

Glimmer sighed softly with a smile, brushing an errant lock of her emerald mane from her eyes. Closing the dusty old tome, she carried it back to the Library's reference desk and carefully placed it on the counter in front of the librarian.

The old stallion that was minding the desk smiled to her. "I don't think anypony has looked in that book in over two hundred years. Find what you were looking for, dear?"

"Yes, Mr. Trotsky, thank you. That was exactly what I needed to see. I need to get going, Sir. But I'll stop by again soon. I need to go check in on my Mother." Glimmer grinned and nodded her head to the old stallion in gratitude for his help.

"Take care, Glimmer. I hope she's doing better." Mr. Trotsky watched her fairly gallop out of the library with a smile. Glimmer's emerald green mane almost seemed to clash with her brilliant red coat but it was her eyes that tied it together; a brilliant blue with what looked like little metallic glints in the iris. Perhaps that's how she got her name.

He patted the book and grinned to himself. "My old friend, I think you and I will be seeing a lot more of her, and soon." Glimmer might be all of thirteen, but she had a sharp mind.

Trotsky reverently carried the book back to the shelf it had come from; a shelf that he and only a select few ever seemed to visit. The book was very old and had rarely been perused by attendees of the school, let alone been studied by a non-student.

The book itself was the first of the Gryphon Accords; codified laws that settled the conflicts between several larger Gryphon clans and the Ponies. Trotsky wasn't entirely sure what Glimmer had been looking for, but she'd evidently found it. What he WAS sure of was that the book had a rather interesting history. Many of those that read it went on to become legends in the legal field. Not all, no... but a significant fraction certainly did. His gut told him that Glimmer might just be the next in that august line.

Glimmer galloped home with a smile on her face. She'd been right; there WAS a way to speak to the Judge without being an accredited lawyer. This afternoon, the Court would be hearing the appeal of one Mr. Potts, the merchant who ran the store in which her mother had been injured. Sneaking into the proceedings would be mildly illegal, but once IN, she could use an ancient snippet of the Canterlot Law Code to request an audience with the Judge... if she sat through the entire proceedings without saying a word. Maybe then, she'd get the answers to questions that had plagued her.

Arriving home and walking in the front door, she saw Nurse Geode peeking out from her mother's bedroom with a smile.

"Welcome home, Glimmer! Your mother would like to show you something, dear." Nurse Geode reminded everypony of their favorite grandmare; she just left a pony with the feeling of warmth and love.

"Yes, Ma'am!"

As Glimmer approached, Nurse Geode opened the door, showing Glimmer something she had longed to see; a yellow mare with blue hair and hazel eyes standing unsteadily on her hooves. Unsteadily, yes, but it was the first time in the six months since the accident that she'd been ABLE to.

With a squeal of delight, Glimmer dashed over and gently pressed her nose to her mother's chest. "Mom, that's WONDERFUL! Congratulations!" She felt her mother nuzzle the back of her neck, and for a brief moment, all was right with the world again.

"It will still be a few more months before your mother is ready to go back to work, Glimmer. But she's definitely on the mend and she WILL be back to her old self. Just you wait and see!" the nurse said with a chuckle. Happy endings were few and far between; fortunately, this was one of them.

Glimmer smiled thankfully to the nurse. "It's because of you coming by to help us, Ma'am. We don't have much to offer, but I can make us all some lunch if you'd care to stay."

"Please, dear. It would mean so much to us," Glimmer's mother said.

"I'm afraid I can't, Hope." the Nurse said regretfully. "I need to get back to the hospital and start my shift. But I'll stop by tomorrow, how about that?"

Glimmer and Hope both nodded at that, and smiled. "Deal. We'll see you then," the mares said happily.

Sidling over so that her mother could lean on her, Glimmer smiled. "Want to have lunch in the dining room, Mom?"

"That would be wonderful, dear! Oh, I'm so GLAD to be able to get out of that bed!" Hope sighed.

"I'm so proud of you Mother." Glimmer leaned up and kissed her mother's nose. "I knew you could do it. I never doubted you for a minute."

Hope smiled down at her daughter and returned the gentle affections. Her concerns could wait for another day; she'd been out of work since that accident at the merchant's shop with a badly shattered shoulder and flank injury that had made it impossible for her to stand, let alone keep her job. Medical disability had run out, and the creditors were coming for them in force. Still, that was a problem for another day. TODAY at least would be spent without cares of that sort.

