

Author's Notes: I wanted to continue with the chapter to the main plot-twist but I simply couldn't help myself and end it where I did. I'm such a sucker for cliffhangers.

I'm getting the feeling my chapters may be a tad short. If you prefer it longer don't hesitate to let me know either via email [moses24(at)gmail(dot)com] or through the Equestria Daily comments section.

Chapter 2: Action

After practically ordering Rarity to stay locked indoors, ("But Twilight, dear, you might need my help!") Twilight bolted back to her library. Stealing a glance above confirmed her earlier suspicions: the sun was completely gone, erased from the sky in its entirety.

The crimson hue replacing it had cast haunting shadows across the land. Her first thoughts were of Princess Celestia; since she controlled the sun, having it suddenly disappear could prove...

Twilight shook her head, not wanting to even imagine the possibilities. Right now she needed to concentrate on finding out what was going on. Practically bursting through the library's door, she called out for her dragon assistant. "Spike! Spike? Where are you?"

The purple baby dragon sat huddle in a corner in the foetal position, rocking back and forth. Twilight walked up, nudging him gently with her nose. "Spike, are you okay?"

Spike yelped, jumping into the air before his panicked eyes settled on Twilight. "Twi? Wh – what's going on?"

"I don't know, that's why I need you to take a letter," the unicorn said hurriedly. Spike hesitantly grabbed a quill and parchment before Twilight cleared her throat. Just before she was about to speak, the dragon coughed and belched green fire, a letter materializing in his hands.

Spike looked at the sun-emblem sealing it. "It's from Princess Celestia."

"Well, what are you waiting for? Read it!"

Opening it, it was Spike's turn to clear his throat. "Twilight. You are needed in Canterlot immediately along with all members of the Elements of Harmony. Chariots are already on their way and should arrive in the hour. More will be explained upon your arrival. Signed Princess Celestia."

The dragon looked up at Twilight. "It's the real deal; her hoof-writing and everything. Wow, sounds really serious."

"Spike, I need you to go to Sweet Apple Acres, Sugercube Corner and the Carousel Boutique to fetch Applejack. Pinkie Pie and Rarity," Twilight commanded.

"Are you crazy?" Spike blurted out. "I'm not going out there!"

Twilight let loose a frustrated sigh. "We don't have time for this, Spike. This is an emergency!"

"B – bu – but what if the sky swallows me whole out there?" he stammered nervously, eyes darting to the crimson horizon outside the window.

"I've never seen you so scared of anything before, what's wrong with this?"

"I – I don't know. It's just...like something deeper inside is telling me that the red sky is bad. I mean *really* bad."

Shaking her head, Twilight sighed again. "Fine, I'll do it. Just start packing my things. I expect everything to be ready by the time I get back."

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Twilight was galloping towards Fluttershy's house as fast as her legs could carry her. Rarity was on her way to fetch Pinkie and Applejack. Almost hammering her hoof on the door, Twilight called out. "Fluttershy! Are you in there? It's an emergency!"

The door cracked open, a sea-green eye peeking out between the tiny gap. The yellow pegasus

hushed Twilight in before securely closing the door behind them.

“Oh my, Twilight,” Fluttershy meekly said. “I’m so sorry for not recognizing you earlier. It’s just that all the animals are so frightened.”

“It’s okay, Fluttershy,” she said. “Gather your things; Princess Celestia has requested all of the Elements of Harmony in Canterlot.”

“But I can’t!” Fluttershy exclaimed in her whisper of a voice. “The animals are so scared of whatever’s happening! I’ve tried everything to calm them down!”

Twilight raised an eyebrow at the pegasus. “Everything?” she asked suggestively.

Fluttershy averted her eyes, a slight blush brushing her cheeks. “...yes...”

“Even the Stare?”

Fluttershy nodded.

“It’s an emergency, Fluttershy. Celestia has requested *all* of us there. The chariots are already on their way.”

“But – but...” Fluttershy looked around at the hiding spots the critters had chosen. They seemed even more scared with Twilight there – probably because she was an unfamiliar face.

Twilight sighed. “I could try a sleeping spell to keep them calm through this crisis.”

“...if you’re sure they won’t get hurt,” the yellow pegasus sighed, closing her eyes. She looked back up. “Just leave Angel Bunny awake, please. He’ll need to look after all the others.”

Nodding, Twilight concentrated on a wide-area spell that blanketed Fluttershy’s property. A few seconds later she was sure that everything save Angel and themselves were now in a quiet and peaceful slumber.

“Fluttershy, I need you to fetch Rainbow Dash and come to the library.” Twilight turned to leave. “And be careful – I don’t know what the skies are like out there.”

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Twilight had briefed everypony on Celestia’s letter once at the library and the crew was now on their way to Canterlot. Rainbow Dash had said the skies were safe, although unnerving. The Royal Guard Ponies immediately escorted them to the central court where Princess Luna awaited them.

They all knelt before the night-blue alicorn before Twilight spoke. “Princess Luna. Celestia has requested for us.”

“I know, Twilight Sparkle. My dear sister is currently trying to hold off the magical side of the crisis by the central spire.” Luna had come a long way since being freed from Nightmare Moon’s influence, her confidence as a co-ruler had grown considerably.

“What sort of magical problem?” Rarity asked.

“Neither of us knows but the red sky is definitely magical in nature,” Luna continued, turning and trotting to the balcony, gazing at the unnatural horizon. “And it seems that the magical anomaly is threatening to rip this world apart.”

“Is that why the Princess is keeping things together?” Rainbow Dash asked, taking a step forward.

“You are correct, little one. But she is fighting a losing battle.” Everypony gasped, prompting Luna to continue. “I will brief you on your mission. We believe we have located the source of the problem.”

“If it’s magical in nature, why can’t you and Celestia try and properly contain it?” Twilight asked.

Princess Luna sighed, turning back to the six. “Because it’s not that simple. Yes, my sister and I have unmatched magical prowess but we simply do not understand the finer laws and subtleties

underlying it.” She pointed her hoof at Twilight. “You, however, have studied magic your entire life. If anything you understand it far better than we ever could. Plus, we need to stay here in case anything else happens.”

Twilight blushed but still pressed on. “Then why all members of the Elements of Harmony?”

“Because you are the most powerful force in the history of Equestria.”

Twilight nodded, not questioning it further. Applejack then spoke. “Well, where are we going then? And how do we fix this problem?”

“Into the depths of Old Canterlot.”

“Old Canterlot?” Applejack interjected. “I dun’ never heard of such a place before.”

Twilight looked pointedly at the apple-farmer. “That’s because it was decommissioned centuries ago and now serves as an archive of all written works from the birth of Equestria till now.”

“Correct,” Luna added. “What awaits you down there I do not know. You will all depart tomorrow morning – so rest up and gather whatever supplies you need.”