem that laid on the edge of the pile. With one more spell, white lines appeared on its surface, carving it into the shape of a six-pointed star.

'But one, I think, goes to you, Dawn.'

She took the star in her hooves, and a smile spread across her face. 'Thanks, Luna,' she said, stifling a yawn.

I checked the Moon, and it was easily past midnight. 'It's late,' I said. 'I have some business to attend to, not to mention some cleaning up to do. You go ahead and sleep in my bed. I'll wake you up in the morning.'

She nodded, still fighting off sleep, and made her way back into my quarters.

The next night, I was wandering the halls of the castle. It was probably just an hour or two past midnight, so I had finished what little work I had, and was just enjoying the peace and quiet.

Suddenly, I felt some sort of magical presence within the castle. I focused on it, and I could feel that, somewhere in the castle, a fair amount of magic was being used. The amount of power would have been nothing for any of us, and would have been only marginally strenuous for a skilled unicorn, so I would have paid it no mind. However, I noticed one thing that caused me to fixate on it: though less powerful, this was the same spell I had cast last night.

I immediately began trying to find the source of the magic, and it led me outside. I found

the spell caster underneath the tree in our royal garden, focusing their magic on something before them. It wasn't until I got much closer that I realized it was Dawn.

I started to panic. Not only because I knew Dawn didn't know the spell she was casting from just observing me once, but also because the amount of magic she was using was dangerous for an untrained unicorn, much less a filly.

Before I could open my mouth to stop her, the spell exploded. Dawn, unable to keep the spell going, was flung back, and the wild magic set fire to some of the flowers and leaves of the tree.

I caught Dawn in my forelegs before she struck the ground, and cast a simple rain spell, which quickly put out the fires that had sprung up. The tree was virtually unscathed, but some of the flowers surrounding it had been burned away.

'Dawn, what were you doing!?' I said, worried for her. 'You could have been hurt!'

She looked at me with tears in her eyes. 'I'm sorry, Luna! I'm so sorry! After seeing how those gems glowed so brightly before you put them in the sky, I thought that I could enchant a gem for Celestia, and give it to her as a gift. I didn't know it was so dangerous.'

I was about to tell her only certain gems could be enchanted in the first place, when I noticed what the focus of her spell was. Lying under the tree, unmoved and undamaged, was my sister's crown, the gem in its center still glowing slightly.

'So, you took my sister's tiara, and wanted to make its crystal glow?'

She nodded. I set her down on the ground.

'That's nice of you, Dawn, but the spell wouldn't work on that gem,' I said. Even as I spoke, the light in the crystal was fading. 'Not only is it not the quality of gem needed, but there are wards on it to keep it from being enchanted. I'm surprised you managed to make it glow at all.'

I nuzzled her to get her to cheer up. 'And if you want, I can help you find a better gift for her.'

Her tears faded, and she looked up at me. 'Thanks, Luna,' she said. 'I'll go put her crown back now.'

'Oh, don't worry. I can take care of that for you,' I said. I focused my magic on the crown, and made sure to include the spell key for bypassing its protections. The crown teleported away, and presumably landed where my sister had left it.

Dawn was beginning to fall asleep again, when she said, 'Luna, please don't tell anypony about this? I don't want Celestia to get mad at me.'

I assured her that, while I've never seen my sister get mad at anypony, I would keep this night a secret. On hearing that, she fell asleep, and I noticed a flash of light on her flank. Her cutie mark had appeared, a purple star like the one I gave her last night, surrounded by several smaller stars.

I suppose there are different ways to interpret her mark. It could have meant she was gifted in magic itself, or something to do with the night sky. In light of your adventures, Twilight, and how you proved that friendship is a certain special kind of magic, I think I might finally know what her mark meant."

As Luna finished her story, Celestia nodded her head. "I see," she said. "I wouldn't have been mad at her, not at all. However, I may have been a little disappointed in her if I ever found out she took my crown. I guess that's why she didn't want me to know what happened."

"Wait," Twilight said, "so her cutie mark *wasn't* for magic, yet it's still the same as mine?"

Luna turned to her. "I'm not entirely sure. It's possible hers meant magic, but in a different way than yours does. It's also possible that neither of your cutie marks mean precisely what we think it means. After all, there isn't really any meaning to a cutie mark beyond what we assign to it."

Twilight nodded and said, "I think I'm beginning to see how we might be connected, but how exactly does she affect me?" She turned towards Celestia. "And you said she changed the course of history. What do you mean by that?"

Celestia turned towards her student.

"She's actually directly related to the events that led to both Luna's imprisonment and your rescue of her. Twilight, she was the one who helped me create the Elements of Harmony."