Glimmer made a hearty lunch of salad greens with diced and shredded potatoes for garnish. It was simple fare, but the fact that she could share it with her mother in the dining room made it seem like the grandest banquet there ever was. Her mother tired easily, however, and soon after finishing her salad obviously needed to rest.

After getting her mother situated, Glimmer nuzzled her again, beaming with pride and happiness. "Rest, Mom. I need to go and take care of something. I'll be back later but I've asked Mrs. Hyacinth to come by and check in on you while I'm gone."

Hope smiled sleepily up at her daughter. "We'll get through this, dear. We're on our way."

"I know, Mom." Glimmer smiled. She did believe it, too. She kissed her mother's forehead, and then went to her room to put on her simple dress that she kept for special occasions. It was a LITTLE small for her now, but still presentable. It still covered her blank flank, after all; for her purposes that would be sufficient. After brushing her hair and styling it a bit, she quietly snuck out the front door.

Court was not to start for another hour, but she had quite the ways to go. She rehearsed in her head what she would say to the Judge after the court case, going over every phrase and every word to make sure it was just so. She wanted, no, she *needed* this to flow perfectly. Fortunately, this passed the time quite adequately and so she soon found herself at the Canterlot Supreme Court, with about fifteen minutes to spare.

Sneaking into court was a different matter entirely. Glimmer had to scrunch her anxiety deep down into her belly and try to keep her face utterly impassive. She had no legal standing to be here; this was an appeals case, and not a prosecutorial proceeding. Glimmer had been at THAT court date, absolutely. Mr. Potts was found guilty of negligence with regards of maintenance of his shop; a heavy shelving unit had fallen down and shattered her mother's hip and shoulder, which precipitated her current economic crisis.

Taking one last deep breath, Glimmer tried to calm her racing heart as she strode up the courthouse steps and through the first security checkpoint. Fortunately, this guard seemed rather bored with his job and simply asked her if she were carrying any proscribed items. Honestly, Glimmer wondered if any pony had ever answered in the affirmative to that. If one WAS stupid enough to bring a banned item into Court, then they deserved what happened to them, ESPECIALLY if they admitted it.

The stately marble halls of the Supreme Court greeted her. This was the third eldest remaining building in Canterlot and it fairly Oozed history. The Princess's palace and the Hospital were both older by a century or two, since the city had been damaged in the attacks that had immediately preceded the Gryphon Accords. The Court had been rebuilt, and placed right back where it was with the same design as the original. Stately. Solid. If anything could be said to be classified as 'eternal' aside from the Princesses, then this building would certainly be it. Words that had been spoken here so many hundreds of years still had their effect on Equestria today. Ancient paintings and murals decorated the walls, depicting events from Equestrian history from the founding of Canterlot, to the organization and codification of the Laws into a formalized structure. There was even, behind many layers of protective and preserving spells, the original draft of the Laws of Equestria.

Glimmer was so entranced and so distracted with looking around and catching glimpses of the history of the place that she never even saw the black-robed pony until her head planted firmly into a flank.

"OOF! Young lady, watch where you're going!" The voice came from the elderly black-robed unicorn stallion. His tone might have been severe, but the smile was quite gentle.

Glimmer swallowed. "M... My apologies, Your Honor. Please, forgive me!" She took a mincing step back.

The stallion chuckled. "Don't apologize, my dear. It's quite the pleasure to see someone ENJOYING being here." He sighed wistfully. "It was the same for me, so many years ago. It's the history of the place, isn't it? That's what got you?" He smiled gently down to the trembling young mare. "T'cha. I don't bite, dear. Come, tell me your name."

Her hopes sank; she wouldn't lie to him, or to anypony, really. Not here. Once he knew who she was and checked to see if she belonged there, it was over. She sighed quietly. "My name is Glimmer, Your Honor."

The judge blinked. "Glimmer? Of the Mr. Potts' case?"

Haystacks. *It's over,* she thought to herself forlornly. "Yes, Your Honor. I had hoped to be there for the appeal slated for today."

"Hm." The judge mulled that over. "You know you won't be permitted to provide additional testimony, correct? And you do know why that is, yes?"

"Yes, Sir. I know. This is an appeals case. Guilt has already been established so no additional testimony can be entered. That was enacted by the Princesses, in order to assure a fair and impartial trial. If testimony were to be accepted, then a mistrial would be declared as Mr. Potts presumably would not have legal counsel present." Glimmer said, looking up at the judge.

"Goodness. You do know quite a bit of law for one your age!" He tapped his chin with a hoof. "If you promise to remain silent... and I do mean SILENT... throughout the entire case, I'll see about letting you view from the gallery."

Glimmer blinked, and smiled uncertainly up at the judge. "You mean that, Your Honor?" Her hopes that her plan might actually work began to build, albeit slowly.

"Of course, Glimmer!" The judge grinned. "You snuck into the Supreme Court of Canterlot and were trying to get into a courtroom that by all rights should be off-limits. And despite that, you still were taken in by the history and responsibility of this place. When challenged, you told me the truth of why you wanted to be here; you wanted to view the case. You also knew the particulars as to why you would not be permitted to present testimony. I am, frankly, impressed. Anyone who cares that much about Law is welcome in my book. Come, now. Your case should be beginning momentarily."

The judge helped Glimmer bypass the last layer of security before she entered the courtroom proper. The judge motioned to a seat in the very back of the courtroom to keep her out of the way.

Glimmer rose, as everypony did when the Judge entered the courtroom and took their places behind the bench. Mr. Potts stood, conspicuously without a lawyer present behind the defendant's table and the prosecuting attorney behind the plaintiff's table.

The Judge looked at his bench and picked up an envelope with golden script on it. He opened it, and read the note inside, then set it down and gazed out over his courtroom. "Fillies and Gentlecolts. I have here a notice from the

Princesses that they will be assuming this case. While this is mildly unusual, they have been known to sit in now and then. As this is well within their purview, I am hereby excused from this case and turn the court over to the Honorable Princess Celestia and the Honorable Princess Luna, long may they reign in wisdom and light.”

Glimmer’s squeak of terror was thankfully hidden by the sound of ponies standing up and hooves clapping onto the marble floor. It had been hard enough to muster her courage to face the Judge. Now she had to face the PRINCESSES? Would it even work with them? It *should*, since technically they were the Judges now, but... she just was not sure. She swallowed hard, doing her level best to pull herself together and managing it... barely.

“Thank you, Judge.” Celestia and Luna took their places behind the bench, and the Judge bowed and left the courtroom.

After taking a few minutes to read the case notes and application for appeal, Princess Celestia looked up and gazed over to the Defendant. In a stately voice, Princess Celestia crushed all hope Glimmer ever had of seeing justice. “Mr. Potts. I have reviewed your application for clemency and find it appropriate. You are hereby bound to it, and are summarily forgiven your crimes. This court will look most unfavorably if it should reoccur. Court is dismissed.”

Glimmer was utterly shocked. There HAD to be more to the story than this... there just had to be... The law couldn’t be so capricious as this, and neither could the Princesses. When she was the last pony in the room aside from the Bailiff and Princesses, Glimmer stood and walked to the aisle. She gathered the tattered remains of her composure and looked up to the Judge’s Bench.

“Princess Celestia, Princess Luna. With all respect and in accordance to Section twelve, paragraph three, subsection sixteen of the Gryphon Accords, I request a brief audience with Your Majesties.” Glimmer managed to state this in an even, unemotional voice.

Princess Celestia arched an eyebrow. “Very well. Please, at your leisure.”

“I.. confess to being confused, Princess. I understand that mercy is important to the legal system as well, but... what about justice?” Glimmer reached down within herself and lifted her concerns to the surface where she could share them. “My mother was seriously injured in Mr. Potts’ shop, and has been unable to work since. While I’m very pleased to say that as of today she can stand on her own hooves, I’m NOT pleased to say that she might need to in order to head to the homeless shelter with me. Princesses, I beg you, where is justice here? Forgiveness is good, but... what about my mother and I? What did we do to deserve this? Assuredly, bad things do happen in life... there’s no

question. How is it justice that Mr. Potts goes free to continue running his business when my mother and I are losing all that we ever knew as a result?" Somehow, despite her deep inner turmoil, Glimmer was able to ask all this in a very polite and civil tone, though the undercurrent of anger was VERY easy to detect. Her speech was stiff and formal, pronunciation severe to the point of almost being clipped, but she just couldn't HELP it.

"What would Justice be to you, in this case, Glimmer?" Luna asked, quietly.

"Some form of compensation, Princess," Glimmer stated directly. "It isn't just for my mother to lose her home when it wasn't her fault she was injured. A windfall wouldn't be right, either. Honestly? I would believe that payment of my mother's medical bills as well as restoration of loss of income so that we don't lose our home. If Mother cannot return to work, then I would request her wages be provided as well. We don't need much, Princess. I'm not asking for economic advancement." She couldn't stop her tears now, though. Just a few ran down her muzzle. "I... just don't think it right my Mother loses her home for something she didn't do."

"Good. You know the difference between Justice and Vengeance," Luna said solemnly. "But there's still the issue of you breaking the law, Glimmer. I'm afraid it's not a trivial offense, either."

Blinking uncertainly, Glimmer asked, "Princess? I'm afraid I don't understand..."

Celestia grew grim and sat back up into her seat. "Indeed, Sister. She broke the law rather severely. Glimmer, you broke into the *Supreme Court of Canterlot*. You broke into and are even now *trespassing* on Royal Property."

Glimmer gulped, folding her ears back and looking up at her upset Monarch. "But.. but Princess, I was.."

Narrowing her eyes, Luna glared at Glimmer. "You. Broke. The. Law."

"Yes, Princess," Glimmer whispered, nearly in tears. She'd come so far. She'd thought she'd actually made it. She'd not counted on the Princesses being there, and certainly hadn't expected them to be so UPSET with her over it. Princess Celestia was right, though... she HAD broken the law. "I'm sorry, Princess."

"Glimmer. You are guilty of criminal trespass within the halls of the Supreme Court of Canterlot. You are guilty by your own admission. Are you prepared to receive your sentence?"

Gulping, Glimmer nodded sadly. “Y... Yes, Princess Celestia.” She squeaked abruptly as her flank began to tingle and feel warm. With wide eyes, she tugged her dress up a little and saw that her cutie mark had finally come in! It was Justice’s Scales!

Celestia and Luna both beamed. “Congratulations, Glimmer! You’ve found what you were meant for.”

“I.. I don’t understand....” Glimmer stammered, staring at her new cutie mark in surprise.

“My dear, clever little pony. I know you came here to ask the Judge about justice. I know it’s important to you, and I also know you feel that you didn’t receive it, right now. But there are things in play that you were unaware of. Bailiff? Please take the Clemency Agreement to Glimmer, if you would,” Celestia asked.

“My pleasure, your Majesty.” The Bailiff approached the bench, and then handed the document to Glimmer to read, with a wink and a smile.

Glimmer scanned the document, eyes widening. “It’s.. all here. A formal apology and acknowledgement of his wrongdoing. He’s covering Mom’s medical expenses, and back wages too. He’s being granted Clemency so he can run his business and pay our debts... and he VOLUNTEERED to do this, even without prompting by lawyers.” She swallowed. “I apologize, Princesses. I was wrong.”

Luna smiled gently. “Glimmer, you sought out Justice. You didn’t feel it was served, and so you did a great deal of research into the matter to find a way to come and ask about it, so that we’d explain it to you. Too many others demand ‘justice’ when what they’re truly ASKING for is ‘vengeance’. You came here asking ABOUT justice; you didn’t demand anything. When we provided you evidence that justice has indeed been served, you apologized for believing that it hadn’t been. You understand that mercy is every bit as important as justice so long as wrongs are righted. But also, you understand that you yourself are not above the law. When you accepted responsibility for your actions without an undue amount of reluctance, you embraced Justice itself. There’s the reason your cutie mark came in; it’s a symbol of justice, but also a reminder that NO pony is above justice. Not you, and not even my Sister and I.”

“But it occurs to me, dear Sister,” Celestia said, eyes narrowing again. “We haven’t pronounced sentence on *Glimmer*. While I’m quite happy that her cutie mark has come in, it would hardly be fitting for her to escape penalty for *her* crimes, now would it?”

“Quite right, Celestia, Quite right indeed. I, Princess Luna, Co-ruler and Co-Goddess of Equestria, do hereby sentence Glimmer to a five year sentence..”

Glimmer’s eyes shot wide. *Five years for trespassing??! Sweet Mother of Equestria, that’s harsh!*

Celestia continued. “... to the Canterlot University Law School. As it has been made clear that the convicted in this case does not have the funding to meet the financial obligations, a scholarship and living stipend will be provided. This sentence is to be served starting in this upcoming semester. Guards! TAKE HER AWAY!”

The two burly guards looked at each other, and at Glimmer who was looking at *them* with surprise in her eyes. “Princesses?”

Allowing her forced grim demeanor to fall at last, Celestia laughed. “Of course not! Escort her home though, and be sure to tell her mother what she has accomplished this day. Glimmer, you’ve done very well today. Congratulations.” Her eyes sparkled. “But I do expect you to serve your sentence with distinction, my little pony.”

Glimmer was in tears, but this time tears of joy. She bowed low, touching her forehead to the floor in front of the Princesses. “I will, Princess. Thank you.. thank you so very, very much.”

“You’re more than welcome, dear one. Go, now. Your mother’s waiting.” Luna said softly.

The two guards came forward and bowed to Glimmer. “My lady?” they asked in perfect stereo.

Glimmer couldn’t help but smile brightly up at them and it was clear that had the Princesses not been there, the guards would have been hugged by a very happy young mare. “Of course, gentlemen. Thank you.”

As the courtroom doors closed behind Glimmer and the guards, Celestia smiled and leaned back in her seat. “It is at times like this that I truly enjoy being a Princess. And I told you she was going to go to the Gryphon Accords. You thought she’d try and talk to us at the Palace.”

Luna stuck her tongue out at Celestia and grinned. “She would have, but you instructed the seneschal to not let her in, Tia.”

From the Judge’s Chambers behind the bench, Mr. Trotsky the Librarian came out. “Told you, Princess. She’s one of the good ones. When she came in to do research, I saw she had the spark. Thought I’d mention it to you.”

“Mm. I still regret the day you retired from the Bench, Trotsky. But tell me, did you show her that book?”

Trotsky grinned and shook his head. “Not at all, Princess. You know I won’t ever do that. She asked the right question, and that book held the answer she needed. I tell you, I think she’s destined for greatness. And thanks for letting me use that old glamour so I could bring her into the courtroom today.”

Princess Celestia nodded and smiled warmly. “Any time, old friend. Any time.”

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Fortunately, due to the efforts of her tutors that the Law School provided, Glimmer was able to catch up with her high-school classes in the first year while taking the freshmen collegiate level law courses. The work was hard but she was a most diligent student; it also helped that she had no economic concerns to worry about. With THAT stress off her mind, Glimmer was able to dig into the study with gusto.

There were other challenges as well; some ponies didn’t care for the fact that they had to bust their flanks to earn a position, but that Glimmer not only had been appointed to one, but had a full-ride scholarship as well. Socializing was also very difficult due to the age gap, but the few friends Glimmer DID make were some of the closest and best she’d ever had. They were the sort that would always be there, through thick and thin. Many good memories were had by all, and there was even some talk about all of them forming their own legal firm someday.

Five years later though, Glimmer had achieved the lofty position of Summa Cum Laude and had the pleasure of walking across the stage to receive her diploma along with her best friends. Glimmer was well-rounded legally, but seemed especially gifted in Ethics as well as multiple facets of criminal law. After graduation, she received a letter requesting that she appear in the Supreme Court again, in the very same courtroom she had been ‘sentenced’ to Law School.

Still wearing her cap and gown (pulled back enough to show her cutie mark), Glimmer walked into the courtroom and was stunned into surprise. Princess Celestia and Princess Luna were there behind the bench, staring intently at her. The same Bailiff had come out of retirement to don his uniform once more and was standing exactly where he had been, that fateful day. Even the same two guards were there!

“Glimmer,” Princess Luna intoned. “You stand accused of achieving Summa Cum Laude. You stand accused of having earned the respect of your Professors, this Court, and the Princesses Celestia and Luna. How do you plead?”

“Guilty as charged, Your Majesty,” Glimmer said softly, a slow grin appearing in her eyes and on her muzzle.

“Are you prepared to receive your sentence?”

“I am, Your Majesty. I can only throw myself on Your Royal mercy.” Glimmer couldn’t completely hide the giggle that demanded to be released.

“For your crimes there can BE no mercy. Glimmer, having been found guilty by admission for earning the respect of those around you and for the dedication you have displayed in your classes, you are hereby sentenced to serve as Aide to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Guards? Escort the ‘prisoner’ to the lobby. Her mother is there, waiting for her to start the celebration. Congratulations, Glimmer. Well done. Well done indeed.”

After the doors closed behind the guards and Glimmer, Luna looked at Celestia and winked. “I can see her wearing the black robes of a Supreme Court Justice someday, ‘Tia.”

“So can I, Luna. So can I. She’s got the heart for it, and the raw ability. A number of years of seasoning, and I think she might even make Chief Justice, if the post opens up. Time will tell, but either way, she’ll be a great asset to the courts.”

“Let’s go add our personal congratulations and then head for lunch,” Luna said with a smile.

It was a good day, indeed.

Justice, after all, had been Served.